

# THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

## Part Eight Doctrinal Section

### V. Paul's Vindication of the Gospel Galatians 3:1 - 4:31

#### A. The Argument from the Experience of the Galatian Christians (Part Five)

#### B. The Argument from Scripture (Galatians 3:6-29)

1. Abraham and his true children - verses 6-9 (Part Six)
2. The curse removed - verses 10-14 (Part Seven)
3. The Promise and the Law

##### a. the Promise cannot be altered by the Law (verses 15-18)

###### (1) this can be seen by the very nature of the Promise

###### (a) it was given in the form of a testament

- the Greek word used here is διαθήκη which usually means a disposition or arrangement made by one side only. Therefore, it is usually understood as "a last will and testament." "The word is most frequently used of God's covenant with Abraham, and through him with Israel and all the faithful. This Covenant is, on Jehovah's part, a work of prevenient grace - one in which the faithfulness of Jehovah is not made dependent on that of man." (Delitzsch, Commentary on Hebrews)
- Paul illustrates the unalterable character of the Promise by referring to the last will and testament of a man. When a man makes certain promises in his will, these cannot be altered.
- The word used in the last phrase of verse 15 means "to add fresh clauses to." The Promise God made to Abraham was final and unconditional. Nothing could alter it.

###### (b) it was made to Abraham before the Law was given

- The heirs of the Promise were Abraham and Christ, Who is Abraham's seed. These two are the beneficiaries named in the Promise. The Promise could not then be altered after Abraham was gone from the earth. The Law was not given until 430 years after the Promise was stated to Abraham. If the Law could alter the Promise, it would in effect destroy the Promise.
- To use a human illustration, imagine that Mr. A made a promise to Mr. B. The promise was that Mr. A. would award Mr. B's children \$1000 per year until they were twenty-one years old. Mr. B. then dies and after several years Mr. A. comes to the children of Mr. B. and says that in order to continue to receive the \$1000 per year they must come and work for him. This new regulation would make the original promise of none effect. The promise would be worthless.

Thus if the Law could alter the Promise, it would destroy it. To carry the illustration another step, we say that the children of Mr. B. did agree to come and work for Mr. A. They would indeed continue to receive the money, but it would not be received because of the original promise but rather on the basis of the work done by the children. In verse 18 Paul concludes: "For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise."

###### (2) this can further be seen by the nature of the Law

###### (a) the Law was added to reveal transgressions

- added does not mean added to the Promise. This idea has already been exploded by Paul.
- transgression - the English word means to step over a line or boundary. The Greek had the image of walking beside the Law and thus spurning it.
- the Law served to show how far man had strayed from God's perfect standard. A man can look into the Law as into a mirror and see himself as he really is.