

## **LESSON 5: GALATIANS 3:6-28**

### **Law vs. Grace**

1. In 3:6, Paul quotes Genesis 15:6. He also writes about Abraham in Romans 4:1-3 and 9:12. In your own words, explain why Abraham was right with God. Why is it so appropriate to speak of Abraham as “the man of faith” (v. 9)?
2. What, and on what basis, is our relationship to Abraham (v. 7)? What was God’s plan for all people predicted from the time of Abraham (vv. 8-9)?
3. How might the answer to the preceding question differ from what the Galatians were apparently being taught by the false teachers? How did Jesus handle an argument about what makes a person a “son of Abraham”? (See John 8:39-45.)
4. In your opinion, why do people want to work for salvation? Consider how much emphasis is placed today on the necessity of certain works and experiences.
5. In 3:10-13, Paul quotes three Old Testament passages (Deut. 27:26; Hab. 2:4, and Lev. 18:5). What do these Old Testament passages tell us about the law? (See NIV Study Note for Lev. 18:5, one of the best in the whole Bible!) Do you think by “law” Paul means simply the marks of Jewish identity (like circumcision and kosher laws), or does he mean something more?
6. Paul’s quotation of Deuteronomy 21:23 in verse 13 gives us a new and still deeper insight into the nature and accomplishment of Christ’s crucifixion?

7. Galatians 3:14 is one of the towering verses in a letter full of towering verses. In your own words, what point is Paul making here? Compare verses 3:5,9,11, and 14. What benefits come through faith?
  
8. What is a “human covenant,” and what does Paul mean when he says that “no one can set aside or add to” one that has been duly established” (v. 15)? Can you give some examples of “human covenant” relationships, and how are these distinguished from other, say, “contractual” relationships?
  
9. How many times does “promise” appear in this passage? To whom were these promises spoken? Explain the point Paul is making in verse 16. (*Extra credit:* Did God’s promises to Abraham point to fulfillment in one or in many? How are we to understand this?)
  
10. In verse 17, Paul writes “What I mean is this,” and proceeds to explain the point he established in verse 15. Explain, in your own words, what Paul is getting at here.
  
11. In verse 18 we learn the nature of the thing promised. What did God promise, and how will that promise come to pass? What does this indicate about the nature of God’s covenant with Abraham?
  
12. If God always intended that the blessings promised to Abraham would come through faith, “what, then, was the purpose of the law” (v. 19)? Why was it added? For how long? To whom did the promise refer?
  
13. What contrast does Paul draw between the way the promise was given (verse 18) and the way the Law came (verse 19)? How does this further show the inferiority of the Law to the promise? And while we’re at it, what on earth is Paul talking about in vv. 19b-20?!? What point is he making by mentioning that “the law was put into effect through angels by a mediator”?

14. Paul has been making the point that grace (given unilaterally by means of a promise) is a very different principle than law (added through a mediator because of transgressions). But “is law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God” (v. 21)? Explain.
  
15. According to Scripture, what has the law shown about every person, and toward what purpose? (See v. 22, 24; Rom. 3:19-20)?
  
16. What picture is given in verses 23-25 of the law and the Jewish people? In what way is the law a “prison?” What is the way to freedom in the presence of God for which the law has been a preparation? How do you tell people about this?
  
17. What, therefore, is the relationship of the law to the gospel of grace? How long was the law to have impact on God’s people? (Careful!) (*Extra credit*: But if we are understanding Scripture rightly here, how are we to understand what Jesus means in Matthew 5:17?)
  
18. What are we through faith in Christ, and what do we have on account of our baptism (v. 26)?
  
19. What point is Paul making in verse 28? How does oneness in Christ affect differences among Christians in race, social status, and sex? What does the “face” of the true Church look like? What are we to make of “niche” churches, geared toward a particular slice of regional demographic...? And turning the question around: does this verse teach that there are no distinctions among believers? Defend your answer.
  
20. What is promised to Abraham’s heirs? How do we know that God counts us as such (v. 29)?