

BRIEF PERSPECTIVE ON SONS AND HEIRS

The issue of the Judaizers was big enough for the leaders of the day (apostles and elders) to meet together (Acts 15). That the leaders of the day debated much on the topic was suggestive that there were those who agreed and disagreed with the belief and practice of the Judaizers.

However, Paul was explicit - the distortion of the gospel has resulted in a different gospel. Faith in Jesus is enough for justification of the believer and the giving of the Holy Spirit to the believers as a result of their faith in Jesus was proof.

The Gentiles believers had received the Spirit of God by faith in Jesus (Gal 3:2). Elsewhere, Paul elaborated that the Spirit of God was given to guarantee our inheritance as sons of God (Eph 1:14). Having begun in faith, the Galatians Gentiles were in danger of error of slavery under the law.

Paul continued his passionate plea.

The contrast seen here was between freedom in Jesus and slavery from worldly principles (Paul considered Judaism to be one form). Salvation, by grace through faith in Jesus, is purely God's gift so that no man many boast.

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WARMING UP

1. Do you think about the **material** inheritance that you have and/or will receive? On what basis did you qualify to receive the inheritance?
On what account will you be disqualified from the inheritance
2. Do you think about the **spiritual** inheritance that you have and/or will receive? On what basis did you qualify to receive the inheritance?
On what account will you be disqualified from the inheritance?

INTO THE PASSAGES

Read Gal 3:1 - 9 - Paul's reminder and rebuke

3. What was the tone of Paul's argument in verses 1 to 6?
4. Were the Galatians walking in the Spirit? How was it possible Spirit-led believers was about to believe an error?

Read Gal 3:10-29 - Knowledge of the truth or application of the truth

5. What are some of the foundational truth about Jesus outlined by Paul?
6. What are the relations between what Jesus has done and the law?

Read Galatians 4:1-7, Col 2:6-15 - Elementary principles of the world

7. What are the elementary principles of the world that Paul was referring to?
8. How many 'in Him' can you find in the Colossians passage? What then is the antidote to being captivated by the elementary principles of the world?

MOVING FORWARD

It was unthinkable to Paul that the Reality was being superceded by the shadow (Heb 10:1). The preeminent Christ, the Head of the Church, was being set aside by people who had their eyes set not on Jesus but on the law!

We exist because He first existed. We love because He first loved us. The church exist because He died.

Paul was passionate in his letter because through the Spirit, He saw the supremacy and pre-eminence of Christ.

Similarly to the Galatians and Colossians, the spiritual forces of this world (elementary principles of this world) seek to diminish Christ. May it not be so.

The riches and realities of the blessings of God, through Jesus, can only be appropriated through faith and this life of faith is not lived only on Sunday, but lived daily.

LIFE TOGETHER

The church is a community of people whose commonality is Jesus.

Some are in different seasons of life and different level of spiritual understanding but all worship Jesus and are led by the Spirit of God.

Continue to encourage one another and point one another towards Jesus.

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These notes are primarily for the Into the Passage portion, and are to be used just as guidelines or commentary notes. Most of them are my own thoughts, so take that with a grain of salt. Let the Word of God lead you to truth, not these notes.

INTO THE PASSAGES

Read Gal 3:1 - 9 - Paul's reminder and rebuke

3. What was the tone of Paul's argument in verses 1 to 6?

Paul was perplexed and a little angry here about the Galatians Gentiles. They had received the Spirit and were running the race well (Gal 3:2, 5:7) but were in danger of a gross error of coming under the slavery of the law.

4. Were the Galatians walking in the Spirit? How was it possible that Spirit-led believers was about to believe an error?

Yes, they were walking in the Spirit. The Christians must not be presumptuous that their theology is 100% correct. Knowledge of God must be learned through a careful study of the bible with the leading of the Holy Spirit. However, a vast majority of the modern day believers have shallow knowledge of the truth, being entirely reliant on Sunday sermon as their only feeding. Our understanding will receive challenge and correction in the environment of a small group bible study (again something that majority of the 'average' Christians do not commit to). Under these circumstances, it is easy to see why some relapsed into error.

Read Gal 3:10-29 - Knowledge of the truth or application of the truth

5. What are some of the foundational truth about Jesus outlined by Paul here?

v13. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law.

v14. Christ was the fulfilment of the promise given to Abraham.

v26. Through faith in Jesus, we became sons of God.

v27. Baptized into Christ means baptized into His death, that our sinful nature was nailed on the cross. Just as Christ rose from the dead by the power of the Spirit, so our new life is lived in the power of the Spirit. Putting on Christ means living in the power of the Spirit.

v29, Because we belong to Jesus, we are Abraham's offspring, heir to the promise.

6. What are the relations between what Jesus has done and the law?

The law highlight clearly the problem of sin. Man is unable to attain the standard of God as required by the law. Since man breaks the law, man sinned and deserved the penalty of death. Only Jesus who was born of a woman, born under the law, lived the perfect and sinless life and became worthy to Saviour of the world. All the requirements of the law were met by Jesus. By believing in Jesus, Jesus took our place by dying for our sins

Read Galatians 4:1-7, Col 2:6-15 - Elementary principles of the world

7. What are the elementary principles of the world that Paul was referring to?

In context where the term appeared, Paul was referring to spirits, tradition, belief and philosophies that are contrary to principles of Christ. All these were set in the backdrop that humans are being enslaved and prevented from knowing Jesus and receiving the blessings that His death intended. So, anything that prevents people from knowing Christ, living out their lives for Christ, receiving the blessings from Christ and continuing on in Christ may be considered elementary principles of the world.

8. How many 'in Him/with Him' can you find in the Colossians passage? What then is the antidote to being captivated by the elementary principles of the world?

In this short passage, there were 9 instances of 'in Him/with Him'. Although the problem of the Galatians and Colossians were different, Paul used the same term of elementary principles of the world to describe philosophies that are contrary to Christ. It is impossible for them and indeed for us to live life apart from Christ. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. He was God and was there in the beginning and in the end, He will be crowned King of kings and Lord of lords. So, it is incongruent and a contradiction that we live our lives with no reference to Jesus. Since He is central to human history, you can see why Paul was jealous that the Reality of God was replaced by the shadow (Heb 10:1)