**YOU ARE ALL CHILDREN OF GOD THROUGH FAITH**

Galatians 3:15-29

Key Verse 3: 26

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith,

**Introduction**



 In this passage, Paul contrasts between Law and promise. He mentions the role of the law in God’s redemption history and the nature of God’s promise given to Abraham. Through this he clearly shows that all believers are children of God through faith in Jesus.

**1. Read verses 15-18. What example did Paul use to explain the promises of God? (15) To whom were these promises spoken, and who did ‘the one seed’ refer to? (16) Why couldn’t the law set aside the covenant? (17) How did God give the inheritance to Abraham? (18)**

**1-1.** **Read verses 15-18.**

Brothers and sisters, 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. **16** The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ. **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. **18** For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on the promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.

**1-2.** **What example did Paul use to explain the promises of God? (15)**

  ***Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case.***



- Paul mentions the stability of the covenant that God made with Abraham, which was not vacated nor disannulled by the giving of the law to Moses.

- The promise was "irrevocable trust agreement" that God made with Abraham.

- Even though God gave the Law to Israelite, the covenant that God made is still in force.

**1-3.** **To whom were these promises spoken, and who did ‘the one seed’ refer to? (16)**

 ***The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,”meaning one person, who is Christ.***

- The term “*seed”,* is not plural but singular. Therefore the covenant designated one person, not many people, to be the recipient of the promises. That one person, *is Christ.*

- Jews were convinced that the term “*seed”* referred to the physical descendants of Abraham, the Jewish people. Therefore they believed it was absolutely necessary to belong to the Jewish nation in order to receive the blessings promised to Abraham.

- But Paul's interpretation is based on his conviction that Christ is the sole heir and channel of God's promised blessing.

- Since Christ is the heir of the promises, all those and only those who are in Christ by faith are beneficiaries of the irrevocable trust agreement God made with Abraham.

- In Jesus we are receiving the blessing that God promised Abraham through the covenant.

**1-4.** **Why couldn’t the law set aside the covenant? (17)**

 ***The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise.***

- In the case of an irrevocable trust agreement, subsequent documents cannot overturn the terms of the original document.

- Paul has this type of document in mind. He notes that the date on the irrevocable trust agreement made with Abraham places that covenant 430 years before the Mosaic law.

- Moses law came 430 years after the Abrahamic covenant indicates that the two should be clearly distinguished from each other and that the terms of Abraham’s covenant should not be confused with or changed by the terms of the Moses’ covenant.

**1-5.** **How did God give the inheritance to Abraham? (18)**

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

· Paul mentioned unconditional nature of the promises made to Abraham. He points out the incompatibility between receiving the inheritance as a gift on the basis of a promise and receiving it as a payment for keeping the law:

· Since the gift character of the promised inheritance is clearly established, the inheritance cannot be received as a payment for keeping the law.

· When parents set up the trust agreements for their children, the young children could not have possibly fulfilled any conditions to merit the gift of inheritance that parents provided for them.

· Even if It is true that the children grew up in a home marked by high standards and strict discipline, but if their inheritance depended on living up to the high standards set in the home, it doesn’t make sense.

. None of children are able to keep all the high standards set for them. The irrevocable trust agreements were established for children before the standards were set up for them.

**2. Read verses 19-22. Why and how was the law given? (19) Who were the three parties of the law? (20) Why can’t the law be opposed to the promise of God?(21) How is the promise given to the people? (22)**

**2-1. Read verses 19-22.**

Why, then, was the law given at all? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was given through angels and entrusted to a mediator. **20** A mediator, however, implies more than one party; but God is one.

**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. **22** But Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

**2-2. Why and how was the law given? (19)**

***· Why, then, was the law given at all? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was given through angels and entrusted to a mediator.***

· Paul mentions the purpose of the law - *It was added because of transgressions*.

· Paul has already demonstrated what the law does not do: it does not make anyone righteous before God (v. 11); it is not based on faith (v. 12); it is not the basis of inheritance (v. 18). So if the law is divorced from righteousness, faith and inheritance of the blessing, to what is law related?

· Paul says that the law is related to transgressions. A transgression is the violation of a standard. The law provides the objective standard by which the violations are measured. In order for sinners to know how sinful they really are, how far they deviate from God's standards, God gave the law. Before the law was given, there was sin (Rom 5:13). But after the law was given, sin could be clearly specified and measured (Rom 3:20; 4:15; 7:7). Each act or attitude could then be labeled as a transgression of this or that commandment of the law.

· The law is temporal framework. the law was not a central theme in God's redemptive plan; it was supplementary and secondary to the enduring covenant made with Abraham. The Moses law came into effect at a certain point in history and was in effect only until the promised *Seed,* Christ, appeared.

· There is a contrast here between the permanent validity of the promise and the temporary nature of the law. On the one hand, the promise was made long before the law and will be in effect long after the period of the law; on the other hand, the law was in effect for a relatively short period of time limited in both directions.

· Jews emphasized the eternal, immutable nature of the law. But Paul’s perspective led him to see that Christ, not the law, was the eternal one.

· *The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator* (v. 19).By this Paul does not mean that the law was given by angels rather than by God. He is merely pointing to the well-known Jewish tradition that God gave the law through the agency of angels as well as *by a mediator,* namely Moses.

**2-3. Who were the three parties of the law? (20)**

 ***A mediator, however, implies more than one party; but God is one.***

· Paul's affirmation of the common confession of all Jews that *God is one* implies a contrast between the universality of God and the particularity of the law.

· The particular focus of the law is specified by its mediation through the angels and Moses to the Jewish people.

· Moses, the mediator of the law, brought in a law that divided Jews from Gentiles; therefore he was not the mediator of "the one," the one new community promised to Abraham (v. 8) and found in Christ (v. 28). Christ, not Moses, is the mediator of the unity of all believers in Christ—Jew and Gentiles.

· the law had an important place in the redemptive plan of God. But the giving of the law was not the final goal of God's plan. The law was an essential step, but only a step, toward the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises in Christ. Christ is the beginning, end and center of God's plan. Amen!

**2-4. Why can’t the law be opposed to the promise of God?(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.***

· Since both the law and the promise were given by God, they must be complementary rather than contradictory in the overall plan of God.

· Paul explains the relation of the law to the promise in a two-part answer to the question.

· If the law could empower one to live in a right relationship with God, *then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.* " If righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

· We are faced with an absolute contradiction if you are told that only by believing in the cross of Christ we will be able to live in a right relationship with God and then we are told that only by keeping the law we will be able to live in a right relationship with God. And that is precisely what the Galatian believers were being told by the false teachers.

**2-5. How is the promise given to the people? (22)**

 ***But Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.***

· "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." (Deuteronomy 27:26)

· All people are sinners and all sinners under God's judgment. Paul's emphasis on the universality of human sin (v. 22) and the universality of God's judgment on all sinners (v. 10) reduces Jews to the same status as Gentiles—*the whole world is a prisoner of sin.*

· So identification with the Jewish people by circumcision and observance of the Mosaic law does not remove one from the circle of "Gentile sinners" (2:15) and bring one into the sphere of righteousness, blessing and life. Rather, it leaves one imprisoned under sin.we are not left as condemned sinners under the curse of God.

· The law was given to show that all humanity is held under the bondage of sin, *so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe* (v. 22).

· Now we can see how the law and the promise work in harmony to fulfill the purpose of God. The law puts us down under the curse; the promise lifts us up in Christ. We are left with no exit under the condemnation of the law so that we might find our freedom only by faith in Christ.

· The law imprisons *all—*both Jews and Gentiles—under sin to prepare the way for including all believers in Christ—both Jews and Gentiles—in the blessing promised to Abraham. So the law should not be viewed as contradictory to the gospel. By reducing all to the level of sinners, the law prepares the way for the gospel.

**3. Read verses 23-29. What was the role of the law until Christ came that we might be justified by faith? (23-25) How did we become children of God in Christ Jesus? (26, 27). If we belong to Christ, what happens to us? (28, 29)**

**3-1. Read verses 23-29.**

Before the coming of this faith,[j] we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. **24** So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. **25** Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian. **26** So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, **27** for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. **28** There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **29** If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

**3-2. What was the role of the law until Christ came that we might be justified by faith? (23-25)**

 ***Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. 24 So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. 25 Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.***

· Paul expands his explanation of the function of the law by personifying the law as a jailer and a disciplinarian. Paul shows that these roles are a necessary part, but only a temporary part, of the entire drama of God's plan of salvation.

· The law took the part of God's jailer on the stage of history: Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed.

· Paul says *we were held prisoners by the law.* All are condemned as sinners by the law. Jews in particular were held as prisoners under law. Jewish life was restricted, restrained and confined by the law. In this sense the law was a jailer over the Jews.

· The temporary function of the law is also described by the image of a disciplinarian. “So the law was our guardian” NRSV translated: "Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came." *disciplinarian* is the Greek word *paidagogos,* from which we derive *pedagoguepedagogue* is "a teacher of children or youth"; the second meaning given is "one (as a slave) having charge of a boy chiefly on the way to and from school in classical antiquity."The pedagogue supervised, controlled and disciplined the child; the teacher instructed and educated him.

· The law was given this supervisory, disciplinary role over the Jewish people. But the supervisory control of the law was only "until Christ". The control of the law was followed by the coming of Christ. The supervisory discipline of the law over the people of God came to an end when Christ came.

· Under the constant discipline of the law, the Jewish people should have learned how impossible it was to keep the law. The law constantly beat them down like a stern disciplinarian, pointing out all their shortcomings and failures. The pain of this discipline was designed to teach them that they could only be declared righteous by God through faith.

· Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

· Paul sees the turning point in his life to be the time when he put his faith in Christ. Before that time he lived under the supervision of the Moses law. But after he put his faith in Christ, his life was lived by faith in Christ, under the supervision of Christ.

· Our new life in Christ is not under the supervision of the law; it is under the rule of Christ by his Spirit. Freedom in Christ from the supervisory rule of the Moses law empowers us to "live for God" (2:19).

**3-3. How did we become children of God in Christ Jesus? (26, 27).**

 ***So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.***

· In the old set of relationships under the law, Jews were God’s people and Gentiles were sinners (see 2:15). But now Gentile Christians are *all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*

· Since Christ Jesus is the "Son of God" (2:20), all who by faith are in Christ are also *sons of God.*

· *sons of God:* they are children of God because they have been united with Christ in baptism and, as a result, clothed with Christ.

· the ritual of baptism by itself, apart from faith, would not accomplish union with Christ. Only when there is genuine faith in Christ is baptism a sign of union with Christ.

· The baptism has led to being *clothed . . . with Christ.* This metaphor, probably drawn from the ceremony of re-robing after baptism, pictures the reality of complete identification with Christ.

· As baptism pictures the initial union with Christ by faith, being clothed with Christ portrays our participation in the moral perfection of Christ by faith.

· The title *sons of God* and the two ceremonies of baptism and being clothed with Christ point to the reality of our new relationship with God in Christ.

**3-4. If we belong to Christ, what happens to us? (28, 29)**

 ***There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.***

· All racial, economic and gender barriers and all other inequalities are removed in Christ. The equality and unity of all in Christ are not an addition, a tangent or an optional application of the gospel. They are part of the essence of the gospel.

· Gentiles were being demoted to a second-class status because they were not Jews. This expression of racial superiority was a violation of the essence of the gospel. All the divisions and prejudices that matter so much in the world are abolished in Christ.

· The equality of all believers before God must be demonstrated in social relationships within the church if the truth of the gospel is to be expressed.

· Paul draws the conclusion to his argument in verse 29: If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

· Since the Galatian Christians belong to Christ, they are directly related to Abraham and recipients of the blessing promised to Abraham.

. Since full membership in the covenant people of God, "the seed of Abraham," is granted and maintained simply by union with Christ by faith, there is no longer any need for the law as the means to secure or maintain that status.

**Conclusion**

 God gave promises to Abraham and the promises are irrevocable. Since Christ is the heir of the promises, all those who are in Christ by faith are beneficiaries of the promise. In Jesus we are receiving the blessing that God promised Abraham through the covenant. People cannot inherit the blessing through their work of the Law. The Law is temporary guardian who supervise and discipline children for a while. In Jesus we are no longer under the Law. In Jesus, we are all children of God through faith. We were baptized into Christ and we have clothed ourselves with Christ.

**One word: We are all children by faith**