

A Promise of Permanent Union | Galatians 3:15-29

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. 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. 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. For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise, but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

Why then the law? It was added because of transgression, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one. 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. But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 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. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

The Permanent Promise

- a. "And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures." (2 Peter 3:15-16)
1. God's Faithfulness
 - b. Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:1-3)
 - c. He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." And he brought him all these, but them in half, and laid each half over against the other...when the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. (Genesis 15:9-10a, 17)

The Purpose of the Law

1. Reveals Sin
 - a. "The law given in order to make transgressions obvious, and in this way to compel men to acknowledge their guilt." (John Calvin)
2. Temporary
 - a. "The law required a mediator because sinners cannot come directly into God's presence; we stand at a distance...the promise came to Abraham firsthand from God; and the law comes to the people third hand: God – the angels – Moses the mediator – the people." (Philip Ryken)
3. Leads to Faith
 - a. "The law can prove that we are sinners, but it cannot make us right with God. It is not life-giving; it is transgression increasing, and therefore death producing. But the law can lead us to Christ. For only when the law reveals our sin will we ever start to look for the free grace that God has for us in the gospel." (Philip Ryken)

The Partnership of Faith and Works

1. Identity
2. Union
 - a. "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:3-4)
3. Unity
4. Forgiveness of sin

Benediction | Colossians 2:12-14

having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside, nailing it to the cross.