



Galatians 3:15-18

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15 Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it.

16 Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ.

17 What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise.

18 For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.

v15: The Illustration from Normal Human Interaction

Brothers, according to *the standards of man* I speak:

Even though *it is* only of man, the having been already ratified **testament**, no one annuls it or adds a codicil to it.

DIATHĒKĒ, diaqhvkx

- Two views of this word's meaning in Gal 3:15:
 1. Covenant = contract or agreement
 2. Testament = "last will and testament"
- Covenant view
 - Context is talking about the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants
 - The context uses diaqhvkx in that sense.
- Testament view
 - The verb "adds conditions to," *epidiatassomai* is used in contemporary literature with diatheke to describe a last will and testament
 - The transmission of inheritance is secured by this special kind of contract or agreement.
 - The "testament" is a kind of contract!

God's Covenant portrayed in man's Testament

- A “testament” or “will” is man’s system for the transmission of inheritance.
- It is like a “covenant of grant” because, as far as the author is concerned, it is more binding than any other contract he can make.
 - It is the expression of his volition towards others
 - He’s dead and can’t change it!
- Therefore it is “eternal.”
- Therefore it cannot depend upon a response from the recipient.

Major Points of the Illustration

- A ratified contract is permanent.
- The violation of man's contract renders the violator as without integrity.
- No one does this because it is bad business.
- The special and universal case of a man's contract is a will.
- Not even the testator can add or delete from it.
 - If he's still living, a change would introduce a bad precedent for those who survive him
 - If he's dead, there's no way he can change what he's said.

v16 The Illustration Applied

So to Abraham were spoken **the promises** and to his seed.

It does not say, “And to seeds,” as concerning many

But

as concerning one, “And to your Seed,”

Who is Christ.

What Promises?

Context says Gen 12 and Gen 15 (cf Gal 3:6, 8)

Gen 12:1-3: First Statement of the Promises

1 Now the Lord said to Abram,
“Go forth from your country,
And from your relatives
And from your father’s house,
To the land which I will show you;

2 And I will make you a great nation,
And I will bless you,
And make your name great;
And so you shall be a blessing;

3 And I will bless those who bless you,
And the one who curses you I will curse.

And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

inheritance

Gen 15:2-6

2 Abram said, “O Lord God, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?”

3 And Abram said, “Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.”

heir

4 Then behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, “This man will not be your heir; but **one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.**”

5 And He took him outside and said, “**Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.**” And He said to him, “**So shall your descendants be.**”

6 Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

An Estate and an Heir

- The context of Gal 3 refers to the major components of the Abrahamic Covenant: An inheritance in Gen 12 and an Heir in Gen 15.
- We must not forget the context of Genesis 12, which is Genesis 1-11.
- In this narrative, Moses demonstrates that the problem facing man is sin and death, and the solution to that problem is the Seed of the Woman.
- The Abrahamic Covenant further reveals God's plan of salvation for mankind through the Seed of the Woman first mentioned in Genesis 3:15.

Seed and Seeds?

- A study of the term “seed:” Sperma and Zera
 - A collective term, like “people” (sort of)—lots of people (plural use) vs. a people (a collective singular).
 - Better example: “man”
 - “Man is evil.” --the entire collective with all constituents represented
 - “The man is evil.” --one constituent from the collective.
- Most of the time in Genesis, “to your seed” is speaking about inheritance of the Promised Land by the nation of Israel.
- Apparently, though, the latent ambiguity in the form of the word is to be interpreted as having its fullest sense in the One Seed of the Woman. Cf context of Gen 3-11
- Jesus is the Jewish Messiah, the Heir, who will inherit the Land, the estate, but who will rule the world.

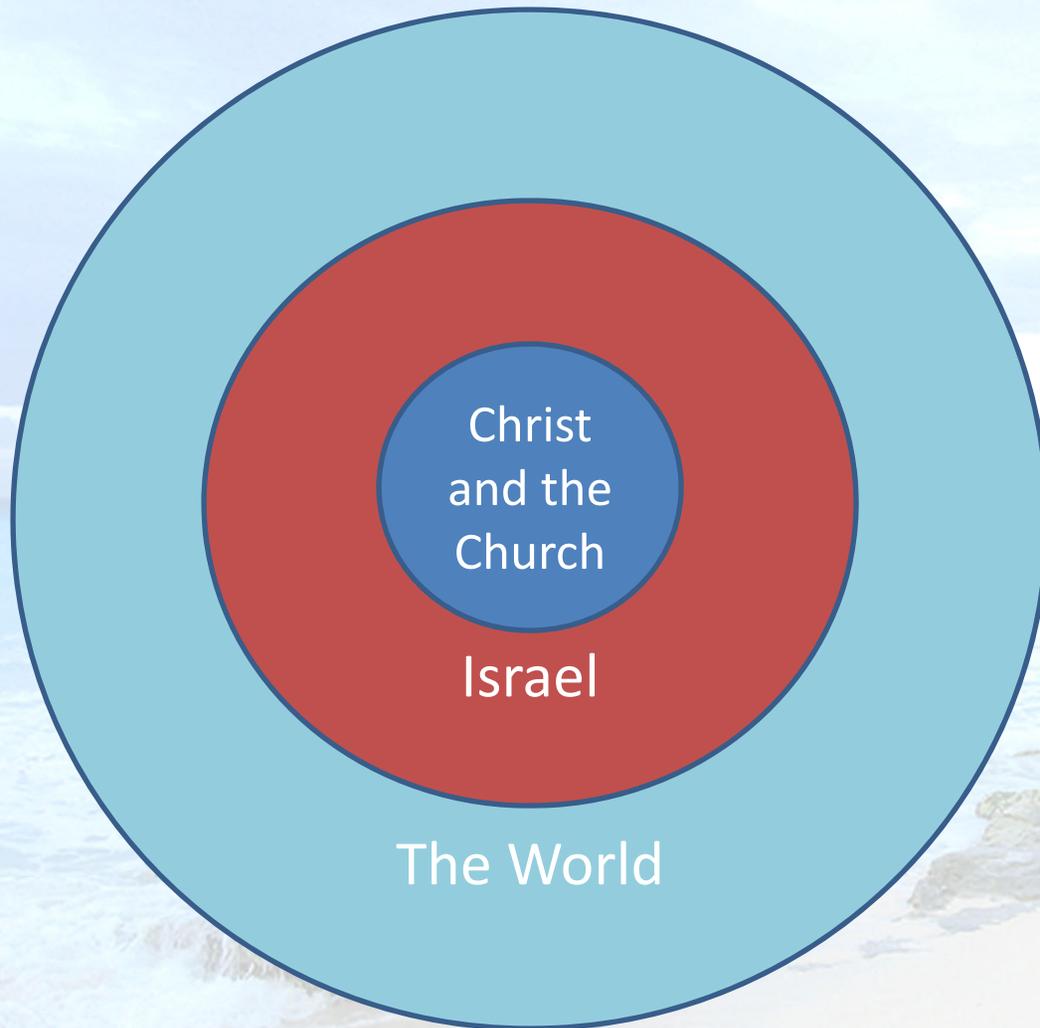
But What About the Descendants ?

- The Joshua conquest of the Land did not fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant!
 - Incomplete conquest of the lands they occupied
 - They did not occupy all the lands between the Nile and Euphrates
 - It was not an eternal occupation (i.e. not “forever”)
- Yet most promises in Genesis to Abraham and to his “ZERA,” seed seem to be speaking about the nation Israel.
- This seeming contradiction between Paul and Moses baffles many interpreters.
- The solution to the problem is that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah Who will rule from Zion over a nation that inherits the land under His governance.

An Exciting Conclusion

- *IF* the Inheritance of the Abrahamic Covenant is to be enjoyed by Israel, the physical and spiritual *descendants* of Abraham under the rulership of Christ the *Descendant*,
- *AND* The Church, not Israel, is said throughout the NT to be *IN CHRIST* to share His destiny,
- *THEN* the destiny of the Church in Christ is to rule with Him over Israel which will govern the earth.

The Kingdom



- 2 Tim 2:11-13,
cf. Mt 19:28,
Lk 22:30
- Gen 12:3,
Isaiah 2, 4, 9,
11, Matthew
- Isaiah 4, 11

