

Galatians

Lesson Seven

Galatians 3: 11-20

The Law is not of Faith

Galatians 3: 11-12 Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for *“The righteous shall live by faith.”*

12 But the law is not of faith, rather *“The one who does them shall live by them.”*

In our last lesson, we looked at verse 10 which stated that those who are subject to the Law are under a curse.

We stressed the fact that no one can keep the Law, so, we all come under the curse of the Law.

The Law not only makes us slaves to a system of Do's and Don'ts, it condemns us because we are unable to live up to that system.

The Law then is our condemnation rather than our deliverance.

That's why we believe that the Law was never given by God as a means of salvation but only to cause man to realize his inability to save himself.

He can then turn to God with a better understanding of his need for salvation by grace.

Once that salvation has been received by grace through faith, we believers then sometimes make the mistake of trying to please God by our works of righteousness.

Holiness is life and death important to the child of God, however, holiness is achieved by faith in God, the same way our salvation is secured.

In ***Galatians 3: 11***, Paul points out again, that no one is justified by the Law, but by faith.

We are saved by faith to live a life of faith.

A person can't remain righteous by works any more than he can become righteous by works.

The Christian life is one of faith from beginning to end.

The Bible tells us that the just shall live by faith.

Why then do we work.

Not to get the Lord's favor.

Rather our works are evidence of our love for Him, as well as His love for us.

So, a two-fold theme of the book of Galatians is brought out by the first part of **Verse 11**.

Verse 11a *Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law,*

First theme, Justification by faith, and the second theme is, Spirituality by faith.

Let's see what James had to say about works.

James 2: 21 *Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?*

The proper interpretation of this passage of scripture vitally important.

The action that Abraham took was work based.

However, Abraham's work didn't justify him before God, it justified him before man.

You see, man needed to know that Abraham believed, and that God accounted that belief unto him as righteousness.

The same is true of our lives.

People need to see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven.

Let's look at **Matthew 5: 16**, *In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

Notice that Jesus didn't say that we were saved by those good works.

So, we should ask ourselves the question, "If we are not saved by good works, what is their purpose"?

Their purpose is not for our salvation, it's for the salvation of others.

What do I mean by that?



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The world cannot see the inside of us Christians.

To them, we are just human beings like they are.

Judging by our outward appearance, we may seem to be.

But God looks at the heart, so he sees the faith that is in there, and that faith pleases Him.

But other people need to see outward manifestations of inward change in the lives of God's children to be convinced that we have anything they don't have.

The world can't see our faith; it can only see the results of our faith, our good works.

Verse 11b for "The righteous shall live by faith."

This actually a quote from ***Habakkuk 2: 4 "Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith."***

Faith gets a person into the Kingdom of God, and faith keeps him going after he gets in.

You may be wondering why this is so important to us as God's children.

It must be the desire of every child of God to grow into mature Christians with strong faith and power to overcome sin in our lives.

How is this done if not through faith.

I can't help but believe that this remains extremely important to every child of God that wants to please God.

Verse 12 But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them."

This verse is a quote from ***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.***

This verse is a reminder that if we shrug off faith and true spirituality to try to obtain righteousness by our own self effort, then we are obliged to live our whole lives by the Law.

If the blood of Christ cleansed us from our sin so we could be made acceptable to God then it is that same blood which continues to cleanse us from all unrighteousness now.



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It is vitally important that we learn that our maturing in relationship with God depends on our growing in our dependence and faith upon Him.

No matter how good we get at it, it never ceases to be about grace.

The Great Exchange

Verses 13-14 *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”—*

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.*

Let’s look at **Verse 13a** *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law.*

Have you ever heard me use the phrase, “The Greek tense?”

Well, the “Greek tense” of this verse indicates that this is a settled action.

Christ has, once and for all, redeemed us from the curse of the Law.

Let’s look at **II Corinthians 8: 9** *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.*

For us to become what Christ is, He had to become what we were.

He became accursed, that we might become blessed.

He became sick, that we might become healthy.

He became poor, so that we rich.

How do I know this?

These are the three categories of the curse of the Law, poverty, sickness, and spiritual death.

In each of these cases, Jesus became the curse for us that we might be set free from the curse.

How about this spiritual death?

Let’s look at **II 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.*

We were unrighteous, He was righteous.



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God made His own Son unrighteous, so you and I could be made righteous.

Christ took our unrighteousness so that we could take His righteousness.

What an exchange!

This exchange sounds so good, some people have a hard time believing it.

That's why they have a hard receiving it because that is precisely how they receive it, by believing.

That belief is called faith.

The righteousness of God in Christ is received as you would receive any gift.

Ephesians 2: 8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,

9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

The Bible is also clear about the origin of righteousness in our life.

Romans 5: 17 For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

I say again, what did we have to exchange for Christ's righteousness?

Thank God the only requirement made by our magnificent benefactor is the only thing we had in abundance, our own unrighteousness.

Christ took our sin, sickness and poverty, and gave us righteousness, health and riches.

We need to remind ourselves what the Bible says about Christ's provision for our health.

Isaiah 53: 4-5 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

Matthew addressed this subject.



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Matthew 8: 16-17 That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick.

17 This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases."

Peter also addressed this subject.

1 Peter 2: 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

So, Jesus became the curse of sickness for us, that we might be made well.

Where did Jesus become sin?

Where did He become poor?

Where did He become sickness?

On the cross.

You may ask about what Jesus said pertaining to being poor in His lifetime.

I am reminded about what Jesus said about not having a place to lay His head.

Jesus said this because He was an itinerant preacher.

This doesn't mean that He was poor in the sense that he had no money.

As a matter of fact, Jesus and the disciples carried a bag of money to feed the poor with that had was so healthy that Judas was stealing from the bag and Jesus was the only one who knew about it.

Jesus took on our poverty on the cross.

Artists have always been kind to depict Christ on the cross with a loin cloth about His waist, however, the Romans always hung criminals on the cross naked.

This served notice to all that witnessed this terrible scene that the criminal hanging the cross had lost everything.

That was our Christ taking on what belonged to us, our poverty, as well as our sin and sickness.

Aren't you glad that Jesus Christ took the curse, that we might receive the blessing?

Verse 14a so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles

Try to follow this thread with me.



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Notice that suddenly, after Paul has spent so much time talking about the curse of the Law, now He uses the phrase, ***the blessing of Abraham.***

If Christ redeemed us from the curse so that we might receive the blessing, why didn't Paul say that we have redeemed from the curse of the Law that the blessing of the Law might be on us?

This because the blessing of Abraham and the blessing of the Law are the same thing.

You might ask, what blessing of the Law?

There was a blessing of the Law.

We have referred to it several times since starting this lesson.

If you kept the Law, the blessing was righteousness, health, and riches, remember?

The only problem was no one except Jesus has ever kept the Law.

The same blessing that you and I receive by accepting Christ into our lives, is the same blessing that we would have received if we had been able to keep the Law to absolute perfection.

Since our Lord perfectly fulfilled the Law for us, we receive the blessing just as though we ourselves had qualified for it.

Pay attention to what I am about to say, this blessing is the same blessing that Abraham received, not because he kept the Law to perfection, because there was no Law for Abraham to keep.

He received these blessings because he believed God.

Therefore, that tells us that it is possible to walk in the blessing of the Law and not even know the Law.

You know this is true when you consider what we learned from last week's lesson. God preached the Gospel to Abraham before he ever knew that the Law would ever exist.

We will find in this lesson that the Law was added 430 years after Abraham lived on this earth.

Yet he walked in the blessing.

How, the same way you can, by faith.

That's what Paul is trying to tell us in this letter to the Galatians, to never let anyone put you under a Law that you, like Abraham, were never subject to in the first place.

Now, let's look at ***Verse 14b, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.***



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Notice that it is through Jesus, not through the Law, that we are made able to receive the promise of the Spirit.

Through what means?

Through faith!

The Abrahamic Covenant and Us

Verses 15-16 To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified.

16 Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ.

Let's break this down, ***Verse 15a To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant***

Here Paul begins with an analogy between the Abrahamic Covenant and a legal agreement.

To make his point clear, he brings the Covenant God made with Abraham down to human terms, likening it to a covenant or contract made between individuals here on earth.

Verse 15b no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified.

Once a contract between two people is drawn up, agreed upon and confirmed by their signatures, from that moment on, that agreement is unalterable by either of the two parties to it without the consent and agreement of the other party.

Now let's follow Paul's logic here and apply this rule to the Abrahamic Covenant.

This contract between God and Abraham was drawn up and ratified before the Law was ever given.

The Law was given to Moses, but the Covenant was made between God and Abraham long before Moses was ever born.

Therefore, the Mosaic Law could not supersede a previously existing contract, the Abrahamic Covenant.

If God were to break His agreement with Abraham after his death, He would be worse than a contract breaker; He would be a cheater, because He would have waited until Abraham was dead to change His contract with Him.

That would make God lower than the level of man.



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Verse 16a Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring.

As we know, it takes two to make a contract.

The two parties to the Abrahamic Covenant were God (the party of the first part Who made the promises of the blessing) and Abraham and his offspring, (Parties of the second part to whom the promises were made).

Verse 16b It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your offspring,” who is Christ.

Who is the “offspring” of Abraham Who shared in his promised blessing?

Jesus Christ.

It seems almost strange because Jesus did not have any need of a contract for Himself.

Contracts exist so that both parties are protected in a deal.

What protection does the Son God need?

The contract releases us from sin, sickness, and poverty.

Christ had no need of release from these things because He was never subject to them.

As the righteousness of God, He was not subject to unrighteousness.

As the embodiment of divine health, we have no record of Him ever being sick.

As the creator of all riches, He was not subject to poverty.

As the creator of life, He was not subject to death.

As the Son of God, He was not subject to any of these things, until that day when He became sin, until the time He took upon Himself our sickness, poverty and death, so that we might receive His righteousness, health, riches and life.

Hebrews 5: 7-9 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.

8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.

9 And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

As we have said, Christ took our nature as sinners.

He took our place on the cross and suffered the chastisement of our sin, that we might be able to take His place as the righteousness of God.

He became sin that we might become sons.



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The only way that Abraham could be declared righteous by God because of His faith, was because there was coming a Messiah from his own offspring Who would fulfill all righteousness for him.

Jesus suffered our penalty and freed us from the Law of sin and death.

So after all this, we come to the knowledge that not only did God enter into a contract with Abraham that included us, He interjected Himself into Abraham's side of the agreement when in Matthew, we see that the first person listed in the lineage of Christ in this physical world is this man named Abraham.

In other words, God is represented in both the party of the first part and the party of the second part so that the contract is guaranteed by God to succeed.

With this in mind, look again at *Ephesians 1: 3-12* with fresh eyes, ***Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,***

4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love

5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,

8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight

9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ

10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.



Notice that Jesus did not need to be called out, He didn't need to be chosen. He already had all these things. He didn't need them, we did. God saw fit to store them for us "in Christ," until His death, resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father. Jesus Christ was our representative Chosen by God. The promises of that contract were made to us individually through our representative, the Lord Jesus Christ, the offspring of Abraham. So, now all of us who are in Christ Jesus are entitled to the blessing of Abraham.

The Law and the Covenant

Verses 17-20 This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void.

18 For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

19 Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary.

20 Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.

Verse 17 This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void.

If God had given the Jewish law to replace or supersede the Abrahamic Covenant He would have been in breach of contract.

God has not changed the terms of this contract.

We have no record that Abraham had ever violated the terms of the contract either.

However, God out did everyone who would ever enter into agreement with Him by placing Jesus Christ in the lineage of Abraham, guaranteeing the contracts success.

Verse 18 For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

The arrival of the Law has not disannulled the promises of the Covenant.



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Suppose I promise to give my brother a hundred dollars after a church service and suppose he agrees to accept that gift.

Whose obligation is it to fulfil that agreement?

It's mine, because I was the one made the promise.

I'm not obligated by law, but by our agreement.

God made promises to Abraham, so the obligation to fulfil those promises was not Abraham's, but God's.

This has nothing to do with the Law, but with agreement.

Verse 19a Why then the law?

If all this is true, why then the Law?

If Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph all survived without it all those centuries, why was it given at all?

Verse 19b It was added

If the Law was added, does this mean that it was added to the Abrahamic Covenant?

Not possible, because it would have been an alteration to the Covenant agreement without Abraham's consent.

Therefore, it would have been illegal.

So, the Mosaic Law became a tool in conjunction with the Abrahamic Covenant for God to use in His toolbox to help teach man what sin was.

Verse 19c because of transgressions,

Because of sin.

The purpose of the Law was to point out man's violation of the Covenant agreement.

Look at ***Romans 7:7 What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."***

Verse 19d until the offspring should come

Offspring is singular.

Who is the offspring of Abraham?

None other than Jesus Christ!



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It is important that you keep in mind that the Law's usefulness ran out when Christ came on the scene.

Verse 19e to whom the promise had been made

The promise had been made to Abraham and his offspring.

As we have already rode this horse a time or two, or three, or more, its Jesus Christ.

Verse 20 Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.

I want to look at this verse of scripture in the Amplified Bible.

Verse 20 in the Amplified Bible, Now the mediator or go-between [in a transaction] is not [needed] for just one party; whereas God is only one [and was the only One giving the promise to Abraham, but the Law was a contract between two, God and Israel; its validity depended on both].

This lesson has given us a glimpse into the indiscernible Wisdom of God.

We have enjoyed coming into the realization that God has placed the onus His Son Jesus Christ for the success of this endeavor.

However, in closing this lesson out tonight, I find it rather amazing that God still sees Abraham's involvement in this Covenant as crucial as we see in verse 20.

In the Amplified Version of this scripture verifies that it would not have succeeded without Christ's involvement, but was also predicted on Abraham's love and faith in God and His Word.

Our part is but to believe!



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