



GOSPEL PROMISE

Driller even deeper into the Old Testament, Paul highlights a crucial detail that the Galatians seem to have forgotten: the promise made to Abraham predates the Law given to Moses by over 400 years. So, how could the Law supersede these promises? While Paul acknowledges the Law's purpose and its benefits to Israel, he emphasizes that it never held a higher position than the promise itself.

THE SCRIPTURE: GALATIANS 3:15-29

¹⁵ To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. ¹⁶ Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. ¹⁷ This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise. ¹⁹ Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. ²⁰ Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one. ²¹ Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. ²² But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³ Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. ²⁴ So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

^m **offspring** – here and following, the word used is actually "seed." ⁿ **430 years** – the approximate time between Abraham and the Israelite exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai through Moses. ¹ Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS: WEEK 7

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever experienced a situation where having rules in place didn't necessarily mean people followed them? Can you share a time when you saw this happen?
2. Have you ever witnessed someone go above and beyond to keep a promise, even when it wasn't easy?

DIVING DEEPER

3. In verse 15, Paul states, "even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified." What does this mean in your own words?
4. How does the concept of a will effectively illustrate Paul's point in this passage?
5. Paul assumes his readers are familiar with the Old Testament as he discusses justification by faith. In verse 16, he mentions God's promise to bless Abraham's "off spring" (singular), identifying Jesus as the fulfillment of this promise. Based on Genesis 12:1-3, which of God's promises to Abraham could only be realized through Jesus?
6. Paul references a period of 430 years in verse 17 (see footnote above). What's Paul's point in mentioning this?
7. Explain the importance of studying the Old Testament for Christians. What potential challenges or misunderstandings might arise from neglecting the Old Testament?

8. Paul asks a question in verse 19 as to the reason for the Law. Using the chart below and summary phrases, identify where in Galatians 3:19-29 Paul alludes to these reasons for the Law.

The Law Reveals to Us Our Sin

The Law Restrains Us from Our Sin

The Law Re-Routes Us to Christ

9. Read Romans 7:7. How does the law help reveal to us our sin? How does the law prepare us for the grace found in Jesus?
10. What are you most tempted to look to your own efforts to make yourself acceptable to God?
11. To help you examine your own heart ask yourself: What situations tend to make you feel discouraged or hopeless? What accomplishments or qualities make you feel most proud?
12. In what ways does understanding God's law deepen your appreciation for the grace offered through Christ?
13. Paul uses the word "offspring" again in verse 29. How does this idea of offspring connect the beginning and end of this week's passage?