

“The Law of God’s Promise”

(Galatians 3:15-29)

Introduction

➤ As we turn to Galatians 3:15-29, we find the apostle Paul continuing to declare and defend the Gospel of Jesus Christ – i.e. salvation by God’s grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone – against the false teachings of legalism and self-righteousness (specifically the false teaching that a person needs to be circumcised in order to be saved).

Gal 2:16 ~ “yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.”

Gal 5:2-6 ~ “Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. ³I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. ⁴You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. ⁵For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. ⁶For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.” (see Gal.5:2-6; 6:15; cf. Rom.2:25-29)

➤ In his letter to the “*churches of Galatia*” (1:2), writing words inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, the apostle is defended the Gospel using various biblically sound arguments. Trying to awaken them from their spiritual stupor [being “*foolish*” (3:1, 3) and “*bewitched*” (3:1)], the apostle has thus far argued from the perspectives of personal/conversion experience (3:1-5) and Old Testament Scripture (3:6-14).

Beginning in 3:15, Paul contends for the Gospel historically by showing that God’s promise of salvation (His covenant with Abraham) – salvation by God’s grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone – was established long before the institution of the God’s law. In short, Paul proves that God’s promise predates and is superior to God’s law.

➤ This passage teaches us that God’s promise given to Abraham precedes and exceeds God’s law given to Moses [note: in this passage, 3:15-29 (15 verses), the word “covenant” (or testament; *diathēkē*) is used two times (vs.15, 17), and the word “promise(s)” (*epangelia/epangellomai*) is used eight times (vs.16, 17, 18^{2x}, 19, 21, 22, 29)]. The salvific promise of God is the main point of this passage, and this entire letter.

That is, salvation is received on the grounds of God’s promise not on the law. God’s law supports and serves God’s promise, not the other way around. This promise has always been, and will always be, salvation that is by God’s grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, and not through works of the law.

➤ This passage can be outlined with three major themes.

1. The Promise before the Law (vs.15-18)

➤ In these verses, Paul shows that not only was God’s promise given before the law, but that His promise is superior to the law. Again, Paul is not making some random (or peripheral) theological point. He is proving that God never intended a person to be saved by keeping the law.

➤ Three truths emerge from these verses regarding God’s salvific promise.

a. The immutability of God’s promise (vs.15, 17)

To show the superiority of God’s promise over the law, Paul offers “*a human example*” (vs.15) stating that “*even ... man-made covenant[s]*” (vs.15) are not to be annulled or added to once they have been confirmed: “*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*” (vs.15). The point is clear, if this is typically true among human covenants how much more is it true of God – who does not, in fact, cannot lie.

Heb 6:13-19 ~ “For when God made a promise [*epangellomai*] to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, ¹⁴saying, ‘Surely I will bless you and multiply you.’ ¹⁵And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise [*epangelia*]. ¹⁶For people swear by

something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. ¹⁷So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise [*epangelia*] the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath [*horkos*], ¹⁸so that by two unchangeable things [i.e. God's 'promise' and 'oath'], 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. ¹⁹We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul ...” (see Rom.3:3-4; Tit.1:2)

As we've seen, God does not (cannot) lie – He does not change His mind or go back on His promises (see Num.23:19; Jms.1:17). God always makes good on His promises.

Paul had already made the point that Abraham was counted righteous by faith (vs.6; Gen.15:6), long before he was circumcised (at 99 years old; Gen.17:24). While that fact should be enough to repudiate the false (self-righteous) gospel of the Judaizers, Paul does not stop there. He goes on to remind them that the God's promise of saving grace came 430 years before the law was introduced: *“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”* (vs.17).

✓**Illust:** “From Israel's sojourn in Egypt (cf. Ex.12:40) to the giving of the law at Sinai (c. 1445 B.C.). The law actually came 645 years after the initial promise to Abraham (c. 2090 B.C.; cf. Gen.12:4; 21:5; 25:26; 47:9), but the promise was repeated to Isaac (Gen.26:24) and later to Jacob (c. 1928 B.C.; Gen.28:15). The last known reaffirmation of the Abrahamic Covenant to Jacob occurred in Genesis 46:2-4 (c. 1875 B.C.) just before he went to Egypt – 430 years before the Mosaic law was given” (John MacArthur; *The MacArthur Study Bible*; notes from Gal.3:17).

If the law (coming 430 years after God's promise) were to nullify or supplant God's promise, then God would be a liar and not to be trusted. Since God does not (cannot) lie, the law cannot annul God's saving grace which He ratified by the promise of His Word.

b. The intentionality of God's promise (vs.16)

In verse sixteen, Paul explained (once again) that though God's promise was given to Abraham, Abraham was not the sole beneficiary of God's promise of saving grace: *“Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring”* (vs.16; see Gen.13:16; 17:8).

Gal 3:7-8 ~ “Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁸And 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.’”

Gal 3:28-29 ~ “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.”

However, perhaps surprisingly (and confusingly), Paul goes on to explain that the scriptural reference to Abrahams *“offspring”* (*sperma*; seeds) does not ultimately refer to all of Abraham's descendants, but to the greatest of all Abraham's descendants – Jesus Christ: *“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,’ who is Christ”* (vs.16; see vs.19; Rom.4:13-20). Jesus Christ is, at one time, both the One who is promised and the One to whom the promise is made! (cf. vs.19).

✓**Illust:** “Paul knows that the singular (Hb. *zera*) can be used as a collective singular that has a plural sense (he interprets it in a plural sense in Rom. 4:18). But it also can have a singular meaning, and here Paul, knowing that only in Christ would the promised blessings come to the Gentiles, sees that the most true and ultimate fulfillment of these OT promises comes to one “offspring,” namely, Christ. Paul's willingness to make an argument using a singular noun in distinction from its plural form (which occurs in other OT verses) indicates a high level of confidence in the trustworthiness of the small details of the OT text” (*ESV Study Bible*; notes from Gal.3:16).

God gave this promise of salvation to Abraham, but the first appearance of the Gospel actually appears in Scripture immediately after the sin of Adam and Eve:

Gen 3:14-15 ~ “The Lord God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this ... ¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.’”

Moreover, God’s promise of salvation was given before the creation of the world:

Eph 1:4-5 ~ “even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will” (see Eph.3:9, 11; cf. Matt.13:35; Col.1:26; 2Tim.1:9-10; Tit.1:2-3)

1 Peter 1:18-20 ~ “knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. ²⁰He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you”

Paul is once again showing that salvation has always been through God’s grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. The Old Testament saints were saved by their faith in the Messiah who was to come, and New Testament saints are saved by their faith in the Messiah who has come – the Lord Jesus Christ! There has never been salvation by works – either in part or in whole. All of God’s commands and covenants are ultimately fulfilled in and by Jesus Christ – His life, death and resurrection.

c. The primacy of God’s promise (vs.18)

Paul summarized, repeated, the truth of the primacy of God’s promise in writing: *“For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise”* (vs.18). A person is not saved by good (religious) works; not even in part. For if salvation could be earned by keeping the law, then God’s promise of salvation by grace would be utterly nullified.

Gal 2:21 ~ “I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.”

Notice that Paul, in describing God’s promise of salvation, used the *“inheritance”* (*klēronomia*) in verse eighteen. Like our English translation, the Greek word refers to that which is given to offspring. In this sense an inheritance is not earned, it is formally a birthright. Here, Paul is using the term analogously to describe the “inheritance” of our salvation which is not by works but through faith in Christ.

1 Peter 1:3-5 ~ “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

Rom 8:14-17 ~ “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ ¹⁶The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.”

Titus 3:4-7 ~ “But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

Sinners become “children of God” only by God’s grace, through faith in Christ. There is absolutely no way a sinner can earn their way into God’s family by works. Consequently, there is absolutely no way a sinner can receive the eternal inheritance of God apart from receiving God’s Son as Lord and Savior.

2. The Purpose of the Law (vs.19-23)

➤ Once we understand that God's promise of salvation (by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone) precedes and exceeds God's law, the natural question is: "If salvation has always been by God's grace through faith, and not from the law, what then is the purpose of the law?" Expecting this uncertainty, Paul asked and answered this question:

Gal 3:19-23 ~ "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. ²⁰Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one. ²¹Is 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. ²²But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed."

➤ In these verses, we find four reasons why God established the law.

a. The law exposes our sin (vs.19-20)

First, Paul explained that the law of God "*was added because of transgressions*" (vs.19). In other words, God gave the law to expose (to ourselves) our utter sinfulness. The Greek word translated "*transgressions*" (*parabasis*) can literally refer to "stepping out of bounds", describing the breaking of God's commands.

Rom 7:7-13 ~ "What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, 'You shall not covet.' ⁸But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. ⁹I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. ¹⁰The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. ¹¹For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. ¹²So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. ¹³Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure." (see Rom.4:15; 5:20)

God's law reveals that we "*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Rom.3:23; cf. Rom.3:10-11). The law reveals God's standard of righteousness, and indicates when we have transgressed that standard – having stepped outside the bounds of God's holiness and into sin.

However, in contrast with the permanence of God's promise, God's law is only temporary: "*until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made*" (vs.19; see vs.16). As we will see, the ultimate purpose of the law is to reveal our need for the Savior, Jesus Christ. Having done, that the law has been superseded by Christ. Again, the One who is the promise of God, and the One to whom God's promise is made.

In one sense, the law is a temporary placeholder – waiting for the coming of the Christ. When God's Son came – i.e. Jesus, the incarnate Son of God – the work of the Law was finished. It was "*put in place through angels by an intermediary*" (vs.19; "intermediary", *mesitēs*), but only for a time. We now have Christ as our only, ultimate and final intermediary and advocate:

1 Tim 2:5-6 ~ "For there is one God, and there is one mediator [*mesitēs*] between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time."

Heb 8:6 ~ "But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates [*mesitēs*] is better, since it is enacted on better promises."

Heb 9:15 ~ "Therefore he is the mediator [*mesitēs*] of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant." (see Heb.12:24)

1 John 2:1 ~ “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate [*paraklētos*] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” (cf. Rom.8:34; Heb.7:24-25)

b. The law reveals our need for a Savior (vs.21)

Once our sin is exposed by the law of God, the natural (rational) conclusion is that we are in need of a Savior from God. We know that “*by works of the law no one will be justified*” (Gal.2:16), “*For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it*” (Jms.2:10).

Gal 3:11 ~ “Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’” (cf. Hab.2:4)

As we will see, the law cannot save it only condemns. In verse twenty-one, Paul asked (and answered) the question that may have been on the mind of the Judaizers: “*Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not!*” (vs.21). The law is not contrary to God’s promises, but a means in which God reveals to us our need for a Savior. The law does not contradict God’s promise of salvation by grace, rather it highlights it.

As we’ve seen, God never intended anyone to be saved by the law. “*For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law*” (vs.21). The law of God does not give spiritual life, in fact, it brings spiritual death.

Gal 2:21 ~ “I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.”

Gal 5:2-4 ~ “Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. ³I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. ⁴You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.”

Rom 8:3-4 ~ “For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”

c. The law imprisons us under sin (vs.22-23)

Again, the law does not give spiritual life and it cannot save. Rather, the law reveals sin and condemns the sinner. In verse twenty-two, Paul put it this way: “*But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin*” (vs.22). The Greek word translated “*imprisoned*” (*synkleiō*) aptly describes the sinner under the law and apart from grace. The word means “to lock up securely” or “to enclose on all sides”, being “*held captive*” (*synkleiō*; vs.23) with no means of escape. In his Gospel, Luke used this word to describe the large number of fish that were “*enclosed*” in the disciples fishing nets (Lk.5:6).
✓ **Illust:** “... the Law is ... a spiritual prison, a veritable hell. When the Law begins to threaten a person with death and the eternal wrath of God, a man just cannot find any comfort at all. He cannot shake off at will the nightmare of terror which the Law stirs up in his conscience” (Martin Luther; *Commentary on Galatians*; Gal.2:23).

It is only by deception (even self-deception) – a deadening of one’s own conscience – that anyone thinks they can be free from the prison of the law apart from faith in Christ. In Galatians, Paul personifies the law as having the power to imprison the sinner and to keep securely locked up under God’s condemnation. The law does not save, it justly imprisons, condemns, and curses the sinner.

Gal 3:10 ~ “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.’” (cf. Deut.27:26)

Thankfully, “*God has done...what the law could not do*” (Rom.8:3). God provided an escape, where there was no escape. He graciously made a way for us to be saved, when there was no other way.

John 14:6 ~ “Jesus said ... ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”

Acts 4:12 ~ “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Notice the pronoun Paul used in verse twenty-three: “*we*” (vs.23). That is, apart from Christ “*we*” all are/were prisoners of the law – spiritually on death row – awaiting our just sentencing to eternal hell (see Rom.3:10-11, 23; Tit.3:3).

The law imprisoned sinners “*until the coming faith would be revealed*” (vs.23). Only a true saving faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior can unlock the prison door of the law.

d. The law drives us to faith in Christ (vs.21-23)

The ultimate reason why the law imprisons us under sin is “*so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe*” (vs.22). Notice again that the promise of salvation is “*by faith*” and not by works (vs.22; Eph.2:5, 8-9). It is given “*to those who believe*” (vs.22), not to those who have kept law (Gal.2:16).

Speaking in regard to salvation within human history, Paul explained that saving “*faith*” was “*revealed*” (vs.23) at the coming of the Son of God; Jesus Christ. With the coming of the Messiah, – “*the mystery of Christ*” (Eph.3:4) that was once hidden has now been revealed in Jesus (see Eph.1:9; 3:4-6; Col.1:26-27; 2:2-3; 4:3).

3. The Perfection of the Law (vs.24-29)

➤ Paul further explained: “*So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith*” (vs.24). Not only is the law a prison, but it is also a “*guardian*” (vs.24, 25). The Greek word (*paidagōgos*) translated “*guardian*” (used only three times in the NT; Gal.3:24, 25; 1Cor.4:15) can be translated custodian, tutor or guide. In biblical times, the “*guardian*” were typically household slaves who were in charge of the children of the household until the children became teenagers (cf. 4:1-2). A “*guardian*” was not primarily a teacher, but more of a child-attendant or “babysitter.” They kept watch over the child during his/her years of immaturity and vulnerability.

In the same way, the law can be understood as a “*guardian*”, protecting and restraining us from sin. Ultimately, through guidance and discipline, the law worked to lead us to a salvation in Christ by faith. The New American Standard Bible, translates verse twenty-four this way: “*Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.*”

➤ Once we understand that a person is saved by faith alone in Christ alone, “*we are no longer under a guardian*” (vs.25). Now that Christ has come, the “*guardian*” aspect of the law is no longer necessary. This is because the true Christian seeks to live a righteous life, fully pleasing to God, by faith and not by works. For the true Christian desires to obey God out of love for God, not out of a duty to the law.

Paul explained it this way: “*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ*” (vs.27; Jn.14:15; 1Jn.2:3-5; 5:2-3).

➤ We can deduce two essential Gospel-truths from these verses of Scripture.

a. Christ alone satisfied all the demands of the law (vs.24-25)

In the Bible we read that Jesus was perfectly sinless – absolutely without sin (2Cor.5:21; Heb.4:15; 1Pet.2:22; 1Jn.3:5). Jesus never sinned (not in action, inaction, attitude, or motive). He lived a completely sinless, righteous life. This means that He never committed an act of unrighteousness, and He never omitted an act of righteous (Jn.5:19; 8:29). He was never disobedient to God in any way or at any time. Jesus perfectly and completely satisfied (fulfilled) all the demands of the law.

Matt 5:17 ~ “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”

Matt 3:13-16 ~ “Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴John would have prevented him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’ ¹⁵But Jesus answered him, ‘Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he consented.”

As Paul explained, *“the law was our guardian until Christ came”* (vs.24). In other words, the law served to reveal that we are sinners in need of a Savior. When Christ came – when the Son of God was born (Gal.4:4) – the temporary purpose of the law was fulfilled in Christ. Whereas the law justly condemned us as sinners and exposed our need for a Savior from God, the Son came to enable us to be *“justified by faith”* (vs.24). For Jesus came to die on the cross for our sins, paying the full penalty of sin for all who would ever believe.

2 Cor 5:21 ~ “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

As He had promised, God has graciously made a way – when there was no other way – to be saved through faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior. Therefore, *“now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian”* (vs.25). Christians are no longer condemned by the law (Rom.8:1), as they live for Christ by faith in the Spirit of God (see Gal.5:22-25; Rom.8:5, 13).

b. Christ alone enables sinners to be saved by faith (vs.26-29)

Jesus is the only person to be absolutely sinless. Jesus is the Savior, He never needed a Savior! He perfectly fulfilled all of God’s requirements, obeyed all of God’s commands. He, therefore, died on the cross not for His own sin but for the sins of all who would ever believe. This is referred to as His “substitutionary death” (or the “substitutionary atonement” of Christ). Meaning, Jesus died in our place for our sins. God treated Jesus as if He had lived our sinful lives, and God treats those who are saved as if they lived Jesus’ perfect life. This has been called “the great exchange” – Christ bearing the punishment and death for our unrighteousness while we receive the glory and reward for His righteousness.

Gal 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’ – ¹⁴so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.”

2 Cor 5:21 ~ “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (see Is.53:4-6; Eph.5:2; 1Pet.3:18; 1Jn.2:1-2)

By His grace, God sent His one and only Son to die on the cross for the sins of all who would ever believe. Also by grace, God has sovereignly chosen to impute our unrighteousness (sins) onto Christ and impute Christ’s righteousness (sinlessness) onto us. To all those who believe, those who truly receive Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior, God has given the promise of eternal life. As Paul stated, *“for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith”* (vs.26).

John 3:14-18 ~ “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”

John 1:12-13 ~ “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Paul went on to explain: *“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise”* (vs.28-29). Everyone – no matter their ethnicity/nationality, their social status, or their gender – who receives Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, by faith, is saved. All true believers are heirs of God’s kingdom, saved, not by their own religious/righteous works but through faith in Christ according to the promise of God.

Conclusion

➤ This message that Paul (again) preached to the Galatians, is the same Gospel message that he (and all the other apostles) preached throughout his apostolic ministry. Salvation by God’s grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone is the Gospel – and the only true Gospel.

Acts 16:25-34 ~ “About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, ²⁶and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone’s bonds were unfastened. ²⁷When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸But Paul cried with a loud voice, ‘Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.’ ²⁹And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. ³⁰Then he brought them out and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ ³¹And they said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.’ ³²And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. ³⁴Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.”

Rom 10:9-10 ~ “because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.”

Eph 2:8-10 ~ “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”