

GOODNEWS LETTER

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CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Without understanding some of the major themes in the Old Testament (Covenant); such as, God's promise to Abraham (Ge. 12, 17), harmony between the Old and New Covenants will be difficult to see.

In the study of two Covenants, we have a change of the guard, so to speak. And, to see the change, we must read what is recorded in Galatians 4:1 & 2; for, it is vital to our growth of understanding.

Paul teaches that, as long as the Old was in affect, those under the **ONE PROMISED PLAN** were heirs, all right; but, they were considered to be **children** (not full grown), ones needing to be "under tutors and governors, until the time of the Father."

Yet, the promise that God made to Abraham was ongoing; continuing through the children until the New Covenant begins. Further, Galatians 4:24 presents to us a covenant transition that Paul places within the **allegory of Abraham's two wives**.

The **allegory** tells of two boys born; each having a different mother. But, only Sarah's son was considered the son of promise. That's how the promise continued, going through the promised seed, Isaac and his offspring. The promise did not go through the son of Hagar, the handmaid. Ishmael was cast out.

It is in Isaac that we seen God's promise alive; even, living in the flesh. Isaac will pass the promise to Jacob and the Nation of Israel will come out of the loins of this man. Jacob wanted (with mother's prompting) the father's blessing passed on him.

Back to the **allegory**, we are told that Abraham's wife, **Sarah**, represents the **New Covenant**; while, **Hagar** represents the **Old Covenant (4:24)**. All those born from Ishmael's line are ineligible for the promise. They have the wrong mother.

And, the allegory lesson is true for all who try to get the promise by doing some religious work. All salvation is by grace; from being saved, to inheriting with Jesus. It comes by believing God's promised word or, like Ishmael, a casting out of the promise takes place (v30).

Galatians 4 ends with, "So then, brethren we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." How can we receive the PROMISE? Look at the end verse in Galatians 3:29. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

The promise is by faith in the work and grace of Jesus, the Christ. The promise comes in the same way as it did to Isaac. It comes by a miracle; which is seen in Sara and Isaac. The miracle was Sara giving birth when she was past her child-bearing age. But, God promised it.

When it comes to our righteousness, everyone is past their age of doing anything worthy to receive it. The **PROMISE LIES** in God's doing, through His Son, Jesus. It is by grace through faith, Ephesians 2:8.

The blessing that is seen in Sarah and her son can also be viewed in Mary and her child, Jesus. Only here, in this birth, God personally gets involved. He does more than speak it. He acts, sending God, the Son to enter flesh through Mary and the Savior is born.

In the promise, man is out of the picture. And, in this thought, we understand better what the **promise** entails. **Please read the next paragraph, carefully.**

The PROMISE that came to us through Abraham, also gives us an **inheritance**. **This inheritance is limited to a specific line of heirs in such a way that it can never be legally transferred.** Once saved, always, my friends. Indeed, we are secure in Jesus.

God's promise is sure to all of faith. But sometimes, the blessing is so amazing that we respond emotionally, as did Sarah when she learned of her calling. Sarah laughed (Ge. 18:12). And, how beautiful was God's reply. **"Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time...Sarah shall have a son"** (Ge. 18:14).

The laughter of the princess did not come out of doubt; not totally. Sara just wondered how in the world a birth could happen since she was 90 years old. Later, in Genesis 21:6, Sarah says, **"God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me."**

Then, Sarah speaks of the blessedness from her grateful heart: **"Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? For I have born him a son in his old age,"** Genesis 21:6.

Gleeful laughter of praise is seen in other parts of the Bible. Psalms 126:2 records another mighty work of God. **"When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue to singing: then said they among the heathen, 'The LORD hath done great things for them.'"**

Then, on that great day, in all its full glory, Jesus was born from Mary's womb presenting to the world God's greatest gift; a birth without man. Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit. When men receive God's promised gift - without works or without the law, (man is out of the picture) they weep sometimes and, sometimes

they laugh in joy. Anytime that man receives the PROMISE from God, he rejoices. It's a glorious experience to be touched by the LORD.

THE PROMISE ENTERS MAN

The genealogy of Matthew 1:1 tells us that Jesus Christ is the son of David, the son of Abraham. Hallelujah, Abraham's promise continues. Its meaning is extended to include a royal lineage of a king. While, we realize that Jesus is heir to David's throne, we now see that those inheriting with Jesus shall also reign with him, as kings (See Re. 5:10).

However, before the **New Covenant** can be enacted for man; so that he may walk in and live by its **life giving spiritual principles**, Jesus Christ must come to earth and ratify the promise by enacting its laws by His authority. He was born to die so that we might live through Him.

The CHANGING OF THE GUARD is recorded as, **the fullness of time...** when "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, **TO REDEEM THEM THAT WERE UNDER THE LAW, THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE THE ADOPTION OF SONS** (Gal. 4:4 & 5).

Hebrews Nine explains how the covenant was ratified. Its benefits, totally and completely, come from His dying and shedding His blood at Calvary.

The first 12 verses of Hebrews 9 deals with the Old Law Covenant. Then, the revelation explains the entrance of the New. Verse 13 informs us about the blood of animals; that there is a purifying of the flesh. But, when we read of the life blood of Christ in Verse 14, clearly, animal blood was only typical; never efficacious.

"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

Verse 15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

The promise is to us today and our children. But, when our promised change comes in the resurrection, and we sit in the kingdom with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, we might - just might - find ourselves laughing again. This time, our joyous and rapturous singing that is in our mouths, will be turned toward the King of the Promise, Jesus, the Christ.