

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

GALATIANS 3:10-14, *AFFIRMATION OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH: THE LAW AND JESUS CHRIST*

- A. The purpose of the Law is to condemn (10-12)
1. The Law is a curse because no one can keep it (10), *For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."*
 - a. *For*
 - 1) It is a marker that shows cause or reason.
 - 2) Paul argued for justification by faith in verses 7-9 and now he argues against the possibility of justification by works.
 - b. The Law is a curse because the demands are too high.
 - 1) One must keep it perfectly to be right before God. The Law is a curse because it demands that we not only know the Law but do everything written in the Law.
 - 2) Paul quoted Deuteronomy 27:26, *Cursed be anyone who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'*
 - 3) Thomas Constable, *What people earn and deserve is cursing and judgment from God since they cannot obey the Law perfectly.*
 - c. The Law demands perfection which only Jesus could accomplish.
 - 1) Jesus declared that the bar was set too high for people born in sin.
 - a) Matthew 5:21-22, *You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment. . .*
 - b) Matthew 5:27-28, *You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*
 - c) Romans 3:23, *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*
 - d) John Stott on the attempt to be justified by works, *We may strive and struggle to keep the law, and to do good works in the community or the church, but none of these things can deliver us from the curse of the law which rests upon the lawbreaker. . . There is neither justification nor life that way, but only darkness and death.*
 - 2) Jesus came to fulfill the Law so that we may receive His righteousness by faith.
 - a) Matthew 5:17-18, *Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.*
 - b) 1 Peter 1:22, *He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.*
 - c) 2 Corinthians 5:21, *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*
 2. The Law can't justify one to God because justification only comes by faith (11), *Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith."*
 - a. *Now*
 - 1) Paul declares that no one can be justified by the Law because of its nature.
 - 2) The purpose of the Law is to condemn not to justify.
 - 3) God's curse is on everyone who can't keep the Law perfectly.
 - b. Paul quoted from prophetic Scripture to underscore the fact that justification by faith has always been God's method of justifying sinners.
 - 1) Habakkuk 2:4, *Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.*
 - a) The English Standard Version adds *his* to the Greek text which then would raise the question, *his faithfulness* or *God's faithfulness*.
 - b) I believe Paul clarifies that it is *God's faithfulness* in Romans 1:17, *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."*

- 2) Paul used the Old Testament against Judaizers.
 - a) The Judaizers ignorantly promoted works despite biblical testimony.
 - b) Max Anders, *This verse (Habakkuk 2:4) reveals that even during the time of the law people were justified by faith and not obedience to the law. The Judaizers would have been wrong in their fundamental message even if they had lived during the time of Moses, because they misunderstood the purpose and power of the law.*
3. The Law and faith can't be mixed (12), ***But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them."***
 - a. Paul declares that Law and faith are mutually exclusive.
 - 1) The Judaizers said that salvation is by faith plus the Law.
 - 2) Paul stood firm that salvation is by faith plus nothing.
 - b. He quoted an Old Testament verse to prove that Law and faith can't be mixed.
 - 1) Leviticus 18:5, *You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.*
 - 2) *The one who does them* refers to the statutes and ordinances of the Mosaic Law.
 - 3) The Law is not based on faith in them but on works, doing all of them which is impossible, James 2:10, *For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.*
 - 4) Thomas Constable, *Law and faith are as different as apples and oranges. The Law requires works, but the gospel calls for faith.*
 - c. Contrast of works to faith.
 - 1) The Law cannot justify the sinner, Galatians. 2:16, *yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.*
 - 2) It can't give him righteousness, Galatians 2:21, *I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.*
 - 3) The Law cannot give the gift of the Spirit, Galatians 3:2, *Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?*
 - 4) It cannot guarantee that spiritual inheritance that belongs to God's children, Galatians 3:18, *For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.*
 - 5) The Law cannot give life, Galatians 3:21, *Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law.*
 - 6) The Law cannot give liberty, Galatians 4:8-10, *Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? You observe days and months and seasons and years!*
 - 7) The Law can only bring the curse of God on those who attempt to live by the Law instead of by faith.
 - 8) Warren Wiersbe, *The Judaizers wanted to seduce the Galatians into a religion of legal works, while Paul wanted them to enjoy a relationship of love and life by faith in Christ. For the Christian to abandon faith and grace for Law and works is to lose everything exciting that the Christian can experience in his daily fellowship with the Lord . . . Why, then, go back into the Law?*

B. The purpose of Jesus Christ (13-14)

1. Jesus removed the curse of the Law by taking the curse of those who live by faith (13), ***Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—***
 - a. Only faith in Jesus Christ can redeem those cursed by the Law.
 - 1) *Redeem* means to *buy out of slavery*. Here, it refers to *slavery to sin*.
 - 2) The *curse of the law* is the curse pronounced on all who do not do what the Law commands.
 - a) Deuteronomy 27:26, *Cursed be anyone who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them. And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'*
 - b) Only a sinless one who is not under the curse of the Law may take on the curse of others.
 - c) Jesus Christ took upon Himself the curse of everyone who places faith in Jesus alone.
 - 1] 2 Corinthians 5:21, *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*
 - 2] 1 Peter 3:18, *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,*
 - 3] Leon Morris, *Christ has done all that is necessary and his death is the means of making sinners free.*
 - 4] Yet, those who promote works declare that Jesus is not enough.

- b. The proof that Christ became a curse for sinners is that He was hung on a tree.
 - 1) Paul quoted Deuteronomy 21:23, *his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God . . .*
 - 2) Paul declares that the curse attached to Jesus was the curse on others for failure to fully obey the Law.
 - 3) Note 1 Corinthians 1:23, *but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,*
 - 4) John Stott, *The fact that Jesus died hanging on a tree remained for Jews an insurmountable obstacle to faith, until they saw that the curse He bore was for them. He did not die for His own sins; He became a curse 'for us.'*

- c. Jesus Christ did this *for us*.
 - 1) Everyone of us should have hung on a tree instead of Jesus.
 - 2) Why would we want to attempt to walk again by works which cursed us instead of walking by faith in Christ which removed the curse?
 - 3) In Galatians 3:1, Paul declared, *O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?* Warren Wiersbe offers several ways people are bewitched by legalism.
 - a) Legalism appeals to the flesh which loves to boast about religious achievements.
 - b) Legalism appeals to the senses by creating a religion which walks by sight instead of by faith.
 - c) Legalism allows a person to compare himself to others instead of comparing himself to Christ.

- 2. The blessing promised Abraham has come to Gentiles through faith in Jesus Christ (14), ***so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.***
 - a. *so that* looks back to verse 17 where Paul declared Christ became a curse for those who place faith in Him alone.
 - b. Paul follows it with two purposes for which Christ bore our curse.
 - 1) It was so the blessing of Abraham could be received by Gentiles, note Genesis 12:3, *I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*
 - a) Gentiles are promised the blessing of justification through faith in Jesus Christ alone.
 - b) Justification is apart from the works of the Law.

 - 2) It was so the promised Holy Spirit could be received by Gentiles and Jews, Acts 1:8, *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*
 - a) The Holy Spirit is received through faith in Jesus Christ alone.
 - 1] The literal translation is *the faith* which makes it clear that the substance of our faith is Christ.
 - 3] John Stott, *Faith is laying hold of Jesus Christ personally. There is no merit in it. It is not another 'work'. Its value is not in itself, but entirely in its object, Jesus Christ.*

 - b) The reception of the Holy Spirit is apart from the works of the Law.

CONCLUSION

- A. The purpose of the Law is to demonstrate that mankind is unable to fulfill the Law, resulting in God's curse.
- B. The purpose of Jesus Christ was to fulfill the Law so He could take the curse of those who place faith in Him alone.
- C. The result for Christians is blessing promised to Abraham and the indwelling Holy Spirit promised by Jesus Christ.