

Via Dolorosa

Galatians 3.15-25

Oh, this is an awkward time to talk!

Are you calling about that thing?

Well, I need to preach a sermon right now!

At BICF ZGC!

Well, they're not THAT bad!

Yeah, most of them stay awake!....

NT Letters SITUATIONAL Theology // 1 Side of Phone Conversation

Galatians: Paul's End of Phone Call, Educated GUESS what THEY Say

RESPONSE: False Teachers: ADDED Man's Merit to God's Mercy

Paul: ADVOCATE for the ALMIGHTY! SERIES of ARGUMENTS

ADD to Gospel is to ABANDON It, MIX our Goodness MISS God's Grace

### 1. Permanence of the Covenant

v. 15 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.

Paul APPLYING Great Theological Mind / Brilliant Logic > Our Status before God

HUMAN Example – Follows 2 Divine Examples ch 3 – SPIRIT of God / Scriptures

HOPE > “BROTHERS” – May be ACTING like FOOLS but they're in the FAITH!

Focus: 3 Covenants = Solemn Promise ratified in BLOOD

Gaze at PANAROMA of 2000 years of Biblical History

3 Significant peaks DOMINATE the HORIZON – Abraham, Moses, Jesus

Word COVENANT can also be Translated TESTAMENT > *Last Will & Testament*

WILL is NOT CONTRACT or BARGAIN: Declares what ONE PERSON will DO

Different Cultures / Law Codes > DIFFERENT Legal Status of Person's Will

ALL Agree on This: Once Person who makes will DIES – It cannot be Changed  
 True in HUMAN Court > GREATER FORCE in Throne Room of Almighty God  
 v. 17,18 This is what I mean: the law...does not annul a covenant previously  
 ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. For if the inheritance comes by the  
 law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

PROMISE is a KEY Word – Occurs 8 X's in last 15 Verses in Chapter

SALVATION is a PRESENT, NOT a PAYCHECK

GAVE the Promise: PERFECT Tense – PAST Action with PRESENT Results

Salvation a Gift GIVEN Once for All and THEN Kept Forever

v. 19,20 ...the law...was put in place through angels by an intermediary. Now an  
 intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.

False Teachers > Law MORE COOL because Given thru WORK of ANGELS

Today: ANGELS in Outfield – Dashboard of Cars – Ceramic ICONS on Shelves

The promise came to Abraham first-hand from God; and the law comes to the  
 people third-hand – God – the angels – Moses the mediator – the people. Stephen Neill

ANGELS – Represent DISTANCE between GOD and the PEOPLE

MOSES: Picture of SEPARATION: Holy/Unholy, Clean/Unclean, Insiders/Gentiles

GOD is ONE – One SEED is Christ – ONE Family of Faith > Jew AND Gentiles

PROFESSOR in University in China – Approached by Troubled Young Man

Confessed: “I am a practicing homosexual – I feel like a SLAVE”

Prof: “YOU are a SLAVE! But Jesus is a SAVIOR who can SET YOU FREE!”

Young Man: “First I need to be a Christian like you, then God will love me”

*I'm* not a Christian like me, either. I'm no better than you are, except for the love  
 and power of God. He loves you now as you are. Christian Professor

God does not deal with us by OUR PERFORMANCE but by HIS PROMISE  
 Proven thru Ch. 3: Spirit, Scriptures, Salvation, Sealed in Blood of Covenant  
 Glorious Conclusion: JUSTIFIED in Christ – Not Guilty, Acquitted, Pardon, Freed  
 Justification COMMENCES in Christ and must CONTINUE in Christ ALONE  
 Then Paul ANTICIPATES their Question...WHY THEN the Law???

## 2. Purpose of the Commandments

Paul tying string between Jesus & Abe so TIGHT, Moses getting SQUEEZED Out  
 ...we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers received us warmly...Paul and the rest of us  
 went to see James, and all the elders...Paul greeted them and reported in detail what  
 God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. When they heard this, they  
 praised God. Then they said to Paul: "You see, brother, how many thousands of  
 Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. They have been  
 informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from  
 Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our  
 customs..."  
 Acts 21.17-22

Lots of Torah, lots of life...If he has gotten the teachings of the Torah, he has  
 gotten himself life eternal.  
 Mishnah Aboth 2:8

v. 17 ...the law, which came 430 years afterward.../ 430 Length of Stay in EGYPT  
 Law NOT NECESSARY for Salvation, ABE Saved, Friend of God, Long Before Law

### a. Convict

v. 19 Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring  
 should come to whom the promise had been made

LAW PROVES Crime has been COMMITTED – BROKEN Written COMMAND  
 Law is NOT given to PREVENT Sin: Not PREVENTATIVE but PROVOCATIVE  
 IN ORDER THAT there might be Transgressions / Law is STIMULUS TO SIN  
 Paul CONCLUDES Three Chapters of SIMILAR ARGUMENT in Romans:

Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. Romans 3.20

The law was given in order to make transgressions obvious, and in this way to compel men to acknowledge their guilt. John Calvin

Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. Romans 7.8-11

Law like CHEMOTHERAPY > Instrument of DEATH poured into Cancer Patient  
 Many Say > “The CHEMO will KILL you FASTER than the CANCER!”  
 Chemo kills GOOD CELLS and BAD CELLS / Makes PATIENT FEEL LOUSY!  
 Chemo is LONG-TERM Strategy > HOPE that Good Cells would LIVE AGAIN!  
 v. 19 Law “was added” i.e. Came in by SIDE ROAD

The law feeds into the promise; it is the on-ramp to the gospel highway. The more we know the law, the more we see our sin...the more we confess we need a Savior.  
 Philip Ryken

b. Complement – Not Contradictory BUT COMPLEMENTARY

v. 21 Is 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.

Promise & Law SEPARATE but COMPLEMENTARY Arrangements  
 OBTAINED by Entirely DIFFERENT Principles: FAITH and WORKS  
 LAW DEMANDS: “You must!...You must!...You must!”  
 PROMISE >> God DECLARES “I will...I will...I will!”

The promise sets forth a religion of God – God’s plan, God’s grace, God’s initiative. But the law sets forth a religion of man – man’s duty, man’s works, man’s responsibility. John Stott

### c. Carry to Christ

1) Prison vs. 22,23 But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed.

LAW/Scripture canNOT make us Righteous/ LOCKS Us up as PRISONERS of Sin  
When LOOKING for WAY OUT > Discover JESUS is ONLY One who Sets Free!

Paul, the prisoner... ..more than forty (Jewish men) are waiting in ambush... They have taken an oath not to eat or drink until they have killed him... Then (the commander) called two of his centurions and ordered them, "Get ready a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine tonight. Provide mounts for Paul so that he may be taken safely to Governor Felix."  
Acts 23.12-24

PRISON was GREAT BLESSING to PAUL at THAT MOMENT > Led to Safety

LAW is PRISON refusing to LET GO until we are HANDED Over to JESUS

The Law...does contribute to justification – not because it justifies, because it impels one to the promise of grace... the principle purpose of the Law in theology is to make men not better but worse; that is, it shows them their sin, so that by the recognition of sin they may be humbled, frightened, and worn down, and so may long for grace...  
Martin Luther

2) Pedagogue – Slave Appointed to Serve as Child’s Protector and Chaperone

vs. 24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.

Wealthy GREEK Families – Older Slaves to help RAISE Boys from 6 to Adulthood  
Guardian – Protector – Chaperone – Baby-Sitter – Disciplinarian – Moral Tutor  
NOT Teacher > TAKE them to School and FORCE them to Do their STUDIES  
TOLD them WHAT to DO, Then PUNISHED them when they FAILED to DO IT!

When a boy ceases to be a child, and begins to be a lad, others release him from his 'pedagogue' and from his teacher; he is then no longer under them, but is allowed to go his own way. Xenophon, Greek Writer (428-354 B.C. ca.)

v. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian

v. 23 before faith came v. 24 until Christ came v. 25 now that faith has come

JESUS is True OBJECT of FAITH – Jesus HERE the ERA of FAITH has BEGUN

Not until the law has bruised and smitten us will we admit our need of the gospel to bind up our wounds. Not until the law has arrested and imprisoned us will we pine for Christ to set us free. Not until the law has condemned and killed us will we call upon Christ for justification and for life. Not until the law has driven us to despair of ourselves will we ever believe in Jesus. Not until the law has humbled us even to hell will we turn to the gospel to raise us up to heaven. John Stott

### 3. Parties of the Covenant

v. 16 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.

Paul is CAREFUL STUDENT of Scripture / EXACT Words Matter

INSPIRATION of Scripture NOT JUST – General Ideas, Impressions, Very Words  
All Scripture is breathed out by God... 2 Timothy 3.16 / EVERY Word of Scripture

The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land."  
Genesis 12.7

3-fold PROMISE of God to Abraham: 1) Son, 2) Homeland, 3) Blessing to World  
Promise ULTIMATELY Spiritual: How could Jews in Canaan bless Whole World?  
SEED – Collective Noun // FAMILY, FOREST >> Christ & ALL IN CHRIST

Paul NOT Grammarian > Preacher of GOOD NEWS > ULTIMATE Meaning

Immediate Meaning: ISAAC / Wider Meaning: ISRAEL / True Meaning: JESUS

Christ is INCLUSIVE PERSONALITY – ALL people of Faith are IN HIM

If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Galatians 3.29

#### 4. Picture of God's Confirmation – Genesis 15

One ATTRACTION of Law is MEASURABLE / Tangible / Gives PROOF if Kept

TSS 3 Rules: HONESTY, RESPECT, OBEDIENCE > NOT ENOUGH for Many!

HAIR Length / HEM Lines / Limit HATS, HOODIES, & HOLDING HANDS

I AM really RIGHT with God! Praying for 40 Days! Reading NT! Fasting!

MEASURABLE, VISIBLE > PRESS the RELIGIOUS Lever and GET CHEESE!

PROMISES – Intangible, Maybe MISHEARD, Maybe CHANGED their Mind

**Wife tells Husband “I don't know IF you LOVE me ANYMORE?!”**

Husband: “When I married you 20 years ago I said ‘I love you’ if I changed my mind, I would have told you so!”

Genesis 15 Father Abraham – DOUBTING the PROMISES of God

Ch 14 ABE BEEN ON EMOTIONAL ROLLER-COASTER - Highs and Lows

DEFEAT OF HOSTILE FORCES / DOUBTS RAISED BY KING OF SODOM

EVEN HEROES OF FAITH STRUGGLE WITH DOUBTS AND QUESTIONS

Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless"

Genesis 15.2

FOR ANCIENTS "children a reward from the Lord" > CHILDLESS = CURSED

NO SON- NO Inheritance - NO Great NATION - NO BLESSING ALL PEOPLE

## a. Lord of Creation

ABE DEMANDS PROOF of God's Promise - GOD SAYS OK, STEP OUTSIDE

The word of the LORD came to him: "...your very own son shall be your heir." And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness. Genesis 15.4-6

INFINITE NUMBER OF STARS SUSPENDED IN LIMITLESS SPACE

STILL COUNTING STARS > SOME SAY MORE THAN 100 BILLION

God SPOKE STARS into Existence: Sovereignly give a SON to Elderly Couple  
Faithfulness in What we SEE, Calls us to TRUST HIM for what we CANNOT See

## b. Lord of the Covenant > GOD ENTERS INTO A COVENANT w/ Abe

On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram" Genesis 15.17

DEF. "Bond in Blood Sovereignly Administered"

Very FAMILIAR IN ABE'S DAY - KNOWN FORM & STRUCTURE

UNILATERAL - God alone set the terms

NOT BY COMMITTEE OR CONFERENCE BUT BY A CONQUEROR

ETERNAL - It would not be revoked or rescinded

GRACE - Based on the mercy of the Sovereign Lord

COVENANT WAS CUT "cutting the covenant" / BLOOD WAS SHED

"So the LORD said to him, "Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon." Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other" Genesis 15.9,10

AS CARCASSES LAID OUT IN HALVES - STREET OF BLOOD FORMED  
SOLEMN AND SICKENING REMINDER OF SERIOUSNESS OF PROMISES



## PROPHET JEREMIAH TELLS US SERIOUSNESS OF THIS OATH

“The men who have violated my covenant and have not fulfilled the terms of the covenant they made before me, I will treat like the calf they cut in two and then walked between its pieces. The leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the court officials, the priests and all the people of the land who walked between the pieces of the calf, I will hand over to their enemies who seek their lives. Their dead bodies will become food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth.” Jeremiah 34:18-20

IF YOU BREAK YOUR PROMISE - YOUR SLIT CARCASS JOINS THE PILE

MAY YOUR BLOOD FLOW DOWN THE STREET OF BLOOD TOO

When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram  
Genesis 15.17

Familiar Image > Firepot like a Bread Oven > GOD APPEARED in Everyday Life  
THE GOD WHO APPEARED IN PILLAR OF FIRE TO CHILDREN OF ISRAEL  
THE GOD WHO IS A REFINER'S FIRE FOR HIS PEOPLE'S FAITH

SHOCKING! INCREDIBLE! GOD HIMSELF WALKS the STREET of BLOOD!

FIRST HE HAD PROVEN HIS PROMISES - showing Abe the Stars

NOW HE PERFORMS HIS PROOF - If I lie, you can slay me!

### c. Lord on the Cross

As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him” Genesis 15.12

A PERSON DOES NOT MAKE A COVENANT WITH THEMSELVES

TWO Parties must Make COVENANT Promises to Make it FINAL

Like Shaking Hands with Yourself / Marrying Yourself

In FULLNESS of Time – God sent SON to REDEEM Us from Curse of the LAW  
 Jesus came as SIN-BEARER and SUBSTITUTE for God’s Covenant Children

For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom  
 to swear, he swore by himself Hebrews 6.13

Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever  
 Jesus HIMSELF came to WALK the Street of Blood for GUILTY ABE & ALL  
 COVENANT was RATIFIED because Jesus was CRUCIFIED  
 PALM Sunday – Jesus STOOD BEFORE that STREET of BLOOD

They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the  
 disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. He took the  
 Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. "We are going up to  
 Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and  
 teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the  
 Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days  
 later he will rise." Mark 10.32-34

Jesus – Our Sovereign Savior took FIRST Steps down VIA DOLOROSA to Death  
 Jesus LED the Way – Disciples ASTONISHED to see MASTER EMBRACE Death  
 CALVARY WHERE HE WAS RENT APART FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION

Salvation in Christ does not rest on a law that we inevitably break; it rests on a  
 promise that God *cannot* break. Philip Ryken

So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.  
 Galatians 3:9

Believe that?? Then - that NIGHT SKY 4000 yrs ago - GOD Hung a Star for You!

### Galatians 3

15 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. 16 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. 17 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. 18 For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise. 19 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. 20 Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one. 21 Is 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. 22 But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. 23 Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. 24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian