

## Galatians 3:15–25

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### Galatians 3:15–25

1. How do men confirm a covenant?
  - “I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.” Contracts are confirmed by an oath or a promise (Hebrews 6:16). Once a contract has been confirmed; it cannot be changed. This is the principle of INVIOABILITY.
  - “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made.” Paul refers to the promises made to Abraham (Genesis 12:2–3, 7; 15:4–6; 17:7–8; 22:17–18).

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2. What three great promises did God make to Abraham (Genesis 12:3)?
  - “Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.” This describes the boundaries of Canaan from south to north (Genesis 15:18–21; 1 Kings 4:21).
  - “I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great.” The fact that 75 Hebrews grew in two centuries to a nation of 2 million is amazing (Genesis 12:3; Deuteronomy 26:5; 1 Kings 3:8).
  - “In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” This is the promise of Christ which Paul will demonstrate next (Genesis 12:3; Acts 3:23–26; Galatians 3:16).

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3. How did God confirm His covenant?
  - “For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself” (Hebrews 6:13–18). Paul refers to these as two immutable things, the oath and the promise.
  - “Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one” (Galatians 3:20). The covenant with Moses was a unilateral covenant, a covenant of one (Genesis 15:10, 17; Jeremiah 34:18–19).

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### 4. What did God give the Law of Moses? (3:19)

- “Wherefore then serveth the law?” The Law was made for sinners (1 Timothy 1:9). It was given so that sin would appear to be sin (Romans 3:20; 5:20; 7:8, 13).
- “It was added because of transgressions.” The was for sinners, given to sinners, that they might know the were sinners in need of redemption (Hebrews 10:1–4).
- “Till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.” Paul makes the case that the Law was never of the character of the “promise”. The promise was inviolable; the promise was confirmed, the promise must be fulfilled. The Law came in beside on account of the effect of sin. It was temporary (Jeremiah 31:31).

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### 5. Does Paul indicate when the Law would end?

- “Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.” Till the seed, Christ, came is the time limit specified. The temporary nature of the Law is a central theme of the OT prophets (Jeremiah 31:31; Ezekiel 16:60–63; Isaiah 56:1–8; Psalms 110; Daniel 9:27).
- “Till the seed should come...” or, “to thy seed which is Christ...” The promise was not made to the nation of Israel as the blessing, but to Jesus as the blessing (Isaiah 53).
- “To whom the promise was made...” The promise was given to Abraham (Genesis 12:1–3). However, the object of the promise was Jesus (Galatians 3:17). The inheritance is the forgiveness (Acts 3:26).

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6. Who was the mediator of the first covenant? The second covenant?
- “[The Law] was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.” Moses received the Law originally written by the finger of God and given to Moses through the angels (Deuteronomy 5:22–23; 33:2; Acts 7:38, 53; Hebrews 2:2).
  - “Till the seed should come...” Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant; however, that is not the point of mentioning Moses (*cf.* 1 Timothy 2:5; Psalms 106:23). The point being that there was no mediator with respect to the covenant of Abraham; that covenant was a unilateral and unconditional covenant that depended upon only the faithfulness of God (Galatians 3:20).

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7. Who is the “we” in Galatians 3:23?
- “But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.” The contrast is between the two systems of justification: the Law and the Faith, or the Gospel. The latter revealed through the Apostles with the Holy Spirit sent down from Heaven.
  - “We...” Who is this? It is the “all” of verse 22 (both grammatically and logically). This is consistent with Paul’s statement in Romans 3:23. Moreso, it is the point of the context, “there is neither Jew nor Greek.” The end of the Law was Christ (Galatians 3:24; Romans 10:4).

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8. Describe the duties of a “guardian” or “schoolmaster”? Is the law a schoolmaster today?
- “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.” In the context Paul was speaking to Jews and Gentiles seeking to pervert the purpose of the Law. He is describing its “function” in God’s plan. In this sense the Law remains a schoolmaster, it retains its function. Its purpose being fulfilled (Matthew 5:18).
  - “Was...” However, the unique relation that both Jews and Gentiles sustained to the Law in the first century, cannot be duplicated now. This does not mean that the Law of Moses is not important or should not be studied. On the contrary, we need to understand it properly.

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9. How are we justified by faith?
- “That we might be justified by faith.” The contrast is between two systems (vv. 22, 23), the Law and the Faith. Under the Law justification was only possible through sinlessness. However, the prophets spoke of justification by faith (Genesis 15:6; Habakkuk 2:4). These OT worthies were justified by faith in a coming Redeemer (*cf.* Hebrews 11), the Messiah, Jesus (John 8:56; Galatians 3:8). It was this promised Redeemer in whom Abraham and all who are His children believed. We are all justified by faith in Christ, belief in Him as the Saviour and Sovereign.

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## Today's Take Aways

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1. The spiritual descendants of Abraham are the heirs, not the physical descendants.
2. The Law of Moses was temporary, for Israel, with a specific purpose which aided in the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise (*cf.* Romans 9:6–8).
3. Jesus of Nazareth is the ultimate fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham.
4. The promise was made without a mediator, both the Law and the Gospel have a mediator.
5. The Law is a guardian whose function was to point me to Jesus and the need for grace through faith.