

## ***Study Hints for Thinking Further***

***International Bible Lessons***

**Galatians 3:15-18; 4:1-7**

**Sunday, February 19, 2012**

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Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be answers to the discussion questions, but hints a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class.

### **Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

#### **1. How does God adopt a child into His family? How can we be adopted into the family of God?**

God creates every human being in His image, but not every human being is adopted into God's family. God the Father has only one "only begotten Son" and that Son is Jesus the Messiah, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. In Old Testament times, God graciously extended the opportunity to people to become adopted into His family. They could become members of God's family if they believed God and His promises, as in the case of Abraham and the other Old Testament saints. God justified them because of their faith; they believed God and God accounted them righteous. The Old Testament scriptures recorded prophecies that pointed to the coming of the Messiah, and the Old Testament saints believed the prophecies that God revealed and were handed down to them by their ancestors. For example, Job knew that God would send the Redeemer in the future, and Job declared his faith and trust in God with these words: "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last he will stand upon the earth" (Job 19:25). When Jesus came into the world, God fulfilled that promise. The New Testament saints were justified by their faith when they believed Jesus the Messiah was the fulfillment of God promises and they trusted Him accordingly. When they did so, they became adopted children of God. Jesus said of some who listened to Him but refused to believe in Him, "You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44).

Today, people can be adopted into God's family by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The Apostle Paul wrote, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). We can be adopted into God's family when we believe God and believe that Jesus is the Messiah that God promised to send. John quoted these very words of Jesus, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God" (John 3:16-18).

## **2. What are some of the gifts a child of God will inherit from their heavenly Father?**

One of the gifts is adoption into God's family as a child of God, with the inheritance that God has planned for His adopted children to receive. Another gift is the honor and privilege of calling upon God in prayer as our "Abba!" or "Daddy!" the meaning of "Abba" is "Daddy." We can call upon our heavenly Father with humble respect and love, even as we can respectfully call upon an earthly parent who loves us and wants to do their best for us always. Other gifts are freedom from slavery to sin and freedom from the elemental spirits. God gives us eternal life and the Holy Spirit to indwell us now.

## **3. Give some reasons why the inheritance of God's children cannot come to them from the law?**

Paul compares the law to a guardian. The law will teach people right from wrong, and when enforced people will be punished for doing wrong. Adopted children of God can learn from the law, but they will not be adopted into God's family by trying to obey the law of God after they have broken God's law. The only way to receive an inheritance as one of God's children is by God graciously forgiving His children for their sins because of Jesus Christ, Who died a sacrificial death upon the cross so God the Father could be both merciful and just when forgiving sinners. We do not deserve an inheritance because of good behavior, but as adopted children of God we can live closely to Jesus Christ as our Lord, Savior, and Elder Brother, and receive the inheritance God has planned for us.

## **4. Why is being under the law similar to being a minor child under a guardian or trustee?**

The law and the enforcement of the law when we violate the law is designed to teach us right from wrong. The law serves as a guardian to help us want to do the right things, but it does so by motivating some people to obey out of fear of the consequences of disobedience; just as some minor children obey their parents because they fear the consequences of disobeying them. When we know the right things to do and also want to do the right things, we do not need the law as a guardian; what we need is a Helper to guide us and empower us in specific situations to do the wise and right things. The Helper is the Holy Spirit that God promised to send into the hearts of His adopted children.

## **5. In these verses, what major blessing or gift does Paul say the Spirit of God will bring to believers when He comes into their hearts? Why is this gift of the Holy Spirit so meaningful and valuable?**

The major blessing or gift is the certain knowledge that I am a child of God, adopted into God's family, with the ability and loving desire to call upon God as "Abba!" The gift of God's Spirit is meaningful and valuable because He gives me the assurance that I am a child of God, because otherwise I would have no desire to call upon God as my "Abba!" Father. The Holy Spirit lives within the child of God and keeps them close to God.

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