

Galatians 3:15–29

- ¹⁵ Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it.
- ¹⁶ Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.
- ¹⁷ And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.
- ¹⁸ For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.
- ¹⁹ What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.
- ²⁰ Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one.
- ²¹ Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.
- ²² But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.
- ²³ But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.
- ²⁴ Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.
- ²⁵ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.
- ²⁶ For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.
- ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
- ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The Promise and the Law **Galatians 3:15-29**

INTRO:

The Apostle Paul just showed these confused Galatians precisely why they should not have listened to the Jewish false teachers. **(1)** The truth was obvious in their experience. They received the Spirit of God by faith when they believed. **(2)** The truth was obvious in the Scriptures because Abraham believed God and He counted it for righteousness. **(3)** The truth was obvious because someone had to take away the curse of the Law. Now, Paul tackles the difference between the covenant and the Law.

I. Covenants cannot change (v. 15-18)

II. Two Questions and a conclusion (v. 19-29)

I. Covenants cannot change (v. 15-18)

Galatians 3:15–18 “Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man’s covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ. And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.”

A. The Apostle Paul used an illustration to make the Galatians understand Paul's point.

v.15 “Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man’s covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it.”

To help the Galatians and us understand how the Law of Moses could not change the covenant God made with Abraham, Paul reminded them of the principle behind a covenant. Once it was ratified, it could not be altered. God made a covenant of promise with Abraham and it never could or will be altered.

B. “Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ.” (v.16)

Having made his point about the immutability of the covenant, Paul clarified with whom the covenant was made. Abraham's covenant was not made with all of Abraham's children. The LORD, Himself, clarified who was in the covenant in

Genesis 21:12 *“But God said to Abraham, ‘Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called.’”*

It was further clarified when the LORD drew a distinction between Jacob and Esau.

You remember the quote in **Malachi 1:2-3**

“Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?” Says the LORD. “Yet Jacob I have loved; But Esau I have hated.”

Paul tells us the ultimate seed of Abraham is the Lord Jesus Christ and we Gentiles receive Abraham’s blessing through Him.

C. Having laid down this foundation Paul now draws two conclusions.

1. First, *“And this I say, that the law, which was 430 years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.”* (v.17)

The covenant of Law made through Moses some four centuries later cannot alter God’s covenant with Abraham. The Law cannot change the promise in any way. It did not make the promise void.

2. Second, *“For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise,”* (v.18)

Our hope of eternal life is not locked to our ability to keep the law, but to the faith we placed in Christ. The Law could not give us eternal life. As **Titus 3:4-6** says so eloquently,

“But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.”

II. Two Questions and a conclusion (v. 19-29)

vs.19-29 *“What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. But the Scripture has confined all under sin, [in order] that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

A. All Paul wrote thus far produced two questions. First, ***“What purpose then does the law serve?”*** Our Apostle gave a careful answer. The Law was given because many people sinned and did not know it was against God’s standard of holiness. We would not know we are all sinners and cannot save ourselves, if there was no Law.

Romans 3:20 ***“Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”***

B. Second, ***“Is the law then against the promises of God?”*** Paul’s answer is sharp and strong. ***“May it never be,”*** is the strongest of Greek negatives. While the law and the promise taught two different things, they dealt with entirely different areas. The Law was how to live in this present world while promise was how we could be made righteous before a Holy God. They did not contradict one another. As our text declares,

vs.21b-22 ***“For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. But the Scripture has confined all under sin, [in order] that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”***

C. ***“But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”*** (vs.23-25)

The phrase, ***“when faith came,”*** can mean the dawning of a new age of redemptive history. The new age will be inaugurated by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world. It might also mean until the one who is the ultimate seed of Abraham, Christ came. The important point here is, that the Law was just a school master to bring us to Christ.

D. When Jesus came everything is different.

vs.27-28 ***“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”***

[1] Baptism is the symbol that signifies our union with Christ and our salvation by faith from sin. **[2]** In our salvation we are all the same in the eyes of God. If we are in Christ, we are all God’s Children regardless of ethic, economic, or sexual identity.

E. Here is the ultimate conclusion. ***“if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”*** If you are saved, you have come to the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, you are a child of Abraham. You will not inherit an earthly land, but you will inherit heaven and God, Himself. Because you are not Jewish does not mean you’re a second class Christian.

Once for All