

Review:

3:15-18 The Promise verses the Law

Once again I believe that Paul is answering an objection that the Judaizers may have raised in response to what he has taught.

He uses a common human illustration to make his point.

Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations:

even though it is only a man's covenant,

yet when it has been ratified,

no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it.

Where is Paul going with this? What does this principle do? or how much stronger is this principle when God is one of the parties to the contract?

Summary 3:15

1. Paul is referring to the law of contracts that indicates that once an offer was made and all the terms and conditions were met and accepted, (ratified) it was not legally breakable or changeable.
2. Once ratified and put into effect, it cannot be set aside or added to apart from agreement of both parties.
3. What Paul is dealing with here is the thrust of the Judaizers that the later covenant the M/L takes precedence over the earlier promise of God to Abraham.
4. The fundamental issue here is the faithfulness of God to His promise, contract, made to Abraham.

Note: the method of ratification of contracts in the time of Abraham

1. First a sacrificial animal was cut into two parts along the backbone, and the parts then would be laid in two rows with a space between.
2. The two contracting parties would then walk between the two rows of animal parts to confirm the pact agreed to.
3. This was the method of ratification used when God established His covenant with Abraham in Gen. 15 with one significant exception. Abe took a snooze (vs:12) and then the functional presence of God in a flaming torch passed through the two rows. (vs:17)
4. Only God passed through since this is an unconditional covenant that is based on God alone for the certainty of its fulfillment.

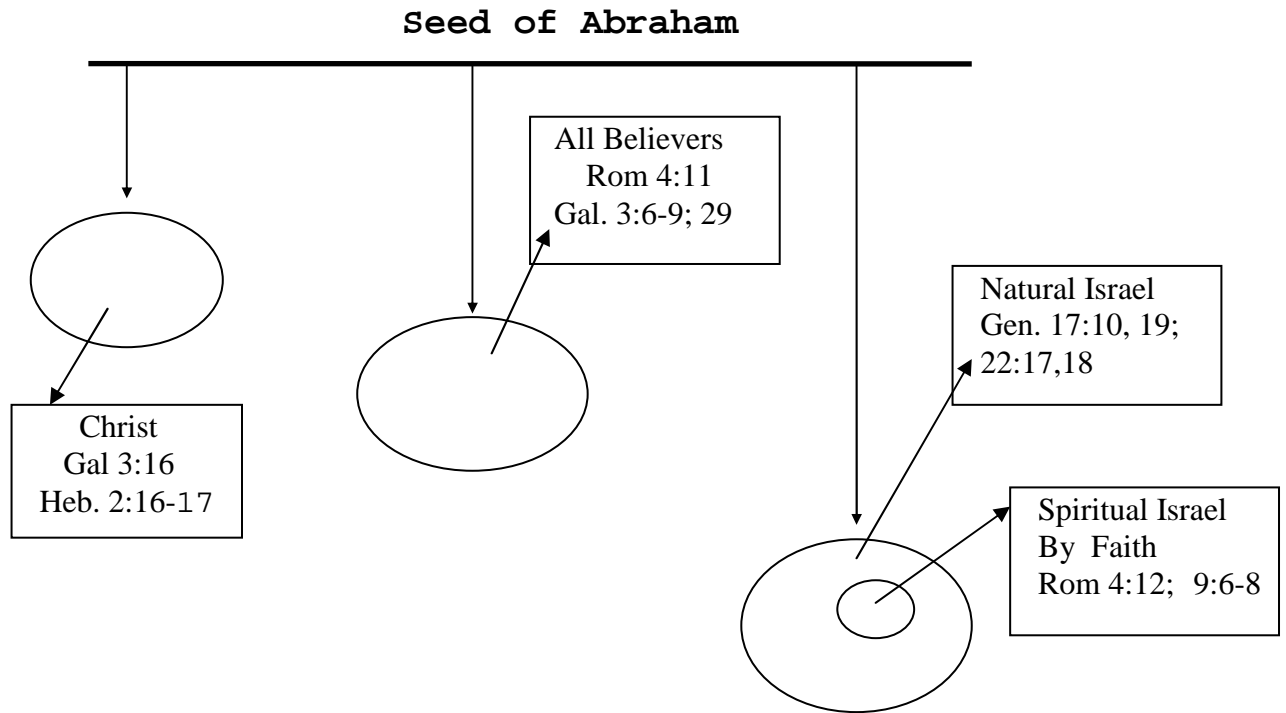
3:16 Paul gives a second reason why the Mosaic Covenant cannot modify or qualify the Abrahamic Covenant

The idea being developed by Paul is this: we expect men to live up to their contracts; what about God's promise- His contract with Abraham and Abraham's Seed?

The Covenant of Law could in no way alter God's faithfulness in fulfilling this promise.

Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed.

The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people,



Thankfully, the fulfillment of the blessings God promised through Abraham and his seed (singular) are dependent upon **one person**, not the entire nation of Israel.

Summary 3:16

1. We find here an example of Paul's high view of Scripture, in that he bases his argument on the fact that the word seed is singular not plural.
2. Seed used in the singular reminds the readers what the faithful of Israel had always recognized that the blessing would ultimately come through a single individual, the Messiah (3:19).
3. It also points out that the spiritual relationship is more important than the physical, natural one.
4. Paul's argument in the context: (remember he is refuting the Judaizers teaching)
The fact that the promises were made to Abraham and to all his spiritual progeny, all believers, indicates 3 things about the faith way of salvation.
 - a. existed before the Law was given.
 - b. it continued through the time that the Law was in force until the veil was rent!
 - c. it is still in effect, actually for all time faith is the means of salvation.
5. The blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant are dependent upon God's promise, achieved through God's perfect Son, Jesus Christ.
6. Because He not only perfectly obeyed God's Law but bore its curse, we can be assured of receiving the blessings promised through Abraham by means of promise, that is by faith not by our performance.
7. Paul is attempting here to demonstrate to the Galatians that the entrance of the Law did not change or add to the covenant of blessing.