

Law, Life, and Inheritance

Introduction

Galatians chapter three begins with a question. It is a strong question because he calls them foolish and bewitched. The word for *bewitched* in the original means *mesmerized, hypnotized*. Its literal meaning is “the evil eye” and is still used that way today in modern Greek. Paul felt that someone had *strongly persuaded* them away from faith.

Even though Jesus Christ had been presented to them as crucified, they were moving away from faith toward the Law. They began in faith, accepting the crucifixion of Jesus and His atoning blood; however, they were now trying to complete their perfection in the Lord by the flesh. Not only was this applicable to the Galatians, it is very important to the Church today. Much of the Church has begun in faith, but, somewhere along the way just like the Galatians, they have moved into completing their perfection in the flesh. We need to hear what Paul was saying to the Galatians just as much as they needed to hear.

As this study progress, several themes will present themselves. It will appear sometimes that these are being presented in a hap-hazard or piece-meal manner; however, please continue to read. The themes will all come together and present a broader picture of God's purpose.

Abraham's Promise

God made a covenant with Himself concerning Abraham¹. As the beneficiary of this covenant Abraham received the promise of a son through whom all nations would be blessed. When Abraham believed God concerning this, it was counted to him as righteousness. Paul said the promise was not for many sons but one, that is, Jesus Christ.

Let's diagram the promise as described in Galatians chapter three:



Abraham received the promise by faith. The promise was to him and to his seed, the Son, so that

¹ Hebrews 6:13-18. **Note:** God made a covenant with Himself before the foundation of the world. This covenant in Eternity has been unfolding in time. Abraham was the beneficiary of the covenant just as in the marriage covenant between husband and wife, the children are the beneficiaries. Further unfolding of this covenant in time reveals that the New Covenant in the blood of Jesus was a covenant between the Father and the Son with us as the beneficiaries.

we could receive the promise of the Spirit through faith so that we might receive the Inheritance. The goal is the inheritance; but, we have to receive the Son in order to receive the Spirit in order to receive the inheritance. This cannot be done by law or by the flesh but only through faith.

Abraham had the promise of a physical son and a physical inheritance for his descendants. While Abraham in faith wandered over the territory that was to belong to his descendants, it was many years later before his descendants began to possess the promised land. With us, the inheritance is spiritual rather than physical, at least, during this age. We become spiritual sons of Abraham when we receive the promise of Abraham in faith². This entitles us to all of the blessings of Abraham as part of our inheritance.

Our inheritance is the Kingdom of God³. It is our spiritual promised land, or, rather, our land of promises, for in Jesus all of the promises are yes.⁴ The Holy Spirit is our pledge, our earnest, our deposit, our down payment on our inheritance⁵ because the Kingdom is “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”⁶. So, the goal or objective of what God is doing deals with the heirs and the inheritance. This can only be accomplished through the promise by faith.

The Law

Why then does the Law exist at all? Why was it given? Especially since it seems that mankind finds it impossible to keep.

Galatians 3:19 NASB

(19) Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.

God added the Law because of transgressions. After the Garden of Eden, man became independent of God and pursued the desires of his own heart. Because of these types of transgressions, God gave the Law to restrict the deeds of mankind.

There are actually two aspects of the Law and we see these reflected in our own legal system. First is constitutional law, which are the basic principles that are the foundation of all other laws. In relation to God's law, constitutional law would correspond to the Ten Commandments. The other aspect of law is case law. These are the practical application of the constitutional law as they relate to everyday life. Most of what is recorded in Leviticus is case law (those who count such things say that there are 631 of them, although I have never tried to count or verify that number). The Pharisees continued to add to the case laws by further restricting them to make

2 Galatians 3:7

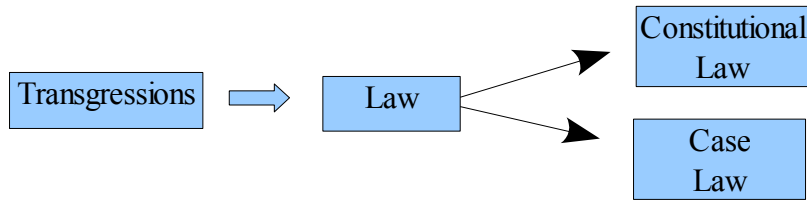
3 Matthew 25:34

4 II Corinthians 1:20; Hebrews 6:12

5 Ephesians 1:14

6 Romans 14:17

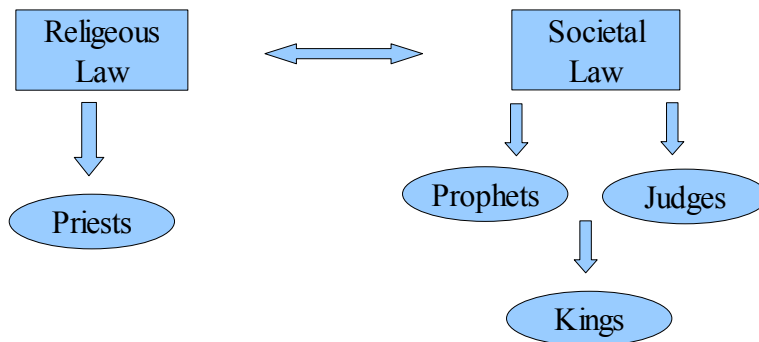
sure that everyone complied. By the time of Jesus, there were thousands of case law commandments that had been created.



As priests continued to interpret the constitutional law, there was a steady increase in case law, which resulted in the application of law that far exceeded the intent or the requirements of the constitutional law.

Under theocratic oriented government, such as Israel, the law tends to break into two components: religious application and societal application. In theory, a true theocratic government would make no distinction between these two components. Society and religion would be the same and follow the same set of rules.

However, short of the Millennium Kingdom, earthly government, even those that are theocratic, tend to separate these two components and over time they will become quite distinct.



In Israel all religious law was interpreted and regulated by the priests as part of their job functions. However, societal law went through a series of transitions. It was God's intention to govern Israel through prophets, which were His spokespersons, and, additionally, judges to resolve problems and conflicts. However, there came a time when this was not satisfactory to the children of Israel and they demanded a king like the other nations around them.⁷

We have inherited a similar view of the Law while at the same time we say that we are not under Law but that we are under Grace. What we usually mean by that is that *religious law* no longer applies to us. However, we firmly believe that we should obey the Ten Commandments and that it is important to do so for the sake of our society, which really means that we believe that a

⁷ I Samuel 8:4-9

moral law is required for our society to function properly.

Right and Wrong

We have, in America, a societal law that is, supposedly, based on God's law. We have a full legal system that adjudicates and enforces our case laws based on the judges' interpretations of our constitutional law. But, in spite of this, most of us have a sense of moral law that overrides societal law if we feel that the law is unjust. One of our advantages in America is that we can voice our moral outrage over issues that are inherently unjust. This is not the case in a number of other countries and societies.

What is legally right in society is determined by the law of the land; however, in our daily living, we determine what is right by our moral code, which can vary from person to person. The quandary in America is that we have come to a time in our continually evolving legal system in which we can be *legally right* but *morally wrong* or *morally right* and *legally wrong*. A good example of this is the abortion issue. It doesn't matter which side you believe is right; there is a conflict between the legal and the moral from either viewpoint.

Why do we have this conflict? Why are the issues of right and wrong becoming so difficult to define in our society? Why does the moral compass of different people point in different directions? And, if this is a problem for us, what about those countries that are not founded on a concept of God's law?

The Root of the Problem

To answer these questions, it is necessary for us to go back to the Garden of Eden and come to an understanding of exactly what happened in the fall of man. Adam was given one simple command from God: Don't eat of the tree in the middle of the garden—the tree of knowledge of good and evil⁸. Everything else was on the menu but not the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

I have heard people refer to this tree as the tree of knowledge; but, that is not correct. It was a specific type of knowledge—good and evil. Up to the time that Adam ate of the fruit of this tree, good and evil was not an issue at all, not even a consideration. Everything had come from God; therefore, everything was good.

When the serpent tempted Eve, he asked her a series of questions. In one of her answers she said that if they ate of the tree in the middle of the garden or touched its fruit that they would die. When the serpent saw that she had answered incorrectly (God had not said anything about not touching it), he contradicted her statement, implying that God had other, ulterior motives that were not in their best interests.

⁸ Genesis 2:16-17

Genesis 3:4-5 NASB

- (4) The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die!
- (5) "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

In this the serpent is telling her three things:

1. eating from the forbidden tree would open their eyes, and
2. when their eyes are opened, they will be like God, and
3. the results of being like God would be that they would know good and evil.

Now, let us examine these statements from the serpent. What eyes would be opened? Their natural eyes were already open because they could walk around the garden and not bump into things. Eve even saw that the tree was good for food.⁹ Their spiritual eyes were already open because God, who is a spirit¹⁰, would come to the garden and walk with them and fellowship with them. That only leaves the eyes of the soul, which up to this time were not open.

When Adam disobeyed God and ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, something inside his soul was activated that previously had been inactive and something in his spirit became inactive that previously had been active. The eyes of the spirit became closed, cutting off fellowship with God, and the eyes of the soul were opened causing man to receive, within himself, the ability to decide good and evil apart from God. This has been a problem for mankind ever since.

The end result of this was that man received the ability, the capability, of determining right or wrong, good or evil, apart from God and he can now create his own rules concerning good and evil, right and wrong just like God. Of course, this can vary from person to person. We develop our own internal moral law that guides our life and we tend to congregate into societies with others who share a similar, compatible moral law. Any conflict between moral laws or societal laws are viewed through the filter of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which means that our decisions in this area are soulish¹¹ and not spiritual. Our determination of good and evil can be quite different from God's.

A Change of Perception

With the eyes of the soul now open, man views reality from a soulish viewpoint and not a spiritual one, which means that reality is seen from the natural outlook and not from the

9 Genesis 3:6

10 John 4:24

11 While other languages do, English does not have a word for things that come from the soul and pertain to the abilities of the soul. In this study, I will use the word "soulish" to have this meaning. It is applied in this manner: things of the spirit are spiritual; things of the soul are soulish.

perspective of God.

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate of the forbidden fruit, the eyes of their spirits were closed (they were cut off from God by their disobedience) and the eyes of their souls were opened. The way that they saw reality changed. Their sight, their perception, became different.

1. **How they saw themselves**—prior to eating the forbidden fruit, they were naked but it was not an issue. After eating, it was an issue and they tried to cover themselves.
2. **How they saw God**—prior to eating the forbidden fruit, they saw God as a friend and fellowshiped with Him in gladness and joy. After eating the forbidden fruit, they saw God as someone to be feared, an enemy, and hid from Him.
3. The only thing that had actually changed was *how they perceived reality*.

The nakedness and clothing are metaphors. Prior to this event, man was naked before God. There was nothing hidden. God saw everything about man. After this event, man disguised himself with clothes before God and others. Man did not want anyone, including God, to see him as he really is. It is interesting to note that when fellowship with God is fully restored in the New Covenant, we will know and be known fully¹².

Prior to the fall, all data input from the surrounding reality flowed through the spirit of man for interpretation, including both spiritual sight and natural sight. After the fall with our spiritual eyes closed and our “soulish” eyes open, all data input from the surrounding reality flowed through the soul for interpretation. Therefore, by eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, man's “primary information processor” changed from the Spirit to the Soul. The new filters of the soul now determine how information from the spirit and from the body is evaluated. As was said earlier, prior to eating the forbidden fruit, right or wrong, good or evil, was not a consideration—all things came from God; therefore, it was all good—now, with our perceptions changed, all things have to be evaluated by ourselves as to whether they are good or evil, right or wrong.

The Results of Changed Perception

When the eyes of the soul were activated, man suddenly saw that he needed to preserve himself, protect himself and provide for himself where, previously, these things weren't issues. They were taken care of by God. How we pursue our own self-preservation is manifested in how we protect and provide for ourselves.

In order to preserve yourself, it becomes necessary to see others as enemies who want to conquer, control and take what you have for themselves. We seek to manipulate our circumstances to protect and provide for us even to the detriment or harm of others. Because of the fall, this is now built into the nature of man and has driven us ever since.

¹² I Corinthians 13:12

When the serpent was tempting Eve, he appealed to an aspect of the nature of man.

Genesis 3:6 NASB

- (6) When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

After observing his success in this area and recognizing that the fall intensified this aspect of man, the Enemy began to construct his kingdom of darkness in the world systems in such a way as to appeal to the nature of fallen man. In other words, he constructed the world systems to be attractive to what man wants.

John tells us that the world has reached the place where it has become an alternative to the Father. If we love it, then we have to recognize the fact that the love of the Father is not in us. We cannot love both the world and the Lord.

1 John 2:15-16 NASB

- (15) Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
- (16) For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

John then describes the characteristics of the things in the world and divides them into three categories that are very close to what we read in Genesis regarding the nature of man.

1. Lust of the flesh—the cravings of the sinful nature, the desire to indulge. Also, this means our desire to identify our enemies and conquer them.
2. Lust of the eyes—we have relegated this to sexual lust, but that is only a manifestation of this and not its full expression. This is our plan, our vision, to conquer our enemies.
3. Boastful pride of life—this is boasting about what we have done and what we can do. How we have prevailed over our enemies.

John said that we are not to “love the world nor the things in the world.” The world has form and structure because there are things in the world. The world is the framework for these things. And all of these things that are in the world relate to the three areas that are attractive to the nature of man. The Enemy has directed the evolution of the world systems so that, today, the world is more attractive to our nature than it has ever been in the past.

The Tree of Life

It was intended that Adam eat of the Tree of Life in the garden; however, when the choice was made, he ate of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil with the result that he was then barred

from the Tree of Life.¹³ Man is given a new opportunity to choose in the Last Adam, Jesus.¹⁴ He has become our Tree of Life.¹⁵ Because of this, we have received new life from God¹⁶ that has given us a new spirit so that our spiritual eyes are open again. This is absolutely necessary if we are to live in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus said repeatedly, “he who has eyes to see...”. This certainly means something besides natural eyes that see the natural world in which we live. He was talking about spiritual eyes that see spiritual truth. To see the Kingdom of God, we have to be able to see with spiritual eyes.

John 3:3 NASB

- (3) Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

The Kingdom of God is a “hidden” kingdom that cannot be seen by unbelievers. We have to be “born again”, that is, have received a new spirit, in order to see the Kingdom of God. Just as natural eyes require light to see, spiritual eyes require spiritual light to see spiritual things. Just as the sun is the source of natural light for our natural eyes, the Son is the source of spiritual light for our spiritual eyes.

John 8:12 NASB

- (12) Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

Our spiritual eyes have to be focused on Jesus as we follow Him. If we do that we will not walk in darkness spiritually.

Matthew 6:22-23 NASB

- (22) "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.
(23) "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

How can the light that is in us be darkness?

Jesus is speaking of two different kinds of light and darkness. We need to have our spiritual eyes clear and focused on spiritual light so that it might light up our entire body. If our light only comes from natural sources, we have only natural light in us and we are in spiritual darkness. Natural light is no better than darkness.

13 Genesis 3:22-23

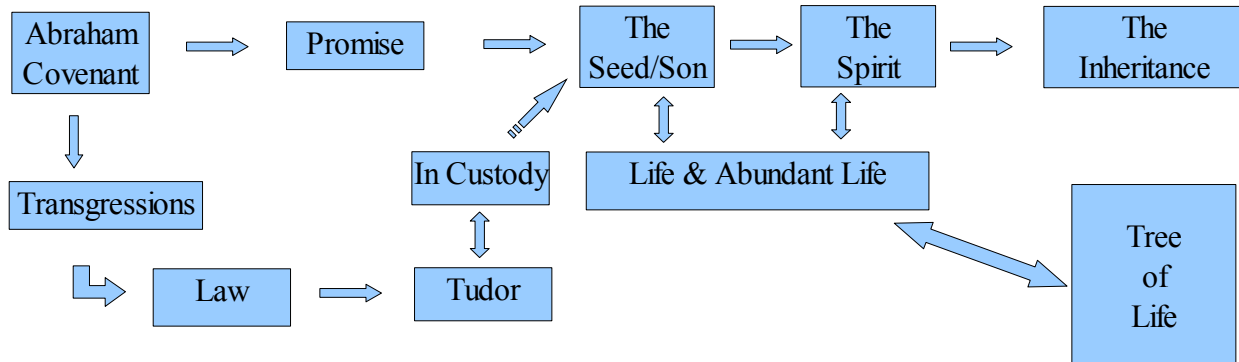
14 I Corinthians 15:45

15 Revelation 2:7

16 John 6:40

The Law and Promise

Now, let's go back to the diagrams from the beginning of this study and add to them.



We have already seen that the Law came because of transgressions¹⁷ and its purpose was to take those who are under the Law and put them into custody until faith was to be revealed.

Galatians 3:23-26 NASB

- (23) But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.
- (24) Therefore the Law has become our tutor *to lead us* to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.
- (25) But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.
- (26) For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

When you are taken into custody, your activities are restricted. You no longer have control nor freedom over your own life, but are at the mercy of the jailers. The Law dictates what you do, how you do it, and the punishment for not doing it.

The Law was not of faith¹⁸. It cannot justify you before God¹⁹, neither is it able to provide life²⁰. Then why give the Law? For three reasons:²¹

1. It was given for transgressions as we have already mentioned. This will be explained in more detail later in this study.

17 Galatians 3:19

18 Galatians 3:12

19 Galatians 3:11

20 Galatians 3:21

21 Galatians 3:14

2. It was given so that through Christ Jesus the blessings of Abraham might come to the Gentiles.
3. It was given so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The Law has held those under it in custody to teach them until faith comes, so that through Christ Jesus the promise of Abraham might be realized, so that the inheritance might be received through faith and promise and not by law.

Slaves, Sons, and Heirs

The goal of God's promise was that the inheritance would be received by the heirs. You have to be a son in order to inherit. The Law is unable to produce heirs because those who are under the Law are not sons but slaves.

Galatians 4:7 NASB

- (7) Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

The Scriptures refer to us as slaves (in a negative manner) in several capacities, such as slaves to sin²², slaves to impurity and lawlessness²³, slaves of our own appetites²⁴, slaves of men²⁵, and slaves to false gods.²⁶ Because of the Law, we become slaves to sin because without the Law sin is not imputed; but, by the coming of the Law, sin is manifested.²⁷

Galatians makes it very clear that there is a difference between slaves and sons since they represent different covenants.

Galatians 4:22-31 NASB

- (22) For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman.
- (23) But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise.
- (24) This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar.
- (25) Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.

22 Romans 6:6, 17

23 Romans 6:19

24 Romans 16:18

25 I Corinthians 7:23

26 Galatians 4:8

27 Romans 5:13

- (26) But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother.
- (27) For it is written, "REJOICE, BARREN WOMAN WHO DOES NOT BEAR; BREAK FORTH AND SHOUT, YOU WHO ARE NOT IN LABOR; FOR MORE NUMEROUS ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE THAN OF THE ONE WHO HAS A HUSBAND."
- (28) And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.
- (29) But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him *who was born* according to the Spirit, so it is now also.
- (30) But what does the Scripture say? "CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE AN HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREE WOMAN."
- (31) So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.

Those who are under the Law are slaves. Even though Ishmael was a son of Abraham, his mother was a family slave, making Ishmael a slave because he was the son of a slave first with no claim as an heir of Abraham. However, Isaac, the son of promise, was a son of Abraham and Abraham's wife, a free woman, which made Isaac an heir of Abraham.

For years now, the Institutional Church as taught us that we are not under Law but under grace. However, in practice, the Institutional Church has selected some laws for us to keep while eliminating others. While speaking grace from the lips, we are applying law to our actions. The Scriptures tell us that if we are to keep the law, we have to keep all of the Law,²⁸ and if we do that, then, we are under the curse of the Law.²⁹

God's people are in bondage to the rules, regulations and traditions of the Institutional Church that has made them slaves of men. We have been taught to act and think like slaves who only do what they are told to do, when they are told it, and how they are told it. A slave does not know what the purpose of anything is; they only know what they are told to do. The mentality and the motivation of a slave is not the mentality and motivation of a son.

A son, on the other hand, desires to learn to understand what he is told so that he can learn to participate in the plans of the father. The motivation is not the avoidance of punishment, which is the primary motivation of a slave, but rather a son's motivation is to be pleasing to his father.

It is time for us to stop being slaves and become sons.

John 1:12-13 NASB

- (12) But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,
- (13) who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of

28 James 2:10

29 Galatians 3:10

God.

Becoming a son requires that we mature, because as long as we are children, we are no different than a slave (in practical function).

Galatians 4:1-2 NASB

- (1) Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything,
- (2) but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father.

The Greek word for “child”, *nēpios*, means “infant” or “minor child” and is the same word that Paul used in I Cor. 3:1 for “infants in Christ”. It can be contrasted with the Greek word, *teleios*, which means “mature” or “full grown” as used in Eph. 4:13.

The son who is an infant or minor does not have authority or control over the things of his father even though he is an heir and owner of all of it. Instead, he is under teachers, managers, guardians, until he comes of age, the date set by the father.

We were slaves under Law, which guards us and teaches us until faith comes, but, now, we are no longer under Law. We are under the promise—sons and heirs of God.

A slave works for what he is due as a slave. A son receives his inheritance, not because of his work, but because he is a son. By its very nature, an inheritance cannot be earned, only received.

We must stop looking at reality with the eyes of a slave. We must begin to see spiritual reality as a son.