



# GALATIANS

VERSE-BY-VERSE



## Session 10: Galatians 3:15-23

### Galatians 3:15-18 | The Assurance of the Abrahamic Covenant

- Verse 15 –
  - When Paul says, **I speak after the manner of men**, he means “I speak according to man’s standards.” He will use **the manner of men** as a basis of his thinking (just as in Matt. 7:11).
  - The *human standard* is that a covenant, once confirmed, cannot be changed nor annulled.
- Verse 16 –
  - This verse points out the need for *verbal plenary inspiration* (one of the bedrock doctrines of our ministry). This principle is of utmost importance in Biblical translation, and when it is not followed, the results can lead a person to a false conclusion.
  - The Scripture consistently speaks of **seed** (singular), **And not to seeds as of many; but as of one**. Compare Genesis 13:15, 17:8, 22:18, etc. Because of a failure to translate with the principle of verbal plenary inspiration, many translations (such as NASB) fail to keep the Hebrew word in the singular.
  - The singular seed must be kept because it is a reference to Christ.
  - What this says and what it does not say:
    - It says that Israel (the land) is the inheritance of Christ, who is the seed of Abraham.
    - It says that the Abrahamic covenant is ultimately fulfilled in Christ.
    - It says that the land of Israel is held *in trust* by the descendants of Abraham until the promised Descendant shall come (see Gen. 17:9).
    - It does *not* say that the modern Jewish nation has no right to the land.
    - It does *not say* that the land covenant with Abraham has been annulled.
- Verses 17-18 –
  - These verses are part of Paul’s argument that the Gospel, like the Abrahamic covenant, is a promise of faith, and that the law does not affect it.
  - Paul’s reference to 430 years helps make clear the chronology from the giving of the covenant to the giving of the law.
    - Those who claim that the children of Israel were in Israel 430 years need to contend with this passage of Scripture.
    - The erroneous view comes from an erroneous understanding of Exodus 12:40-41.
  - The bottom line in Paul’s argumentation is that **if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise**. Thus Law and Grace are not the same, not compatible, not interchangeable, not to be intermingled.

### Galatians 3:19-28 | The Purpose of the Law

- Verse 19 –
  - If the Abrahamic Covenant (i.e.: *land to the Seed*) was not based on law, then the natural question arises: **Wherefore then serveth the law?**
    - Paul answers the question in a clear manner (though the modern church has muddled the clarity).

- The law was **added because of transgressions**.
        - Not, as is commonly taught, *so that we can learn how bad we are*, but because *the nation of Israel had to remain a viable entity till the seed should come to whom the promise was made*.
      - In itself, this shouts a requirement for a dispensational interpretation of Scripture, for it has the word **till**, a time word (ἄχρις[achris] - until/as far as). The word itself requires that *after Christ the Law become useless*.
      - How was the Law **ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator**?
        - The word **ordained** is διατάσσω [diatasso], which is “thoroughly set in order.” The **angels** therefore *thoroughly set the law in order*.
        - Angels can be spirit beings or human messengers.
        - If this is a reference to the revelation of Deuteronomy 33:2, then angels would be the correct interpretation, and we have insight into the “behind the scenes” implementation of the Law.
      - Who was the **mediator**?
        - Many assume Christ, but I think that Christ is the **seed** that would come, God is the giver of the Law, the angels are the ones to set the law in order, and Moses is the mediator (God handing the Law *for the people* to the hands of the mediator, Moses).
        - See Ex. 20:19-22.
- Verse 20 –
  - There are two parties in mediation, and **God is one**, thus another party is needed. In this case, the nation which was put under the Law.
  - Note that the Abrahamic covenant *didn't have a mediator* because it was one-sided!
- Verse 21 –
  - The **promises of God** are primarily a reference to the promises to Abraham, but are applicable to any of God's grace-based promises.
  - The law, though not based on promise, was not **against the promises of God** but was *alongside the promises for a temporary period*.
  - The Law could not **have given life** because that would have made the Law itself to be **against the promises of God** (i.e., supplanting the promises made 430 years earlier).
- Verse 22 –
  - Here **the scripture** (literally, *the Writing*, as in YLT) is a reference to the law. The law **concluded all** (i.e.: “*shut up the whole*” -YLT) under sin.
  - Prior to the law, there was sin, but it was not imputed (Rom. 5:13). After *the Writing* then, sin was imputed, and the only hope was a future day of faith.
- Verse 23 –
  - The purpose of the law was to *keep* the nation until faith should come (see v. 25). But during this time, Israel was **shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed**.
  - Those who claim that people have always been saved “by grace through faith” need to reconcile their thinking with this verse. They were **shut up unto the faith** (that is, confined by the law and unable to live by faith). Furthermore, the faith had not even been revealed! They knew nothing of *by grace through faith*.