

Context

- 1] Paul writes to the Galatian churches – planted months ago
- 2] Whole church going ‘pear-shaped’ Galatia, Antioch even Jerusalem (2:11, 13)
- 3] Reverting from Grace to Law, circumcision group (2:12) – foolish (3:1, 3)

Main Point *The Law was given after the promise to lead us to Christ so he could set us right by faith*

Key Verse *The Law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith’ (3:24)*

The place of the Law – under grace (15-18)

- 1] ‘brothers’ (15, cf 1:11)

ensure that those who believe in Jesus know that you recognise that

- 2] Example from everyday life - a human covenant
cf ‘An example’ - Law or faith (3:2, 5)

Use illustrations that people understand

- 3] Abraham (16)

a) promise (Gen 12:2,3,7; 15:5)

b) Ab and seed (sing.) = Christ

nb *Abraham and his seed* (Gen 12:7; 13:15; 24:7)

ie Messiah – the awaited King.

All promises yes in Jesus (2 Cor 1:20)

God’s promise to Ab fulfilled through Jesus

God’s covenants / promises stand forever

- 4] ‘covenant of Law (17) (Moses) 430 years after covenant of promise (Ab.) NOT supercede
Nb long time? - *A thousand years is as a day with God* (Ps 90:4)

Time is inconsequential to God

- 5] Inheritance (18) depends on promise (grace) not Law.

cf *Inheritance* (Acts 7:5)

God gives our inheritance to us as a gift of grace

The purpose of the Law – need for grace (19 -22)

- 1] Law temporary (19a)

- 2] Law given through mediator (19b)

Nb *mediator* (Deut 33:2; Ps 68:17; Heb 2:2; Acts 7:53)

Angels from a Jewish tradition, possibly Deuteronomy 33:2.

Stephen also alludes to angels having a part in the giving of the Law, Acts 7:53.

- 3] Law for us – the problem lies with us NOT God (20)

Nb *God is one* (Deuteronomy 6:4 (Mark 12:29); Ephesians 4:6)

God Himself has no need of a mediator

only Grace can help us

4] Law does not contradict promise (21)

Nb absolutely not (2:17; Rom 6:1)

Life eternal is knowing God (John 17:3)

Law is complementary to promise of God if Law 'worked' – don't need promise

We can never achieve righteousness before God by keeping the Law

5] Gospel (22)

a) Whole world prisoner of sin (the Law simply shows this) (22a)

Sin is universal (Ps 14:3; Rmns 3:23)

Whole world is a prisoner of sin (Deut 27:26)

Everyone is a prisoner of sin – we can't help it!

Everyone can receive Abraham's promise- righteous through faith in Jesus.(3:22,24)

b) promise given to those who have faith in Jesus (22b)

cf faith in the Son of God (2:20)

The effect of the Law - leading to grace (23-25)

1] Before faith – prisoner locked up by the Law (23)

nb held prisoners cf 'guarded' (2Cor 11:32)

Locked up cf 'enclosed' fish (Lk 5:6)

I.e. guardian / strict disciplinarian (1Cor4:15, 21)

Legalism totally binds us

2] Law lead us (via despair) to Christ – justified by faith (24)

Cf Rom 7:24 ---25)

Nb Lead us child slave - A strict disciplinarian - in ancient drawings often with a cane in his hand (cf 1Cor4:15, 21)

3] Faith has delivered us from the Law

* Jesus justifies / sets us right with God by our faith in Him *

Conclusion

1] Believe in God and His promise and receive with Abraham God's righteousness.

2] Recognise the purpose of the Law

3] Live free from the tyranny of the Law

Summary *Brothers, covenants are permanent (15). The promises were given to Abraham and his seed, Jesus (16). The Law was given to Moses 430 years after Abraham; it does not abolish the promise (17); this inheritance is given by God's grace. (18). The Law was given so we would recognise sin; it was for our benefit (19, 20). It is complementary to the promise; in itself it can't give life. We are all held captives by sin but through the faith in Jesus Christ we receive this promise (21, 22) Before we had this faith we were helplessly subject to the Law (23) Knowing this, it led us to faith in Jesus and so it has done its work (25).*