

Sunday, May 7, 2023—Galatians 3:15-16 Plural Promises & A Singular Seed

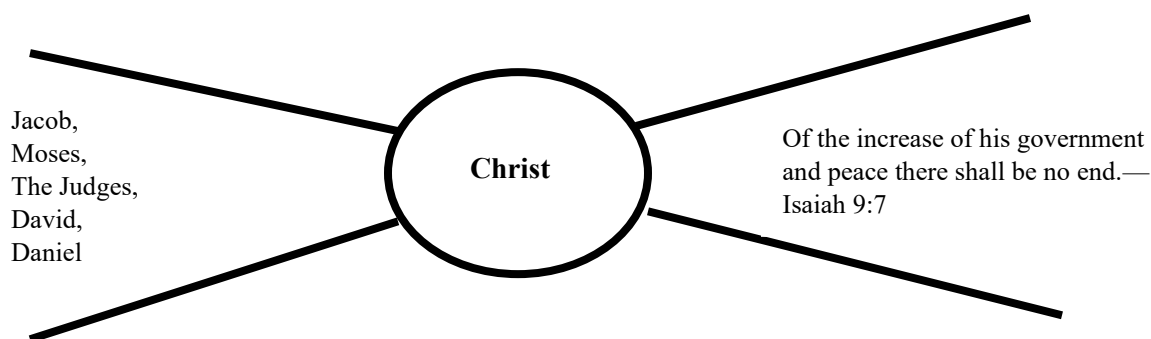
Galatians 3:15

- **Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.**
- Paul is saying that he is speaking in terms of a human covenant. Once a covenant is signed, one party cannot go back and change the terms of the agreement.
- **Confirmed**—carries the idea of made authoritative or ratified i.e., both parties have signed on the dotted line so to speak.
- Paul has two main points that he wants to firmly establish in the minds of the Galatians:
 - Even as a human covenant is final and not changeable; likewise, the Abrahamic Covenant has not been “disannulled.”
 - As a human covenant cannot have anything added to it; likewise, the Abrahamic covenant did not have the Law added to it. (Campbell, 77).

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.**
- In order to understand this verse, you have to understand the difference between the seeds plural and the seed singular.
- Some of the promises given to Abraham were:
 - That a special land with specifically defined borders would be given to him (Genesis 15:18-20).
 - That his offspring would become a great nation (Genesis 13:16).
 - That in him all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3). (Campbell, 77)
- Notice that the promises plural were given to the seed singular which is defined in the verse as Jesus Christ.
- Are we to understand from this verse that the promises made to Abraham did not extend to his seed plural?
 - Genesis 13:14-16
 - Genesis 15:5

- Genesis 17:6-8
 - Genesis 22:17-18—who could read these passages with an unbiased mind and question that in all these promises, God had the multiplied seed of Abraham in mind?
 - Genesis 26:4
 - Genesis 28:14—not only do these promises extend to Isaac and Jacob, but to the rest of Abraham’s multiplied seed.
- It is clear that this is how Moses and the prophets understood the promises God made with Abraham.
 - Deuteronomy 1:8-10, 21
 - Isaiah 60:1-3
 - Jeremiah 23:3-6
 - Zechariah 8:13, 23
 - Acts 3:25-26
 - Consider the following passage from Pastor C.R. Stam’s *Commentary on Galatians*:
 - “Perhaps it will help at this point first to notice what the verse does not say. It does not say that God would not bless Abraham’s multiplied seed, or through them the world. It does not say that God would bless only Christ, the single seed, and make Him alone a blessing to the world, though in a sense this is true, for all blessing flows through Him. The Apostle simply states that in making the promises to Abraham and his progeny, God used the word seed, which is singular in form, and that he did this because he had Christ in view. In other words, God specifically avoided the use of plural words which might have been used . . .” (Stam, 182-183)



- After present the foregoing diagram Pastor Stam states the following regarding it:

- “Please glance at the foregoing chart and note how the possibility of blessing the world through Israel’s multiplied seed diminishes steadily until we get to the One person—just one of the seed of Abraham: the Lord Jesus Christ.

Does it not follow, then, that God’s promise concerning the multiplied seed will not be fulfilled because they forfeited the blessing through failure and unbelief, and that, therefore, the nations will be blessed through Christ alone?

Not exactly. Are we hedging when we answer the question in this way? No, for God will indeed bless the world through the multiplied seed of Abraham. This has been proven, not only by the unconditional promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but also by repeated prophetic confirmation both before and after Pentecost. However, Israel will never become the world’s blessing until she does so through Jesus Christ because the blessing of the world is wrapped up in Him alone. . .

When Israel acknowledges Christ as her Messiah, then all nations will be blessed through Israel, through Christ. (Stam, 184-187)

- Arno C. Gaebelein adds the following in Volume 3 of his *The Annotated Bible*:
 - “The promise were made to Abraham; they were unconditional promises with no “if” attached to them, grace is the foundation of them. These promises were, afterward, confirmed to his seed. And that one seed (not seeds) is Christ. Isaac was a type of Him. And the original promise that all nation should be bless in Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) had been confirmed after the promise seed, Isaac, had been upon the alter (Gen. 22:18). Isaacv, upon the alter and taken form the alter, was a type of Christ, His death and resurrection (Heb. 11:19).” (Gaebelein, 217)
- Even for Israel, the only way to inherit blessings is through Jesus Christ.
 - Genesis 22:18
 - John 8:56—the “seed” of Galatians 3:16 refers to Christ.