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# Romans

**...because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression. Romans 4:15**

Today a concept is introduced which goes back to the very creation of man and is found throughout the Bible and throughout human history - "the law brings about wrath." Man was placed in the Garden of Eden and he was, in fact, given a law. It was one command and it was in the negative (you shall not), but it was a command none-the-less.

Man was told that he was not to eat of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. If God had not given him this law, then there could have been no penalty for eating the fruit. It would have been no different to the man than eating any other fruit in the garden.

Secondly, the law was just. If God told the man, "You shall not drink any water" then that law would have been unjust because man needs water to exist. However, man didn't need to eat the fruit of that particular tree; there was other food to eat. The law was just and therefore enforceable. A violation of it brought about wrath.

The same is true with every other law given by God along the way. The laws were just and holy and they were reasonable. But accepting God's promise in Genesis 3:15 as well as those to Abraham could only come by faith because no law had been introduced along with them. Further, there is no law that could come along and fulfill the promises. They preceded any type of law and were thus grace. The only thing the introduction of a law could do would be to diagnose problems along the way, but they couldn't provide a cure for the state of man. In other words, the law can only condemn, but it cannot save.

Understanding these things leads to the fact that the law can only point out sin and show the need for something else. Fallen man needs to be completely detached from the principles of the law in order to be brought to a place where there will be no transgression and thus no wrath. This is the marvel of Jesus' work.

By coming in the form of a man, without the stain of original sin, Jesus fulfilled the law that only condemns us. He then offers His perfection under the law to any who will receive it. When it is so received, it brings us to that place where there is no transgression. We have overcome the law which was contrary to us and therefore we have no wrath which would result from that law!

The place of inheritance, which preceded the law by promise, is therefore the only place of freedom from wrath. The inheritance is through Jesus. If you have grasped this, then you truly stand in "the liberty by which Christ has made us free (Galatians 5:1)." Paul would then ask you to "not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage." You are free from the law and eternally saved by the work of Jesus. It is the most glorious place to be.

Life application: To reintroduce the law after calling on Jesus can only bring a person into subjugation once again. The law brings about wrath, not freedom, so

stand firm in the freedom of Jesus Christ and let nothing hinder you from the prize.

**Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all... Romans 4:16**

"Therefore" is Paul's note of conclusion for this particular line of thought - "Because of these things... the following is the conclusion."

"It is of faith." This returns to verse 13 - " For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." The promise was through faith and thus it stands by faith even now. And the reason?

"That it might be according to grace." If the promise isn't of faith, then there would be no grace involved. Anything other than faith involves work. When work is included, then wages are due. As was noted in Romans 4:3 and which should be repeated, 1) Deeds of the law, or works, do not lead to justification. 2a) "Faith" is not something required within the context of the law. The law is of works and demands perfect obedience. 2b) But by faith a person is justified and declared righteous. 3) Therefore, because the law demands works, and faith is not a requirement under the law, then faith cannot be a work; it is something entirely different; no wages are due.

But Paul has shown clearly and concisely, using both David and Abraham, that it is of faith and therefore it might be according to grace. And the reason is clear - "So that the promise might be sure to all the seed." The term "all the seed" must be apart from the law because the promise was made prior to the law in Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc. The promise stands even though there was no law. If this is the

pattern, and it is also the pattern through David who was under the law, then it is all-encompassing - "to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law."

Anyone of faith may receive God's grace; anyone lacking faith - regardless of whether they are of the law or not - are excluded. The promise is by grace through faith only. It is to those who "are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all."

It is astonishing how many people miss this. Instead, they tear verses out of context in order to justify that we are bound to the constraints of the law. And yet, the law demands such things as going to Jerusalem to sacrifice three times a year. It demands that one not wear clothing of two types of material - wool and linen for example. It demands circumcision and Sabbath observance - and on and on. Any violation of the law breaks the entire law (James 2:10). And yet, while ignoring all of these tenets found under the law, they still claim that adherence to the law is required. This is unclear thinking and it is a setting aside of the very grace bestowed upon us in Jesus Christ.

Life application: Verse after verse has come to the same irrefutable conclusion - we are not under law but under grace. This is so important that we need to be reminded again and again. It is the principle tenet of Paul's writings and yet... and yet we continue to miss it. Stand firm on the gospel and do not let yourselves be brought again under the yoke of bondage.

**...(as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;... Romans 4:17**

This is a continuation of the previous verse which stated that the promise belonged "to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those

who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all." To support this, Paul returns to the fountain, to Scripture - "as it is written."

When a thing can be argued over and debated against, the surest way to prove one's claim is to return to the source of the matter. When this avenue is taken, argumentation is quickly cleared up. God spoke to Abraham, "I have made you a father of many nations." The term "I have made" is *tetheika*. It is used to indicate a granting or constituting of a matter. This promise was spoken to Abraham as if it was complete; in God's mind, the promise is as if it were already accomplished.

Abraham was given the promise from God and he simply believed it, despite its otherwise incredible nature. But the promise after all was from "God, who gives life to the dead." This phrase is certainly speaking of the deadness of Sarah's womb which is referred to in verse 19. However, because it is speaking of the calling of life from a dead womb, it demonstrates that God can call anything to life and so through the dead womb of Sarah will come the One who would restore man's spiritually dead condition. This is evidenced by Abraham's declaration of righteousness in Genesis 15:6.

Each step of Abraham's life is used to show us the pattern of our own calling. It is God who restores us to life "and calls those things which do not exist as though they did." Abraham would be a father of many nations. People who appeared to be outside of God's chosen line are called into it. Those who were once far off are brought near. Those who were dead are called to life. The relationship which did not yet exist in our temporal reality is spoken of by God in a manner as if it already did, and therefore it does.

Life application: The Bible is full of promises which are still future to us now and yet they are spoken of as if they have already come about. For example, it says those who were called are glorified. It also says that when we were saved God "raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ

Jesus." These haven't yet happened in our stream of existence, and yet to God who is outside of time, they have already occurred. When you're feeling as if everything is against you and God has forgotten you, remember this. In His mind, you are already seated in Christ Jesus in heaven. It is done and will never be taken away. Your salvation is eternal and your hope is already realized.