

Called to Be Heir

So what are you going to do with the house?" asked Sierra, tearing open the sugar substitute packet. "I know you don't want to move to that neighborhood!"

The "neighborhood" Sierra was talking about was where Taylor's grandmother Ethel once lived. Taylor's grandmother died three months ago and left her home to her only granddaughter as the sole heir.

Taylor and her family lived in a nice, comfortable, 4,000 square-foot home that was 90 minutes away. Taylor had many fond memories of her grandmother's home that included family gatherings, playing, and most importantly, personal time with her grandmother. Grandma Ethel loved reading Bible stories and praying with her grandchildren. Taylor's earliest memories of Bible stories were those told to her from her grandmother's big white Bible.

"You could sell it. Or you could rent it out," said Sierra.

"I've been praying about it," Taylor said. "There is a nice, small church in the neighborhood that could use it."

"I've talked to the pastor," continued Taylor. "They could use the home for their youth, women, and men's groups to meet. Or they could let one of their seniors live there for free."

"For free? Are you sure?" asked Sierra.

"I've talked it over Dorian, and he thinks it's a great idea," Taylor smiled. "We want to bless the Body of Christ in this way. We feel it's what Jesus wants us to do."

1. *What does it mean to be an heir?*

2. *What is the difference between an heir by birth and an heir of a promise?*

3. *Why should we always listen to Jesus, the heir of all things?*

Jesus: The Son of David

Matthew 1:1-6, KJV

1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

2 Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;

3 And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram;

4 And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon;

5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;

6 And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias.

Matthew 1:1-6, NIV

¹This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:

²Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, ⁴Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶and Jesse the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife.

Matthew wrote his Gospel with the purpose of demonstrating how Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies. We see this right away in the first chapter with Christ's genealogy, which traces the Lord's ancestry back to King David. Scripture foretold that the Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah and in particular through David.

Matthew's designation of Jesus as the "son of David" not only highlights a purpose of his genealogy, but occurs throughout his account of Jesus' life (9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15; 22:42, 45). The apostle wrote to convince the Jewish people, his initial audience, that Jesus fulfilled Scripture and in particular, God's covenant with David.

Matthew began his genealogy with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob,

and Judah (vs. 2). This connected Christ with the covenants God made with the Patriarchs and fulfilled God's promise through Jacob that the kings of Israel and the Messiah would come through Judah (Gen. 49:10).

4. What was Matthew's main purpose in giving us a genealogy of Jesus as well as in writing his Gospel account?

5. Why did Matthew begin Jesus' ancestry with Abraham?

Jesus: The Messiah

Matthew 1:16-17, KJV

16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

Matthew 1:16-17, NIV

¹⁶And Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah. ¹⁷Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah.

While the beginning of Matthew's genealogy emphasizes Jesus as a descendant of King David, verse 16-17 stress that Jesus is the Christ. The One born of Mary fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies concerning the lineage of the Messiah.

While Joseph as Mary's husband provided means of Jesus' claim to the throne of Israel, Matthew later clarifies that he was not the biological father of Jesus (see Matt. 1:18-23).

6. Why did Matthew organize his genealogy in groups of 14 names each?

Jesus: The Heir of All Things

Hebrews 1:1-5, KJV

1 God, who at sundry times and

Hebrews 1:1-5, NIV

¹In the past God spoke to our

KJV

in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

NIV

ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. ³The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. ⁴So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

⁵For to which of the angels did God ever say,

"You are my Son;

today I have become your Father"?

Or again,

"I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"?

The Book of Hebrews begins by confronting its Jewish readership with the superiority of Jesus' revelation over that of the Old Testament. The former message came piecemeal during several centuries as God employed many people and various methods to speak to His people. In some cases the Lord spoke directly to the writers such as to Moses; in other instances, He revealed His message through dreams, visions, and historical events.

With the advent of Jesus, God speaks directly to us through His Son. This does not imply that the former revelation was not inspired; God used many godly men and

women to convey His former message preparing the way for the arrival of His Son. Whereas the past messages provided parts of God's redemptive purpose, God fully reveals it to us through Jesus.

Verse 2 describes Jesus as "the heir of all things" as well as the Creator of the universe. There can be no greater revealer of God and His message than the Son through Whom the Father created all things and who will someday inherit everything.

By describing Jesus as the "radiance of God's glory" and "the exact representation of his being," the author tells us that Jesus and the Father are both equally God (vs. 3). The Son fully reveals the Father (John 14:9). There can be no revelation superior to what we have through Jesus throughout what we have in the New Testament.

After proclaiming Jesus' equality with the Father, the writer of Hebrews explains Jesus' superiority to the angels in the rest of chapter 1. The Jews of the first century A.D. exalted angels above all creation and regarded them as the revealers and mediators of God's covenants in the Old Testament. In order to fully convince the ancient Hebrew mind of Jesus' superior revelation, the author needed to also show that the Son was greater than the angels.

Jesus' name points to His grander nature versus the angels, which not merely identifies but points to His exalted nature and character. In Psalm 2:7, God refers to Him as "my Son." No angel ever received such a lofty title. The quotation from 2 Samuel 7:14 in the second half of verse 5 also illustrates Jesus' superior status to the angels as none of them are ever described in such a way. The writer continues in the remainder of chapter 1 to show how the Old Testament, of which his readers knew quite well, proved Christ's higher status than that of the angels.

7. *In what way is the revelation that came through Jesus superior to that of the Old Testament?*

8. *Does the author leave any room for anyone greater than Christ to come at a later time? Why or why not?*

Acting Like a Royal

The world watches intently when a child is born into a royal family. That child is celebrated, photographed, and followed almost as closely as his or her parents. However, the child initially has no concept of his or her significance, nor does the child understand what is required of someone of royal birth. Galatians 4:1-2 says “that the heir as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father” (KJV). In other words, as long as the child is immature, uneducated, and undeveloped, then he or she is unequipped to rule and reign as a true heir. The child needs to listen to his or her parents and guardians and soak in their wisdom to understand what the future holds.

Like the child in a royal family, we must constantly learn about what is expected of us. The person who can best teach us is Jesus, the heir of all things and the source of all wisdom. Sadly, we often act like children who think we know all there is to know about being a child of God, or we take our position for granted as if we are entitled to it. But we are not royally born—we come into the family acknowledging that we are not worthy of inheriting the riches of the Kingdom.

Too often, instead of acting royally, we listen to our own wants and desires and, as Paul said, return to “the weak and beggarly elements” (vs. 9) that we should have abandoned when we came to the Lord. Instead, we should humbly listen to the One who knows and wants what’s best for us. We will grow in grace and faith when we seek His wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.

9. *Why do we often act “unroyally” as heirs to the Kingdom?*

10. *How can remembering we are heirs help us instead to listen and learn?*

11. *What have you learned lately from listening to the Lord?*

Listening to and Obeying the Heir

We are commanded to walk worthy of our calling, to be worthy of an heir with Jesus. It's a choice that, by God's grace, we can fulfill. But to do so, we must want it enough to listen to Him so we can be like Him. We can do that through daily meditation in His Word, through worship, and through prayer. When we have heard what to do, then we do it.

► *In this space, draw an object that represents listening such as an ear or earphones. Next to it, write your commitment to seek the Lord's will this week. in His Word. You may want to complete this statement: I will put God above _____ this week and listen to the Holy Spirit.*

KEY VERSE

[God] hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds. —Hebrews 1:2, KJV

But in these last days [God] has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. —Hebrews 1:2, NIV

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Week of December 7 through December 13

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

- Mon.** Isaiah 7:10-15—Sign of God's Presence.
- Tues.** Isaiah 42:1-9—Called as a Light to the Nations.
- Wed.** Isaiah 49:1-7—Called to Mission Before Birth.
- Thurs.** Luke 1:26-38—Birth of Jesus Foretold to Mary.
- Fri.** Luke 2:34-38—Simeon Foretells Jesus' Ministry.
- Sat.** Ruth 4:9-17—In the Lineage of Ruth.
- Sun.** Matthew 1:18-25—Miracle of the Holy Spirit Conception.