

Series: Galatians
Title: God's Testament
Text: Gal 3: 15-18
Date: Dec 3, 2020
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Galatians 3: 15: Brethren, I speak after the manner of men;

He speaks by the inspiration of the Spirit of God. But he is using an earthly illustration that we all know]

Galatians 3: 15: Though *it be* but a man's covenant,

The word here is a man's testament: his "last will and testament"

Galatians 3: 15: Though *it be* but a man's [testament] yet *if it be* confirmed,

Once a man's last will and testament is confirmed: written out, signed, sealed, witnessed, and particularly by the death of the testator.

Galatians 3: 15: Though *it be* but a man's [testament] yet *if it be* confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.

No man can make it void nor add to it. This being the case among men, certainly the same is true concerning God's eternal, everlasting covenant of grace in Christ.

Galatians 3: 16: Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. 17: And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. 18: For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

The word "covenant" here is "testament." When our Lord Jesus instituted his table he said,

Matthew 26:28: For this is my blood of the **new testament**, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

The word "testament" is the same Greek word in our text translated "covenant".

Proposition: God's covenant is much like a man's last will and testament. Our Lord does all. He gives the inheritance freely. His people passively receive the inheritance.

In God's testament, God gave Abraham a promise. Ultimately it was the promise of eternal inheritance, eternal life. Paul calls it *the inheritance*. God made many promises, which are all accomplished by our triune God in Christ, but they all end in the grand promise of an eternal inheritance, eternal life with God.

But God gave another covenant at Sinai. It was a covenant of works. It was not a testament but a contract. Yet, the works of the law cannot disannul or add to God's covenant which was confirmed before to Abraham in Christ. Why not?—*For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.*

Subject: Gods' Testament

THE FATHER'S WILL

When a man makes out his last will and testament it is made before the inheritance is given. All things laid out in the testament are entirely according to the man's will.

So it is with God our Father. God made his testament in eternity before making anything in creation. It is an eternal and everlasting covenant of eternal promises of an eternal inheritance.

Titus 1: 2: In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

So this testament was *confirmed before of God in Christ* in eternity. Long before God confirmed it to Abraham in Christ, God confirmed it in Christ alone. Paul says the promises were made to one seed, that Seed is Christ. Before the world was made God set down all things in his covenant. God was not obligated to make it but freely and of his own will did so. Everything included in God's everlasting covenant is of God's will and pleasure. So it is unalterable. It is from everlasting to everlasting

Psalm 33:11: The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

THE TESTATOR AND THE HEIR

God's testament is unlike a man's testament because the Son of God is both the testator and the heir.

The Son of God is the Testator of the covenant of grace. It is his testament because he is God. As the GodMan, Mediator, Christ shed his blood unto death in place of his people to confirm his covenant, his testament, by his blood.

Hebrews 9: 15: And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. 16: For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17: For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

Someone might say, "How did God promise Abraham this inheritance when Christ had not shed his blood and died yet?" Christ Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. His blood is effectual to cleanse before the cross the same as after the cross. Every blessing God purposed to give in his will and testament is free to his people on account of the blood of Christ the testator who stood as our Surety from eternity and then came and died in place of his people. That is why Christ called it the new testament in my blood. His blood put away the sins of his people as he honored God's law declaring God a just God and a Savior.

Yet, Christ is also the Heir. A father chooses what son will be his heir. He chooses to which children he will give his inheritance. God the Father chose his Son to be his heir. It was God's good pleasure to freely give his Son a kingdom. Christ said,

Luke 22: 29: My Father hath appointed unto me a kingdom.

And God the Father chose his elect in Christ to be joint-heirs with Christ. When born of his irresistible grace by his Spirit, we are made to know that we are the children of God.

Romans 8:17: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

All God's elect are Christ's portion, his inheritance.

Deuteronomy 32: 9: For the LORD'S portion *is* his people; Jacob *is* the lot of his inheritance.

And Christ our King is our inheritance. That was typified in the old covenant priests when the Lord delivered them into their temporal, promised inheritance Canaan.

Number 18:20: And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel.

Genesis 15:1...the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

Our Lord Jesus has the glory of giving all the blessings of this free inheritance to his people through the Spirit through faith in him because he is the Firstborn among many brethren. It pleased God our Father that all fulness dwell in Christ his Firstborn Son. It pleased God the Father that all the children of his household give Christ the Firstborn all preeminence in all things. So Christ is the heir who gives out all the promises to his brethren who are joint-heirs with Christ.

He gives us the Spirit of regeneration as a free gift of his promise. He promised to give us a new spirit and he shall do so in each of his chosen, joint-heirs.

Hebrews 10:15: *Whereof* the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16: This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17: And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18: Now where remission of these *is, there is* no more offering for sin. 19: Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20: By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21: And *having* an high priest over the house of God; 22: Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Ephesians 2: 19: Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

Redemption, pardon, justification, regeneration, perseverance, ending in our eternal inheritance in glory—it is all given us freely from Christ's hand through his blood according to the will of God our Father.

Luke 12: 32: Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Revelation 3: 21: To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

THIS IS THE TESTAMENT MADE WITH ABRAHAM

When our Lord called Abraham this is the testament he confirmed to him in Christ. No conditions were left in Abraham's hand. God confirmed it in Christ by two immutable things: his word and his oath:

Hebrews 6: 13: For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, 14: Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. 15: And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16: For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation *is* to them an end of all strife. 17: Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath: 18: That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19: Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20: Whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

The promise was to Abraham and to Christ his Seed—*Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.* What a blessing that the promise was to Christ. The promise includes all Abraham's spiritual seed, all God's elect, all who shall be brought to faith in Christ. But he speaks only of Christ the Seed. God declares that there is no separation between Christ and his people. God speaks of Christ alone because he is the Head. Every chosen child of God is his body. What Christ did we did in him. What Christ is doing is only for the members of his body.

1 Corinthians 12: 12: For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

The testament confirmed—ratified in Christ's blood—guarantees every promise God made to Abraham would be given freely to Abraham and to his spiritual children because Christ fulfilled all covenant obligations for his people.

To Abraham it was "*confirmed before of God in Christ.*" It was confirmed of God in Abraham's heart by the Spirit of God. A man's testament has to be witnessed and sealed. The Spirit is the Witness and the Seal of the covenant. The Spirit of promise through Christ's blood purges our conscious, bearing witness with the new spirit he creates in us that we are children of God. He seals to our hearts the assurance that God's testament is ordered in all things and sure.

NO DISANNULMENT

So if a man confirmed his last will and testament, especially by the testator's death, no law can disannul or add to it. Neither could the law of Sinai—*And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years*

after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

The law at Sinai was *a contract*. A contract has conditions that have to be met perfectly by each party and only then are the benefits obtained. *A will* is freely given. The testator does all. He chooses who will be his heirs. He chooses what they will receive upon his death. The beneficiary is passive. He merely receives the free inheritance. When that man's will and testament has been confirmed it is unalterable. So the contract given at Sinai could not disannul God's will and testament: the law can add nothing nor take away anything.

Besides that, if our works contribute, then our eternal inheritance is no more by God's promise. But God gave it to Abraham by promise. Justification, righteousness, sanctification, preservation, eternal life—all is God's free gift conditioned only upon the merits of Abraham's seed, which is Christ (Heb. 6:13-20; Gal. 3:14).

THE INHERITANCE

Brethren, Abraham and our fathers who lived before the covenant given at Sinai all looked for the promises to come.

Hebrews 11: 13: These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14: For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

We have no inheritance here. Here we are strangers and sojourners. Our inheritance is eternal. Our portion is Christ and we are his inheritance. He is working everything together for our good according to his eternal purpose. We shall live with him forever in the new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Everything God did with temporal Israel and every temporal promise God made to them was to show us a type of God's spiritual promises to spiritual Israel. So in order to show God's immutability and faithfulness, even under that contract given at Sinai, God fulfilled every carnal promise despite Israel's failure to obey. And in the end it shall be said spiritually to all Christ's heirs what was said to them.

1 Kings 8:56: Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.

But we will give the glory to Christ, not as a servant, but as a Son over his own house, whose house we are, if we continue believing on Christ until the end (Heb 3: 1-6). May God give us grace to believe on Christ as Abraham did.

2 Corinthians 1:20: For all the promises of God in [Christ] are yea, and in [Christ] Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

Amen!