

Introduction: The Tapestry of Scripture

In Galatians, Paul is addressing the claims of Jewish false teachers who have come into the churches to compel these Gentile believers to begin keeping parts of the OT Law. Since they likely justified this with appeals to the OT Scripture, Paul has also used the example of Abraham and numerous OT passages to show that it is those of faith and not those of the Law who are justified before God. He turns now to consider the nature of God’s promises and what that means for these Gentile believers.

Main Point: All of God’s gracious promises are _____ through and _____ in Christ, and so we as believers can live with full assurance in Him.

Galatians 3:15-18

- Paul offers an _____ from everyday life and then makes an important theological point drawn from Scripture. (vv. 15-16)

- (1) He addresses them with affection and speaks of a _____ compact or agreement.

“To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant”

“covenant”—διαθήκη (diathēkē)—a covenant, will, or testament. The term is used in Scripture of God’s binding agreements with His people. It is used here in the more common, legal sense.

- (2) These documents could not be easily changed and were considered _____.

“no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified.”

- His point is to use a lesser, common example to point to something _____.

“By using these terms with legal denotations, Paul makes a comparison between the promises of God and the legal example of a will, affirming the permanence of each when properly ratified.”

– Michael Burer

- (3) He then returns to the example of Abraham and God’s promise to him and his _____.

“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,”

- The term “offspring” in these promises is certainly a reference to the literal _____ of Abraham (Gen. 15:18; 17:7-10; 22:17-18).

- His clarification takes the focus off of the _____ and focuses in on _____ descendent of Abraham.

“who is Christ”

Paul’s Uses of “Offspring”: *Natural* *Natural-Spiritual* *Spiritual* *Ultimate*

Christ & the Abrahamic Covenant

- The promises given to Abraham can be understood as national and universal (Gen. 12:1-3).
- The promises to Abraham’s natural offspring implied a land, a king, and a people.
- These promises are reiterated in the Mosaic (Exod. 19), Land (Deut. 30), and Davidic Covenants (2 Sam. 7)
- None of these covenants provided salvation and so a New Covenant was promised (Jer. 31, Ezek. 36).
- It is Messiah (His person and work) that accomplishes all that is necessary for the salvation promised in the New Covenant (Isa. 42:6-7; 49:8; 53:5; Lk. 22:20).

Key Point: _____ is the ultimate focus of God’s promises, and He _____ that they will be kept just as God intended.

- In view of the prior example, Paul declares that the Law does not _____ the prior promises made to Abraham. (vv. 17-18)

(1) Paul references the giving of the _____ Covenant and states how it came later in salvation history.

"This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward"

Exod. 19:4-8 →

(2) He then refers back to the _____ Covenant to show that the Mosaic Covenant cannot annul it.

"does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void."

Gen. 15:7-21 →

(3) He further explains the basis for what he has just claimed.

"For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise;"

"inheritance"—κληρονομία (klēronomia)—inheritance, possession, property. It is used throughout the OT historical books and prophets to refer to the land promised to Israel.

- Used here, Paul is referring primarily to the promised "_____" of the nations that would come through Christ for the salvation of all mankind and which is received by faith (Gal. 3:6, 7-9, 14).
- Because his focus is on how the _____ come into the promised blessings of God, he has made no references to the national promises made to Abraham.

Paul is not reinterpreting God's promises to Abraham's natural descendants regarding the promised _____.

(4) He concludes by emphasizing the _____ nature of God's promises to His people.

"but God gave it to Abraham by a promise."

"gave it"—χαρίζομαι (charizomai)—to give freely as a favor; to give graciously.

- In the same way that the promise was graciously received by Abraham through _____, so it has now been received by the Galatian believers in the same way.

Key Point: It is through Christ that we have become _____ of the salvation promised to Abraham and made sure through the New Covenant in His blood.

Paul's Message to the Galatians

The Galatians must understand that the addition of the Law into the history of salvation has not nullified the glorious promise of God to Abraham which they have graciously received by faith and not by works.

Concluding Thoughts

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is the central _____ of Scripture and all human history!

2. Because of that, we are kept secure in Him and our _____ cannot nullify the promises of God to us!

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1. The Lord Jesus Christ is the central figure of Scripture and all human history!
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