

Galatians– Embracing Grace and Truth

Facilitated by Sister Patricia Weaver

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Thursday September 17 , 2026

Women of Excellence

Bible Study 7pm

Memory Verse

Galatians 3:28 (NLT)

There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus

Short Introduction

Paul's letter to the Galatians is called the Path to Christian Freedom. It proclaims the reality of believers' liberty in Christ—freedom from the law and the power of sin, and freedom of serving the true and the living Lord.

A group of teachers had traveled from Jerusalem to Galatia and were insisting that non-Jewish believers must obey Jewish laws and traditions. They taught that a person was saved by following the law of Moses (with emphasis on circumcision for males, the sign of the covenant), in addition to faith in Christ. In other words, Gentiles had to first become Jews in order to become Christians. Some Galatians had been convinced by these teachings, and many had become confused. Paul opposed the false teachers called the (Judaizers) by showing that the law is powerless to save anyone. Only God's grace through personal faith in Christ makes people right with God. Amen!

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The Superiority of the Promise (Galatians 3:15–18)

Galatians 3:15–18 (NASB95)

15 Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is *only* a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it. **16** Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as *referring* to many, but *rather* to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ. **17** What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. **18** For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.

Galatians 3:15–18 (NLT)

15 Dear brothers and sisters, here's an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or amend an irrevocable agreement, so it is in this case. **16** God gave the promises to Abraham and his child. And notice that the Scripture doesn't say "to his children," as if it meant many descendants. Rather, it says "to his child"—and that, of course, means Christ. **17** This is what I am trying to say: The agreement God made with Abraham could not be canceled 430 years later when God gave the law to Moses. God would be breaking his promise. **18** For if the inheritance could be received by keeping the law, then it would not be the result of accepting God's promise. But God graciously gave it to Abraham as a promise.

Four reasons are given for affirming the superiority of the covenant of promise: its confirmation, its Christ-centeredness, its chronology, and its completeness.

POINT 1 - ITS CONFIRMATION

Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations; even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it. (3:15) NASB

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Four reasons are given for affirming the superiority of the covenant of promise: its confirmation, its Christ-centeredness, its chronology, and its completeness. First of all, the covenant of promise was superior because it was confirmed as irrevocable and unchangeable. This can be illustrated by reference to a human covenant. **In terms of human relations**, Paul says, **even ... a man's covenant, ... when it has been ratified**, allows **no one** to set **it aside or** add **conditions to it**. Even human beings hold their covenants to be never broken or dishonored. Once **ratified**, they are not able to be changed or reversed.

Covenant is a general term for a *binding agreement that* always involves two or more specific parties. *When God made the covenant with Abraham, whose name was then Abram, He promised, “ ‘I am a shield to you; your reward shall be very great.... This man [Eliezer] will not be your heir; but one who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.’ And He took him outside and said, ‘Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’ Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness. And He said to him, ‘I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it’ ” (Gen. 15:1, 4–7).*

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When Abram asked, “O Lord God, *how may I know that I shall possess it?*” (v. 8), God ratified the covenant by a ceremony common to the ancient Near East. On the Lord’s instructions, Abram took a heifer, a female goat, a ram, a turtledove, and a pigeon, then cut them in half and laid the two sides of each animal opposite one another, with a path in between. At sunset, God caused a deep sleep, as well as “*terror and great darkness,*” to fall on Abram. After reassuring Abram of His promises, the Lord symbolically passed between the animals in the form of “*a smoking oven and a flaming torch*” (vv. 12–17).

“If, therefore,” Paul argued, “**a man’s covenant**, when **ratified**, cannot be set **aside** or have **conditions** added to it, how much less can a covenant God makes with Himself be (invalid) annulled or changed ? Even God’s own covenant with Moses did not nullify or amend His covenant with Abraham, because God had made the former covenant permanent and unchangeable.”

Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you in this section of the lesson?
2. What does Paul mean by a human covenant?
3. How does God’s unchanging promise brings comfort?

POINT 2 - ITS CHRIST-CENTEREDNESS

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Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ. (3:16) NASB

Second, Paul argues that the covenant of promise was superior to the covenant of law because it was Christ-centered. The unchangeable covenant involving faith directly relates to God’s last and final covenant established through His Son, Jesus **Christ**.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who inspired the writing of both Genesis and Galatians, Paul quoted the Genesis passage. The term **seed**, he declares, is singular in Genesis 22:18. It was therefore not **referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed.”**

In an even earlier promise, a clearly singular use of *seed* also refers to Christ. To the serpent in the Garden of Eden, God said, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He [singular, referring to “her seed”] shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel” **(Gen. 3:15).**

The one and only heir of every promise of God is Christ. Every promise given in the covenant with Abraham was fulfilled in Jesus Christ and only Jesus Christ. Therefore, the only way a person can participate in the promised blessings to Abraham is to be a fellow heir with Christ through faith in Him.

There has never been nor can there ever be salvation apart from the finished work of **Christ**. The covenant with Abraham was fulfilled in the covenant of Jesus Christ, and therefore the covenant of law, whatever its character and purpose, did not abolish or modify those two covenants, which really merged into one.

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Discussion Questions

1. What does Paul mean by “seed” in Galatians 3:16?
2. How does faith in Christ connect us to Abraham’s promise?

POINT 3 - ITS CHRONOLOGY

What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. (3:17) NASB

Third, the covenant of promise was superior to the covenant of law because of chronology. **The Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God.** Because the covenant with Abraham was permanent, no amount of time could **nullify the promise**.

The **four hundred and thirty years** refers to the time elapsed between God’s last statement of the Abrahamic covenant and His giving of **the Law** to Moses. The Lord repeated the promise to Abraham’s son Isaac (Gen. 26:24) and then to his grandson Jacob (28:15). **The Law** came 645 years after Abraham, but 215 years later God repeated the Abrahamic covenant to Jacob, exactly **four hundred and thirty years** prior to the Mosaic covenant at Sinai.

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Even the covenant with Abraham did not *establish* the principle of salvation by faith but only verified it. From the time of Adam's fall, faith had been the only means of man's becoming right with God.

Discussion Questions

1. What stood out to you in this section of the lesson?
2. How long after Abraham's Promise was the Law given?

POINT 4 - ITS COMPLETENESS

For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise. (3:18) NASB

Fourth, the covenant of promise is superior to the covenant of law because it is more complete. Paul's point is that an **inheritance ... based on law** depends on man's performance, whereas the one **granted ... to Abraham by means of a promise** depends on God's power. The term **granted** mean (to give graciously) and points to the permanent character of the inheritance. The principles behind the two types of **inheritance** are incompatible. One is by God's law and man's works and the other by God's grace and man's faith. Not only that, but the abilities to fulfill the covenants are of an infinitely different order. Man *cannot succeed* in perfectly keeping the **law**, and God *cannot fail* in perfectly keeping the **promise**. Because the covenant of **promise** is complete, the covenant of **law** can in no way improve or change it.

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By definition, an **inheritance** is not earned but simply received, and to work for that which is already guaranteed is foolish and unnecessary. Trying to earn the **inheritance** God promises through faith in His Son is much worse than foolish. To add works of the **law** to faith in God's **promise** is to "*nullify the grace of God*" and to cause Christ to have "*died needlessly*" (2:21).

Discussion Questions

1. **How does God's promise to Abraham demonstrate His faithfulness?**
2. **What is most meaningful to you about being a part of God's family?**

Closing Prayer