

Heirs of the Covenant

Introduction

Sometimes we have been taught traditional doctrine and scriptural interpretation as the absolute truth to the point that we don't really read what the Scriptures actually say. We end up with a man centered interpretive viewpoint that may be far from what God intended. For example, we refer to the “New Covenant” and our part in it through Jesus Christ when in point of fact we, as Gentiles (which is what I am) never had a covenant with God. The Jews have what we call the “Old Covenant” which they received at Mt. Sinai, but Gentiles did not have a part in that.

Ephesians 2:11-16 NASB Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands-- (12) remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. (13) But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (14) For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, (15) by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, (16) and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

Before Jesus, we Gentiles were 1) excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, 2) strangers to the covenants of promise, 3) had no hope, and 4) without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus we Gentiles have been brought near to God by the blood of Jesus. Now the question is, did the blood of Jesus make us part of the covenant of Mt. Sinai where the Law was given to the Jews or are we Gentiles made a part of another, previous covenant apart from the Mt. Sinai Law covenant? The answer to that question is what this article will discuss.

Descendants of Abraham

What we refer to as the “New Covenant” is actually a promise made to the Jews under the “Old Covenant”.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 NASB "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, (32) not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. (33) "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their

heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (34) "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

This "New Covenant" promise to the house of Israel is contrasted with the covenant at Mt. Sinai. It will not be like that. Instead of Law written on stone, the Law will be written on the heart.

To begin to understand the two covenants idea we have to begin with Abraham and the covenant that God made with him.

Genesis 17:3-5 NASB Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, (4) "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you will be the father of a multitude of nations. (5) "No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.

Genesis 17:18-21 NASB And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before You!" (19) But God said, "No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. (20) "As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. (21) "But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year."

God's covenant with Abraham included him becoming the father of many nations. The lineage of the covenant would be through Isaac, the child of promise.

Paul interprets this for us in Galatians:

Galatians 3:16 NASB Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as *referring* to many, but *rather* to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ.

The descendant of promise is Christ and those who are in Christ are then descendants of Abraham as Paul explains to the Gentile believers in Rome and Galatia.

Romans 9:6-8 NASB But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; (7) nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." (8) That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

Galatians 3:7 NASB Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.

Galatians 3:14 NASB in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

We need to understand that our lineage is spiritual according to the promise to Abraham so that all

might be based on faith and not on works.

Two Covenants

We need to understand that there are two covenants: one made with Abraham and his descendants and one made with the descendants of Israel at Mt. Sinai. Paul explains the meaning of these two covenants in Galatians.

Galatians 4:22-31 NASB For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. (23) But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. (24) This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. (25) Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. (26) But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. (27) For it is written, "REJOICE, BARREN WOMAN WHO DOES NOT BEAR; BREAK FORTH AND SHOUT, YOU WHO ARE NOT IN LABOR; FOR MORE NUMEROUS ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE THAN OF THE ONE WHO HAS A HUSBAND." (28) And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. (29) But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him *who was born* according to the Spirit, so it is now also. (30) But what does the Scripture say? "CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE AN HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREE WOMAN." (31) So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.

Paul is saying this:

- the bondwoman = Hagar = covenant at Mt. Sinai = Law and slavery
- the free woman = Sarah = covenant of promise = heirs of the covenant.

The covenant of promise was made with Abraham and was to come through the promised Seed, which we have seen is Christ Jesus. Those who are in Christ are heirs of Abraham and heirs of the promise.

Romans 4:13-14 NASB For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. (14) For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified;

Romans 4:16 NASB For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, 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,

We Gentiles are not those who are descendants of the covenant at Mt. Sinai and of the Law; but, we are those who are descendants of Abraham through the faith of Abraham; that is, by believing on Christ Jesus.

Paul speaks in Romans eleven about the wild olive tree and the cultivated one. Natural branches were

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cut off of the cultivated olive tree and branches of the wild olive tree were grafted in. The cultivated olive tree is the one that grows from the root of Abraham. Natural descendants of Abraham were cut off as branches from the tree because of unbelief. Gentiles as wild branches have been grafted in. We have become a part or branches of the cultivated olive tree by the grace of Jesus and our faith in Him. That is, as long as we continue in faith. If we continue in unbelief we might also be cut off as branches. [*For further study on this subject see [The Nation of God](#) on the website.*]

The roots of our covenant with God are not Judaism or the covenant of Mt. Sinai. Our roots are in Abraham and the covenant with him.