



World Christian Fellowship

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Galatians

Lesson 32- Inferiority of Law

Galatians 3:19-22, *What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. ²⁰ Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one. ²¹ Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. ²² But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.*

True Christians can be and are foolishly bewitched.

Galatians 3:1, “You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?”

They had become bewitched over the gospel, the gospel which they had been saved. Some Jews had come from Jerusalem to Galatia they had said, “Faith is not enough you must also keep the law of Moses, circumcision and other commandments to be saved. Salvation is faith plus works.”

Paul is writing in verse 3 to those who have begun by the Spirit. These are true believers.

They have begun by the Spirit.

They are foolishly bewitched into accepting the legitimacy of a false gospel even though they are believers.

V 7, they are the true sons of Abraham.

All who are justified by faith are in a sense the spiritual sons of Abraham.

Paul says in **verse 10**, “Anyone who tries to be justified by works is going to be under a curse; for as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse.”

If you try to come to God by your works, your morality, your religion, you are cursed. Only those who put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ will be justified.

V 11, “The righteous man shall live by faith.”

V 14, “In Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham comes to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

Paul had always preached the gospel of faith alone. The Judaizers had come trying to force people to believe that it was faith and works. That is a damning heresy that must be condemned and that’s what Paul is doing.

What about the law of Moses?

God gave the law of Moses. Abraham was saved by faith but when God gave the law of Moses four hundred and thirty years

after the last restatement of the Abrahamic covenant to Jacob, God gave the law of Moses.

Didn't God then change the plan for salvation?

Didn't it go from being faith before the law to works by the law?

This was the Jewish notion. They would give honour to Abraham and Abraham's faith, and then they would give an equal and parallel honour to Moses and the law.

Paul wants to point out that the law was never intended to be a way of salvation. That would make conflict between the promise and the law. There would be two competing ways of salvation.

So, Paul says that seed of Abraham was none other than Jesus Christ.

The promise came to Abraham. The promise was

- Divine,
- Unconditional, and
- Eternal.

It was gracious and therefore undeserved.

We looked at in detail the covenants God made with Abraham, David and the New covenant.

The promise to Abraham, the promise to David, and the promise to the prophets of the new covenant all bound up in God's eternal, unconditional grace, sovereign grace.

The promise is superior, and it all resolves in Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:20, *For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.*

All the promises of God are in Christ.

- ✓ He is the seed of Abraham.
- ✓ He is the son of David.
- ✓ He is the ratifying Redeemer of the new covenant.

Everything God promised to Abraham and all those in Abraham's line, everything He promised to David and all who would be influenced through the Davidic covenant, everything He promised in the new covenant – Jeremiah 31, Ezekiel 36 – all of that is fulfilled in Christ.

In Him all the promises of God are Amen.

Acts 13:32-37, *And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers. ³³ God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm:*

*'You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.'*

³⁴ And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus:

'I will give you the sure mercies of David.'

³⁵ Therefore He also says in another Psalm:

'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.'

³⁶ "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; ³⁷ but He whom God raised up saw no corruption.

The promise to David was not fulfilled in David, but in greater than David, David's son, the Messiah.

Acts 13:38-39, *Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; ³⁹ and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.*

In Christ is the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham,

In Christ is the fulfilment of the promise to David,

In Christ is the fulfilment of the promise in the new covenant.

- ✓ The Abrahamic covenant, the Davidic covenant, the new covenant, that's a path of salvation.
- ✓ The law of Moses, the covenant with Moses plays no role in salvation, Moses couldn't set you free. The law can't do that.

Romans 15:8-9, *Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a [e]servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers,⁹ and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: “For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And sing to Your name.”*

Christ is the servant to the circumcision, the Jews, on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to Abraham and the others, and for the Gentiles to glorify God. Christ then is the one who confirms the promise to Abraham. He is the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant.

Hebrews 6:12-20, *that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.¹³ For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,¹⁴ saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.”¹⁵ And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.¹⁶ For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute.¹⁷ Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the [i]mmutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath,¹⁸ that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.¹⁹ This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil,²⁰ where the*

forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

- God repeats His promise to Abraham right at the time that he was about to slaughter Isaac.
- God made a promise to Abraham.
- The promise is divine, it is unalterable, and eternal. It is therefore irrevocable, gracious, and therefore undeserved.
- God has made a promise to Abraham, through Abraham, all being ratified in the person and work of Christ.
- God is demonstrating the unchangeable of His purpose.
- God made a promise, and then gave an oath.
- God made an oath with Himself the unconditional covenant.

Two unchangeable things:

- a promise and
- an oath

It is impossible for God to lie.

We have laid hold of the full benefits of the promise of God to Abraham when we have laid hold of Christ.

We have an anchor of the soul when we are connected to Christ.

We take hold of Him as our hope.

All the promises to Abraham that embrace the promises to David, that embrace the new covenant are all in Christ.

When we lay hold of Christ, we lay hold of all those promises. There's nothing there about the Mosaic law.

There was in Acts 13, which said that the Mosaic law plays no part in this.

Hebrews 9:15, *And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.*

Christ death covered all who believed in the old covenant. His death adequately went backwards as much as it went forward.

The promise to Abraham was of an eternal inheritance, ratified, and repeatedly by repetition to the patriarchs, by the promise to David of the great King, and brought to really its climax in the new covenant and it all points to Christ.

All Abrahamic blessings, all Davidic blessing, all new covenant blessings are in Jesus Christ and Him alone.

The Galatians will have to choose.

Either salvation is by faith and the promise from God, or by the demands of the law, not both.

Scripture is clear that the law of Moses plays no role in the fulfilment of the promises to Abraham and to David and to the prophets in the new covenant.

V 18, *For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.*

God granted it by a promise, not by law.

The inheritance is not based on,

- keeping the law,
- circumcision, and
- moral works.

But it is based on a promise that God's grace-gifted to Abraham and through Abraham to all who believe.

The complete inheritance, with all the blessings and the promise, are given as a grace gift through faith.

Whatever view the Judaizers taught, the fact was God granted salvation and justification to Abraham by the promise of faith, not the deeds of the law.

The law didn't even exist then. It came four hundred and thirty years after the final statement of the covenant with Abraham to Jacob, and six hundred years after Abraham.

The promise then is superior by its

- Confirmation,
- Christ-centred and
- Sequence

The law doesn't nullify the promise. So, to every sinner who trusts in Christ alone apart from works, the promise comes, the inheritance comes.

“Why the law?”

V 19, *What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.*

Paul is creating his own argument here.

Answering it by two ways.

1. The superiority of the promise
2. The inferiority of the law.

The inferiority of the law

Paul gives three reasons to show us that the law is inferior.

1. inferior purpose.

a) Knowledge of sin

Romans 7:7, *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet."*

The law is pure reflection of the holy, moral and righteous character of God which defines sin.

We have the law of God written in the heart. But the full range of the law of God gives us a picture of God's complete righteousness and everything that offends Him.

b) Evil desire

Romans 7:8, *But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.*

When God says, "Don't do this," something in our fallen nature makes that more attractive than what's not forbidden. The law has a way of exciting sin in us.

c) Shows our rebellion against God

The law says,

- There is God,
- God has a will,
- God has rules,
- God has standards, and
- if you break them, you are under divine condemnation.

Sin is not just bad because of what it does to me and the people around me, but far more significantly it does to God.

Psalm 51:4, *Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight— That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge.*

You have rebelled against God, God is the Judge, God will hold you accountable, and God will punish sin.

We know that the law defines sin, we know that the law excites sin, and we know that the law declares that we are in rebellion against God whom we continuously offend, who will hold us to account for those offenses, and punish us.

Why the law then?

V 19, *What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom*

the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.

It was added to bring about transgressions, or to manifest transgressions.

Did transgressions exist before the law, before Moses received the law on Mount Sinai?

Did sin exist?

Of course, all the way back to the fall.

People didn't have a full definition of sin.

People did not fully understand the revelation of the holiness of God so that they would understand that they were in rebellion against Him in violating His law.

There's one thing that the law did that hadn't been done, and here's what it is. The law proved when it was given that it could not save anybody.

The Jewish people were,

- ✓ Chosen by God,
- ✓ Received the blessings of God,
- ✓ Had the promises of God,
- ✓ Guided by Prophets of God,
- ✓ Experience the tangible presence of God,
- ✓ Experienced the awesome miracles of God, and
- ✓ Worshipper of true God.

These people had the most potential because they had the best,

- Circumstances,
- Conditions, and
- Connections to God

Yet what happened to them when they received the law of God?

Exodus 24:3, *So Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the Lord has said we will do."*

Exodus 24:6-8, *And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar.⁷ Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient."⁸ And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you according to all these words."*

We will obey!

We know the story of Israel!

Disobedience!

The history of Israel proves that the law can't save.

The law had to be written down and the law is righteousness, holy, just, and good.

When the law was given to the people who were with the most potential, and they couldn't be saved by it.

Please do remember we are discussing about the moral law, not the civil and ceremonial law.

The Ten Commandments, they can't even keep the first commandment.

Exodus 20:2-5, *"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. ³ "You shall have no other gods before Me. ⁴ "You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; ⁵ you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,*

They just could not keep the first commandment from their Ten Commandments.

The law was given to demonstrate to the whole world that nobody can be saved by the law.

The people who had the best circumstances couldn't do it.

The nation of Israel received the law, and with the law, the whole nation went apostate, and except a small remnant of those who believed and by faith were saved.

Paul sums it up in letter to Romans.

Romans 3:20, *Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

The law's purpose then is inferior.

Law does not cure sin.

Law is to curse the sinner.