

Joshua 1:3-5, Inheritance: Paul Backs the Judaizers into a Logical Box, Galatians 3:18

- 1- Paul uses a debater's technique in verse 18. He introduces a conditional sentence with the protasis of a first class condition, which indicates the statement is true.
- 2- However, what he is about to say is not true. Paul assumes it is true for the moment in order to refute the false claim of the legalistic Jews.
- 3- If the inheritance of the contract finds its source in keeping the Law then it obviously does not find its source in the veracity of God's unconditional promise to Abraham and the Lord.
- 4- Paul takes the Judaizers' false premise and assumes it is true in the protasis in order to assert in the apodosis that the inheritance cannot be based on the promise to Abraham.
- 5- Paul has now backed the Judaizers into a logical corner. In verse 15 he introduces his argument with the example of a legal contract taken from Roman civil law. Such a contract when ratified cannot be annulled or altered.
- 6- He then shifts his argument to the Torah and analyzes the promise given by God to Abraham and his Seed in Genesis 13:15.
- 7- He compares this contract with the one mentioned in verse 15. The party of the first part is God and the party of the second part is Abraham and his Seed, Christ.
- 8- In such a contract, fulfillment of its pledge rests entirely upon the party of the first part who issues it. Nothing is required of the party of the second part who receives it. Thus a promise.
- 9- But you may ask at this point that Abraham did have to believe in Christ. That's a given. We have demonstrated that Abraham was a believer long before he received the promise.
- 10- In fact, God never promises anything to the unbeliever. Promises only apply to believers and their fulfillment is dependent entirely upon the grace of God.

- 11- Having established this point, Paul disproves the false doctrine of the Judaizers in verse 17 by reminding them that the Mosaic Law was not issued until 430 years after the promise was given to Abraham.
- 12- In view of the example given in verse 15, Paul asserts in verse 17 that the Law cannot abrogate or nullify the promise quoted in verse 16.
- 13- Verse 18 thus becomes the coup de grâce of Paul's argument. He takes his opponents' argument and now states it as a truth and then demonstrates the erroneous conclusion one is forced to reach.

Galatians 3:18 - For if the inheritance is based on Law, it is no longer based on a promise.

- 14- This conclusion is the one claimed by the Judaizers: the promised given by God to Abraham in Genesis 13:15 will be inherited by Abraham's physical descendants who keep the Law. Further, Gentiles can also inherit the promise by keeping the Law.
- 15- Paul has proven that their argument is a logical fallacy. His coup de grâce is the final clause,

Galatians 3:18b - ... but God gave the inheritance to Abraham by means of the promise.

- 16- The word inheritance is κληρονομία, which we defined as "real estate that passes from father to son on the death of the former. A birthright; the possession of which one enters in virtue of sonship, not because of price paid or task accomplished."
- 17- For Old Testament saints this inheritance is an earthly kingdom dependent upon their spiritual lineage to Abraham through faith alone in Messiah alone.

- 18- For the New Testament saints the inheritance is a heavenly kingdom dependent upon their adoption into the royal family and position in Christ by means of the baptism of the Holy Spirit through faith alone in Christ alone.
- 19- The inheritance of Old Testament saints involved a spiritual life that was maximized under the three stages of the faith-rest drill.
- 20- The inheritance of New Testament saints involves a spiritual life that is maximized under the three stages of the fourth spiritual mechanic, referred to as the adult spiritual life.
- 21- In other words, our eternal inheritances are sure. According to Peter in:

1 Peter 1:4 - ... an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.

- 22- But in order to fulfill our obligations as sons of God, we are granted certain assets within that inheritance, which are imputed at salvation. They enable us to serve God in time and to manage the inheritance in eternity.
- 23- All of what we have now studied comes together when we consider the explanation given by Dr. Merrill F. Unger on the subject of spiritual inheritance. We will now note Dr. Unger's analysis and we will do so point by point although I will quote him directly. I will also amplify some of his comments.