

Session 5 - Paul on Abraham

Recap:

- One Page Bible Interpretation Basics
- View the Bible through the lens of the Greatest Commandment
- Look for the deeper meaning rather than being fixated on the surface level words.
- What is God's design intention.
- Look for the arc or thread that connects the whole Bible together on a subject.

Read: Galatians 3:1-14

Where are all the quotations from?

Genesis 15:6

Genesis 12:1-3

Deuteronomy 27:26

Habakkuk 2:4

Leviticus 18:5

Deuteronomy 21:22-23

What is the situation/context?

The Galatians are believing that in order to become a follower of Christ, you need to obey the Jewish laws. You need to be circumcised. Paul is very angry about this and is arguing that Gentiles are saved by faith and they do not need to be circumcised.

What is the argument that Paul is making?

Abraham is known as the man of faith. In Genesis 15:6 it says that Abraham believed and it was credited to him as righteousness. What did he believe in? He believed in the promise from God that he will have a son from his own flesh and blood and that his descendants will be as countless like the stars in the sky.

So Paul is tracing the origin of the concept of faith and how faith is the center of the Jewish faith rather than obedience to the law. This promise and the faith of Abraham is what started it all. So all of the Jews that were born are Abraham's children and therefore children of the promise.

Sometimes people think that Jesus and the New Testament is about faith, but Paul is arguing that true Jewish religion was also always about faith. It was about Abraham's faith in the promise. What was the promise? The promise that Abraham would have a son and that the blessing to the world would ultimately be Abraham's son, Jesus Christ.

So Paul is saying that righteousness or "right standing" before God has always been about faith in Jesus.

The Spirit is a big part of Paul's Argument

- The Spirit is in contrast to the flesh.
- The law is in contrast to faith.

What is the story of Abraham?

it's difficult to summarize the whole story of Abraham, that is why we need to read the Bible. When he says the name "Abraham" he expects you to know a lot about Abraham already.

Additional text: Galatians 4:21-23

- These things are being taken figuratively. it's not to say that they can ONLY be taken figuratively. Figurative sense is one sense that it can be taken.
- Figurative readings ARE valid even when there are literal readings available. They can BOTH be valid.
- Paul calls the story of Hagar and Sarah "law". So "law" for Paul can be the narrative or the story. Law can also be interpreted figuratively or metaphorically.

Takeaways:

1. Authorial intent is but one tool to understanding the Bible.
2. Paul is relying on the STORY of Abraham, just as much as he is relying on discourse.
3. Figurative interpretations are not incorrect automatically.
4. Intertextuality: Paul is VERY reliant on Scripture.