

Galatians 3 pt. 2 v.10-14 Read thru.

In verses 1-5 of Galatians chapter 3 Paul asks a series of rhetorical questions directly to the Galatian churches in order to provoke them to consider the error of the doctrines that they have given themselves over to.

The Galatian churches were probably comprised mostly of Gentiles, non-Jewish people. These new Christians (all Christians during this time were new Christians!) were struggling mightily with the thought that perhaps they were missing out on a deeper spiritual experience, or were less holy in God's eyes because they did not initially adopt the customs of the Jewish people - a strict, pharisaical adherence to the Law - the Old Covenant.

This bad doctrine came about because, "certain Jewish teachers came along, insisting that Gentiles could not be Christians without also keeping the Law of Moses...Abraham looms large because the narrative they had received was based on the offspring of Abraham - which they were misinterpreting" (Halley's)

This really breaks Paul's heart. He had been a Pharisee, a strict adherent to the Law and a blood descendant of Abraham. As a matter of fact Paul is recorded saying in Acts 23:

[Act 23:6 NKJV] ... "Men [and] brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee..."

He knew all too well about formal religion, customs, traditions, and dead works. That was how he grew up!

But Jesus had shown him something different regarding faith and this group of people who were formerly outside of God's covenant but were now brought near by the blood of Jesus.

We find in Paul's early ministry a stirring occasion where Paul was quite blunt about the fact that God was extending His grace to the Gentiles in Acts 13.

At this time they are in Antioch of Pisidia (rather than Antioch in Syria where they were sent out from). Having declared the gospel to the Jewish people there in the synagogue, and seeing mixed results we find this:

TURN TO [Act 13:42-48 NKJV] 42 So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. 43 Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. 44 On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. 45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy;

and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. 46 Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 "For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.' "

48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

This all informs our understanding of why Paul was contending so tenaciously for the freedom that is found in the gospel. It was made clear to him that no other burden was placed upon anybody other than faith.

A true, deep seated, faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ was and is the only thing that makes people righteous in God's eyes.

That was the message Paul initially preached to the Galatians, that was the message they initially grasped ahold of, or rather were grasped by - the good news.

But after sometime the Galatian churches grew discontent in their simple faith and were convinced to "try something else." That "something else" was seemingly related to their faith - the Law. They were being instructed by Judaizers, Jewish men who professed to believe in Jesus, that in order

to attain righteousness one had to believe in Jesus AND follow the entirety of the Old Covenant Law.

This is the context for the plurality of churches in the region of Galatia.

V.10 Paul begins to build upon the foundation he has laid with regards to his earlier line of rhetorical questioning by going straight to the Scriptures.

He begins with the plain fact that should be easy for all to understand - "whoever is subject to the works of the Law they are also under the curse."

Those who desire to serve under the law are subject to the justly pronounced condemnation toward them for their failures, transgressions, missteps.

That is the point Paul makes clear as he quotes Deuteronomy 27:26

It's important to note that God's people, along with all creation struggled under the weight of the Law and the Curse until Jesus Christ.

Historically, God commanded that as the people were entering into the new homeland that He promised to them that the nation of Israel was to be clearly reminded of His Law for them and the covenant that they were each of them entering into.

Mt. Gerizim to bless; Mt. Ebal to curse.

The final curse recorded in Deuteronomy 27 is Paul's quote: [Deu 27:26 NKJV] 26 'Cursed [is] the one who does not confirm [all] the words of this law by observing them.' "And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

This is Paul's wake up call to them - you want to be part of the Old Covenant? You want to partake in that ancient faith? This is what it means - this is the weight that you have to carry!

V.11 No one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident.

This truth that Paul delivers plainly to the Galatians is also the conclusion that we come to when we study God's word systematically.

The fullness of God's word all fits together and what we learn by examining the Old Testament is that God's people could not, would not, keep the Law in any collective manner.

No one was justified by the Law, all were guilty under the Law, they received the curse. Even the heroes of the faith that we look to: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, the Judges, Samson, Gideon, David, Solomon, etc. all fell short of God's perfect holiness!

They all needed grace, and the only way they were able to keep their lives, let alone do anything good was by God's grace alone!

Because of God's grace they had hearts that beat for Jehovah, they believed in the middle of their wretchedness in the promises of the Father. And that is what pleases God.

[Heb 11:6 NKJV] ...without faith [it is] impossible to please [Him], for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and [that] He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Paul shows them that this truth has been recorded not only anecdotally in the life of Abraham, - "Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness," (v.6) but that the prophet Habakkuk wrote this to God's people.

Expanding that verse:

[Hab 2:2-4 NKJV] 2 Then the LORD answered me and said: "Write the vision And make [it] plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it. 3 For the vision [is] yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry. 4 "Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; *But the just shall live by his faith.*

Sound familiar? Paul clung to this! It is also found in Romans 1

[Rom 1:16-17 NKJV] 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

Another rendering of that phrase could read - "because of faith the one who is regarded as, or made righteous shall live."

We cannot fabricate faith in order to buy more life, as if we are entering some bargain with God.

When our deepest, foundational condition is one of faith in Christ, God justifies us, regards us as righteous, and we share in His life.

So what we find in verse 10 and 11 of Galatians 3 is that Paul reconciles two seemingly opposing thoughts that are both found in God's word.

- 1 - the requirement for the Law, though it brings a curse.
- 2 - the requirement for Faith, which brings righteousness.

V.12 Furthermore in verse 12 Paul points out to the churches that if you want to follow the Law then you better count yourself as all in! In which case, you are under the curse!

[Jas 2:10-11 NKJV] 10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one [point], he is guilty of all. 11 For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

*Special note: Some people like to pit James and Paul against one another - this is false. John Spencer said a couple of years back at the Deep South Pastor's Conference that Paul was correcting obedience without belief, James was correcting belief without obedience.*

So then, if people are bound to the law, and are justly condemned for failure to abide by the law, to live holy lives, and there is a curse pronounced upon them, where is our hope?

We find this in v. 13 - Christ has paid the price for us, He bore the affront to his holy person on our behalf.

The same treatment that Christ received, if applied to us, would not be an affront to our dignity but the reasonable punishment for our violations of God's law.

Moreover, He, Jesus Christ, BECAME a curse for us, in our place, so that we might be free from both the requirement of the law and the penalty for our violations against the Law.

We must not let this slip through our minds - we must grasp the fullness of this thought as it has profound bearing on our faith.

Jesus Christ did not just pay for our sins as a proxy who visits the library to pay our late fee - where the transaction is made at arms length on behalf of some third party who is too embarrassed or too poor to pay the bill.

Jesus Christ BECAME SIN, BECAME THE CURSE, for our sakes so that He might deal with it in totality; so that as He was crushed, our sin, our curse was obliterated under God's wrath.

[Isa 53:10 NKJV] 10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put [Him] to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin...

The Holy One, robed in majesty and glory, traded His holiness for FILTH, and SIN, so that the Father might completely crush it under foot and extend His matchless mercy towards us His creation rather than His wrath!

[Psa 103:10-12 NKJV] 10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities. 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, [So] great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; 12 As far as the east is from the west, [So] far has He removed our transgressions from us.

[1Pe 2:24 NKJV] 24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.

Who did He make this exchange with? Those who believe! And, more to the point - those who previously wore the garments of filth and had the curse spoken against us - it was us that Christ made the exchange with.

Parallel to the thought portrayed here in verse 13 Paul writes to the Corinthians:

[2Co 5:21 NKJV] 21 For He made Him who knew no sin [to be] sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Paul girds this mind-bending theological foundation with the scriptures of the Old Testament - "cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree."

So it is - Christ, the Holy One, the Messiah, the one to bring God close - became a curse, became sin for our sakes so that we might be robed in His righteousness, so that we might bear His image.

And He did all of that why? He imputed His righteousness to us beggars why?

Tying this back in with God's Word, and the fact that God the Father is a promise keeper, Paul gives the answer to 'why?' in verse 14: that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles.

That blessing is God's righteousness through Faith, which is accompanied by the Spirit of God dwelling within each of us.

Knowing all of the bad news - the curse, the Law, sin, prepares our hearts for the good news - those who believe in Jesus Christ are robed in His righteousness and regarded as Holy Ones, Saints, by the Most High God.

This promise is available to all and is not bound up in ceremony, works, or tradition but in the faith of Abraham found among the saints who profess, "We believe Oh Lord."