

## "You Are All One in Christ Jesus" -- Galatians 3:26-4:7

### I. Introduction & Review

### II. Some clarifications

#### A. Various uses of "law" in Paul

1. "The Law" is not the same as "The Old Testament"
2. Sometimes "The Law" meant the 10 commandments
3. "The Law" for Jews often meant the Pentateuch -- the first five books of the OT that had been handed down to Israel through Moses
4. "The Law" could also be the law of Moses + all the interpretations and clarifications that accumulated up through the time of Jesus
5. Law in itself vs. Law as taught by Paul's opponents
6. "Works of the law" as a technical term: circumcision + keeping holy days + dietary laws
7. "The Law" not usually an equivalent to "human effort"

#### B. Paul is deconstructing his opponents use of the law that maintained the privileged and exclusive status of Israel after the coming of the Messiah.

1. See chart at end of outline.
2. Quote regarding Paul's view of the law: "At its heart was the conviction that the old covenant made with Israel at Sinai had passed away and the new covenant predicted by Jeremiah and Ezekiel had come. The change of covenants was necessary because no individual could keep the stipulations of the old covenant, a fact which Israel had demonstrated at the national level. The change was also necessary because after the covenant was broken, Israel used the Law to erect barriers between itself and the Gentile world, barriers which to some became a point of pride and false security. The new covenant maintained the formal structure of the old, including its barrier of separation between those within and those outside. This barrier ceased to be national in character, however, and assumed instead dimensions dictated by the Spirit, dimensions which in their practical outworking coincided in many particulars with the old covenant. This new covenant, moreover, as the prophets had predicted, was written on the heart and could be kept by those who walked in the Spirit."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>F. Thielman, "Law," *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1993), 541-2.

- C. Paul is showing how God is *consistent* in his plan of salvation.
    - 1. Jesus and Paul were both teaching what the Law and the prophets actually said and meant as opposed to the way it had been taught and interpreted.
    - 2. Jesus and Paul were both showing the consistency of Scripture -- things people may have missed but which actually pointed toward Jesus as Messiah and the incorporation of the Gentiles into the people of God (Scripture fulfilled, including the law).
- III. Paul's Punchline: You are all ONE in Christ (3:26-29)
- A. You are all Sons of God through faith (vv. 26-27)
    - 1. Sons of God = descendants of Abraham = people of God
    - 2. Note: "Sons of God" and gendered language
  - B. You all have a new identity: being "in Christ" (v. 28)
    - 1. Paul's big concept: "in Christ"
    - 2. Being "in Christ" transforms our identity and trumps every other marker of identity.
  - C. The implication: if you are "in Christ," you are all Abraham's seed now. (v. 29)
    - 1. Jesus is Abraham's seed (v. 19)
    - 2. Since you are in Christ, you too are Abraham's seed, and you too inherit the promise and the blessings to Abraham.

#### DISCUSSION

- We are to be "one" in Christ. What are things in our own community and in the church more broadly that threaten to put up walls that divide us into categories other than that of "in Christ"?
- In what do I place my identity? Do those things divide me from my brothers and sisters in Christ? Does my identity "in Christ" trump all other identity markers in my life?

- IV. Paul's Picture: You Are Sons and Heirs, not Slaves (4:1-7)
- A. Another analogy: waiting to "come of age" (vv. 1-2)
  - B. We too were enslaved under the "ABC's" of the world (v. 3)
  - C. But at the right time, God freed us and adopted us as Sons (vv.4-5)
  - D. Since we are Sons and not slaves, we are also heirs. (vv. 6-7)

#### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- What does it mean for us that we have God's Spirit in our hearts, crying "Abba! Father!?" What does it mean for you that we have been adopted as God's "sons"?
- What are ways that you are tempted to return to the "ABC'S" rather than living as a "grown-up" in faith?

For next week: Read Galatians 4:8-20

	<b>Paul's Opponents<sup>2</sup> ("Judaizers") and/or Jewish Teaching</b>	<b>Paul</b>
Who receives the blessings of Abraham?	Abraham's seed(s)	Abraham's seed(s)
Who is Abraham's seed?	Israel	Jesus Messiah
Who is the people of God? sons of God sons of Abraham	Israel	Those "in Christ"
How do you receive the blessings of Abraham?	Through Jesus and by being part of the Jewish people	By faith in Jesus Christ
How is an individual incorporated into the people of God? (What is the mark of the people of God?)	circumcision	faith/baptism/Spirit
What tells you how to live as the people of God?	the Law of Moses	the Spirit
Does the people of God need to be separated from the rest of the world?	Yes	Yes
What separates the people of God from the rest of the world?	"Works of the Law": circumcision, keeping holy days, dietary laws	living according to the Spirit
Does an individual have to become a Jew in order to be a Christian / in order to inherit the blessings of Abraham?	Yes	No

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<sup>2</sup>Beware: extremely simplified for the purposes of clarification and contrast. :-)