

Law and Grace

Galatians 3:15–22 (ESV) 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.*

1. The Immutability of the Promise v. 15-17

- A. Generated by God v. 15
- B. Grounded in Christ v. 16, 22
- C. Given Before the Law v. 17
- D. Granted by the Promise v. 18

2. The Intention of the Law v. 19, 22

- A. The Law Exposes Sin v. 19
- B. The Law Reveals the Penalty for Sin
- C. The Law Reveals the Remedy of Sin v. 22

3. The Inferiority of the Law v. 19-21

- A. The Law was given by Mediation v. 19
- B. The Law is Inferior to Grace...Not Opposed to Grace v. 21
- C. The Law Cannot Bring Life v. 21

*“After God gave the promise to Abraham, He gave the law to Moses. Why? He had to make things worse before He could make them better. The law exposed sin, provoked sin, condemned sin. The purpose of the law was to lift the lid off man’s respectability and disclose what he is really underneath—sinful, rebellious, guilty, under the judgment of God and helpless to save himself. And the law must still be allowed to do its God-given duty today. One of the great faults of the contemporary church is the tendency to soft-pedal sin and judgment ... We must never bypass the law and come straight to the gospel. To do so is to contradict the plan of God in biblical history ... No man has ever appreciated the gospel until the law has first revealed him to himself. It is only against the inky blackness of the night sky that the stars begin to appear, and it is only against the dark background of sin and judgment that the gospel shines forth.”(John Stott, *The Message of Galatians*, p. 92-93)*

Questions for Reflection and Application

How do the details of God’s covenant-making ceremony with Abram encourage you?

When are you most tempted to look to your own efforts to make yourself acceptable to God?

Think back to your conversion, or the first time you understood the gospel. How did your view of God’s law change?

How does knowing God’s law increase your gratitude to Christ?

What difference does this make to your affections?

Why do you obey God’s law? Do you ever obey it for the wrong reasons?