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## **SONS OF PROMISE**

*"Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children [sons] of promise" Galatians 4:28.*

In the **book of Galatians**, Paul is writing to the churches in the region of Galatia. There were a number of towns in Galatia where Paul had founded churches. Paul was their spiritual father (**Gal.4:19**). Paul wanted to bring them up to maturity as spiritual children, so that they would grow up and walk in their inheritance in Christ, walking *"in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage"* (**Gal.5:1**).

### **Judaisers in the church**

Paul is writing to them after they have received some people, known as Judaisers, who tried to convince them to accept a form of Judaism. This included even literal circumcision for the men, and keeping the laws, supposedly from Moses - but including many other Jewish laws and traditions - in order to be fully saved. Such people are arising again today, trying to convince Christian leaders and churches that we must go back to our 'Hebrew' roots and practice Jewish ways to be fully pleasing to God.

In this study we will see that the Scriptures teach us that we must go back to our father Abraham and emulate his faith, thus becoming the children of promise who are able to inherit all that God has promised.

**Galatians** is a book of 'faith', breaking us free from the bondage of religion. In the book of Galatians the law that the Galatians needed to keep free of, was the law of Moses as preached by the Judaisers. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, for Gentiles, it is not necessarily the "law of Moses" but a religious law, even a "Christian law".

### **THE PROMISE**

What is the Promise? *"And we declare to you glad tidings - that promise that was made to the fathers. 'God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus'" Acts 13:32-33a.* The promise was made to the fathers: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. This promise was *"glad tidings"*. God fulfilled the promise by *"raising up Jesus"*.

*"For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us" 2 Corinthians 1:20.* It is through the Son of God, Jesus the Messiah, that **all the promises** of God are fulfilled. God is glorified through His people who are in Christ. God fulfilled His promises in Christ and now they are being fulfilled through His people, by faith.

### **The Scriptures reveal the promises**

**We must receive the Scriptures as the Word of God.** We have received them and all revelation must be based on the Scriptures; there is no revelation outside of the Scriptures. If we receive the Scriptures, the oracles of God, that which is written, we will receive the promises and become partakers of the Godhead (the divine nature). Peter says these promises are *great*,

*precious and magnificent* (2 Pet.1:2-4). Our future is not to become like the Jews, but to become like God!

## THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

*"For the promise that he would be heir of the world, was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith" Romans 4:13.* This promise was spoken in Genesis 17:4, *"As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations."*

### Heir of the world

Abraham and his seed would be *"heir of the world"*. Abraham was the beginning of the generations of the people who would be known as the Hebrews. But at the time Abraham was called, he was a Gentile, and he lived 430 years before Moses and the Law. Abraham received the promise through faith. The promise would come through the righteousness of faith. The promise would be of no effect if it was to come through "law". Jesus, the Seed of Abraham, inherits the nations and the earth (**Psalm 2:7-8**).

### The Gospel was preached to Abraham

Paul declares *"the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand saying, 'In you all the nations shall be blessed'" Gal.3:8.* The Scripture foresaw that God would justify Gentiles [the nations] by faith. Paul says that this is the preaching of the gospel: *"In you (Abraham) all the nations of the earth will be blessed"* (**Gen.12:3**). Abraham and his seed are heirs according to the promise. The heirs are *"those who are of faith, the sons of Abraham"* (**Gal.3:7**). *"So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham"* (**Gal.3:9**).

This is amazing! That God included the Gentiles in the original promises to Abraham. According to Paul, God's promise that all the families or nations of the earth would be blessed through Abraham, is actually the gospel. Through the gospel of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, the promised blessing is released to all the nations.

### Jesus is the Seed of Abraham

In **Galatians 3:16** Paul shows us that the promise was not made to the seed of Abraham, referring to his descendants through Isaac and Jacob, but was actually referring to the Messiah [Christ]. *"Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'and to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed', who is Christ"* **Gal.3:16**.

The *"promises"* refer to the covenant word that God had made to Abraham. If we do not know the promises we will not receive them. Many believers do not know the promises. The promises (of the covenant) were made to **Abraham and his Seed**. The covenant is made from a greater to a lesser, and is not able to be annulled (**Gal.3:17**).

God did not say *"and to seeds as of many, but as of one"*. The Seed of Abraham is a Person, and it is not Isaac; it is Messiah/Christ. The Seed is singular, The Seed is Christ. It is not Isaac, but the One Isaac points to, the Messiah.

**Messiah is the descendant of Abraham; the One who inherits the nations and the earth**

## **WE INHERIT BY FAITH**

*"Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all" Romans 4:16.* The seed, plural, includes those who are of the law, that is, the descendants through Isaac who came into the covenant of the law through Moses; but the seed plural also includes the descendants who are of the same faith of Abraham. Abraham is father of both. It is written *"I have made you a father of many nations" (Rom.4:17).*

The children of the flesh, no matter how genuine their claims are to be Jews, to be Hebrews, to be of the chosen race, are not in fact the children of Abraham, unless they embrace Messiah by coming to faith in Jesus the Messiah. *"Those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but the children of promise are counted as the seed" Rom.9:8.*

Isaac was a son of promise. It required the supernatural intervention of God for Abraham and Sarah to be able to have a son. Isaac is a type, pointing to the Christ. The coming of Christ in the flesh is much more the supernatural intervention of God in human history than the conception and birth of Isaac. Christ is the promised Seed!

### **The promise of the Spirit through faith**

The word of God testifies that *"The just shall live by his faith" (Hab.2:4 & Gal.3:11).* Even those who received the law, finally they cannot live by the law, but actually are cursed because they break the law; *"For it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them'" Galatians 3:10.* But *"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" Gal.3:13-14.*

All the nations, including the nation of the Jews, are able to receive the promise of the Spirit. It is by faith. The children of the flesh are not heirs automatically, but only those born of the Spirit are the heirs.

## **THE MESSIAH IS FOR ALL NATIONS**

*"Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: 'For this reason I will confess to you among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name'" Rom.15:8-9.* Paul is showing us here, by drawing on the Old Testament, that God sent forth His Son through the circumcision [the Jewish people] not only to confirm the truth of God among them so that they could be saved, but also to confess the Messiah, Jesus, among the Gentile nations. The Gentiles in believing in Messiah, would glorify God for His mercy.

The promises have to be understood in Jesus the Messiah. The promises are not received through the natural lineage. The Messiah came for all nations even as the promise was spoken to Abraham in **Genesis 12:3**. Abraham is the father of many nations and was called so by God from the very beginning.

## **The obedience of the faith**

Paul said we are established in the faith according to *"my gospel"* (Rom.16:25-26). The Scriptures testify of Jesus; He is the Messiah of the Old and New Testament. Jesus said, *"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me"* Jn.5:39. The Scriptures have always pointed to Christ, and the purpose of the Scriptures being made known to all nations is for all to come to *"obedience of the faith"* (Rom.16:26). The revelation of the Scriptures is all about Christ, the Anointed One. Christ is a many-membered body (1Cor.12:12), and there is a corporate anointing that is to be manifested in the body, making Christ known in all the earth. The prophetic Scriptures make known to us the mystery of God's purpose for all the nations. This is *"according to the commandment of the everlasting God"* (Rom.16:26).

## **The truth of the gospel**

The Jewish believers including Peter and Barnabas caused trouble in the church at Antioch by separating themselves from the Gentile believers over the issue of food and refusing to eat with the Gentiles. Paul says, *"They were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel"* (Gal.2:14). And what is *"the truth of the gospel"*? Answer: *"That a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ"* (Gal.3:16a). Paul shows us in **Romans 7:4** that we *"become dead to the law through the body of Christ."* What does this mean? That Christ by dying sets us free from the law because Christ took upon Himself our sin which required our death under the law, Christ dying for us, so that we could live for Christ.

## **Christ living in the believer**

Paul makes the point clearly that even though the Jews by nature are *"not sinners of the Gentiles"* but still, that all can only be justified by faith in Jesus Christ. Justification is not through works of law. Jews by nature are not justified by trying to keep the law - ceremonial worship, food codes, washings etc. Gentiles and Jews are justified the same way, through faith (Gal.2:15-16).

Therefore we *"have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me"* (Gal.2:20). This is the outworking of the grace of God! This is the fruit of Christ dying! (Gal.1:21).

## **WITCHCRAFT ENSNARED THE GALATIANS**

Paul begins chapter three of **Galatians** with an alarming challenge: *"O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?"* Gal.3:1. Witchcraft had overtaken these believers. They had come under supernatural control which was leading them astray from faith in Jesus. They were now following a different religion, seeking to keep the law (v.3-4). And yet Paul asks them if God *"works miracles among you, by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith"* (Gal.3:5), and then reminds them that Abraham *"was accounted righteous because he believed God"* (v.6).

## **There is no discrimination in the kingdom**

Again Paul declares *"Therefore know that those who are of faith are sons of Abraham"* Gal.3:7. Only those of faith are sons of Abraham. *"There is neither Jew nor*

***Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus"*** (Gal.3:28). This is a powerful declaration of the nature and culture of the kingdom of God. There is no discrimination or partiality or superiority on the basis of race or religion, on the basis of economic status, on the basis of gender.

***"So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham"*** Gal.3:9. No matter what your background you are blessed with believing Abraham, when you have come to faith. We should pursue and walk in the inheritance promised to Abraham. This will bring us into freedom, and call us out into the real inheritance. Remember Abraham is ***"heir of the world"*** (Rom.4:13).

### **Faith comes through Christ's redemption**

If you stay under the law [whatever law it is] you stay under a curse. Inheritance does not come by the law but by the promise of Abraham. The Scripture says, ***"The law is not of faith"*** (Gal.3:12), but ***"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law ... that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith"*** (Gal.3:13-14).

### **What was the purpose of the law?**

The law was given to deal with transgressions (Gal.3:19). It was given ***"till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made"*** (Gal.3:19). Sin was openly judged in the earth through the law. Scripture confines all under sin (v.22), ***"that the promise of faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe"*** (v.22). ***"Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we no longer need a tutor"*** (Gal.3:24-25).

### **WHO ARE THE SONS OF PROMISE?**

***"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus"*** Gal.3:26

***"And if you are of Christ, then you are of Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise"*** Gal.3:29

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