

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, July 8, 2012

Passage: Romans 4:13-17

Memory Passage: Romans 8:20-21

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Gen. 12:1-7, Rom. 4:13-17 & Rom. 3.** What does the word “for” in v. 13 reveal about the relationship between 4:11-12 and 4:13ff? What was the promise to Abraham and his offspring and where is it found in Scripture? Who are his offspring in this verse?

(b) The promises to Abraham were reaffirmed several times in Genesis. What three primary aspects of this promise do you find in Gen. 12 (We could look at many passages to find these three aspects, but they are all included in these verses)? Do you see anywhere in Genesis 12 (or the other affirmations of this covenant found in Genesis 13, 15, 17, 18, 22) the promise that Abraham and his offspring would be “heir of the world?” Did Paul use this phrase to refer to something different than the OT promise(s) or is it a different way of saying the same thing? How do you know?

(c) How did the promise “come . . . through the righteousness of faith?” Since this is the only place in the Bible this phrase is used, would you say Paul is rephrasing what he has already said or saying something new? On what basis do you answer?

(d) *Family: Read Rom. 4:13.* Ask, “What is the promise to which Paul refers?” Your family should be able to give some sort of an answer to this based on previous study. **Then Read Gen. 12:1-7** and ask you family to write down, as you read, the different parts of the promise God makes to Abraham. They should hear the promises of: (1) many descendants, (2) an inherited land, and (3) a blessing for all nations. Then discuss (1) who made the promise (God), and (2) can it be broken (no, because God is faithful and honors all His promises lest He become a liar and then not be God). and (3) what difference this makes to us.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 4:13-17, Ps. 2:7-12, 47:7-9, Is. 49:6-7, Zech. 3:9, Gal. 3:16 (as a reminder), & Heb. 11:8-16 (and for extra blessing, Rev. 21-22).** Let’s continue investigating the phrase, “heir of the world.” We could look at dozens of passages from the OT, but these 4 will suffice. What common thread do you see between them that helps us understand Paul’s use of this phrase in Rom. 4:13? In what work is God involved that is common to all 4 passages?

(b) According to Heb. 11:8-16, how is the land described to which Abraham obediently went (v. 9)? To what was he ultimately looking (v. 10), and to what does this refer?

(c) For Abraham, what things fell into the category of “not having received the things promised?” Of what importance is the shift in language from “land” (v. 9) to “earth” (v. 13)? What homeland did Abraham (and others) seek (v. 14)? Explain v. 15-16 in the context of this passage. How do all of these passages (OT & NT from today’s study) inform our understanding of the phrase, “heir of the world” in Rom. 4:13?

(d) Does the promise of the new heavens and the new earth, upon which you will spend eternity as a believer, drive you to the same kind of faithful obedience as Abraham exhibited? Spend some time today meditating on the truths found in Rev. 21 & 22 and write down at least 5 ways that these truths can serve as godly motivation for flourishing (by this I mean faithful, trusting, joyful endurance) in this world in your day to day life, even though you are an “exile” on this earth, seeking a “better homeland” and a “better country,” “the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.”

(e) *Family:* Lead your family through (b) – (c) above. Emphasize that Paul was in one sense lumping all three aspects of the promise to Abraham (people, land, blessing to all nations) into the phrase “heir of the world,” and at the same time agreeing with the constant OT teaching that God always intended to bless the nations, the entire world, with salvation. If you have time, do (d) as well as you look through Rev. 21-22 and learn about the “land” we will inherit as believers.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 4 (Our chapter reading for the day which includes our passage, 4:13-17).** After reading the entire chapter, how do vs. 18-25 help you understand vs. 13-17? How do they complete Paul’s argument? Is there anything surprising in Paul’s flow of thought continued in vs. 18-25?

(b) How does the word “for” connect v. 14 with v. 13? Why does Paul return to the law in these verses? Who are “the adherents of the law” and why would faith be nullified and the promise be voided if they were the heirs?

(c) After stating the negative in v. 14 (i.e. what the law does not do), Paul presents the positive. What is it that the law does (produces)? How does it do so (think of all Paul has taught you in Romans so far, as well as 7:7-11)? What is a transgression? Is it different from sin? Is all sin a transgression? Is all transgression sin? (See Rom. 5:13-14 and Gal. 3:17 for help.)

(d) *Family*: Make two columns on your white board with the headings “Can” and “Can’t.” Walk your family through the truths about what the law can’t do (v. 14) and can do (v. 15) and explain each concept (e.g. faith has no effect and the promise made to Abraham must be voided if one can obey the law and earn righteousness, the law reveals to us what we must and must not do and therefore brings the wrath of God when we disobey, the word “transgression” is used in its technical sense of “a violation of a revealed law,” and does not imply that there was no sin before the law was given, etc.).

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 4:13-17, Gal. 3:15-29, & Rom. 5.** To what does the phrase “that is why” that begins v. 16 refer (i.e. does it look forward or backward in the text)? How does the promise “rest on grace?” How would becoming an heir by keeping the law cause the promise *not* to rest on grace? Since the promise rests on grace, and this is a result of it being received by faith, what does this tell you about faith and how it is obtained?

(b) To who does the phrase “the adherent of the law” refer? Does Paul use it to refer to the same group as he did in v. 14 or a different group? What about the context gives you the answer? Who are those “who share the faith of Abraham,” and are they different than the adherents of the law? How do you know?

(c) According to Gal. 3, who are/is the offspring of Abraham? Why is the chronological fact of the law being given 430 years after Abraham important? What was the purpose of the law in light of the promise, and in what relationship do they stand to each other? What truths do we learn in this passage that help us understand Paul in Rom. 4?

(d) What comfort do you take from the truth that your salvation rests on grace and is guaranteed by God? If you only had Romans 4 at your disposal, how would you counsel someone who was struggling with their walk with Christ and confessed to you that they are having trouble living up to the Bible’s/God’s expectation of them? What about someone who was having difficulty accepting that God could actually forgive *all* of his/her sin?

(e) *Family*: **Read Rom. 4:13-21 aloud** asking your family to keep track of every time the Scriptures mention the word “promise” or “promised” (they should hear 5 occurrences). Then walk through what you learn about the promise of God to Abraham (and to us!) with every occurrence, having your family write down their own lists as you discuss each verse.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 4:13-17 & Rom. 6.** What is the importance of Gen. 17:5 (quoted in 4:17) in Paul’s flow of thought? What 2 characteristics does Paul ascribe to God in Rom. 4:17? To what specifically might he be referring in each case and why are these specific characteristics important?

(b) How did the promise in Gen. 17:5 come to Abraham? What would have happened to Abraham if he did not believe God’s word? Was God’s word, “Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness” (Gen. 15:6) made void because of Abraham’s sin? What lesson can you take from this fact? In other words, when you are tempted to disbelieve God’s word, whether promise or command or statement of fact, how should everything you have learned so far about Abraham’s testimony encourage you to repent of this sin of unbelief and turn again to trust in God’s written word to you?

(c) *Family*: Review Rom. 4:13-17 with your family by devising a 5-10 question quiz on its primary content. Make each question concern something that you have studied this week, and be ready with prizes/rewards for the first one who answers each of your questions. Then spend time memorizing our memory verse, Rom. 8:20-21.

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Guaranteed by Grace

In Romans 4:13-17 Paul makes 2 statements of fact, one positive and one negative, concerning how the promise is conveyed to Abraham and his offspring.