

## Galatians 3:15-29

In the first part of chapter 3, we learned about the foolishness of works: it was foolish to think one could be saved by works and it was just as foolish to think that we could continue our walk with Christ with works to try to enhance our salvation or justification which were made perfect in His Blood shed on the Cross!

Paul talked about how the Messiah redeemed us from the curses contained in the Law; how He fulfilled all righteousness demanded by the Law and we saw from (2 Corinthians 5:21 NKJV) "For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.";

GUZIK: It stops us in our tracks to understand that the price He paid to buy us out from under the **curse of the law** was the price of Himself. It didn't just cost Jesus something, even something great - **it cost Jesus Himself**. We know that men cursed Jesus as He hung on the cross; but that compares nothing to how He was cursed by God the Father. He made Himself the target of the curse, and set those who believe outside the target.

Tonight, we are going to see a great deal of Truth about the Law. We will learn what it is and why it was given; we will also understand the Abrahamic covenant of faith and its relationship to the Law.

Paul is making his case for "justification by faith" by expounding on the covenant made with Abraham:

(Galatians 3:15 NKJV) 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.

In order to have the Galatian Churches understand, he explains the idea of God's covenant to a man's covenant; He says that a man's covenant cannot be amended nor annulled beforehand except by the ones who entered into it. And, like a man's "last will and testament", once it is executed, it can never be changed by anyone.

Therefore, because the Abrahamic Covenant was given by God alone, God could be the only one to amend or annul it. And, since the covenant was based on the promises of God, it was a done deal.

**But, the Abrahamic contained more than the promise of land and nations.**

Genesis 22:15-18 NKJV Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, (16) and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only *son*— (17) blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which *is* on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. (18) **In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.**"

**Because of Abraham's faith, God made an extraordinary promise to every nation on the earth. But listen to what Paul says next:**

(Galatians 3:16 NKJV) 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.

The promises made by God were made to Abraham **AND** to the coming Christ. This is an incredible statement; this is what's behind the Hebrews Chapter 13 verse 20:

**Hebrews 13:20 NKJV** Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, **through the blood of the everlasting covenant**

The Covenant promises were made to Christ AND ratified by Him when He died, and His blood was shed. This is an **eternal** covenant between Father and Son. Jesus was the Seed that died and was buried and truly has produced a harvest:

**John 12:23-24 NKJV** But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. (24) Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a **grain** of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.

Essentially, when He died and the testament (covenant) was confirmed by His blood, the testament, in human-terms, was opened and "read" to the nations. This covenant cannot ever be altered or annulled by any man!

*(Galatians 3:17 NKJV) 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.*

In other words, what came **after** cannot annul or alter what was **promised** before!

**"By God in Christ"** – the covenant concerned Christ and according to Genesis 22, it was made by the **Angel of the LORD**, who we understand to be God the Son. The covenant concerned Him, He is the substance and totality of it; He is the Mediator of it; He is the Messenger of it and the surety or guarantee of it as well; we commonly call this covenant a "covenant of grace and redemption"; that's because of God's deep and loving **grace** towards us, we who are sinners who had to be purchased out of their sinful state.

*(Galatians 3:18 NKJV) For if the **inheritance** is of the law, it is no longer of promise; **but God gave it to Abraham by promise.***

A testament is not made up of laws but conveys an inheritance. What do heirs look for when they open a last will; rules, and regulations? No, they look for what's been freely given to them. The Covenant that God gave to Abraham did not contain laws. It contained promises of great spiritual blessings.

Our inheritance is unilaterally promised and therefore is immutable.

**Romans 4:13-16 NKJV** For the promise that he would be the heir of the world *was* not to Abraham or to his seed **through** the law, **but through** the righteousness of faith. (14) For **if** those who are of the **law** *are* heirs, faith is made void and the promise made

of no effect

Paul is also hammering away at the Judaizers who wanted to alter this covenant of grace to include the law; traditional Jews who rejected it would have loved to see it go away altogether, that is, they would, if they had the power to do so, make it null and void!

**The Law -- is conditional and not of promise;** it cannot be by merit **and** by promise, by works **and** grace too; these can never be reconciled or joined together; if it is by promise, then not of the law; and if it is of the law, it is not by promise:

"but" nothing is more certain than this, that

**God gave it to Abraham by promise;** wherefore justification is not by commandment keeping (a.k.a., dead works) but by the grace of God, freely given through **faith** in the righteousness of Christ; therefore by faith all can become heirs of eternal life:

**This is diametrically opposed to what traditional, Law-keeping Jews believe. They say that paradise/heaven is the inheritance or reward of obeying all the commandments. Some say that the Mosaic covenant superseded the promises to Abraham. Many Messianic/Believing Jews say that the Mosaic was brought forward into the New Covenant. Some say that the New Covenant is a Renewed Mosaic Covenant; even some churches believe in law-keeping because they fear the "law of liberty" and totally distrust the grace of God and His word concerning sin (see Romans 1 thru 8).**

**Naturally, one might ask Paul, if this is the truth, why did God give us the Law?**

*(Galatians 3:19 NKJV) 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. (Galatians 3:20 NKJV) Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one.*

I suppose the simple purpose is, how do I know something is wrong unless there is something that says, "don't do that, it's wrong!"?

*Romans 7:7 NKJV* What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? God Forbid! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET."

I think it's interesting that covetousness is the commandment Paul chose as his example. First, it's a "do-not" commandment that we know produces a "gotta do it" reaction in us; Second, it is purely a matter of the heart. Paul was saying, in effect, sinning was a natural and compulsive thing!

But he then says, 'it was given **UNTIL** the Seed, to whom the promise was made, would come! The Seed would come and fulfill the promises made to Abraham. These promises were made hundreds of years before the Law and being **of** God, will stand forever. When God made the promise to Abraham, He granted remission sins, righteousness, salvation and everlasting life without conditions, without works! This great blessing was made to Abraham and to all the nations that would come from him.

Then there's that enigmatic verse (20) Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one.

Paul compares 2 mediators: Moses and Christ. Moses mediated between the people and God. But how could Moses mediate when the Law was clear and the people, who promised to obey it all, kept on disobeying it? The Law did not change them inside so all Moses could say was, "Have mercy on them LORD" and even once he said, "spare them and blot me out of the Book". The Jew's believe in the enduring mercies of God to bail them out as a nation and as an individual; But what was missing was any internal change of heart; But there were other Jews (OT saints) who clung to their faith that the Promised Seed would come and free them from the bondage of sin and self.

Clearly, the better mediator is Jesus Christ. He does not change the voice of the Law, nor does He hide the Law with a veil. He takes the full blast of the wrath of the Law and fulfills its demands most meticulously.

Christ, being God and Man, mediates with the Father regarding the sins of the people...and said, in effect, "they cannot change; they deserve to die in Your wrath, but I took their place so that they will live." – God in Christ, Christ in God, therefore Paul says, "God is one".

*(Galatians 3:21 NKJV) 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.*

*Certainly not!* = **God forbid!**

Paul is saying that those who use this argument are confused! They say that if inheritance (promises) are not of the Law then the Law is against the promises and therefore God is contradicting Himself because He gave both.

The issue is, the Jews thought that the Law brought life because it defined righteous behavior. Listen to this passage from a Messianic Prayer Book:

*This is the Torah (Law) which Moses placed before the children of Israel. It is in accord with the LORD's command by the hand of Moses.*

*A tree of Life it is for those who take hold of it, and blessed are the ones who support it. Its ways are ways of pleasantness and all its paths are peace. Long life is in its right hand, in its left are riches and honor. The LORD was pleased for the sake of righteousness, to render the Torah great and glorious.*

One of the ancient writings says, "great is the law, for it giveth life to them that do it, in this world, and in the world to come:" (as recorded in John Gill's commentary on Galatians). The problem is, how many have performed it perfectly? (one)

Paul rightly says, if the law could have given life, then righteousness should have been by obedience to it. Listen to what He wrote in Romans 7:

**Romans 7:5-14 NKJV** For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. (6) But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we

should serve in the **newness of the Spirit** and not *in* the oldness of the letter. (7) What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? God Forbid! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET." (8) But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin *was* dead. (9) I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. (10) And the commandment, which *was* to *bring* life, I found to *bring* death. (11) For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me*. (12) Therefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. (13) Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. (14) For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.

But the Law is NOT without value, as some say, extending its lack of justification to its entirety. For again, Paul says elsewhere:

1 Timothy 1:8-11 NKJV But we know that the law *is* good if one uses it lawfully, (9) knowing this: **that the law is not made for a righteous person**, but for *the* lawless and insubordinate, for *the* ungodly and for sinners, for *the* unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, (10) for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, (11) according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.

Our civil laws are based, for the most part, on the Law of Moses which contains laws concerning behavior, punishment, justice, fairness etc. These are laws used lawfully.

*(Galatians 3:22 NKJV) 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.*

Note the constant comparison of purpose of the Law and of faith in Christ.

Confined under the law, under guard, under the restraint of a slave... vs faith in Jesus Christ

The word tutor or schoolmaster are 2 typical translations. But the Greek word implies a slave whose duty it was to **bring** a child to school and to watch over them or even restrain them so that they would behave. They might help with their studies but more often or not, it wasn't their main function. How ironic is it that a slave has power over a child of a free man.

This, in a real sense, describes the primary purpose of the Law – it is its spiritual purpose:

it reveals to a person his pride, sin, blindness, misery, his ignorance, hatred, and all manner of self. It does this by being a harsh taskmaster whose uses the Law as a hammer to bring down proud, the self-righteous, the hypocrites, the idolaters, the transgressors – that is – all those who think that they

are right and God is wrong. These types have existed since day 6; instead of learning from Him, they are offended by Him. Even under the threats of death and cursing – these types say “bring it on...”.

*Luther rightly said, “This monster of self-righteousness, this stiff-necked beast, needs a big axe. And that is what the Law is, a big axe. Accordingly, the proper use and function of the Law is to threaten until the conscience is scared stiff.” It was given after the blessed promises were made so that they might come to their senses and stop needless warring with the One who would never lose!*

**(Galatians 3:25 NKJV)** *But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.*

We are no longer compelled and restrained by this “tutor”.  
“after faith has come” – I think this “faith” is referring to Christ Himself.

Paul doesn’t explicitly state that we are under anything or anyone else. But we know from Romans:

**Romans 6:14 NKJV** For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Before grace came through faith, sin had complete dominion over us. Now, you must understand that this includes even those who had led an exemplary life of right behavior, never really disobeying your parents, teachers or the law. These are the “good ones”, so to speak, the “goodie-two-shoes” who, on the outside seem righteous. God even called Job “blameless or complete and upright; one who fears God and shuns evil”. But he never cursed God, he did appear somewhat self-righteous and at the end had to declare,

**Job 42:2-6 NKJV** "I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose *of Yours* can be withheld from You. (3) *You asked*, 'Who *is* this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. (4) Listen, please, and let me speak; *You said*, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.' (5) "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. (6) Therefore I abhor *myself*, And repent in dust and ashes."

**(Galatians 3:26 NKJV)** For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

By faith in Christ we are all children of God. We all inherit the same life;

**(Galatians 3:27 NKJV)** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ **have put on Christ.**

Being baptized into Christ, we can identify with His death and new life; We can “put on Christ”, that is, follow Him; but perhaps more importantly, we “clothe” ourselves with His righteousness, His power, His life. By contrast, before Jesus, we were clothed in Adam, in the skins of bloody animals, always bearing the shame and guilt of sin. But in Christ,

1 Peter 2:9 NKJV But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

(Galatians 3:28 NKJV) 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.

*Certainly, by our standards of judgment, we distinguish between the Jew and Gentile, a man and a woman, a slave and free man. But, in God's economy, we are ALL one in Christ. We have our worldly differences but if we are all ONE in Christ, we are equal in God's eyes. We may have different roles to play, but the sheep has as much value to God than the shepherd, the slave as must as his master.*

*To the Jews and the Greeks this was a phenomenal concept: A Jew eating with a Greek; a slave sharing communion with his master; Men would separate themselves from the women in the synagogues and the Temple. But in the sight of God, they are equal; Paul proved this by approaching and praying with a group of women on the Sabbath in the city of Philippi as recorded in Acts 16.*

(Galatians 3:29 NKJV) And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

So, simple, so profound – we believer's are Christ's; we have been purchased with His precious blood; we are the seed of Abraham from all nations and, we are heirs and joint heirs with Christ!