

McCoy Memorial Baptist Church

Date: April 12, 2020

Spring Quarter: "Faith and Freedom" (Galatians)

Today's Lesson: "God Keeps His Promises"

LAST LESSON: In 3:1-14 Paul proved from OT Scripture (six passages) that Abraham was justified by faith and not by obedience to the Law, & that every believer, whether Jew or Gentile, is also saved by faith. This was made possible by Jesus who took sin's curse upon Himself.

TODAY'S LESSON: Even if Paul's opponents admitted that Abram was justified by faith, the Judaizers might have argued that the Law, coming later, entirely changed the basis for achieving salvation. Paul continues to put forth his arguments to prove that God justifies sinners thru faith in Christ's finished work and not by works of the Law.

THE LAW CANNOT CHANGE THE PROMISE (3:15-18)

Three reasons are given for the superiority of the covenant of promise:

1. Its **CONFIRMATION** (v. 15)

The promise/covenant God made to/with Abraham was entirely unilateral (one sided), unconditional one. It was/is irrevocable and unchangeable.

2. Its **CHRIST-CENTEREDNESS** (v. 16; cp. v. 19)

Genesis 22:18 "... thru your offspring (Seed) all nations on earth will be blessed." Blessing would ultimately come through a single individual, the Messiah (Gal. 3:16, 19). In an earlier promise (Gen. 3:15) a clearly singular use of "seed" also refers to Christ: "He will crush your head."

3. Its **CHRONOLOGY** (vv. 17, 18)

"The law, introduced 430 yrs. later, does not set aside the covenant previously estab. by God and thus do away with the promise." Paul is counting from the time Jacob went into Egypt (Gen. 46:1-47:12; ... 1876 B.C.) until the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai (Exo. 19:1-2; ... 1446 B.C.).

THE LAW IS NOT GREATER THAN THE PROMISE (3:19-20)

1. The Law was **TEMPORARY** (v. 19a)

Not only was the Law conditional (the blessings of the Law were dependent on the meeting of certain conditions); the Law had a terminus point: "until the Seed (Christ) should come." It is obvious that a temporary law cannot be greater than a permanent covenant.

2. The Law required a **MEDIATOR** (vv. 19b-20)

When God gave the Law to Israel, He did it by means of angels & thru the mediation of Moses. Israel "received the Law by the disposition of angels"

(Acts 7:53). This means that the nation received the Law third-hand: from God to angels to Moses. But when God made His covenant with Abraham, He did it personally, without a mediator.

THE LAW IS NOT CONTRARY TO THE PROMISE (3:21-26)

You can almost hear the Judaizers shouting the question in Gal. 3:21: "Is the Law then against the promises of God?" The answer is "NO!" The Law **cooperates** with the promise in fulfilling the purposes of God. Law & Grace actually **complement** one another. Why was the Law given?

1. The Law was not given to provide life (v. 21)
2. The Law was given to reveal sin (vv. 19a, 22)
3. The Law was given to prepare the way for Christ (vv. 23-26)
Here Paul uses an illustra. that was familiar to all his readers—the child guardian. The Gk. word: **παιδαγωγός (paidagōgós)** - "a child leader." The transliteration of Greek noun gives us our word **pedagogue** or **pedagogy**.

What was Paul saying using this illustration?

- 1) He is saying that the Jews were not **born** thru the Law, but rather were **brought up by** the Law.
- 2) He is saying that the work of the guardian was preparation for the child's maturity. Once the child came of age, he no longer needed the guardian.

THE LAW CANNOT DO WHAT THE PROMISE CAN DO (3:27-29)

1. The Law could never justify the guilty sinner (Gal. 2:15-16)
"There is no one righteous, not even one" (Rom. 3:10). It's only thru faith in J. Christ that the sinner is justified—declared righteous—before God.
2. The Law could never give a person a oneness with God (3:27)
The Law actually separated man from God. There was a fence around the tabernacle and a veil between the holy place and the holy of holies. Faith in Jesus results in the "baptism of the Holy Spirit." This baptism identifies the believer with Christ & makes him part of the body (1 Cor. 12:12-14). Water baptism is an outward picture of this inner work of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 10:44-48).
3. The Law could never make us heirs of God (3:29)
"If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, & heirs according to the promise." **Heirs**: this means we are heirs of the spiritual blessings God promised Abraham. This does not mean that the material & national blessings promised to Israel are set aside, but that Christians today are enriched spiritually because of God's promise to Abraham (Rom. 11:13ff).