

"Doctrine of Justification and Sanctification"

Galatians 3-4

Part 4

Introduction: The past two studies that we have looked at have focused upon two topics. The first topic was Abraham. The Judaizers had taught that justification and sanctification could only be accomplished as a person came under the Law. But Paul refuted this when he pointed to Abraham because Abraham was saved 600 years before the Law was ever given and he was saved about 14 years before he was circumcised. Therefore, Abraham is the father of all who believe because he has set the example of the way of salvation through faith. Keep in mind also that Abraham was a *Gentile* and so he sets the example for all *Gentiles* and *Jews*.

The second topic that Paul touched on was the Law. He reminded the Galatians that if any were under the Law then they were cursed.

Notice Galatians 3:10

The Law called for the death of the Law breaker and there was not one person in Galatia or anywhere in the world that could keep the Law. To break one part of the Law was to break the entire Law.

James 2:10

¹⁰ For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

The Law appeals to the flesh because the flesh likes to do something to earn salvation or to bring about holiness in our lives. But the Law only brings a curse for it can never bring a blessing to us. Paul went on to say that Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the Law when He died upon the cross.

Notice Galatians 3:13-14

Jesus took the judgment that should have been upon us and He bought us with His blood and now the blessings of Abraham come upon us. We then receive the Promise of the Spirit by FAITH and not works.

This then brings us to where we are tonight.

➤ **The Unchangeable Covenant**

Notice Galatians 3:15

When we first read this verse, it seems to be completely out of place but the truth is Paul is making a point here that is very important. Before we get into the verse let me tell you something else that the Judaizers were teaching. They would acknowledge that Abraham was justified by faith and that he was justified before he was circumcised but then they taught that when the Law came it changed the way of justification and that man was now required to keep the Law. So, their teaching was that when the Law was given everything changed and now justification and sanctification were by faith plus keeping the Law.

Paul then in verse 15 corrects their teaching once again.

Notice Galatians 3:15 again.

Paul now uses the example of a covenant made between two people in the Roman Empire. When two people entered into a covenant they determined the specifics and when it was agreed upon the covenant was then ratified. Once this was done it could not be changed. Notice the words of Gromacki.

"Within courts of law a covenant agreed to and signed by both parties cannot be changed later by the will of only one participant. The sealed word of both men is binding upon both parties. These men must respect the legal requirements of such a contract ("a man's covenant") Quite often a person may orally agree to a contract, shake hands on it, and later back out on it. Once the contract has been ratified or "confirmed" in writing, with both signatures affixed, it becomes obligatory to both people to maintain their respective part of the bargain. At no time in the future can one party unilaterally impose upon the covenant any new restrictions. He cannot "disannul" the contract. He cannot render it to be null and void. He cannot get out from under his obligations simply because he wants to. Also, he cannot "add" any new restriction to the responsibilities of the other party. What was written originally must stand. If contracts could be broken easily, the worlds of business and politics would be full of chaos."

So, what is Paul saying in all of this? Let us notice the Abrahamic Covenant.

Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18

⁵ *And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.*

⁶ *And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.*

⁷ *And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.*

⁸ And he said, LORD God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

⁹ And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.

¹⁰ And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.

¹¹ And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹² And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.

¹⁷ And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.

¹⁸ In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

God made a covenant with Abraham and in this He ratified the promise of blessing which was justification to all who would believe/exercise faith. This covenant rested completely upon God's faithfulness because Abraham never walked between the animals. It was a covenant for Abraham and it was given to him as a promise. The point that Paul is making is that the Law never changed the Abrahamic Covenant.

Hebrews 6:13-18

¹³ For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself,

¹⁴ Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

¹⁵ And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

¹⁶ For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

¹⁷ Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

¹⁸ That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

Notice Galatians 3:16

The promises were made to Abraham and to his Seed not seeds. The promises were made to Abraham and to Jesus. What promises are Paul talking about?

Genesis 12:2-3

² *And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:*

³ *And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

These are some of the Abrahamic promises that were also ratified in the Covenant. These promises would all find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Namely the promise that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed. The ultimate fulfillment will be in the coming Kingdom.

Notice Galatians 3:16 again.

Paul is making a point here that if the Law nullified the Covenant, then the Covenant was made void before the fulfillment ever came to be, because the fulfillment was in Jesus Christ. If the word SEED was plural, it could then apply to Abraham's descendants before the giving of the Law and then it might appear that the promises were fulfilled in his descendants. But the word SEED is singular and it refers strictly to Jesus Christ who came some 1400 years after the Law. It is through Jesus Christ alone that blessings come upon us who are believers.

Ephesians 1:3

³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

Notice the words of Barton.

"This verse would probably make more sense in the flow of the text if it appeared in parentheses. But the point is important. The promises that Abraham received from God were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Now, if the promises were meant for Abraham and his many descendants alone (to all his seeds), then it might appear that the promises had already been fulfilled, and that the law had come as a new phase in God's dealing with his people. But the promises had been given to the "Seed"—that is, Abraham's most famous descendant, who came many years after both Abraham and the law. The law has an important function, but salvation by grace through faith was God's promise from

the beginning of time until the judgment day. While language experts argue that "seed" can also be a plural ("The farmer plants seed" certainly refers to more than one seed), Paul correctly applied the singular form of the word in this instance. The Jews had always believed that God's promises would be fulfilled in a single person, the Messiah. God's promise remained intact even though Abraham himself only had one descendant through Sarah. Further, the promises were not fulfilled prior to the giving of the law, nor by the giving of the law. Instead, they were fulfilled when Christ came as Abraham's "Seed." Christ alone fulfilled the messianic aspects of God's covenant and showed that God's promises are in effect for all time. Many claimed to be rightful heirs to God's promises to Abraham by their being his offspring, but Paul pointed out the only true, rightful heir was Jesus. The covenant that God shared with Abraham had been reaffirmed many times, but only Christ fulfilled the Abrahamic covenant as the unique Seed. The Jews certainly enjoyed many privileges and responsibilities as part of the Abrahamic covenant, but blessing the nations was the Messiah's role. The promises to Abraham go just to Christ. (They don't reside in the Jewish people.) In and through Christ they go to individual believers. Christ is our hope of blessing."

Notice Galatians 3:17

Paul tells us that the Law was given 430 years after the promise. This is probably referring to the last confirmation of the Covenant given to Jacob.

Genesis 46:1-4

And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac.

² *And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I.*

³ *And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation:*

⁴ *I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.*

From this announcement to Jacob until the giving of the Law was 430 years. So, the point that Paul is making is that the Law did not disannul/make of none effect the promise that justification is by faith.

I just want to stop here and remind us that the Abrahamic Covenant has never been cast aside. In this Covenant there were three special promises. They were LAND, SEED, and

BLESSING. Many will tell you that the Abrahamic Covenant has been made void because of Abraham's actions/sins. But we see in Genesis 46 it was given to Jacob. The Covenant never rested upon the faithfulness of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. The Covenant rested upon the faithfulness of God. It was and is an unconditional covenant. We know what the Bible says concerning God.

Titus 1:2

² *In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;*

Going back to the 430 years it was in that period that God blessed the patriarchs on the bases of faith alone and the giving of the Law could not change that in any way.

Notice Galatians 3:18

Paul comes right back to the main point and he makes it very clear. The "inheritance" spoken of here is "righteousness/justification by faith." If justification is by the Law, then it is something to be earned and it cannot then be of promise. The Judaizers wanted to mix faith and Law but when that happens it is no more of faith but all Law. The two cannot exist together. Justification is only by grace through faith. It is given as a Promise. The promise is that when faith is exercised in the finished work of Jesus Christ then justification is given as a gift to the believer.

Conclusion:

No matter what comes along God's Covenant will never be changed. Those who are struggling to live a life pleasing to God so that they will be accepted are constantly trying to claw their way to a place where they can say they have attained. But the Truth is that they will never reach that pinnacle by works. They will never have peace in their lives. They will never have rest in their lives. It is a hopeless struggle in which they will always view God as the Judge and never as a loving Father. It is not until the sinner brings their sin before God and abandons his hopeless struggle. It is then that the grace of God is poured upon us and the peace of God fills the heart.