

Galatians

Lesson 6

Chapter 3:15-25

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Lesson 6
Galatians 3:15-25
God's Covenant Promises

Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.
(Galatians 3:25)

Prayers

Introduction

In verses 3:15-25, Paul continues to use the example of how God declared Abraham righteous because of his faith rather than through the law since Abraham lived before the law was given to Moses. Throughout this reading, Paul refers to promises made to Abraham. God made five distinct promises to Abraham, so you will need to ask yourself which promise Paul is referring to:

- 1) Genesis 12:2-3 promises to be a great nation, a great name, and to bless all people on earth through him.
- 2) Genesis 15:18, 17:8 promise of land
- 3) Genesis 17:2-4 promise to greatly increase the numbers of Abraham's descendants, make him a father of many nations and have kings descended from him
- 4) Genesis 17:7-8 promises to be Abraham's God and the God of all his descendants. This promise was accompanied by circumcision.
- 5) Genesis 17:19 promise that Sarah would bear a son, Isaac, and God's covenant would be everlasting with all his descendants.

Temporary measures are a tool until a permanent solution is implemented. Paul writes that the Law of Moses was God's temporary measure for Israel until the timing was right for his permanent solution to all mankind through Christ.

Read Galatians 3:15-25 The Law and The Promise

Gal 3:15 Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case.

Gal 3:16 The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ.

Gal 3:17 What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise.

Gal 3:18 For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.

Gal 3:19 What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator.

Gal 3:20 A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God is one.

Gal 3:21 Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.

Gal 3:22 But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

Gal 3:23 Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed.

Gal 3:24 So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.

Gal 3:25 Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law

1. In verse 3:15, Paul compares God's covenants to human contracts. How do contracts begin and end?

Contracts begin with all parties agreeing to the terms and end when the agreement is successfully concluded or when one or more of the parties break the agreement.

2. What covenant promise(s) did God make with Moses and Israel that he made with Abraham? See Exodus 29:44-46.

Ex 29:44 "So I will consecrate the Tent of Meeting and the altar and will consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve me as priests.

Ex 29:45 Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God. ⁴⁶ They will know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.

God promised to be the God of Israel and dwell among them. Many blessings accompanied God's promise: land, security and protection, prosperity, wisdom and guidance (to name a few).

- a. What did Israel promise?

Ex 24:7 Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey."

Ex 24:8 Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

Israel promised to obey everything in the Book of the Covenant – the Law of Moses.

- b. Did God's covenant through Moses carry any conditions that would nullify the contract?

Dt 28:15 However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

Dt 28:63 Just as it pleased the LORD to make you prosper and increase in number, so it will please him to ruin and destroy you. You will be uprooted from the land you are entering to possess.

Dt 28:64 Then the LORD will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods—gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known.

God's promises to Israel were conditional on their obedience.

- c. Despite breaking their covenant with God and God's harsh wrath against the idolatry and disobedience of Israel and Judah, God did not forsake his love for his people. What did God promise them in their exile? See Ezekiel 34:15-16, 23-25, 30-31.

Eze 34:15 I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD.

Eze 34:16 I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.

Eze 34:23 I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd.

Eze 34:24 I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the LORD have spoken.

Eze 34:25 "I will make a covenant of peace with them and rid the land of wild beasts so that they may live in the desert and sleep in the forests in safety.

Eze 34:30 Then they will know that I, the LORD their God, am with them and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, declares the Sovereign LORD.

Eze 34:31 You my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are people, and I am your God, declares the Sovereign LORD."

God promised that he would continue to care for Israel and act as their shepherd. God never abandoned Israel and sent his Son to be Israel's Shepherd, and ours.

- d. When did the Old Covenant through the Law of Moses end, and why?
 - i. Fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 587-596 BC
 - ii. When Joshua entered the Promised Land
 - iii. By the life and death of Christ
 - iv. Fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in AD 70
 - v. Trick question! The Old Covenant still stands until Christ's second coming.

The Old Covenant ended when the blood of Christ implemented the New Covenant at his crucifixion. The perfect sacrifice atoned for the sins of all. Christ implemented a New Covenant of grace, Spirit, faith, and love through his body and blood.

3. What is the promise Paul refers to in verse 3:19? See also Galatians 3:8-9.

Gal 3:19 What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come.

Gal 3:8 The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you."

God's promise to Abraham to bless all nations was fulfilled in Christ, who justified us through his body and blood and united us with God through his Spirit. Recall from lesson 4, the benefits of being united with Christ's body: forgiveness of sins, unity with God, eternal life, and life by the Spirit who brings guidance, renewal, transformation, and the power to resist evil.

4. What was the weakness of the law, verse 3:21?

Gal 3:21 Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.

The problem was not the law but humanity's corruption by sin, so the law could not change people's hearts and make them love God. Only the Holy Spirit can transform our hearts and minds to love God.

5. Paul writes in verse 3:21 that the law could not impart life or righteousness. Life and righteousness are imparted by God's grace of the New Covenant in Christ. What words come to mind when you think of life in New Covenant?

Grace	Love	Joy	Faith	Spirit	Forgiveness
Communion	Union	Redeemed	Atoned	Justified	Sanctified
Prayer	Salvation	Christ's righteousness			

6. What righteousness does Paul refer to in verse 21 that we receive in the New Covenant?

We receive Christ's righteousness, so we are always righteous in God's eyes. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30).

7. The Law of Moses failed to change the Israelites' hearts so that they would worship only God. According to Galatians 3:19-25, what was the purpose of the law?

The law was put into place to atone for the sins of Israel until Christ's coming and ultimately lead us to Christ (by convicting us of our sins and need for a Savior).

8. Paul writes in Galatians 3:24, "the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ." God draws us all to Christ through his grace using many means and circumstances. What circumstances did God use to bring you to Christ?
- The law, conviction of sin through scripture?
 - Receiving God's grace while experiencing the consequences of sin
 - A friend?
 - Upbringing in a Christian family?

I am an example of someone led to Christ through the law. I was 24 years old when I was pointed to Christ through a Bible study with a pastor, where I understood the concept of sin and my need for Christ as my Savior.

9. Since we are no longer under the supervision of the law (verse 3:25), do we have a license to sin? Why or why not?

We are not under the supervision of the law but are led by the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit will never lead us to do anything contrary to God's will.

10. Paul writes that we are not under the supervision of the law (Galatians 3:25) and that there is no condemnation for sin for those in Christ (Romans 8:1). Discuss why some of the reasons for obedience below are good and why others might not be good.
- I want God to love me.

God loves you unconditionally. His love does not vary by your behavior. He has loved you before creation. Be secure in his perfect love.

- I don't want God to punish me.

Paul writes in Romans 8:1, "there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ." Our sins are forgiven and forgotten when we come to Christ with repentance.

- I am afraid of God.

Fear of God might bring us to God; as the Psalmist writes, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 11:10). But, we should not live our lives in fear of our heavenly Father because his perfect love for us drives out fear, "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear" (1 John 4:18).

d. I don't want my sin to separate me from God.

Christ has atoned for your sin, all sin for all time, and God has placed his Spirit in you so you can never be separated from God. Paul writes, "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).

e. I love God

Good reason! No one who lives in him keeps on sinning (1 John 3:6). But remember, we all sin, but "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (John 1:9).

f. I want my life to glorify God.

Good reason! Peter writes, "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us (1 Peter 2:12).

11. If we are free from the law and there is no condemnation, what are we obeying?

We obey the law of love. Paul writes, "Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law" (Romans 13:10). Christ's commands summarize the entire law, to love God and our neighbor. Christ's commands to love others had no boundaries: to love one another (John 13:34, 15:12, 15:17), our neighbors (Matthew 22:39), and even our enemies (Matthew 5:44).

Jesus also gave his disciples a different type of command, "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20).

Closing Prayer

Notes on the life received in the New Covenant.

The New Covenant was put into effect through Christ's body and blood. In Galatians 2:20, Paul wrote that he had been crucified with Christ and no longer lived, but Christ lived in him.

Gal 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

The following verses list the precious blessings we receive through the blood of Christ.

- a. Ro 3:25 God presented him as a sacrifice of **atonement**, through faith in his blood
(Atonement)
- b. Ro 5:9 Since we have now been **justified** by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! **(Justification)**
- c. Eph 1:7 In him we have **redemption** through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace **(Redemption)**
- d. Eph 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been **brought near** through the blood of Christ. **(Unity with other believers in the body of Christ)**
- e. Col 1:19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to **reconcile** to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. **(Reconciliation)**
- f. 1Jn 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, **purifies** us from all sin. **(Purification / Sanctification)**
- g. Heb 9:22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no **forgiveness**. **(Forgiveness)**
- h. Heb 9:14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, **cleanse our consciences** from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! **(Clean conscience)**
- i. Rev 1:5 To him who loves us and has **freed us from our sins** by his **blood** **(Freedom from sins)**
- j. Rev 12:11 They **overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb** and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. **(Power to overcome Satan)**

- k. ^{Rev 5:9} And they sang a new song: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your **blood** you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. **(Unity with God)**