

Understanding the Promised Blessing of God 3.15-26

Abraham - Blessing - Spirit
Moses - Law - Curse

Let's use a will for example.

A covenant of inheritance (vs. 18).

- God established his covenant with Abraham.
- The law was added (430 years) later.
- This addition didn't change the terms of the original covenant (faith).

vs. 16, Promises spoken to Abraham and to his seed.

vs. 17-18, The addition of the law didn't change the promise.

From the beginning God spoke that restoration would come from the seed.
Through this seed there would be Messiah people (a single world wide family).

Genesis 3:15 So the Lord God said to the serpent: **15** I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.

2 Samuel 7:12-13 When your time comes and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up after you your descendant, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. **13** He is the one who will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

Romans 1:3-5 concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was a descendant of David according to the flesh **4** and was appointed to be the powerful Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead. **5** Through him we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the Gentiles,

If you want to see where the promises of Abraham are fulfilled, look for the Davidic King (Messiah).

Inheritance

Who are the people of God?

How can you tell if they are God's people?

Romans 8:16-17 The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children, **17** and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and coheirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

Paul's mission is rooted in fulfilling the promises of Abraham.

That fulfillment happens because all the promises of God are yes in Jesus (2 Corinthians 1:20).

This promise restores the original human vocation to be the image-bearers within God's creation.

The law can not override the promise.

vs. 19, So why the law?

Paul's point (theology) - God gives his Spirit to people because they surrender to Jesus, not because they conform their lives to the Mosaic law.

- The law of Moses is not God's most important revelation.
- What takes center stage is God's promise to Abraham.

Paul is asking the Judaizers to look through a different lens. You are only looking at scripture through Moses. I am asking you to look at scripture through Abraham. Judaizers had elevated Moses over Abraham.

Salvation is universal (available to all nations) it is not nationalistic (Israel only).

-> for the sake of transgressions

There are many options for the meaning of this phrase.

- Torah provides a way of dealing with transgressions (consequences associated with offending God, restoration through sacrifice).
- Torah pushes people toward transgression. (Do not steal. Do not covet. Now I am aware I could possibly get something for nothing.)
- Torah makes me aware of transgression. (There is a large gap between my reality and God's holiness). (Romans 3:20, 5:20; 7:7-8)

Let's consider one more.

Paul is trying to dismantle the argument that Torah = Righteousness

Torah limits the multiplication of sin.

-> Until Messiah had come (The Law was engaged for limited time).

-> The Torah is inferior to the promise because it was a mediated treaty.

God -> Angels -> Moses -> Israel at Sinai (Inferior) Exodus 20:19

God -> Abraham

vs. 20, The point is multiple links in the relationship compared to the essential nature of God (Deuteronomy 6:4 The Lord our God, the Lord is one.) And Moses...is not the one!

The law (Moses) holds Jews and Gentiles at arms length.

Deuteronomy - do not associate with the Canaanites. Israel must not slip into foreign idolatry.

But, God is one and he is gathering a people from every nation, tribe, and tongue through the One (Seed) Christ.

The time of separation is gone!

vs. 21, Is the law contrary to God's promises?

The law had no power to give life.

Paul's point: If the law could bring life it would have been contrary to God's promises, but the law can't bring life.

To live (truly live) in the here and now is to be made alive in the Spirit.

The Spirit opens the flood gates of righteousness.

The Spirit enables people to do what is right in God's sight.

The common Jewish thought, "Great is the Torah, for to those who practice it, it gives life both in this world and in the world to come."

The collective historical experience of Israel up to Paul and the decades after reveal the Torah does not bring life.

- The kingdom of Israel is divided into the northern Kingdom and the southern Kingdom (930 BC).
- The northern Kingdom is conquered by Assyria (722BC).
- The southern Kingdom is conquered by Babylon (586BC).
- The destruction of the first temple by Nebuchadnezzar.
- Antiochus Epiphanes IV (175-164BC) raiding the temple and setting up an altar to Zeus (Maccabean revolt).
- Second Temple destroyed by Romans in 70 AD.

Are all of these moments an indication of the Torah bringing life?

vs. 22, Scripture is the revelation of the purposes of God.

Imprisoned -> life is not found in the law. The whole world is held prisoner to sin.

- The law was inferior (3:19-20).
- The law could never make alive (3:21).
- The law revealed humanities need for redemption (3:22).
- The law was a type of caretaker, guardian, babysitter (3:23-25).

Guardian / Pedagogue - this was a role in the ancient household (often filled by a slave) entrusted with the care and discipline of minor children.

vs. 24-26, Until Christ

“Everything the law wanted to be when it was young (as revealed to Moses) is found now in Christ and in life in the Spirit. Thus, when a Christian lives in the Spirit and under Christ, that Christian is not living contrary to the law but is living in transcendence of the law. And it is for this very reason that life lived primarily under the law is wrong.” Scot McKnight, Galatians, The NIV Application Commentary

Paul is speaking of a people who are family identified by faith.

Question: What is it on which you base your life? Does it deliver on what you believe it promises?

Is the foundation of your life Jesus? Is your life displaying faith? Are you truly living (by the power of the Spirit)?

How does your community reflect faith? What about your everyday life demonstrates to the outside world that you part of a collective of Jesus people?