

“God’s Unchangeable Promise”

Galatians 3:15-22

The fulfillment of the gospel promise was never dependent upon the keeping of the law.

1. The Gospel Promise – A Promise that Can Never be Altered! vv. 15-18

- (1) **A Lesson from Covenants Established by Men** “...even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified.”
- A covenant made or a will put in force cannot be modified!

(2) What of the Covenant Promise Made by God?!

-1- “Covenant” → “Promises”

Paul shifts attention from a covenant in general to the covenant made by God, and particularly to God’s promises made to Abraham

-2- For whom is this covenant promise valid? “to Abraham and to his offspring” v. 16

- Paul shows that the promises right from the start were intended for those in Christ
- “not ‘to offsprings’ referring to many...but referring to one...‘your offspring’ who is Christ”
- “Offspring”- indicating Abraham’s descendants concentrated in one definite person; to be taken as a unit concentrated in the person of Christ.

-3- The Law came long after the Promise! “the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void.” v. 17

- That which applies in human covenants holds all the more for a promise given by God!
- God’s promise cannot be made void by the law, and cannot be altered by the law!
- This is all the more clear, since the law was given so much later!

-4- The Promise and Law cannot be combined! “For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.”

- A promise is a promise!

Obedience-demands cannot be added to the promise!

- A promise need only be believed!

- cf. Gen. 15 God confirmed His covenant promise to Abraham
- God made clear that He Himself would fulfill the obligations of the covenant!

2. The Law – A Servant to the Promise

vv. 19-22

- (1) **The Law given to make transgression manifest!** “Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions”

- That sin might be acknowledged in all of its terrible and dark character.

- That sin might be brought out into the open and fully ‘metastasize!’ cf. Rom. 4:15; 5:20

- To show the need of Christ, the promised ‘Seed.’ “...until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made”

(2) The Law is of a lesser glory than the Promise! 19b-20

- The law was mediated – mediated by lesser agents, angelic and human
- In the giving of the promise, God alone was at work; He is its author and fulfiller!

(3) The Law is not against the Promises! “Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not!”

- The law simply serves an entirely different purpose in God’s economy.

- It cannot give life.
- The law can only aim at what the promise in Christ actually provides. cf. Rom. 8:3-4

(4) The Law: a ‘prison-house!’ “But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”

- All human life and all efforts imprisoned!

- ‘Sin’ is the ‘jail-keeper!’

- No avenue of escape is left to man by means of the law! cf. Deut. 27:26 D
- So that all might seek the only way of escape! The promise by faith in Jesus!