

PROMISES OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT  
LESSON 8: The Promise of Spiritual Blessings

**Scripture**

*Galatians 3:29 NKJV* *And if you are Christ s, then you are Abraham s seed, and heirs according to the promise."*

The Pericope: Galatians 3:1-29

Verses 1-5 — The Opening Challenge

Paul opens with barely contained frustration: "O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?"

Verses 6-9 — Abraham as the Defining Example

Paul goes straight to Abraham, because the Judaizers were using Abraham as their trump card. Abraham was circumcised. We are his children. Therefore circumcision matters.

Paul reframes the whole story:

"Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

Then Paul makes the stunning claim:

"Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham."

He's not saying the Gentiles get to participate in Abraham's covenant secondarily. He's saying faith-people "are" Abraham's children by definition. The Scripture even foresaw this: "In you all the nations shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:3)

That "all nations" language was always there. It wasn't a plan B. It was the original announcement of the gospel.

Verses 10-14 — The Law Cannot Deliver the Promise

Paul now dismantles the law as a path to blessing. The law operates on a curse-and-command basis: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

The law demands perfect obedience. So the law, rather than blessing, puts people under curse. It was never designed to justify, it was designed to reveal.

But Christ redeemed us from that curse by becoming a curse himself (Deuteronomy 21:23 hung on a tree). The purpose: "That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Two things unlocked by the cross: the Abrahamic blessing reaching Gentiles, and the Spirit received through faith. These are not separate items — they are the same reality described two ways.

#### Verses 15-18 — A Covenant Cannot Be Modified After the Fact

Paul uses a legal illustration. A human will, once ratified, cannot be altered. God made a covenant-promise to Abraham and his Seed (Paul will capitalize on the singular \*Seed\* in a moment). The law came 430 years later.

The law cannot annul or add conditions to a promise already ratified. If inheritance comes through law, it no longer comes through promise — but God gave it to Abraham through promise. The law was never a competitor to the promise. It was a later addition with a different function entirely.

#### Verses 19-22 — Then What Was the Law For?

This is the natural objection: if the law can't justify, why did God give it?

Paul's answer: “it was added because of transgressions,”— to make sin visible, defined, and obvious — until the Seed came to whom the promise was made. The law was a temporary measure with a specific end-date: Christ.

He also notes the law was mediated through angels and Moses. The promise to Abraham was direct — God to Abraham. The more direct covenant is the more foundational one.

The law is not against the promises. But it cannot give life. It cannot impart righteousness. Scripture locked everything under sin so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

#### Verses 23-25 — The Law as Custodian

"But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed."

The Greek word here “guardian,” is a household slave in the ancient world whose job was to escort children to school and keep them from trouble. A guardian with a temporary, specific function.

The law served that role for Israel: containing, restraining, pointing forward, until Christ came. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under that custodian. The guardian's job is finished.

#### Verses 26-28 — The New Reality in Christ

"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Three pairs that no longer divide:

- Jew nor Greek
- Slave nor free
- Male nor female

This is a statement about covenant status. All three distinctions were used in the ancient world to determine who had full access to religious and civil standing. In Christ, those barriers to covenant membership are gone.

You are all one in Christ Jesus.

Verse 29 — The Conclusion

"And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Paul lands the plane. The entire argument was building to this. The logic is tight:

- God promised blessing to Abraham's Seed (singular — Christ, verse 16)
- You belong to Christ
- Therefore you are in the Seed
- Therefore you are Abraham's seed
- Therefore you are heirs of the promise

How Paul Reaches the Conclusion

The argument has four interlocking moves:

1. Faith, not law, was always the covenant mechanism, Abraham proves it chronologically
2. Christ absorbed the law's curse, removing the barrier between the promise and the nations
3. The law was never a path to inheritance, it was a temporary guardian until the Seed arrived
4. Union with Christ = inclusion in the Seed = heir of the promise

Paul is not inventing a new system. He's showing that what looks like a new thing (Gentiles receiving the Spirit by faith) was actually the original promise all along. The Judaizers weren't being more faithful to Abraham. They were misreading him.

## **Lessons for Us**

1. Our standing before God is based on union with Christ, not performance.

The Galatians were being told their faith wasn't enough, they needed to add something. Paul's answer is that adding requirements to faith is a different gospel. If you are Christ's, the question of your standing is settled.

2. We are heirs, not just recipients.

An heir has a legal standing. We are inheriting what belongs to the family. The spiritual blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, justification, the Spirit, access to God, are ours by right of family, not by earning.

3. The promise is older than the law.

When guilt or religious pressure tells you that you're not doing enough, remember: the promise predates the requirements by 430 years. Grace was always the original architecture.

4. "In Christ" is the most important address we have.

Paul's entire argument pivots on location, where you are. If you are in Christ, you are in the Seed, which means you are in the covenant, which means you are an heir. Your spiritual identity is not self-constructed. It's inherited.

5. The barriers that once defined access to God are gone.

Jew/Greek, slave/free, male/female, these were real social and religious hierarchies. Paul isn't pretending they don't exist socially. He's saying they carry no weight at the covenant table. No one gets a bigger inheritance because of their background.

6. The Holy Spirit is the evidence, not the goal.

Paul started the argument with: how did you receive the Spirit? The Spirit's presence was the proof the promise had arrived. The Spirit doesn't reward for getting everything right, the Spirit is the sign that you are already in.

7. Religious addition is subtraction.

Adding law-keeping to faith doesn't make faith stronger it relocates the basis of standing from Christ to self. Any time you find yourself thinking "faith plus \_\_\_\_\_ = acceptance," that's the Galatian problem showing up in your own heart.

The bottom line Paul reaches: we don't need to earn our way into Abraham's family because we are already there through Christ, by faith, as a full heir. The blessings aren't pending. They're inherited.

What part of this connects most to where you are right now?