

## 12.

### GALATIANS 3:10-14

#### I. REJECT THOSE WHO TEACH YOU A DIFFERENT DOCTRINE

##### C. Because of Teachings of the Scripture

##### 2. About the Curse of the Law

#### Introduction

Next Paul quoted Scriptures that taught salvation by grace by emphasizing the contrasting truth that the law brings cursing instead of blessing. First, he quoted Deuteronomy 27:26, which Moses spoke to Israel on the Plains of Moab and said, “*Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.*” The law given at Sinai outlined a beautiful, clean, and highly meaningful way of life. It taught the kind of life that is happy, free, and productive. However, its disadvantage is that it reveals that people are full of sins and, therefore, condemned by the law. Because of the fallen nature of people, no one has ever been able to keep everything the law teaches, so it condemns everyone. It ends up bringing a curse instead of a blessing.

Second, Paul quoted two verses to show that the law is powerless to remove that curse. He quoted Habakkuk 2:4, which says, “*The just one will live through faith.*” That Scripture points out that, since people cannot be declared just by their works, they can be declared just only through faith. The law teaches obedience, not faith. Therefore, it lacks the one truth that can make a person just. Since the law lacks that truth, it is powerless to remove the curse that it puts on a person. Then Paul quoted Leviticus 18:5, which says, “*the man doing these things shall live by them.*” The law gives life only to those who do what it says. It says nothing about justification or giving life. Since the law makes no provision for them, the law provides no means of relief for the curse it inflicts.

Third, Paul quoted a Scripture that implies that Jesus alone can remove the curse of the law. He quoted Deuteronomy 21:23, which says, “*Cursed is everyone hanging on a tree.*” He used the verse to insist that Jesus takes away the curse of sin because he was hanged on a Cross made from a tree. He took the curse on Himself, so that everyone who believes in Him is set free. When Jesus took the curse in full on Himself, nothing was left for the law to do. Therefore, it is useless to expect the law to add anything to salvation when Jesus already has done it all.

Paul pointed to those teachings of the Scripture about the law in order to emphasize that anyone who has known salvation by grace through faith cannot gain anything by practicing the ritual laws of Moses.

#### Outline

	<u>Pages</u>
2. [Scriptures about the curse of the law] (3:10-14) . . . . .	2-4
<b>a. For the ones [depending] on the works of the law are under a curse (3:10-12) .</b>	<b>2</b>
(1) <b>Because it is written (3:10b-10c).</b> . . . . .	<b>2</b>
(a) <i>“Cursed is everyone who does not continue (3:10b)</i> . . . . .	<b>2</b>
(b) <i>“In all things that are written in the book of the law to do them:”</i> [Deut. 27:26] (3:10c) . . . . .	<b>2</b>
(2) <b>And it is clear that no one is justified before God by the law (3:11).</b> . . . . .	<b>2</b>
(a) <b>Because “The just one will live by faith.”</b> [Hab. 2:4] (3:11b) . . . . .	<b>2</b>
(b) <b>And the law is not out of faith (3:12)</b> . . . . .	<b>2</b>
[1] <b>But “the man doing these things</b> . . . . .	<b>2</b>
[2] <b>“Shall live by them.”</b> [Lev. 18:5] (3:12b) . . . . .	<b>2</b>
<b>b. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law (3:13-14).</b> . . . . .	<b>3</b>
(1) <b>Having become a curse for us (3:13b-13d)</b> . . . . .	<b>3</b>
(a) <b>For it is written, (3:13c)</b> . . . . .	<b>3</b>
(b) <i>“Cursed is everyone hanging on a tree.”</i> [Deut. 21:23] (3:13d) . . . . .	<b>3</b>
(2) <b>So that the blessing of Abraham might come to the nations (3:14)</b> . . . . .	<b>3</b>
(a) <b>So we might receive the promise of the Spirit</b> . . . . .	<b>3</b>
(b) <b>By faith (3:14b).</b> . . . . .	<b>3</b>

**Comments**

Paul pointed out a second way that the Old Testament Scriptures teach salvation by grace through faith. They do it by revealing that the law brings a curse to people, not salvation.

Verse 10. **For the ones [depending] on the works of the law are under a curse because it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.”**

The first Scripture Paul quoted about the curse of the law was Deuteronomy 27:26, which says that anyone who does not keep everything written in the law is under a curse. The standards of the law are so high and its demands are so strict that no one can keep it all. A person only has to commit one infraction of the law to become a lawbreaker. That one infraction makes him a rebellious sinner and places him under a curse. The sad truth about the curse is that no one has ever broken the law in only one spot. Everyone has come short of what God expects in many ways and stands under the curse many times over again. The same Scriptures that record the law God gave to Moses reveal that that law brings a curse, not salvation. Paul did not need

to stress that no one is able to keep every law perfectly, because that reality was well known to all the Galatians. So the law placed them under a curse and gave them despair, not hope.

Verse 11-12. **11 And it is clear that no one is justified before God by the law, because “The just one will live through faith.”**

**12 And the law is not based on faith, but “the man doing these things shall live by them.”**

Second, Paul quoted a pair of Scriptures that show that the law cannot take away the curse it inflicts. Those Scriptures are Habakkuk 2:4 and Leviticus 18:5.

Habakkuk 2:4 says that a person becomes righteous and receives life through faith. Paul used that verse to show that the Hebrew Scriptures never taught that justification and life come from keeping the law. They always taught that life comes from faith in the goodness and grace of God. Therefore, it is a serious error to hold that the Hebrew Scriptures teach that a person can be saved by keeping the ritual law. The Jewish Scriptures contained the law to teach them that they were sinners and needed to be justified. Then they revealed that justification is available through faith.

Leviticus 18:5 teaches the law gives life and freedom only to people who do what the law requires. The law teaches obedience. It offers only punishment for those who do not obey. It is totally lacking in the element that can give justification and salvation, which is faith. Therefore, it is a false hope to think that the law can add anything to a person who is justified by faith.

Paul paired those two Scriptures to show that the Jewish Scriptures taught people how to be justified but also clearly taught that keeping the law was not that way. Paul reminded the Galatians that the law is not based on faith but on works. Those trusting the law for salvation have missed the true way of salvation and have chosen a way that only can fail.

Verse 13-14. **13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us. For it is written, “*Cursed is everyone hanging on a tree.*”**

**14 So that the blessing of Abraham might come to the nations so we might receive the promise of the Spirit by faith.**

Third, Paul quoted a Scripture that reveals that Jesus' death on the Cross has the power to remove the curse that people receive by breaking the law. The verse was Deuteronomy 21:23, which says that everyone who is hanged on a tree is cursed. That statement was based on a practice that was used to express total repulsion for an especially evil person. Israel's way of executing a criminal was by stoning. (Lev. 20:2,27; 24:13-16,23). When death by stoning was not enough to show the total disdain people felt toward the criminal, his naked corpse was hanged on a tree or a wooden stake or a wall in public to expose him to public abuse (Gen. 40:19,22; Josh. 10:26; 2 Sam. 4:12; 22:12). It was

an extreme extra punishment for unspeakable crimes. Paul said Jesus received that kind of public curse when He was hanged on the Cross and openly displayed for everyone to see.

Jesus did not receive that curse because He had committed heinous crimes, but to pay the penalty for other people's sins. He bore that penalty, not because He was guilty, but because He chose to take on Himself the penalty sinners owe for their sins. When He did it, the penalty was paid and the curse was removed for all who believe in Him. All who accept the sacrifice He made for them are freed from the curse of sin forever. When the curse has been removed, nothing is left for the law to do to add to the believer's salvation.

When Jesus paid the full price for sin, he made salvation available to everyone. The Cross makes the blessings of Abraham's covenant and the presence of the Holy Spirit available to all people of all nations. It is not available only to physical descendants of Abraham, but to all people everywhere. Paul based that teaching on the Hebrew Scriptures found in the books of the law. The same Hebrew Scriptures that reveal the curse of the law also reveal that Jesus can remove that curse and that freedom from the curse is available to everyone in all the nations of the earth.

Paul showed he had learned well from his studies in Arabia under God's guidance. He accurately interpreted each of the Scriptures he quoted and showed that the Hebrew Scriptures teach that salvation and righteousness do not come from working to keep the law but from faith in Jesus. He was eager for the Galatians to understand those truths, so they would not continue to be deceived by the false doctrines that were being taught to them.