

v. 15

A Certified Agreement

- Once something has been agreed upon, the terms of that agreement are not changed.
- Ratified: sign or give formal consent to (a treaty, contract, or agreement), making it officially valid.
- The covenant that God made with Abraham is found in Genesis 15.
- Read, or have someone read, Genesis 15:1-6 with an emphasis on verse 6.
- The first covenant that God made with Abraham was predicated on faith not works.

v. 16-18

The Offspring and the Law

- Read Genesis 22:15-18
- God made a covenant with Abraham that his offspring would be a blessing to the nations.
- Paul says that the offspring that God is referring to is not the people of Israel but rather in the person of Jesus Christ alone. Jesus is the Offspring of Abraham from Genesis 22.
- The covenant that God made with Abraham through faith was settled 430 years before the law came. This means that the law of faith was not undone by the law of works. It was a set precedent 430 years before the law ever came.
- Abraham's inheritance was given to him because he believed God in Genesis 15:6.
- We, as Gentiles, are granted access to the covenant with Abraham in the same way that Abraham himself was: faith in Christ.
- What does this mean for our salvation? We cannot earn it with our good works. It is only by the grace of God that any of us are saved.

v. 19-25

The Law

- So, if the covenant with Abraham was by faith, then why was the law necessary?
- The law was added because of sin and would act as a guardian until the Offspring, who is Jesus, would come.
- The law imprisoned everyone who was under it.
- The overall purpose of the law was to point back to the covenant of grace that God made with Abraham. The intent is to reveal and emphasize that no one could be saved by any other means than the grace of God alone.

v. 26-29

One in Christ

- Now that Jesus has come and fulfilled the whole law it has been completed. The law was not abolished, rather it was fulfilled and no longer necessary.
- The need to have a guardian is no longer necessary. The law of grace through faith that was promised to Abraham was paid for by Christ.
- What does this mean for us? We must lean on the righteousness of Christ alone for the necessary payment for our salvation.
- When Jesus came He also granted access to God to the Gentiles.
- Now, through and under Christ, there is no more Jew and Gentile. We are unified in one body, the church.
- We are God's chosen people. The same ones that God promised to Abraham in Genesis 15.
- That makes us heirs according to the promise of God and God cannot go back on His promises due to His holy nature,

Small Group Questions

- 1) What does it mean for something to be ratified?
 - It means that an agreement, statute, amendment, etc was approved and is now in effect. God ratified a covenant with Abraham therefore it was approved as precedent and would not be done away with.
- 2) What was the covenant that God made with Abraham?
 - That God would give Abraham offspring when yet he had none.
- 3) Who fulfilled the promise of Abraham's Offspring?
 - Jesus! According to Galatians 3:16, Jesus was the One that God promised to Abraham. The Israelites, while Abraham's physical descendants, were not what God was referring to in Genesis 22 when He told Abraham that through His Offspring the nations would be blessed.
- 4) What did Abraham do that counted unto him as righteousness?
 - He believed God. In the face of long odds he believed that God would deliver His promise and hold fast to the covenant.
- 5) Which came first, the covenant of faith or the law of works?
 - The covenant of faith came first. The law of works did not supplant the covenant of faith. The law of works was powerless to save only to oppress. The covenant of faith was always the way of salvation for God's people.
- 6) What does this mean for us?
 - Faith in Christ alone is the only way that we can be saved. This is why this was being taught to the Galatians. They were relying on a works-based/faith hybrid and that is not the Gospel. It is something gross and unacceptable to God. If we are trusting in anything other than Christ alone then we are lost.