

I. Introduction and review: Defending the gospel.

II. The addition of the Mosaic Law does not nullify the promise to Abraham. 3:15-18

- A. Human covenants (testaments/contracts) can't be unilaterally set aside or changed once they are in force. v. 15 Heb. 9:15ff
- B. God made a covenant with Abraham before the Law came through Moses. v. 17-18
1. The Abrahamic covenant promised a great inheritance to Abraham's *seed* (offspring) - "I will". 3:6 Gen. 12:1-3 15:1-21 17:2ff Heb. 6:13-15
 2. All that God required of Abraham was faith. 3:6 Gen. 15:6
 3. The Mosaic Law promised earthly blessing to the nation conditioned upon their obedience - "Thou shalt". Lev. 18:5 Dt. 7:12-13 28:1ff
 4. The Law, which came 430 years later, did not change or invalidate God's prior covenant/promise with Abraham. v. 17 Ex. 12:40
 5. Most of the Jews looked to the Mosaic Law as the means by which they could be justified before God.
 6. To make obedience to the Mosaic law the basis for receiving the inheritance would invalidate God's promise granted to Abraham. v. 18 2:16 Ro. 4:14
- C. The promise of inheritance is given to Abraham and his *seed* (descendants). v. 16,18 Gen. 13:15-16 17:7-9 24:7
1. The concept of *seed* is very significant in Scripture. Gen. 3:15 2 Sam. 7:12-13 Ps. 89:3-4 Mt. 1:1
 2. *Seed* (singular) can be used of one person or collectively of a group of people.
 3. Christ is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham - the true *Seed*.
 4. We who are faith are the *seed* of Abraham and are co-heirs of the promised inheritance because we are in Christ. 3:29,7 Isa. 53:10 Ro. 4:13-18 Ge. 15:5 22:1
 5. Not all of Abraham's physical offspring are his true *seed*, but only those who are of faith. Rom. 2:28-29 9:6-13 Gen. 17:19-21 21:12
 6. What is the inheritance and who will inherit it? Gen. 13:15-16 15:1-5 17:7-9 Ro. 4:13 Heb. 11:13-16 13:14 Rev. 21-22 Ps. 22:27-28 47:7-9 72:8-11
 7. Thanks be to God that we are in Christ! John 1:17

III. What then is the purpose of the Law? 3:19-22

- A. The Law is inferior to the promise. v. 19b-20
1. The Mosaic Law was only temporary - *until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made*. v. 19b 4:9-10 Heb. 7:18-19 Acts 15:10-11
 2. The Law is inferior to the promise (which was directly given to Abraham) in that it was mediated. v. 20 Act 7:38 Dt. 5:5 33:2 Heb. 2:2 Ps. 68:17
 3. The Law cannot save you. 2:16 Rom. 3:20 Heb. 10:4 Ps. 14:3
 4. If the Law cannot justify, then why did God give it to Israel?
- B. The primary use of the Law was to reveal and provoke transgressions. v. 19a
1. There is no greater barrier to salvation than human morality and self-righteousness. Luke 18:10-14 Mark 10:17-23
 2. God's Law, rightly understood, obliterates any illusion that one can justify himself by his works. 2:16 Ex. 20:1ff Rom. 3:19-20 8:7-8 Mt. 5:21ff 22:36-40
 3. The Law actually increases transgression. Rom. 4:15 5:20 7:7-8
 4. Application - merely teaching morality will not make people better. Jer. 13:23

- C. Is the Law contrary to God's promises? v. 21-22 Mt.5:17
1. Promise and Law are complementary.
 2. The Law was never intended to give life. v. 21 2 Heb. 10:4,11-12
 3. The Law was given to show us how caught up in sin we are so we would seek justification through faith in Christ. v. 22 Ro. 3:20-26 7:24-8:4
 4. The Law leads us to the Gospel which imparts life – Dr. Law and Dr. Grace. v. 22b Js. 1:18 Eph. 2:5 1 Pe. 1:23
- D. The problem is not with the Law itself, but with those who misused the Law.
1. The Jews tried to use the Law to justify themselves. Rom. 9:31-32 10:2-4
 2. People today continue misuse the Law as they try to save themselves by works and morality
 3. The Law rightly understood leads to faith!
 4. Salvation by faith in God's promise reserves all the glory to Him. 1 Co. 1:30-31
- E. Is this the only proper use of God's Law?
1. The primary use of God's Law is to drive us to seek justification through faith in Christ.
 2. The Law, by its threats of earthly judgment, restrains evil in the civil sphere. Rom. 13:1-7 1 Pet. 2:13-14 1 Tim. 1:8-11 Pr. 22:15
 3. God's Law also informs a believer of how he can express his love to God through obedience. 5:13-14 John 14:15 Jer. 31:33 Ezek. 36:26 Heb. 10:16 1 Jo. 2:3-4

IV. Conclusion.

- A. People today need to properly understand God's Law. Mt. 9:12 Luke 19:10
- B. Has the Law done its proper work in your life?

Discussion questions

1. Why should we study such theologically involved passages instead of always focusing on extremely practical topics like peacemaking and family relationships?
2. How did the Jews misuse the Law?
3. What is the significance of the concept of *seed* (offspring) throughout Scriptures?
4. In what sense is Jesus the one true seed of Abraham?
5. Which people are the true seed of Abraham today?
6. How is the Law inferior to the promise?
7. How do people today misuse God's Law?
8. What is the most important function of God's Law?
9. How do many preachers fail to use the Law properly?
10. What are other valid uses of God's Law?
11. Does it do any good to teach morality and character to children?