

(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! That 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. 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. Now the 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. 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. So then, the Law was our "guardian" until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But, now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God --- through faith!

(27) For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 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. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Think on these things:

- 1) The purpose of v. 15 is to indicate that the coming of the Law through Moses does not change the covenant God made with Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 and 15:1-20. Which came first, God's promise to Abraham or God's Law through Moses? By how many years (v. 17, Exodus 12:40)?

God's promise to Abraham came first by 430 years.

- 2) Looking at Genesis 17:18-21, who is the "heir" of promise? How many sons did Abraham have (skim Genesis 25:1-2, 5-11)? Can you name the son of Abraham who Jesus came from?

Isaac was the heir of promise out of the 8 sons eventually born to Abraham. Jesus came from Isaac's line.

- 3) Did the Law of Moses nullify the promises made to Abraham (v. 17)? How did Abraham gain his inheritance from God (v. 18)?

No, the Law did not annul God's promises, which is how Abraham received his inheritance.

- 4) So, rhetorically, Paul asks, "Why then did God give Moses the Law" --- if we don't gain God's inheritance by the law (v. 18)? What is the answer from v. 19?

God added the Law because of men's transgressions.

- 5) What phrase from v. 19 indicates “how long” the “added” Law was supposed to be in place? Looking back at v. 16, who is the offspring who was coming and who fulfilled the Law, rendering the Law no longer applicable to receive God’s inheritance? (See also Romans 10:1-4)

It was to be “until the offspring should come.” V. 16 says that “that” offspring was Jesus Christ.

- 6) Since God’s Law is holy and righteous, explaining to us God’s expectations for people who believe in Him, why was it unsuccessful in bringing people life (v. 22, and Hebrews 7:19)?

By defining “sin”, all mankind was imprisoned and held captive as sinners. Hebrews teaches that the Law makes nothing perfect.

- 7) V. 23 says people were captives and imprisoned under the Law (the Old Covenant) before Jesus came (the New Covenant) and the Gospel of faith was revealed. Why was the Law put in charge (NIV, or ‘guardian,’ ESV) for so many years (v. 24)? What does Colossians 2:13-14 say Jesus did when He died on the cross?

The Law was meant to lead us to Christ; it pointed out our great need for the Deliverer (Savior). Jesus “cancelled the record of debt against us.” He set it aside by nailing it to the cross.

- 8) If you choose to put your faith in Jesus, what is your relationship with God now (v. 26)?

God’s child.

- 9) In God’s world, is a man better than a woman, or a Jew better than a non-Jew (Gentile/Greek)? (v. 28) All who belong to Christ – by faith – also belong to who’s lineage (v. 29), and become heirs to the promises of God (Romans 9:6-8)?

No, a man is not better than a woman, or a Jew better than a Gentile. In His creation, God views everyone He creates as equal. Children of faith belong to Abraham’s lineage.

People and situations I want to pray for this week: