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## Galatians 3

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Galatians 3.

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### Topics.

- Foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?
- The Gospel preached to Abraham.
- Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.
- Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.
- We might receive the promised Spirit through faith.
- God's promises to Abraham.
- The law was put in place through angels.
- The Scripture imprisoned everything under sin.
- The law was our guardian/schoolmaster until Christ came.
- You are Abraham's offspring and heirs according to promise.

**The previous chapter:** in the previous chapter Paul spoke of false brothers who had secretly slipped into the church at Jerusalem enticing brothers and sisters back under Moses Law and Jewish customs turning them away from God's grace and bringing them into slavery. Paul told them that he would not submit to them for even a minute so that the gospel of grace would be preserved for the Galatians. He spoke of Jews not being sinners like the Gentile and of no-one is justified by works of the law, but only through faith in Jesus Christ.

**NOTE:** for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

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### GALATIANS 3:1-5

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#### O Foolish Galatians! Who has Bewitched You?

- **Galatians 3:1-5:** O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. <sup>2</sup>Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? <sup>3</sup>Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? <sup>4</sup>Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? <sup>5</sup>Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law or by hearing with faith.

**NOTE:** to understand the glory and majesty of this chapter it helps to know beforehand that the Spirit in focus is the Spirit of righteousness also called, the Holy Spirit, it is that Spirit that God is pleased to impute to those who faithfully follow Christ and trust in him for their eternal salvation. Paul brilliantly shines a floodlight on the God's abundant grace that is spiritually and gloriously gift-wrapped in the eternal promised Spirit of God.

**Bewitched:** in this context carries the idea of the minds of the faithful in Christ being deceived.

**The context of this chapter:** is righteousness and justification being obtained by faith and grace contrasted to righteousness and justification being obtained by Israel's ceremonial laws of purification which were also called, Moses Law. They were given to Moses and the nation of Israel by

God at Mount Sinai, and were written in a book. For over four-thousand years faithful Jews kept these laws (circumcision and many ceremonial religious rituals etc.). The brothers and sisters in the Galatian church were being strongly influenced by certain Jewish religious leaders who were enticing them back into believing that the only way to righteousness and justification that leads to eternal life was by being circumcised and keeping the religious laws and ceremonial rules as recorded in the book of Leviticus.

**The Law:** from Strong's Concordance can refer to any of the following:

- Anything that is established, a custom, or a command of any law whatsoever.
- A law or rule producing a state approved of by God.
- The Mosaic Law referring to the volume of the law and its content.
- The Pentateuch (the first five books of Moses).
- The Christian religion and the law demanding faith.
- Christ and the law of love and the moral instruction given by God.

The Law in the context of this chapter refers to the Jewish religious ceremonial rites and the laws of purification.

**The Spirit:** in this context refers to, the Spirit of righteousness (also called the gift of righteousness) and the expression, "Receiving the Spirit" refers to the Spirit that by repentance toward God transforms the desire of a sinners heart to live a life that honours God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is that Spirit that influences the mind and heart toward the things of God (i.e., prayer, worship reading the Bible and fellowship with others that are in Christ etc.).

This Spirit (also called the Holy Spirit) is that Spirit that by faith crowns and clothes those in Christ with righteousness and not only assures them that God's favour is upon them for their eternal glory, but also imparts various gifts for serving the Lord, for benefiting those in Christ's family and for encouraging and helping those outside of God's Kingdom.

**Begun by the Spirit:** means that the Galatian brothers and sisters spiritual walk in Christ began by faith and grace, not self-effort.

**By the flesh:** in this context refers to doing things by self-effort contrasted to faith, it refers to the Jews keeping the ceremonial laws of purification to earn salvation and be right with God.

**Suffer so many things in vain:** the words, "Did you suffer so many things in vain: (v4) refer to the persecution the Galatians brothers and sisters would have suffered, from the Jews who held strictly to Moses law and Jewish customs and traditions and the words, "If indeed it was in vain?" (v4) shows that Paul was hoping they would forsake those who were bewitching and enticing them to turn from faith and grace to be counted as worthy, accepted and righteous before God and go back under Moses laws of purification and Jewish religious laws and ceremonial customs and traditions to be right with God instead of trusting in grace that God imputes to those who trust in Christ for their righteousness rather than trust in their own futile self-effort.

**The practical application for us today:** it is very easy for us to fall back under some degree or level of self-effort and works since human pride and ego prefers self-effort to grace because self-effort produces self-righteousness and this allows pride to rise up and exalt itself above others which in turn produces a heightened sense of spiritual superiority (howbeit a false one) thus the reason we have to forsake any thought of attaining to our own righteousness by self-effort.

## **Self-effort can take the form of trusting in any of the following:**

- Regular attendance of church and Bible reading.
- Singing in a choir and faithfully attending all practice meetings.
- Teaching the Lord's word or preaching sermons.
- Faithfully keeping religious rites and ceremonial practices.
- Praying, fellowshiping and worshipping the Lord etc.

Obviously all these things are good in themselves and spiritually healthy to practice, but the moment we think they have any power to make us righteous before God or trust in them to make us worthy to be accepted by God and deserving of eternal life is the moment we nullify the grace Christ achieved for us on the cross.

**He who supplies the Spirit:** Paul's words, "He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you" (v5) refers to God who inputs the Spirit of righteousness (also called God's Holy Spirit) which gifts various brothers and sisters with spiritual abilities and talents for the building up of God's Kingdom while the "Works of the law" (v5) refer to keeping Moses law and the Jewish ceremonial laws of purification.

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## **GALATIANS 3:6-9**

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### **The Gospel Preached to Abraham.**

- **Galatians 3:6-9:** just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"? <sup>7</sup>Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. <sup>8</sup>And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." <sup>9</sup>So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

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Paul makes a statement that Scripture foreseeing certain events that would come to pass announced them beforehand, these climatic events that would change the world and were proclaimed long before they come to pass refer to God's promise to Abraham that:

- In thee and in thy seed shall all nations be blessed (Gen 12:3) (Gen 18:18) (Gen 22:18).

God in this promise is telling Abraham that his seed (the Messiah, the Christ) will descend from him and that salvation to eternal life and glory would be through him. This means that the Gospel that was preached to Abraham was that the Messiah the Christ would come from his very own loins and that by him all nations (Jews and Gentiles) would be blessed (made happy). Abraham not only rejoiced at this promise but by faith saw Christ's day and was glad (John 8:56) revealing to us two things:

1. That Abraham's faith rested solely on God's word and the promised seed, (the Christ to come).
2. That Abraham's Christ is our Christ and our faith and blessing is the same as Abraham faith and blessing.

The Gospel (glad tidings) that was preached to Abraham is the same Gospel (though not with the same fullness of revelation) that we preach today The Gospel message that was proclaimed to Abraham declared two central truths:

1. That all nations (both Jews and Gentiles) will be counted righteous, justified and saved to eternal life in the same way that Abraham was which was by faith and not by the religious legal system or works of the law.

2. That through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed (made happy).

(Gen. 12:3) (Gen. 22:17) (Acts. 3:25) (Rom. 4:13) (Gal. 3:16).

**NOTE:** when it is said that "all nations" will be blessed, it does not mean that every individual of all nations will enjoy this happiness, because not all are in Christ, nor do all have his righteousness imputed to them, nor do all have faith in him. There are many that will be condemned with the world thus the meaning of the words, "all nations" means "Some of all nations" i.e., God through Christ will save some Jews and some Gentiles from all nations in contrast to God saving Hebrews and Jews only.

**The faith of the early fathers:** the following words Jesus spoke to the legalist Jews, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56) and the following words from the author of Hebrews, "For unto us (in the New Testament) was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them (in the Old Testament): but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Hebrews 4:2). These verses reveal the following two things:

1. During the Old Testament era faith for salvation to eternal life and not trust in the religious legal law (which majority of Israel did) was required by God in the same way as it is today.
2. That, those who were faithful toward God were not looking toward a passing or short-lived promise, but rather lived with the anticipation of the coming of their promised Messiah the Christ. Though they did not have the fullness of revelation of the Gospel that we have today they understood that righteousness was by faith in believing the word and promises of God and in their excited joy and anticipated hope of the arrival of their Messiah the Christ. They understood that like Abraham who was counted and accepted as righteous by God because of his faith and because his believing was fastened upon the word and promise of God that they also by faith would in the same manner be owned and accepted by God as righteous in the same way.

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## **GALATIANS 3:10-12**

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### **All who rely on Works of the Law are Under a Curse.**

- **Galatians 3:10-12:** For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." <sup>11</sup>Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." <sup>12</sup>But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them."

The Book of the Law refers to Moses Law, the Ten Commandments, the ceremonial laws and the Jewish laws of purification thus those who rely on the law for their righteousness and justification are under a curse because if they break just one law, they are pronounced guilty of breaking all the law. This is because the law is such a hard taskmaster it requires every law to be kept if a person is going to trust in it for their righteousness and acceptance by God to be counted worthy of eternal life. All who trust in the law are clearly placing themselves under a curse because it is humanly impossible to perfectly fulfil the law and those who do not perfectly fulfil the law are declared guilty and condemned to eternal death by it.

This is because the eternal law of Sin and Death states:

- The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).

This means that whoever does not perfectly keep all the commandments of the law is declared by the law guilty and therefore condemned to mortal and eternal death (2 Cor. 3:9). This is why being under the Law is called

a curse, but there is an eternal and divine law that by grace supersedes the law of Sin and Death it is called, the Good News because it states that all who trust in Christ have been granted the free gift of God which is:

- Eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:23), because, the law of the Spirit of life has set them free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2)

This means that the law of Sin and Death has no power over those who believe in Christ and faithfully follow him. This promise is guaranteed because it is not dependent on our self-effort, but on our faith, this is why the Scriptures state:

- Faith is counted to whoever believe in God who raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead who was delivered up to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification (Rom. 4:22-25).

And why Paul wrote:

- The promise to Abraham depends on faith in order that it may rest on grace and in this way be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring (Jews and Gentiles) (Rom. 4:16).

God in his foreknowledge and knowing human nature knew if He had made eternal salvation dependent on our self-effort there is no-way He could guarantee or promise it to any of us, thus the reason God in His great wisdom made eternal salvation dependent on faith. This is another reason the Gospel of Christ is called the Good News.

**NOTE:** it is not the Ten Commandments that are at fault, since they are not only perfect, but express God's perfect will, it is our corrupt fallen nature with all its sinful dysfunctions and aberrations (self, ego, pride, greed, lust etc.,) that that are the problem since they prevent all of us from attaining to the perfection the Law demands.

Paul's entire focus in his letter so far has been to convince the Galatians that they cannot rely on the law to save them.

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**Living by faith is:** believing that God counts us righteous because of our faith contrasted to self-effort it is having the faith that Abraham had. He believed against all the odds (i.e., he was one-hundred and Sarah was ninety) and he didn't consider the condition of their bodies or their age but rather chose to believe God's promise, so it is with us, the body is corrupted it is full of sinful dysfunctions and aberrations that limit us from attaining to the holy perfection the law requires. This is the reason we need to take our eyes off our bodies and stop relying on self-effort and fully surrender our trust to God's promise that states:

- With the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved because the Scripture state, "Everyone who believes in Christ will not be put to shame" for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him because, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom. 10:1-21).

**Shall live by the Law:** means that those who are going to rely on keeping the law for righteousness must keep all the law since if they break any part of it they will be harshly judged by it, because the law has no compassion and no grace if it is broken it without mercy declares those who broke it guilty and condemns them to death. Since Paul clearly understood that those who rely on being righteous by keeping the law will in reality be declared guilty and condemned by the very law they are trusting in it is easy to see why the bulk of his letters are spent opposing those who entice new converts to Christ back under the law and why he shines a brilliant floodlight on faith and grace.

**Grace and the Ten Commandments:** obviously God's desire is that we all aim to keep the Ten Commandments since they are an expression of His perfect will, but since the Lord understands we cannot attain to their standard of Holiness perfectly our aim is not to abide by them in an effort

to earn our righteousness and justification (since we would fail every time), but rather because the spirit behind the law is love, because each law protects a human being from harm. In the book of Romans Paul states:

- Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:10).

The spirit of the law is to protect the innocent from physical, financial, sexual, emotional and spiritual harm, thus those who know God aim to keep the Law because it is the right and loving thing to do. It fulfils the Ten Commandments regarding man, and the Royal Law:

- Love thy neighbour as thyself (Matt. 22:37-39) (Mark 12:28-31) (James 2:8).

Added to these it not only fulfils the law of love and pleases God, but also brings a good testimony to His name and the name of Jesus and the Christian faith. Those who belong to Christ aim to keep the law not to get saved, but because they are saved. They understand that righteousness is a gift of God that comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and cannot be earned by self-effort. They know that the law is splendid as a guide to an understanding of God's will, but as a means of reunion with God, the God we have sinned against, it is a hopeless failure nevertheless both law and grace go together, the law without the Gospel is diagnosis without remedy, but the Gospel without law is only the Good News of salvation for people who don't believe they need it because they have never heard the bad news of judgment, the law is not the Gospel, but the Gospel is not lawless (Rom. 3:19-20) (Eph. 2:13-22).

**The Commandments of God and the Lord Jesus Christ:** Micah says, what the LORD requires of mankind is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God. Isaiah tells us the LORD loves justice and hates robbery and wrong doing and Jeremiah says, those who know God practise steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, because it is in these things that God delights (Micah 6:5-10) (Isaiah 61:8) (Jer. 9:24). The people God loves are those who acknowledge Him and uphold justice and make choices that lead to peace. They are people who do not lie, deceive or make promises they do not intend to keep, but speak the truth, do what is right and show respect and give help to others when able. These are the things the LORD delights in and that bring His favour. The constant theme throughout Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount is doing what is right before God by seeking the way of peace in all situations. Jesus in this sermon calls Christians to treat people fairly and with respect, dignity, decency grace compassion, kindness, mercy and to be quick to forgive. It is about being dominated by the thought "what action can I take or do that will help and encourage this person." It is all about doing right to others, thus the reason it is referred to as the "Famous Sermon" because the principals if followed not only by Christians but all humanity are the only way to peace (Matt 5). For further information on Jesus Famous Sermon see:

- Matthew 5 in Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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## **GALATIANS 3:13-14**

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### **Christ Redeemed us from the Curse of the Law by Becoming a Curse for Us.**

- **Galatians 3:13-14:** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—<sup>14</sup>so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

The words, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law) (v13) means that those who belong to Christ are delivered from the struggle of keeping the law by self-effort to be counted righteous by God and justified. The law has no power to judge those who belong to Christ, guilty or condemn

them to eternal death. The words, "Jesus became a curse for us" (v13) means that even though Christ never sinned he was nevertheless killed as a guilty criminal it is in this sense that "God for our sake made Christ to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21) the Lord Jesus Christ became the ultimate sacrificial Lamb without blemish not only for us, but for the entire world. Paul's entire focus in this letter is still to convince the Galatian brothers and sisters that God counts them righteous because of their faith and not because of their self-effort in keeping the Law of Moses and the Jewish laws of purification.

**Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree:** throughout history there have been sceptics who have used the following words, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree" to undermine the Bible because traditional Christianity accepts that Christ was crucified on a cross. Their argument is futile since what is important to God's eternal foreordained plan of salvation for all mankind is that Christ laid down his life for the world and that he died and rose again to eternal glory, what he died on is irrelevant to God's plan and makes not the slightest difference to the Christian message of salvation. Nevertheless, the use of the word tree and the cross can be harmonised in the following two ways:

1. Since the word tree as used in this verse comes from the Greek word (xulon) which can refer to a literal tree or any other wooden article, obviously the cross was made from wood so in this sense it was simply a tree cut and chopped into the shape of a cross.
2. The words, "Cursed is everyone who is Hanged on a Tree" (v13) are cited from the book of Deuteronomy in which the civil law of that era stated, "If a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God (Deut. 21:22-23). These words were written in a time when men deserving death were hung on a tree and not crucified on a cross since crucifixion only began during the Roman era. Added to this Paul is not citing a prophecy of Christ, but a civil law that existed under Old Testament law thus the expression 'hanged on a tree' in reference to Christ is simply a Jewish idiom that in this context simply means, "Put to death as a criminal."

**We might receive the promised Spirit through faith:** the following verse, "That we might receive the promised Spirit through faith" (v14) shows that the promise Paul now has in focus is the promise of the Spirit. In the context of this chapter it is the Spirit of righteousness (also called God's Holy Spirit). It is the Spirit of righteousness that God imputes to all who faithfully follow and trust in Christ so that they can be set free from the imprisonment and captivity of the law and by grace be justified, forgiven and granted eternal life and everlasting glory. Paul's entire focus in this chapter is the gift of righteousness that comes by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, he is trying to convince the unbelieving Jews that Gentiles who have faith in Abraham's promised seed the Lord Jesus Christ are now accepted by God and receive the same Spirit of righteousness as Abraham did.

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## **GALATIANS 3:15**

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### **A Man-Made Covenant.**

- **Galatians 3:15:** 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 (Confirmed in KJV). To convince the Galatian brothers and sisters that God's covenant/promise of, 'the Spirit (of righteousness) through faith (v4) is guaranteed to all who trust in Christ Paul points out that when people make a promise they swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes their promise is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the

unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath by Himself, so that by two unchangeable things, i.e., God's promise and it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge (in Christ) might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us because we have God's promises and the truth that he cannot lie as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul (Heb. 6:9-19).

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## GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM

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### GALATIANS 3:16-18

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- **Galatians 3:16-18:** Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. <sup>17</sup>And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. <sup>18</sup>For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

The following verse, "Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring" (v16) show that there was more than one promise made to Abraham and his Seed (the Lord Jesus Christ).

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## FOLLOWING ARE THE TEN PROMISES GOD MADE TO ABRAHAM

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### FIRST PROMISE

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The first promise was when Abram was seventy-five and Sarai was sixty-five the LORD said to Abram:

- Get thee out of thy country (Haran), and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: <sup>2</sup>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: <sup>3</sup>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* So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and *Abram was seventy and five years old* when he departed out of Haran (Gen 12:1-4).

Abram was 75 years old when he departed out of Haran (Gen 12:4). Sarai was 10 years younger than Abram (Gen 17:17).

**Seed:** in Strong's Concordance comes from the Hebrew words (zera and zara) and means to conceive a child and be fruitful.

**NOTE:** all the promises God made to Abraham use the term seed (singular in the KJV) and offspring (singular in the ESV) which immediately refer to Isaac, but through prophecy to the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:16).

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### SECOND PROMISE

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The second promise was when Abram was in Canaan, the LORD appeared to him and said:

- Unto *thy seed will I give this land* (Canaan): and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him (Gen 12:7).

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### THIRD PROMISE

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The third promise was after Lot separated from Abram and the LORD said to Abram:

- Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: <sup>15</sup>For *all the land* (of Canaan) which thou *seest, to thee will*

*I give it, and to thy seed forever.* <sup>16</sup>And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered (Genesis 13:14-16).

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#### FOURTH PROMISE

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The fourth promise was after Abram rescued Lot and met Melchizedek; the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision saying:

- Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. <sup>2</sup>And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? <sup>3</sup>And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. <sup>4</sup>And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, *This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.* <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>And *he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness* (Gen. 15:1-6). (Notice there is no mention of Sarah being the mother of the promised child).

The Lord gave this promise to Abram the same day Abram sacrificed the heifer (Gen. 15:9-10, 18) which was most likely sometime during his first year in Canaan which would mean Abram was about seventy-six and since Abram was eighty-six when Hagar gave birth to Ishmael (Gen. 16:16). It is almost certain Sari and her husband had been trying to have a child for ten years before Sari offered Hagar to her husband (Gen. 16:3, 16).

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#### FIFTH PROMISE

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The fifth promise was also when Abram sacrificed a heifer. The LORD said to Abram:

- Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land (Egypt) that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years (Gen 15:13). (Still no mention of Sarah being the mother of the promised child).

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#### SIXTH PROMISE

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The sixth promise is also the same day Abram sacrificed the heifer the LORD said to Abram:

- *Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates*” (the land of Canaan) (Gen 15:18). (Still no mention of Sarah being the mother of the promised child).

Abram and Sarah had been living in the land of Canaan for 10 years (v3) and Sarah was still barren so she says to Abram:

- Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. <sup>3</sup>And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, *after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan*, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. <sup>4</sup>And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived (Gen 16:2-4).

Abram was eighty-six when Hagar gave birth to Ishmael (Gen. 16:16).

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#### SEVENTH PROMISE

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The seventh promise was when Abram was ninety-nine years old. The LORD appeared to Abram and changed his name and said to him:

- I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. <sup>2</sup>And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. <sup>3</sup>And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, <sup>4</sup>As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. <sup>5</sup>Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. <sup>6</sup>And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. <sup>7</sup>And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. <sup>8</sup>And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God (Gen 17:1-8).

God tells Abraham:

- His everlasting covenant is with Abraham and his seed after him.
- He will multiply Abraham greatly and kings will come from him.
- Abraham will be the father of a multitude of nations.
- He will be a God unto Abraham and to his seed after him.
- He will give Abraham and his seed the land of Canaan for an everlasting covenant

The following words of God are also included in this seventh promise:

- As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. <sup>16</sup>And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. <sup>17</sup>Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? <sup>18</sup>And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! <sup>19</sup>And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him (Genesis 17:15-19).

When Abraham was ninety-nine and Sarai was eighty-nine God changed her name to Sarah and told Abraham that she will become nations and have a son, God tells Abraham He will establish His covenant with Isaac (the promised son born of a miracle birth) and his seed forever. Abraham's words, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" (v18) indicate that Abraham would have been happy for Ishmael to be the heir.

This no-doubt is because Ishmael is almost 13 at this time and it is certain Abraham loved him as his own son (Gen. 17:25-26).

God continues this seventh promise saying to Abraham:

- My covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year (Gen 17:21)

Abraham was ninety-nine when God said this to him.

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## EIGHTH PROMISE

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Eighth promise was when the LORD visited Sarah one year later:

- The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken. <sup>2</sup>For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. <sup>3</sup>And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. <sup>4</sup>And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him. <sup>5</sup>And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him (Gen 21:1-5).

Abraham was ninety-nine and Sarah was eighty-nine when the LORD said to Abraham, He will return in one year and Sarah will have a son. Sarah doubted God and the LORD said to her, "Is anything too hard for the LORD?" (Gen. 18:10-14). One year later when Sarah was ninety and Abraham was one-hundred the LORD visits Sarah and Isaac was born.

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## NINETH PROMISE

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Ninth promise was when Sarah told Abraham to cast Hagar and Ishmael out and God said to Abraham:

- Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad (Ishmael), and because of thy bondwoman (Hagar); in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for *in Isaac shall thy seed be called*" (Gen 21:12).

**NOTE:** Abraham is now one-hundred and is devastated at having to cast out Hagar and Ishmael his son (Gen. 17:25-26) who it is certain he loved as his own child and who is now thirteen years old. No-doubt this is the reason for God's encouragement to Abraham and one of the reasons God told Abraham twelve princes will come from Ishmael and God will make him a great nation (Gen. 17:20).

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## TENTH PROMISE

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Tenth promise was given when Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac. It was God's last promise to Abraham. The angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven, and said:

- Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. <sup>12</sup>And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. <sup>13</sup>And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. <sup>14</sup>And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen. <sup>15</sup>And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, <sup>16</sup>And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: <sup>17</sup>That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; <sup>18</sup>And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice (Gen. 22:11-18).

Abraham's lived one-hundred and seventy-five years then died and was gathered to his people (Gen. 25:7-8).

**Abraham's faith:** the first promise was when Abram was seventy-five (He left Haran) (Gen. 12:4) and lived in Canaan for ten years (Gen. 16:3) then Hagar conceived and one year later Ishmael was born (Gen. 16:16). When Abraham was ninety-nine, Sarah eighty-nine, Ishmael thirteen (Gen. 17:24-25) God told Abram that in one years-time Sarah will give birth to a son who they are to name Isaac (Gen. 17:1, 15-17, 21) so Isaac was born when Abram was one-hundred and Sarah was ninety (Gen. 21:5) and Ishmael was fourteen. The first promise was when Abram was seventy-five (Gen. 12:4) so if we accept that God gave Abram the promise of his very own son in his first year in Canaan (Gen. 15:4) and that Abraham was one-hundred when Isaac the promised son was born (Gen. 21:5) then Abram believed God for almost twenty-five years before God's promise of his very own son and heir was fulfilled.

**God counted Abram as righteous:** Abram was counted righteous, because he not only believed God's promise that he would be the father of a multitude of nations, have offspring who would be as the stars of heaven and the dust of the earth who kings would come from and who would inherit the land of Canaan forever and be heirs of the world, but

also God's promise that the LORD would give him his very own son to be heir. It is interesting to notice that even though the LORD had spoken this promise of a son to Abram many times God never told Abram that Sarah would be the mother until the year prior to her actually conceiving. So Abram had raised Ishmael as his own son for thirteen years and it is sure that he loved him as his own child prior to Isaac being born and not knowing that God had another son in mind to be the true heir. It is almost certain Abram for those thirteen years believed Ishmael was the promised son and heir since God never told him any different, nor did God tell Abram that Sarah through a miracle birth would be the mother of the promised son until Ishmael was thirteen years old. Yet God even though he knew Abraham did not have a totally clear picture of how God's promises were going to come about still counted Abraham's faith as righteousness.

This shows that Abraham's faith in believing against all odds was more important to God than Abraham having a perfectly clear understanding of every specific detail of how God was going to bring the promises to pass. The fact Abraham had a clouded understanding of who the promised son was did not stop God from counting him as righteous nor did it hinder God from bringing the perfection of the promise to pass. This should teach us all that providing faith has the broad picture of God's promise it will be counted to those who are trusting in Christ as righteous despite the fact it does not have absolute clarity of how God's promises will come to pass. This is because God's grace covers that which is out of focus. To have the faith of Abraham does not mean we have to have perfect understanding, but it does mean we have to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for our righteousness in contrast to trusting in our own self-effort or any religious act or practise we may be faithfully performing.

The thing God loved in Abraham was not his intellectual knowledge, but the spiritual muscle of his faith.

Even though Abraham thought the true promised son was Ishmael up until Isaac the true child of promise came God counted his faith as righteousness. There is a fabulous lesson we can learn from this i.e., whoever has faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (howbeit clouded) when the Lord does arrive in majestic glory we all like Abraham will accept with overwhelming joy his appearing when we see him face to face and Christ like God did to Abraham will continue to count us as his brothers and sisters clothed in righteous because of our faith in him despite our limited understanding. Those who are of faith of Abraham are not only the sons of Abraham, but also blessed along with Abraham, the father of faith likewise those who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ become heirs in all the promises made to Abraham. God's delight in Abraham's faith shows us that even though we may have a clouded view of the Lord and how he will return, but are nevertheless faithful in our devotion, passion and faith toward him and patiently waiting with anticipated joy for him to return then that faith will be counted to us as righteousness.

**Summary of Gods promise to Abraham:** God told Abraham he would establish an everlasting covenant with him, Abraham would be a father of many nations and God would make from his seed a great nation. Sarah would be called a mother of nations and kings would come from her. Abrahams son and heir Isaac would come from his own bowels and in Isaac Abrahams seed would be called and multiply as the stars of the heaven and as the sand upon the sea shore. They would possess all the land of Canaan and the strongholds of their enemies. God would be a God to Abraham's seed and his seed after him. Abraham's seed will be and everlasting possession for God and he will be their God and in Abrahams seed all the families of the earth will be blessed.

(Gen. 12:1-7) (Gen. 13:14-16) (Gen. 15:1-6, 18) (Gen. 17:1-8)  
(Gen. 17: 15-19, 21) (Gen. 21:12) (Gen. 22:11-18).

Verse seventeen and eighteen show that law did not do away with God's covenant:

- 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. <sup>18</sup>For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise. (Gal. 3:17-18)

**The law:** primarily refers to the Jewish religious ceremonial rites, the Jewish laws of purification and also includes the Ten Commandments.

**The inheritance:** refers firstly, to the promised seed of Abraham the Lord Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords and beloved elder brother of all who believe and secondly, to the land and multitudes of brothers and sisters in Christ belonging to the family of God (also called the Kingdom of God). Though the Law of Moses and the Jewish laws of purification came four-hundred and thirty years after God made the promises to Abraham it does not cancel the inheritances of God's promises to Israel because a promise is not based on self-effort but on the honour and integrity of the person who made the promise.

**Concerning the guarantee of the promise the author of Hebrews wrote:**

- When God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, <sup>14</sup>saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." <sup>15</sup>And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. <sup>16</sup>For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. <sup>17</sup>So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, <sup>18</sup>so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. (Hebrews 6:13-18).

God's promise is guaranteed for two reasons, firstly because it was made by God who swore by Himself (since there is no-one higher) and secondly God cannot lie.

**NOTICE:** Paul is not teaching the history of Abraham to the Galatians, but using Abraham as an example to prove that salvation is by faith and not by the law. The context of the entire chapter is about the two paths to justification, the law of faith or the law of purification (which is not really a path at all). Paul is shining a floodlight on Abraham's faith to prove that those who belong to Jesus Christ are blessed by being counted righteous by their faith just as Abraham was.

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**GALATIANS 3:18**

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**Why was the Law Added?**

- **Galatians 3:18:** Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring (seed in KJV) should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary (Mediator in KJV).

**NOTE:** when Paul is writing a letter, he has no audience before him to ask questions so he often adopts a style of writing that enables him to raise a topic by asking a question himself. This type of writing has three benefits:

- 1 Questions always grab the attention of the reader as they set the mind to seek an answer.
- 2 It gives the author the opportunity to answer questions that they perceive they might be asked if in front of a live audience.
- 3 It raises a topic the writer wants to highlight and discuss.

Paul asks the question, "Why was the law added?" (v19) and then answers the question himself by saying that the law was added for the following two reasons:

1. Because of transgressions and wrongdoing.
2. To act as a guardian and protector (v24) until the promised seed of Abraham should come to his offspring (the nation Israel) to whom the promise had been made.

**The law was put in place through angels:** God was the mediator (v20) who gave the law through angels to Moses who then gave it to Israel, while Moses was the mediator between Israel and God at Mount Sinai four-hundred and thirty years after God had given Abram the promises.

**The purpose of the law:** the law was added to the promises to control and limit sin until the promised seed (Jesus Christ) of Abraham came. Since the majority of mankind does not need to be told, murdering another human, taking another man's wife for sexual pleasure, stealing and kidnapping a person is wrong behaviour much of humanity was already living a lifestyle that was in harmony with many of the laws written in the Ten Commandments. So, one might ask, "Why did God give them to Moses in such a dramatic manner?" The answers to this question is that God by not only descending from heaven in such a thunderous, dramatic and specular fashion on Mount Sinai, but also by engraving the Ten Commandments on stone with His own finger shone a brilliant floodlight on them to clearly show the entire world the following three things:

1. God's perfect will for all mankind.
2. The only way humanity has any hope of living in harmony and peace with each other is to obey the Ten Commandments.
3. To sentence all mankind under sin.

The reason the Ten Commandments express God's perfect will is because the underlying Spirit of the law is love. This is because each law protects innocent humans from physical, financial, emotional and spiritual harm this is the reason Paul says:

- Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:10).

The laws of purification and religious ceremonial laws were added to provide a way of redemption for those who did sin and to echo and point the way to Christ. The legalistic Jews believed that justification and salvation to eternal life came by the observance of the Law of Moses. It is certain many Jews loyally preached faith in the promise and in its fulfilment in Christ, but mistakenly made the inheritance of the promise dependent upon the fulfilling of the law. Paul is shining a spotlight on the fact that trusting in the law invalidates the promise because salvation to eternal life must rest either upon the promise or upon the law it cannot be both. The Jews were teaching the Galatian brothers and sisters that salvation was dependent both upon the promise and upon the law whereas Paul is highlighting the fact that if the promised inheritance comes through the law then it is no more of the promise and not only is faith made void, but the promise made becomes of no-effect (Romans 4:14).

The promise refers to the promise God made to faithful Abraham which when summed up states that he would be heir of the world not by fulfilling the law, but through the righteousness of faith (Rom. 4:13) and that he would be the ancestor of the Messiah, the Christ and that in him all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Since there cannot be two ways of obtaining the same blessing/promise it becomes clear to those who have a logical mind that the law was given for another purpose altogether. The covenant God made with Abraham and his seed is still in force today through Christ the promised seed of Abraham. Whoever abides in Christ by faith are the spiritual seed (offspring) of Abraham. The promises of Abraham are first made to Christ and then by him to those who are by

faith grafted into Christ, but when the promise is mingled with the law it is made nothing but the law, it is for this reason our righteousness must always be in Christ as a sure defence of faith against dependence on self-effort and human righteousness.

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## **GALATIANS 3:19-22**

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### **Reasons the Law was Added.**

- **Galatians 3:19-22:** Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. <sup>20</sup>Now an intermediary (mediator in the KJV) implies more than one, but God is one. <sup>21</sup>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. <sup>22</sup>But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. until the coming faith would be revealed.

**Intermediary:** in this context refers to a go-between and by implication a reconciler (intercessor) (i.e., someone in the middle or between) and the word, 'Mediator' carries the same idea. In these verses it refers to God who gave the 'LAW' and to Moses standing before Him and the people of Israel. Paul saying is the law competing with the promise and in conflict with it. Paul immediately answers his own question by saying, "Certainly not" (v21). Paul in these verses is explaining to the Jews and those being bewitched by them (v1) that the promise of God and the law are not in conflict with each other for the simple reason they both serve two entirely different purposes.

**The law:** had no power to grant anyone righteousness since not one of us can attain to its perfect standard of holiness so rather than give life it imprisoned us all under sin (v22). This is because the law without compassion or mercy states:

- Whoever does not perfectly keep all its commandments is condemned not only to mortal death, but also eternal death (2 Cor.3:9).

This ministry of death carved in letters on stone is also called the, law of Sin and Death which states that

- The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

This means whosoever sins must mortally and eternally die; which means that all mankind is held captive to this law imprisoned by it until the promised seed of Abraham the Lord Jesus Christ came (v23). It is not the Ten Commandments that are at fault, since they are not only perfect, but express God's perfect will. It is our corrupt fallen nature with all its sinful dysfunctions and aberrations (self, ego, pride, greed, lust etc.,) that that are the problem since they prevent all of us from attaining to the perfection of the Law demands.

**The glory, the beauty, the wonder and splendour of God's grace in Christ:** the words, "For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law" (Gal. 3:21) should give every brother and sister in Christ tremendous comfort and set them free from any form of mental torment or self-condemnation since these words clearly show that not only Paul, but God Himself knows that not one of us will ever attain to the perfect standard of the law no matter how much we might desire to or how hard we try.

Both God and Christ know that any attempt we make to attain to God's perfect standard of holiness to make us worthy of eternal life by our own human self-effort is doomed to fail before we even start, thus the glory, the beauty, the wonder and splendour of God's grace in Christ.

**The promise by faith in Jesus Christ:** in total contrast to the law gives life and life abundant because it sets all who believe totally free from self-effort and striving to keep laws to attain to righteousness that leads to eternal life.

**The Scripture imprisoned everything under sin:** the expression, "The Scripture imprisoned everything under sin (v22) means that the Ten Commandments given by God Himself are so perfect they placed all of mankind under sin because fallen human nature has so many sinful dysfunctions and aberrations (selfishness, ego, pride, lust, greed etc., just to name a few dwelling within) not one of us can attain to the perfect standard of the law. But the Good News is that God has a much the higher law that supersedes the law of Sin and Death which states, "The promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe" (v22) meaning whoever has faith in Christ will be counted righteous not because of self-effort to attain to the high calling of the law, but because of their faith in Christ.

**Until the coming faith would be revealed:** the words, "Until the coming faith would be revealed" (v23) refers to the majestic Good News of the Gospel which is about salvation from eternal death to eternal life. It proclaims that salvation is by faith and grace through believing in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is about recognizing that one falls short of God's Glory and absolute Holiness and about repentance, baptism and faithfully abiding in the faith. Throughout the entire history of mankind there has only been one man who has ever been able to attain to the high calling of the law, and Jesus Sermon on the Mount and God's perfect standard of Holiness. The Gospel of salvation is about recognizing this reality, repenting before God and accepting His foreordained plan of salvation. Salvation is about trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, looking forward to his return and being raised to eternal glory. The majestic Good News of the Gospel, states that whoever comes to God through repentance and faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ is not only approved of and accepted by God the Father but all their sins are forgiven, not because they are deserving of it, or by any self-effort or religious good works, but because through faith in Christ righteousness is imputed from God to them as a pure and free gift, but this is not the end of the Good News of the Gospel since God's promises also state that the faithful in Christ will be resurrected to eternal glory and everlasting life. Can there be any better news than this? This is the reason it is called, the Good News of the Gospel.

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## **GALATIANS 3:23-25**

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### **The Law was our Guardian/Schoolmaster until Christ Came.**

- **Galatians 3:23-25:** Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed.<sup>24</sup> So then, the law was our guardian (schoolmaster in KJV) until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.<sup>25</sup> But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

**The purpose of the schoolmaster:** the idea here of a Schoolmaster/Guardian is who watches over his students for the sole purpose of restraining them from acting wickedly and from temptations that would bring their lives to ruin, thus the use of the word, Schoolmaster/Guardian in this context carries the idea of a principal of a school whose care students are committed to and who taught them in ways that would protect them and help them prosper in life. The Schoolmaster/Guardian (the Law) made use of discipline and kept a strict eye and hand over the performance and duty those who were under his authority and restrained them from many things that their fleshy and sensual inclinations led them to by threatening them with the fear of death (mortal and eternal) when disobedient and inflicting its penalties and punishments on those who broke its demands and thereby subjected them to bondage.

**The schoolmaster taught:** the moral law, the letter of the law, the writing on the two tables, with many other statutes and judgments, the duty to God and to mankind, what is to be done and to be avoided, what is righteousness and what is not, the nature of sin, its disadvantages, shortcomings, imperfection and consequences; but not one of these give any instructions about a Saviour nor about righteousness that comes by faith and by God's grace in Christ.

**The schoolmaster was only intended to be temporary:** the fact the Law is referred to as a schoolmaster shows that the use of it was always only intended to be temporary and the duration of its use only for a certain period of time. No student is expected to remain forever under a schoolmaster, since the goal of every teacher is to bring their students to a proper and mature age for a greater and higher exercise of life so the law was designed to continue and did continue to be of this use and service to the Jewish nation until Christ came.

**The ceremonial law:** the ceremonial law gave Israel some hints of the Gospel and the way of salvation by Christ by signs and by types and figures, by rites and ceremonies, by shadows and sacrifices. The ceremonial law had something both awful and tremendous in it, the awfulness was in the reality that every beast that was slain in sacrifice was not only an instruction to those offering it that they deserved to die as that creature did, but also carried in it an acknowledgment and confession of their own guilt and that God's handwriting of ordinances was against them. The sacrifices and offerings were designed to shadow and echo the Messiah and to introduce him to the world while the moral law of God was designed to show people their sin and the danger of living a life of sin.

The purpose of the law is to condemn and thereby lead us to right behaviour and God's forgiveness and grace that comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ the redeemer of us all. The entire focus of the law is designed to show us our sin and condemn us and even under the preaching of the Gospel it still does so that we see our hopelessness of achieving righteousness by self-effort and are therefore led to Christ the Redeemer. This is the effect the preaching of Gospel should have since it is right that people should be made to feel that they are sinners in order that they may be prepared to embrace God's offer of mercy and grace that is received by faith in the Lord Jesus who is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes (Rom 10:4).

**The schoolmaster acted like a military guard:** there is no such thing as justification by the law it is clear that no blessing could be expected from a schoolmaster who acts like a military guard keeping those under it shut up as in a prison and who treated all who were under its rigid and severe discipline as convicted and condemned criminals until Christ the deliver came and by God's free gift of grace through faith ended the schoolmasters unrelenting bondage of achieving righteousness by self-effort and by keeping the demands of the law and religious rites, practises and traditions. The following words of Paul should be of enormous comfort to every brother and sister in Christ since they clearly show that we are counted righteous and justified, and saved to eternal life totally apart from the law:

- Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes (Rom. 10:4).

These majestic words beautifully show that the law has no power to condemn those who are faithfully trusting in God's free gift of righteousness which comes by grace and through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**NOTE:** obviously keeping the law should be the aim of every Christian since it is not only the right and loving thing to do, but also fulfils the Royal Law of God, "Love thy neighbour as thy self" (Mark 12:31) (Jas. 2:8) and honours God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. It only becomes wrong when our motivation to keep the law is not to glorify God

and to benefit others, but is driven by our own self-effort to attain to our own standard of righteousness to make us worthy of eternal life rather than trusting in God's righteousness that comes by grace and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

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## **GALATIANS 3:26-29**

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### **You are Abraham's Offspring and Heirs According to Promise.**

- **Galatians 3:26-29:** for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. <sup>27</sup>For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ. <sup>28</sup>There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup>And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Here we see the brilliance of Paul's knowledge and the clarity of his thinking he begins with the Galatian brothers and sisters being bewitched by Jewish teachers and takes them through God's eternal promises to Abraham to bring them to this stunning and glorious conclusion, Christ is the promised seed of Abraham therefore whoever belongs to Christ are Abraham's decedents because of God's covenant to Abraham that he would be the father of many nations and that his seed would be the heir of the world, which means that it is not those who are biologically Abraham's offspring that are counted as the heirs of the promise, but those who by faith belong to Christ no matter whether they are Jews or Gentiles if they belong to Christ God counts them as the offspring of Abraham. In some circles of religion today there is a mindset that Israel will have an exalted position in the eternal Kingdom of God, but these verses clearly show that this is a mistaken theory since God is now establishing one nation in Christ made up of both Jews and Gentiles. There are no favourite nations in Christ we are all one in him as Paul states:

- There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female.

Clearly showing that all are equal in Christ no matter how noble or how common, how gifted or how lowly, how rich or how poor, how powerful amongst nations or how ordinary, whether a leader of a global church or the church mouse we are all equal in Christ, no-one is superior to another.

- If you are Christ's, you are Abraham's offspring and heirs according to promise (Galatians 3:29).

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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