

Does The Law Overrule The Lord? (VI)

I. When God Makes a Promise, 3:15-18

15:

- “To give a human example” – ESV
- “Though it is only a man’s covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it.”
 - Annuls: reject something as invalid; nullify; ignore (2:21, grace)
 - Adds: legal technical term: add codicil to will
 - To add to a covenant is to annul it
- Acts 15:1 – unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.
 - Argument from lesser to greater: even men are bound by duly ratified contract

15:

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 - Annuls: reject something as invalid; nullify; ignore (2:21, grace)
 - Adds: legal technical term: add codicil to will
 - Attested (ratified): confirm, validate; make legally binding (18, 29, promise)

God never breaks His word

16a:

- To Abraham and his Seed were promises made
 - Seed: sg.; v.29, collective use
 - 1 Co.12:12, Christ in corporate (bodily) sense

16b:

- He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many
 - Seed did not include Canaanites, or other descendants of Abraham
 - Must be interpreted spiritually: true only of believers. Luther...

16a-c:

- To Abraham and his Seed were promises made
- He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many
- And to your seed, who is Christ
 - Gn.3¹⁵ And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel
 - Jn.8⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad
- Significance of one letter (Gn.3:15) shows inspiration of Scripture. “The seed is Christ”

17:

- The Law (coming 430 years later) could not annul the covenant
 - Annul: make void, change, set aside the promise
- 1. Covenant was confirmed before (ratified): at time it was given...by God...in Christ
- 2. Man's covenant, once confirmed, cannot be set aside; much more true of God's covenant...
- 3. So what? The Law was NOT part of the original covenant – therefore Law cannot change or set aside the promise

[Contrast Judaizers]

18:

- The inheritance is not connected to obedience to Law of Moses. [If it is, NO ONE will obtain it]
- No middle ground – it's one or the other
 1. If the inheritance is a matter of Law, it cancels God's covenant
 2. God gave this promise to Abraham
 - a. Judaizers quote Moses; Paul quotes Abraham
 - b. Judaizers quote Law; Paul quotes Promise
 - c. Judaizers quote tradition; Paul quotes covenant with Abraham

I. When God Makes a Promise, 3:15-18

II. Why Did God Give The Law?
3:19-20

19:

What purpose?

1. Added because of transgressions

- Law detects transgressions, brings them to our knowledge. Ro.7:7-13; 5:20; 3:20

2. Till the Seed should come (16)

- Law was a temporary addition that did not affect the promise
- Law reveals our moral bankruptcy

19:

What purpose?

3. Appointed through angels

- Acts 7⁵³ who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept *it*
- Hb.2² For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast...
 - Report from apostles is same in effect as hearing Jesus Himself
 - Contrast this with God's direct communication with Abraham
 - Compare apostles, Jn.16:12-15

19:

What purpose?

4. By hand of a mediator

- Moses –Dt.5:5, 27
- Moses went from people to God (priestly)
- Moses went from God to people (prophetic)

20:

Facts of mediation (at least two parties)

1. One God revealed His will to Abraham and to Moses at Sinai
2. A ruler may communicate through staff, leaks, etc., but for important message: speaks directly
3. Promise to Abraham –
 - a. Unilateral – no middle man
 - b. Eternal – not temporary
 - c. Unconditional – our response is conditional
 - d. Irrevocable – unlike the Law, never set aside

20:

Q: If God is one (20) why is there opposition between promise and law?’

A: It’s not opposition, but contrast. Both served God’s purpose.

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III. Did God Contradict Himself?
3:21-25

21:

- Does God's law contradict God's promises?
 1. Law revealed sin, showing need for Savior, therefore worked with the promise
 - Ro.7:24f., bad news → good news
 - Law accomplished its purpose by showing what it cannot accomplish
 2. The great lack in the Law: it could not save
 - If it did, there would be no need for the promise. Law shows need for gospel.

22:

- Scripture [personification]: confined all under sin [shut up; hem in; enclose, imprison...]
- Ro.11³² God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all
 1. All: no exception
 2. Under sin: Ro.3:9-19. Sin is the jail-keeper...
 3. Showed necessity of grace (10)
 - **Faith: 23, 24, 25, 26
 4. Given to those who believe. 2:16; Hb.5:8-9
 5. A gift may require conditions.
 - **2 K.5. Jn.9. Gal.5:6. Gal.3:27

23:

- Before faith came (gospel) – ‘the faith’
 1. We were kept under guard by the law...
 - 2 Co.11:32
 - Ro.6:23
 2. Kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed
 - A guard is relieved of duty when another guard comes to replace him

24:

- Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ... one who has responsibility for someone who needs guidance, *guardian, leader, guide*. 'Baby-sitter.' [Under severe discipline, we yearn for freedom]
- These slaves protected sons and informed father of disorderly conduct
- Thayer...
 - Low view of law: legalism
 - High view of law: leads to grace in Christ
 - Contrast Moses and Joshua

25:

- After faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor
 1. **Not limited to ceremony** (24, the law).
 2. **No part remained** (5:3).
 3. **Christ's law remains**, 6:2; Ro.7:1-3.
- So what? No more OT priesthood, tithing, sabbath, animal sacrifice, instr. music, etc.

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IV. How Does This Affect Us?
3:26-29

26:

- For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus
 - Sons of God (Ac.17:24-28, creation; Gal.3, new creation)
 - Through faith (cf. 2:14)
 - In Christ Jesus (real salvation; not symbolism)

27:

- If this is 'Holy Spirit baptism'
 1. Two conditions for salvation: faith + miraculous baptism (Ac.2 / 10) ... therefore NOT faith alone
 2. If Spirit baptism is the element, then one who is resurrected (as Ro.6) is without the Spirit
 3. Baptism into Christ is not something God does for us, but something we do, therefore it is not H.S. baptism, but water...

27:

- Baptized into Christ – the promise of Gal.3:27; Rom.6.
 1. Two conditions stated: faith and baptism
 2. What are we baptized into?
 3. Why does it not even mention faith alone?
 4. Does NT call baptism a work?
26, act of faith... 27, baptized into Christ...

27:

- **Put on Christ:** Clothe with; role of; character [taking on of characteristics, virtues, intentions, etc.].
- The toga virilis: Roman garment of full-grown man, assumed when ceasing to be a child)
- “This proves that baptism, where it answers to its ideal, is not a mere empty sign, but a means of spiritual transference from the state of legal condemnation to that of living union with Christ, and of sonship through Him in relation to God (Ro 13:14)” – JFB

28:

- Sonship with God involves brotherhood in Christ; it is not determined by . . .
 1. Nationality (Jew)
 2. Social standing (slave / free)
 3. Gender (male / female)

29:

- If you are Christ's [= belong to Him] . . .
 1. You are Abraham's seed. 6:16
 2. Heirs according to the promise.

If this promise were ownership of all the land that Abraham occupied on earth, most would stand in line to get it.

If the promise were entrance into the saved part of Hades (Lk.16, 'father Abraham), many would be even more excited.

This is the blessing of salvation in Abraham's seed in the heavenly paradise with the Lord Himself...