

# Galatians 3:10-29

## The Curse of the Law; God's Promise Versus the Law

---

### Day 1

#### Read Galatians 3:10-14

#### The curse of the law

1. What is the problem with trying to keep the Law? 3:10 (See also James 2:10)

- Who would come under that curse and why according to Romans 3:10-12,19-20,23?

**FYI:** "All means a lot. It means that while some sins are worse than others are, there are no small sins before such a great God. 'Jewish keepers of the law would overlook small transgressions. Paul would not.' (Morris)" - David Guzik

"To be blessed by God instead of cursed by Him we would have to look at the law and satisfy its every demand; And that cannot be done...attempting to be saved by works will lead to profound anxiety and insecurity, because you can never be sure that you are living up to your standards sufficiently, whatever they may be...It makes you nervous and timid (because you are unsure of where you stand) or else swaggering and boastful (because you are trying to convince yourself of where you stand). Either way, you live with a sense of curse and condemnation." - Timothy Keller (75)

2. What is written *in the law itself* about being justified? 3:11 (*The quote in this verse is from Habakkuk 2:4*)

- Why can't the law and faith be combined as a means of salvation? 3:12 (See also Romans 4:4,5; 11:6)

**FYI: The just shall live by faith:** "Every word in [Habakkuk 2:4](#) is important, and the Lord quotes it three times in the New Testament just to bring out the fullness of the meaning!

In [Romans 1:17](#)... the emphasis is on *faith*: 'The just shall live by **faith**.'

In [Hebrews 10:38](#)...the emphasis is on *live*: 'The just shall **live** by faith.'

Here in [Galatians 3:11](#)...the emphasis is on *just*: 'The **just** shall live by faith.'"

- David Guzik

"Salvation is either by faith or by works. There are no alternatives, and these are mutually exclusive--they cannot be mixed because they are poles apart. Add even one deed of human effort to salvation, and you pass from faith to works...from grace to Law...from a divine gift to a human wage. More than that, you move from life to death, from being blessed to being condemned. ...Christianity is a religion of 'done,' and all other faiths are religions of 'do.'"

- Charles Swindoll (54)

3. How did Christ remove the curse and satisfy the demands of the law for us? 3:13 (Compare Colossians 2:14)

**FYI:** "The word '*for*' means 'on behalf of' or 'in the place of'; Jesus was our substitute. He received the curse we earned (v 13) so that we might receive the blessing He earned (v 14)."

- Timothy Keller (75)

**IT'S GREEK TO ME: Redeemed** Strong's NT:1805 *exagorazo*; to buy up, i.e. ransom; figuratively, to rescue from loss  
 - Strong's Concordance  
 "Redeemed has the idea of 'buying back' or 'purchasing out of.' It isn't just rescuing; it is paying a price to rescue."  
 - David Guzik

4. Underline the phrases that describe what Christ did to redeem us from the curse of being judged by our inability to keep the law.
- Isaiah 53:5,6 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed....the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. NIV
  - Mark 10:45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." NASU
  - Romans 8:3-4 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, NIV
  - 2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. NIV
  - Ephesians 5:2 and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. NIV
  - 1 Peter 1:18-19 you were redeemed... with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. NIV.
  - 1 Peter 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. NIV
  - 1 Peter 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. NIV
5. Through Christ, what did the Gentiles receive and how? 3:14 Cf. 3:8,9,29

**FYI:** "There are only two possible ways of being accepted as righteous by God. One is to keep the law perfectly (3:12). However, those who try to do this will inevitably fail, and will then be subjected to the curse in Deuteronomy 27:26 (3:10). The other way to be accepted by God is to exercise faith, as the quotation from Habakkuk 2:4 shows (3:11). Those who believe in Christ are justified because He suffers the curse on their behalf (3:13,14)." - Africa Bible Commentary (1420)

**Applying the Word:** *What pulls you into thinking you need to rely on your own efforts to make yourself acceptable to God?*

**Day 2****Read Galatians 3:15-18****God's promise to Abraham (background)**

6. Read Genesis 15:1-21.

- When God made His promise to Abraham, what did Abraham ask? Genesis 15:8
- What part did Abraham have in the covenant making ceremony? Gen. 15:12
- Who was the only party to pass between the pieces? Gen. 15:17

**FYI:** "This may seem strange to us, but in Abram's day this was the way a covenant was 'signed'. Each covenant-maker would pass between the halves of the animals. It was a (very!) graphic way of those entering a covenant saying; If I break this agreement may I be cut up and cut off: I will deserve to die just like these animals did." - Timothy Keller (79)

"God, represented by the smoking oven and the burning torch [reminiscent of the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire representing the presence of God], passed through the animal parts by Himself; as Abram watched, God showed this was a unilateral covenant. Abram never 'signed' the covenant, because God 'signed' it for both of them. Therefore, the certainty of the covenant God makes with Abram is based on who God is, not on who Abram is or what Abram does. This covenant cannot fail, because God cannot fail...God was putting His Deity on the line as a confirmation of His oath to Abram."  
- David Guzik

7. What promise was made? 15:18-21

- What would have made this promise difficult to believe? 16:1,17:17 (See Genesis 12:4-7 for the length of time Abraham had been waiting for a promised descendant.)

**The unchanging nature of God's covenant**

8. What point did Paul make about human covenants (contracts/legal wills)? 3:15

9. With whom did God make his covenant/promises? 3:16 (*The word "seed" in Genesis 21:12 and 22:18 is a singular tense.*)

- Since this was an *unconditional* promise made to Abraham (*i.e. he had no part in it*), on whom did the fulfillment of the promise depend? (*NKJV reads "the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ." 3:17*)

Galatians 3:10-29

10. How did Paul apply his argument in 3:15 to the covenants/promises made by God? 3:17 (List the phrases that describe what *did not* happen to the promise.)
11. How much of the law had Abraham adhered to when he received the promise? 3:17 (Compare Romans 4:9-11)

**FYI:** The promise and Abraham's belief is recorded in Genesis 15:6. The instructions for circumcision were given to Abraham *later* in Genesis 17. The law was given more than 400 years *later*.

"Once every signature is in place, a legal agreement is permanent unless the parties who made it agree to change it. God's covenant cannot be less permanent than a human one."  
- Africa Bible Commentary (1420)

12. What is the hope of our inheritance based on? 3:18 (Compare Romans 4:13-14)
- How reliable is that promise? See Hebrews 6:13-19; 10:23; 2 Corinthians 1:20

**FYI:** "If a human's will can't be revised or revoked, how much more immutable and indestructible is a promise made by the eternal God."  
- Charles Swindoll (63)

"The principle is that the very concepts of 'promise' and 'law' are mutually exclusive...Paul is adamant: either something comes by grace or works; either it come because of the giver's promise or the receiver's performance."  
- Timothy Keller (79)

13. As a review, fill in the following blanks from Paul's argument in 3:15-18.

- 3:15 A covenant (contract, will) cannot be set \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_
- 3:16 God made an unconditional promise to Abraham and to his seed, Christ, so the promises depended on \_\_\_\_\_ alone to fulfill it.
- 3:17 The law does not invalidate the \_\_\_\_\_ and nullify the \_\_\_\_\_
- 3:18 So what we receive depends on God's \_\_\_\_\_ not the law.

**Applying the Word:** "For Christ's love compels us..." (2 Corinthians 5:14) How would you explain the motivating power of Christ's unconditional love?

**Day 3****Read Galatians 3:19-21****The conditional and temporary nature of the law .**

14. Why was the law given? 3:19 (Compare Romans 7:7)

- How long was the law to be in effect?

**FYI:** "The Law clearly defined what was moral and immoral, godly and ungodly. Sin was no longer a matter of human opinion, but divinely established fact. Now we knew we were transgressors of God's righteous standard, not simply offenders of human law (compare Romans 3:20, 4:15, 7:7). Put briefly, the Mosaic Law's function was not to provide salvation but to convince us of our need for salvation."  
- Charles Swindoll (64)

"The Galatians, who lived after the coming of Christ, are wrong to still focus on the law as the basis for acceptance before God. Its function has never been to serve as basis for justification, and it has passed its expiry date."  
- Africa Bible Commentary (1421)

15. How many parties were involved in the giving of the law? 3:19b (Who was the mediator? Exodus 34:27-29)

- How many parties were involved in the giving of the promise? 3:20 (*Expanded Paraphrase of 3:20 reads: "But when God made His promise He acted on His own sovereign account."*)
- What does that say about the binding nature of the law versus the promise?

**FYI:** "The unchanging nature of God's covenant with Abraham is an important principle; it was a one-sided covenant ...that was promised forever...There is no 'ifs' in Abraham's covenant... but there are plenty of "ifs" in the covenant of Moses (Deuteronomy 28). The Mosaic covenant was a two-sided covenant, with two both parties obligated to uphold it ...A promise depends on one person; a mediated agreement depends on two. The weakness of the law compared to the covenant of Abraham is shown because it depends on two parties, not God alone."  
- David Guzik

16. How does the law come up short? 3:21

17. What does the law show us about our condition? 3:22 (Cf. Romans 3:19)

**FYI:** "That is the purpose of the law. It shows us that we do not just 'fall short' of God's will, requiring some extra effort to do better, but that we are completely under sin's power, requiring a rescue."  
- Timothy Keller (83)

"The law is not something evil, opposing God's promise. The problem with the law is found in its inability to give strength to those who desire to keep it. If the law **could have given life**, then it could have brought righteousness. But the Law of Moses brings no life; it simply states the command, tells us to keep it, and tells us the consequences if we break the command."  
- David Guzik

**Christ released us from the law**

18. What two phrases describe the role of the law?

- 3:23
- 3:24

**IT'S GREEK TO ME:** ***We were kept/held prisoner*** Strong's NT:5432 *phroureo* to be a watcher in advance, i.e. to mount guard as a sentinel (post spies at gates); figuratively, to hem in, protect - Strong's Concordance  
***tutor/put in charge*** NT:3807 *paidagogos*; a boy-leader, a servant whose office it was to take the children to school

19. How did Christ change our status? 3:25,26 (Compare 1 John 3:1,2)

- Our standing? 3:27 (Compare Colossians 3:1-4, 10-12)
- Our relationship with other believers? 3:28
- Our blessings? 3:29

**FYI:** "If you have trusted Christ by faith, you are in Him, forever freed from the curse of the Law. You will never have to seek God's favor. He is completely satisfied with His Son, and since you are in Him, God is completely satisfied with you as well. He may not always like what you do with your freedom, but He will never turn His back on you. (Heb. 13:5-6)"  
 - Charles Swindoll (57)

***Applying the Word:** What does being a "child of God" indicate about the Lord's relationship with you? Take time to thank God for his "indescribable" gift of salvation.*

**Day 4****Our identity in Christ**

20. Read through the two supplemental sheets: "*The Law in the Gospel Life*" and "*In Christ.*"

- Which "In Christ" verse(s) did you have trouble embracing?
- Which verse do you need to remember the most for what you are facing today?

