

Ln 6 ... Avoiding a Spiritual Curse

Galatians 3:10-22

Sometimes in life we must choose. We can be one thing or the other but not both. For example, we can't be married and single at the same time. We can't be saved and lost at the same time, and we can't be saved by grace through faith and saved by works at the same time. The Judaizers taught salvation was a combination of faith and works, which, Paul explains, results in a curse. Beginning with Abraham ([3:6](#)), Paul has already proven God's way of saving people and of **avoiding a spiritual curse** has always been exclusively by grace through faith. In this section, Paul reveals **three** actions required to avoid this curse.

Refuse to Depend On the Law for Salvation (3:10-12)

The problem with the Law is not only does it not save, but also it actually brings a curse. Quoting [Deuteronomy 27:26](#), Paul writes: *For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them* ([3:10](#)). The word translated **curse** (KATARA, kuh-tar'-ah-) means "rejection by God" or "eternal condemnation." Anyone who wants to be saved by keeping the Law is living *under the curse*.

Why, according to [James 2:10](#)?

If we break just one part of the Law, such as, *Thou shalt not covet* ([Ex 20:17](#)), we break it all and come *under the curse*, which is eternal condemnation. The purpose of the Law was never to save but to bring knowledge of sin ([Rom. 3:20](#)).

The Law spotlights our sin. To clarify the purpose of the Law was never to save, Paul quotes [Habakkuk 2:4](#), and writes: *But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith* ([3:11](#)). Paul continues by writing that *the law is not of faith, or based on faith* ([3:12a](#)).

Then, quoting the Law in [Leviticus 18:5](#), what does he write ([3:12b](#))?

In other words, if we are trusting in God's written Law for salvation, we must *live in them*, or obey them, perfectly. The reason is that the Law's standard is perfection, which is humanly impossible. Therefore, those who try to be justified by the Law are *cursed*. If even a **part** of our salvation depends on keeping, or obeying, the Law, we are *cursed*.

To avoid this spiritual curse, **refuse to depend on the Law for salvation** and...

Rely Exclusively On Christ for Justification (3:13-18)

Even though the Law sets forth a standard impossible for us to fulfill, there is hope for us. Paul writes:

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us (3:13a). The word translated redeemed (EXAGORAZŌ, x-ah-gor-ad'-zo-) means to buy a slave out of a slave market.

Christ not only ransomed, or *redeemed*, us from the slave market of sin but also *from the curse of the law*.

He paid the only price high enough to set us free from sin and to meet the demands of the Law.

What was that price, according to [1 Peter 1:19a](#)?

Quoting [Deuteronomy 21:23](#), Paul writes: *for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree (3:13b)*. This means the worst criminals were executed by hanging them on trees as a sign of their *curse*. Instead of a tree, Jesus was hung on a wooden cross; however, the principle is the same. Christ died to redeem us *from the curse of the law*.

Jesus' sacrifice was for all of us because Paul writes: *That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ (3:14a)*. The blessing of Abraham refers to salvation by grace through faith.

Christ's death was also so *we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (3:14b)*. Through the prophet Isaiah, God promised: *I will pour my spirit upon thy seed (Isa. 44:3c)*. Everyone who receives Christ also receives the promise of the Spirit, who empowers us to live for God.

How does [Romans 8:9c](#) confirm this truth?

Paul, a master teacher, now uses an illustration: *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 (3:15)*. When two parties make a *covenant*, a third party cannot come along years later and add to or change that covenant. If this is true in dealings between sinful humans, how much more it applies to a holy, righteous God! Abraham did not make a promise to God. God made a promise to Abraham ([Gen. 12:2](#)), and God never breaks His promise ([Josh. 21:45](#)).

Next, Paul writes: *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 (3:16)*. Paul's point is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham didn't reside in the Jewish people or in the Law, but in Christ. The Law, which came over 430 years after Abraham, *cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect (3:17)*.

Paul continues: *For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise (3:18)*. In other words, the *law* and the *promise* cannot be mixed or combined. Our *inheritance* (salvation) doesn't depend on the Law (our performance) but on grace (God's *promise*).

Concerning God's promises, what does [Titus 1:2b](#) declare?

To avoid being under a spiritual curse, **refuse to depend on the Law for salvation, rely exclusively on Christ for justification**, and finally...

Refocus On the Law for Illumination (3:19-22)

Paul concludes this section by refocusing on the Law to help his readers understand its purpose.

Therefore, he writes: *Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions* ([3:19a-b](#)).

The Law was given to clearly define what sin is. After the Law was given, sin was no longer a matter of human opinion but a divinely established fact.

The Law was given to illuminate, or shine light on, our sin. It was not given to provide a means of salvation but to reveal our need for a Savior. The Law was given *till the seed should come to whom the promise was made* ([3:19c](#)). The purpose of the Law was fulfilled in Christ.

That's why Jesus makes what declaration about the Law and the prophets in [Matthew 5:17b](#)?

To show the inferiority of the Law, Paul explains that while God personally gave the promise to Abraham, the Law *was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator* ([3:19d](#)). The Law came through Moses with the help of *angels*. The setting was fearful and threatening. People could not go up the mountain or touch the foot of it without penalty of death ([Ex 19:12](#)).

However, the promise given to Abraham was as Friend to friend.

In contrast to the fearful setting at Mount Sinai, what does God say to Abraham in a vision ([Genesis 15:1b](#))?

God wants to have a relationship with us in the same context as the promise He gave to Abraham, not in the context in which He gave the Law. He wants us to live for Him in love and faith, not the Law and fear.

Paul continues: *Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one* ([3:20](#)). When the Law was given, Moses was the mediator between God and the Israelites. However when God gave His promise to Abraham, He did so directly. This is because God alone is responsible to fulfill it, regardless of the actions of Abraham or anyone else.

Now, Paul asks the obvious question: *Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law* ([3:21](#)).

The relationship between the Law and God's promise to Abraham is not one of contradiction, but of need and fulfillment. The Law reveals our need of a savior, and the promise reveals the fulfillment of that need.

The Law cannot and was never intended to give *life*. If it could, it would be *against the promises of God*, since it would provide an alternate means of salvation.

The Law reveals our inherent sinful nature. Therefore, Paul writes: *But the scripture hath concluded* [imprisoned] *all under sin* ([3:22a](#)). The *scripture*, or Law, declares we are all prisoners of *sin*. Apart from Christ, the penalty for being a prisoner of *sin* is *death* ([Rom. 6:23a](#)).

For what other reason was the Law given, according to [Galatians 3:22b](#)?

The death sentence for sin can only be pardoned by faith in Jesus Christ. Christ is the truth of God's promise, and the truth will set us free ([Jn 8:32](#)).

The Law is a good thing, but it can result in a spiritual curse.

To avoid this curse:

**REFUSE TO DEPEND ON THE LAW FOR SALVATION,
RELY EXCLUSIVELY ON CHRIST FOR JUSTIFICATION,
REFOCUS ON THE LAW FOR ILLUMINATION.**