

God's "Set-in-Stone" Promise!

Galatians 3:15-18; Genesis 15:1-17

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- The recent re-negotiation of the NAFTA agreement
- Nothing today appears to be "set in stone". All contracts and laws are open for annulment or change.
- God made a specific covenant with Abraham. God promised him...
 - Land, particular the land of Canaan
 - "Seed" which will grow into a great nation
 - Spiritual blessing that will expand to the world
- God's one requirement: faith
- But perhaps God's promise to Abraham is not "set in stone" like the false teachers contended.
 - Abraham and those prior to the Law were saved by faith in God,
 - When God gave the law to Moses, the basis of salvation changed from faith to works.
 - The covenant with Moses annulled or supplanted the covenant with Abraham
- What is the relationship between the Abrahamic promise and the Mosaic law? Does the Law amend or annul God's promise? Is the promise made to Abraham "set in stone" or was it set aside when God gave the Law to Moses?

Why is God's promise to Abraham "Set-in-Stone"?—Galatians 3:15-18

Four Factors

A. Its CONFIRMATION—Galatians 3:15, Genesis 15:1-17

1. The Human Experience: Human covenants in Paul's day, once ratified, were considered to be irrevocable and unchangeable.
2. Different kinds of covenants / agreements
 - a. Unilateral vs. Bilateral or Multilateral
 - b. Unconditional or conditional
3. Abraham's Experience: Was it unilateral or bilateral? Conditional or unconditional? Genesis 15:1-17
 - a. The context (15:1-7) Promise of a seed/heir and the land
 - b. Abram's inquiry (15:8)—"*How shall I know if I will inherit it?*"
 - c. The ratification of the covenant
 - 1) The ceremony to ratify covenant in his day—(15:9-10)
 - 2) Only the LORD symbolically passed between the animals
 - 3) Significance: God made the covenant with Himself.
 - 4) The covenant God made with Abram is not only unilateral in that God sets down the stipulations without consulting Abram, but it was also unconditional based solely on what God will do for Abraham, not on what Abraham will do for God. The only condition was for Abram to believe God.
 - 5) The covenant God made with Abram was also immutable, that is changeless and permanent!

B. Its CHRIST-CENTEREDNESS—Galatians 3:16

1. Jesus Christ as the "seed" of Abraham—Genesis 22:18
 - a. "Seed" is a collective noun which can be either singular or plural
 - b. Jesus Christ as the "seed" of the woman—Genesis 3:15
2. Jesus Christ fulfills all of the promises of God—2 Corinthians 1:18
3. Jesus Christ and the ultimate fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant
 - a. The "land"—Palestinian Covenant
 - b. The "seed"—The Davidic Covenant
 - c. The "blessing"—The New Covenant

C. Its CHRONOLOGY—Galatians 3:17

1. The Law came 430 years later and cannot annul nor change a covenant previously ratified by God alone.
2. Even before Abraham, salvation was by faith in God.
3. Covenant with Abraham has been "confirmed". It is irrevocable.

D. Its COMPLETENESS—Galatians 3:18

1. If the inheritance is of the law, then it is no longer of promise. Can't be both
2. God "gave" it to Abraham by promise