

Date: 2 Apr 2023

Scripture Passage: Galatians 3:15-18

Title: God's Covenant

Introduction

- Abraham saved by faith in the coming savior.
- The law does not disannul the one way of salvation, namely the way of faith in the Savior Jesus Christ.

1. The way of faith/promise was given as a covenant between God and Abraham (15-16).

- The apostle Paul emphasized this point by contrasting a human covenant (v15) vs a covenant made with God (v16). A covenant is a formal agreement between two or more parties, sometimes more than two parties are involved. It is the formal agreement between 2 or more parties.
 - As in a human covenant, once confirmed (signed), no one cancels or adds to it. It is binding, requiring parties concerned to uphold. E.g. when you get married or when you buy or sell property. Once it is confirmed, once it is signed, that means the two parties concerned have agreed to abide by the terms of the conditions.
 - The same may be said of covenant made with Abraham, it is the way of salvation by promise. God made this covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12:2-7). It was the covenant that he would have many descendants. That he would have this land and that he would have peace in that land. But this had a deeper fulfillment, as made clear by God that the physical fulfillment was only a structure, as it were, to bring about the deeper spiritual fulfillment. That spiritual fulfillment is in the promise in coming Savior.

2. The covenant was confirmed by God, fulfilled in Christ (16-17)

- Promises of many descendants, of land, of peace. Actual fulfillment in Christ (cf. 3:8-9). The word "seed" is used in collective sense, but the fulfillment was in the one Seed (16 cf Gen. 3:15). This has the primary significance as referring to the coming savior.
- When Adam fell into sin, God condemned the serpent for his role in the fall of Adam and Eve. He gave the promise of salvation through a seed of the woman. Gen 3:15. This is the first gospel in the bible. When Adam and Eve fell, God in his mercy provided salvation for him, his wife, and for those who are going to be descended from him, who have been chosen by God.
- Israel's sojourn in Egypt was 430 years (17 cf. Ex. 12:40). Covenant with Abraham made ~200 years earlier and reaffirmed with Isaac (Gen 26:24) and Jacob (Gen 28:15). It follows therefore that that covenant may not be canceled, even though the law came 430 years later. The law given in the time of Moses cannot in any way cancel what was given to Abraham by promise. Confirmed by God in Gen. 15:9-21. Law cannot nullify covenant that has been confirmed.

3. Since the covenant is by believing in the promise, it cannot be by the keeping of the law (18).

- Jews claim to be descendants of Abraham and you. But the inheritance of Abraham was received by promise. They were trying to keep the law in order to receive the inheritance. But no one can keep the law perfectly. If you rely on keeping the law you will fail to receive the promise. Instead you ought to rely on the promise given to Abraham, namely by faith in Christ. Then you receive the inheritance promised to Abraham.
- The covenant involved the coming of a particular seed, namely the Savior. Anyone who have faith in the coming saviour, there will be the true heirs of Abraham. They will receive the promise, the blessing of salvation.
- The law does not in any way cancel the one way of salvation, which is by faith in Jesus Christ. Abraham believe in the promise of God. And that promise involved faith in the coming seed Jesus Christ. Today when we have faith in Christ, we share the same faith as Abraham. We are his spiritual children. We are his descendants. We are heirs. We receive the promise blessing of salvation that was given to us. So Abraham is, as it were, our spiritual father. We are his spiritual children.

Summary and Application

- Are you saved? Have you repented of your sins? Have you trusted in Jesus Christ? Your faith in Christ and him crucified alone. Or are you still trusting in your effort or trusting in your various ways of salvation? Be clear that the only way of salvation is by faith in Christ alone, not by your works.