

## **The Case For Grace**

### **Galatians 3:10-14**

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In Galatians 3:10, Paul says, “For as many as are of the works of the law,” there’s our subject, “are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. 11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. 12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. 13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: 14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

Galatians 3:10-14, our text, is fundamental to an understanding of biblical Christianity. The reason is because they are central to an understanding of how to be right with God. If you understand these verses, you understand your relationship of the law, the relationship of faith, and how God saves us—not by law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. As Paul put it in verse 11, “... justified...in the sight of God.” There are only two alternatives for being justified. One is true and the other is false; that is, either law or grace, or works or faith.

I want you to peek back in Galatians 2:16 for just a quick moment. This is when we were first introduced to the word “justification” or “justified” and the idea of the law. It says, “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” This is the first time in the book of Galatians (Galatians 2:16) when he introduces the concept of being justified by faith, and the relationship of that to works of the law, and uses the expression, “works of the law.” We are justified not by “the works of the law, but by the faith,” or by believing in, “Jesus Christ.”

We come in Galatians 3 (just a reminder) to the doctrinal section of the book of Galatians. In Galatians 1 and 2, they were practical or personal, talking about who Paul was and his message, defending his message and his ministry. Galatians 3 and 4 are doctrinal. Paul was talking about how their experience indicated they received salvation by faith and not by works. Scripture also indicated that, in the case of Abraham who God made a promise to, Abraham believed that promise and God reckoned unto him righteousness by his belief or by his faith. Paul makes the case that we are not saved by law but by Christ who did the work for us on the cross known as redemption. Jesus brings us the blessings of salvation, but they come to us through faith in Him.

I want you to note that Paul comes back to the subject of the works of the law, so go back with me to Galatians 3:10, “For as many as are of the works of the law,” notice that statement, they “are of the works of the law.” That means that they are trying to be justified before God by good deeds or by religious actions—ceremonial rites or rituals. They’re trying to get right standing fellowship and favor with God by performing or by doing, and it’s not going to happen. We just

read in Galatians 2:16, that you cannot be "...justified by the works of the law."

The designation "law" is used in the Bible several ways. Before I begin to unpack these verses (if you're taking notes), I want you to write down how the Bible uses the term or phrase "law." First, it is used for the entire Old Testament. I'm going to give you the references, John 10:34. It's actually important for you as a Christian to understand what we mean by "law." First, in some cases, the Bible is referring to the entire Old Testament. The second way it's used, Matthew 5:17, is for the first five books of the Bible written by Moses, Genesis to Deuteronomy. That's known as the Pentateuch. That is sometimes called "the law," and is usually differentiating between the law and the prophets. Thirdly, it refers to the moral, civil, and ceremonial regulations given to Israel on Mount Sinai. Write down Hebrews 9:19. Fourthly, and lastly, the Bible uses the term "law," as the Ten Commandments, Matthew 22:36-40. Those are four ways that the Bible uses.

They sometimes become a little bit of a challenge to know the context, how they are intended to be viewed or interpreted, but basically they summarize the concept in the Old Testament that God gave His law to Israel. Some people think that by performing or trying to keep the law, which no man is able to completely do, that they can gain favor or right standing with God or somehow be justified before God. We would use the term "saved" and go to heaven, but it won't happen. All the law could do was condemn us; it cannot save us. That was never the purpose or the intention of the law.

In our text tonight, Galatians 3:10-14, there are two main sections I want you to see. The first Paul looks at two things: the dilemma of the law, verses 10-12; and we'll look at the deliverance of the law, verses 13-14, where Christ came to redeem us from the curse of the law. The first thing we see is the dilemma of the law, what the law could not do and what it does do, which is negative. Follow again with me in verse 10. Paul says, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. 11 But that no man is justified by the law," again, "in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. 12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them," or must live in them.

There are three problems with the law in these verses. Let me give them to you. First, the law brings a curse. All the law can do is condemn or curse you. If you want to live under the law, then all it's going to do is to bring a curse. Notice verse 10, "For as many as are of the works of the law," this would be the Judaizers, who were the false teachers coming into the churches of Galatia telling the Gentile Christians, "You can't be saved unless you become Jews, keep the law of Moses, follow dietary laws, holy days, circumcision," and all that stuff, "you can't really be saved." They were teaching a combination of faith in Christ plus good works in order to be saved. There are many people today that believe that you believe in Jesus but you have to work real hard, try real hard, and hope that if you're good enough, you'll get to go to heaven. They never rest in the finished work of Christ, and they never have assurance. They never have assurance that they are saved or understand the doctrine of justification by faith.

All mankind, or all humanity, are under sin. We're born first in Adam, which is condemnation, sin, and death; and we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Read Romans 3:9. All mankind are under the curse, notice that in verse 10, and Paul is quoting in this passage, Deuteronomy 27:26, when he says, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." All through the entire passage we cover tonight, he's drawing and quoting from the Old Testament Scriptures. Paul is saying, "Look, all the law can do is bring a curse." As they gathered on Mount Gerizim and pronounced the blessing and cursing, the result was they broke God's law and brought the judgment of God upon them and were thus cursed. We, in order to try to keep the law, have to know what is in the law and then do that which is in the law.

In James 2:10 it says that if you break one of the laws, you are a law breaker. It's kind of like a link on a chain. How many links on a chain have to break for the chain to break? One, right? All you have to do is break one law, and you're a law breaker. Guess what happens? You're cursed; you're judged. You need to remember, too, that when Jesus talked about the law, He actually said from the Ten Commandments that if you look lustfully after someone that you've committed adultery in your heart. That's pretty radical. Jesus says God even looks at your heart, so it's not just your outward actions, it's your inward attitudes. If you have anger or hatred towards somebody else, you've already committed murder. It's pretty hard to drive on the freeways around here, right?, without killing somebody. Anybody that says, "Well, I'm going to try to get to heaven by keeping the law," it ain't going to work. It's just not going to happen, "...no man is justified by the law," the deeds of the law. Paul's arguments are logical, biblical, and thorough. No one can go to heaven by being righteous under the law. No one can have a right standing before God by keeping the law. All the law can do is, verse 10, curse or condemn you.

The Old Testament ends, Malachi 4:6, with a curse. The very last verse of the very last book of the Old Testament ends with a curse, but the New Testament ends, Revelation 22:3, with no more curse. Revelation 22:21 reads, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." The Old Testament ends with a curse, and the New Testament ends with no more curse but, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

John, in his gospel, said "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Thank God for Jesus! Amen? Because without Him there is no hope that we could ever be right with God. How tragic this is when people turn from the grace of God, turn from faith in Christ, and try to earn, merit, or deserve a right standing before God which is futile. There's no way that could ever take place.

Let me give you the second dilemma or problem with the law. It's in verse 11. The law cannot justify. Again, I realize that you might be saying, "Well, this isn't new. You've already talked about this stuff," but it is new in the Galatian epistle that Paul is dealing with the law. Believe me, it's very, very important. It's important that you understand the relationship of the law to grace. Notice verse 11, "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith." Again, I don't know how to express or communicate it, but these verses are simply profound. They are so very important. "...no man is justified by the law in the

sight of God.” Can a man or a woman get to heaven by being religious? Do you know there are some people even today that think it doesn’t matter which religion as long as you’re sincere. Just pick one that suits your fancy, kind of like a smorgasbord, you know. Pick one religion and do your best, and God will get you into heaven. The Bible makes it very clear that no one “...is justified by the law in the sight of God,” and that’s what’s important, God’s sight. He sees our hearts. Paul then says, “...it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.”

In verse 10, Paul quoted Deuteronomy 27:26. Now, in verse 11, he’s quoting Habakkuk 2:4. “...it is evident,” Paul’s observation, verse 11, and Paul’s stated principle, here it is, “...no man is justified by the law in the sight of God.” Just that one statement and he could have not written the entire book of Galatians. All he needed to say with apostolic authority is that no one is going to be justified...now remember, to be justified is a forensic legal term. It means that God declares you righteous. It’s the act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner to be righteous. He does that based on the fact that Jesus died on the cross, and the believing sinner trusts in Christ and is saved or declared righteous—justified—by God’s grace. So, “...no man is justified by the law.”

Let me break it down a little further for you in verse 11. Paul asserts four truths about this. Notice he says, “no man,” just that phrase, “no man,” means (I looked it up in the Greek) no man. He’s talking mankind here, okay? He’s not just talking male versus female, it’s mankind. I know it’s not en vogue or right to use such a term today; but I’m not here to be politically correct in my speech, I’m here to be biblically correct. What he’s talking about in context is Jew or Gentile. That was a great racial divide in those days—Jew or Gentile. You were either Jewish or Greek, Jew or Gentile. The Jews despised Gentiles, but there are no exceptions. There are not two ways to be saved—a Jewish way and a Gentile way, or an American way and an African way, or an American way and a South American way, or an American way and a European way. There’s only one way to be saved, and that’s by faith. That faith has as its object the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. If anyone ever asks you, “Are there multiple ways to get to heaven?” The answer is no. You can’t go around the cross if you want to get to heaven. It’s the only way to be redeemed, and God is the One who redeems us. We cannot save ourselves. It’s like trying to pull yourself up by your own bootstraps. It won’t happen. It won’t work—no man, no exceptions.

Secondly, the verb literally translates in verse 11, “is” being “justified.” That indicates that Paul is stressing what was actually going on at the time he was writing his epistle. He’s saying, “Right here, right now, no one is being justified by the works of the law.” Thirdly, notice the phrase, “by the law,” which literally is in the law. It said earlier in verse 10, “For as many as are of the works of the law,” it’s the same concept of they want to live in the sphere of law or legalism that cannot give you a right standing before God or fellowship with God, so by means of law, no man can be justified. Write down Galatians 3:21. Paul says, “...for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.” If a law could have brought spiritual life, then that would be the way to get to heaven and God would have never sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross. If you can just be good enough to go to heaven, then Jesus would not have had to die on the cross or the death of Christ was in vain—

all you had to do was live good enough and you could have gone to heaven without His sacrificial atoning work on the cross.

Notice the fourth fact in verse 11, "...no man is justified by the law," involves the sight of God, "in the sight of God." I don't know about you, but what matters to me is that I'm right with God. It doesn't matter if I keep your religious standards or rules and you think I'm okay. What I want to know is: Does God accept me? Am I right in the eyes of God? We should all have a desire to be right before God and in His eyes, and it's only the eyes of God that really matter. To substantiate Paul's claim that no one can be right with God in His eyes by the works of the law, he quotes the Old Testament book of Habakkuk 2:4, and here's the quote, "...the just," referring to the righteous, the justified, "shall live by faith."

This is one of the greatest verses in the Bible. When we started the book of Galatians, I mentioned that it was very instrumental in the Protestant Reformation when Martin Luther was studying this book and saw that statement, "The just shall live by faith." His eyes were opened to the doctrine of justification by faith, and it started the Protestant Reformation. What a glorious verse this is! It's quoted three times in the New Testament. You should write them down: Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11 our text, and Hebrews 10:38. I don't know how much you can put into this thought, but Warren Wiersbe brings it out quite clearly (and I think it's interesting) that in Romans, when it's quoted, the emphasis is on the just. The book of Romans is about justification by faith. In the book of Galatians, when it's quoted, it's talking about giving life and living, so the phrase there would be "shall live." When it's quoted in the book of Hebrews 10:38, the emphasis is on "by faith." The one verse is mentioned three times and has those three facets: Romans 1:17, the just; Galatians 3:11, shall live; and Hebrews 10:38, by faith.

A footnote, Habakkuk made this statement. He lived after the giving of the law. Abraham, we're going to talk about him again in a minute, lived before circumcision was a rite of the Jews and before the law was given on Mount Sinai. He believed God, and God gave him righteousness, but Habakkuk lived after all of this. Even then, he says, "No one shall live but by faith," so the just, the righteous, live by faith. We're saved by faith, and we live by faith. It's salvation that we have by trusting Christ, and sanctification, the Christian life, comes by living by faith and trusting Him as well.

Notice the third dilemma in our text, verse 12; that is, the problem is the law is contrary to faith. It brings a curse, verse 10; it cannot justify us, verse 11; and it's contrary. It's the antithesis of faith. Verse 12, "And the law is not of faith," there's the expression, "the law is not of faith," you can't mix together law and faith, "but, The man that doeth them shall live in them." This is a quote from Leviticus 18:5. In all three of these verses, Paul is giving a scriptural argument from the Old Testament—the law brings a curse, the law cannot justify, and the law is contrary to faith. Legalism, as a method of justification and sanctification, has no place within the principle of faith. Faith does not express itself in legalism. Faith and law are not two sides of the same coin.

Harry Allen Ironside had someone once say to him, "Well, I believe that we're saved by faith and works and that we have to work as well as believe and trust in God." Some people read the book of James and come to that conclusion, but it's not what James is talking about. James is talking about a works that is a manifestation of saving faith. He's not talking about works which is the cause or the reason that you're justified before God. James, by the way, is talking about justification before men. How do men know that you're saved? By the way that you live, by your works, by your conduct. Paul, in Romans, is talking about justification before God. How does God know that we're saved? By our faith. He sees our hearts. We trust Him. Anyway, this woman came up to Harry Allen Ironside and said, "I think that yeah it's kind of like a boat. If you're rowing in a row boat, you have the two oars, and you need both oars to get across the lake. If you have just one oar, and you're rowing the boat, you'll just go around in circles. If you just row one or the other oar, you'll go...you need both oars to get across the lake." She thought that was so profound, and that's how you're saved. Dr. Ironside said, "The problem with that is no one's going to heaven in a row boat." It doesn't work.

Just a little word to the wise: All human illustrations break down at some point; so don't base your doctrine on a human illustration, base it on the clear teaching of Scripture. Don't just come up with some idea, "Well, I don't believe that works right," and a lot of people have gotten messed up because they're not basing what they believe simply on the Scripture, they have some kind of human illustration that they want to use for what they believe. No one is going to heaven in a row boat. We're going to heaven because of what Jesus did for us on the cross.

Faith says, "Believe and live;" law commands us to do and live. Faith says, "Believe, and you have life." The law says, "Do, and you shall live." There's no way that you can combine the two.

In verse 12, "but, The man that doeth them shall live in them," as I pointed out is a quote from Leviticus 18:5, so you can't rest, you can't have assurance. If you think that you are going to get to heaven by your good deeds, and in the context of Galatians this would be circumcision, dietary laws, holy days, new moons, sabbath days, becoming quite Jewish, becoming religious, but it carries over into every other area. It might be water baptism, confirmation, communion, catechism, wearing certain clothes, not eating certain food, doing some kind of manmade rigor and laws and rules. None of that will get you righteous before God. The only thing that can give you righteousness is faith in Christ, and He imputes it to you, the righteousness of Christ.

We move to the second section from the dilemma of the law, which brings a curse and cannot justify and is contrary to faith, to verses 13-14 where we have deliverance from the law. Since we are sinners and under the condemnation of God, we have broken the law of God and cannot save ourselves, Paul points us to the only solution for man's sin. That solution is Jesus Christ. Amen? The only solution for man's sin is Jesus Christ. Notice it in verses 13-14. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law," you can almost stop right there and say, "Praise the Lord!" "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law," how? "being made a curse for us: for it is written," now he's quoting from Deuteronomy 21:23, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Jesus became a curse for us. He bore our sins. "That," here's the reason, "the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that," here's the second

reason, “we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

Jesus Christ is our redeemer. Do you know that redemption is probably one of the most dominant themes through the whole Bible? The Bible is the story of God redeeming fallen man. Redemption is the scarlet thread that runs from Genesis all the way to the book of Revelation. Now, I want you to note the nature of our redemption in Jesus Christ, verse 13. There are four aspects of Christ’s redemptive work in verse 13. First of all, it is a finished redemption. Notice the statement there, “Christ hath,” past tense, finished, done deal, “redeemed us.” Every word in this verse is pregnant with theological truth. The work of Jesus on the cross of redeeming us is a finished work.

What does it mean to be redeemed? It literally means to pay the price. It means to buy out of the market, and it means to release and to set free. It’s used in the world of the slave market. They would go into the slave market, buy a slave, take the slave out of the market, and then set the slave free. They would purchase and then release them. The imagery there for us is that we are all slaves to sin, under condemnation, and God sent His Son Jesus to come into the world to die on the cross. That was the redemption price, the blood of Jesus Christ, to buy us slaves to sin, to take us out of bondage, and to set us free. Amen? The picture of Israel coming out of the exodus is a picture of redemption—the blood of the lamb, the deliverance, the setting them free is all a picture in the Old Testament of our redemption. It’s a finished redemption. Christ already has, once and for all, the writer of Hebrews says, redeemed us. He doesn’t have to come and do it again, and again, and again, and again. This is why I don’t believe that in the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup in the Lord’s supper, or some call it the Eucharist, that the elements actually become the body or the blood of Christ. Once and for all Jesus died on the cross, and He doesn’t go back again and sacrifice...and it was done, it was finished, it was complete, it was a done deal.

In the Old Testament, under the law, every year the priest would have to make an atoning sacrifice reminding the people their sins were not really forgiven. It was only a temporary covering. They weren’t really fully redeemed. It wasn’t a once and for all act.

Let me give you the second fact about redemption, verse 13. It’s a personal redemption. In the little two-letter word “us,” “Christ hath redeemed us,” Jew and Gentile, so there’s not two standards or two religions, both Jews and Gentiles have been redeemed. In Christ’s death on redemption on the cross, creation will also be restored, but He didn’t die for creation, He died for people. The result is that there will be the reversal of the curse, and all creation (Romans 8) that’s groaning and travailing, will be restored when we have the manifestation of the sons of God.

Thirdly, notice in verse 13, it’s a purposeful redemption, “...from the curse of the law.” Why did Jesus die on the cross to redeem us? To save us and to spare us the penalty of our own sins, which is death. “For the wages of sin is death,” or the curse of the law. The cross of Jesus Christ rescued us from condemnation.

Fourthly, notice it's a substitutionary redemption (verse 13), "...being made a curse for us." This is what you call the substitutionary death of Christ—His redemption on the cross was for us. Write down 1 Peter 2:24, Christ, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree," or on the cross. Isaiah 53:4-6, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed...and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." That's a marvelous prophecy in the book of Isaiah 53:4-6 where Jesus took our place. He was substituted for us. His redemption was that He bore our curse. He paid the price that we could not pay. We're spiritually bankrupt, and He paid that price.

Again, in verse 13, Paul is quoting Deuteronomy 21:23, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," so Jesus took our place and bore our curse. Jesus bore our sins. He didn't become a sinner, He was a substitute for sinners. He was sinless but took our sin and paid its penalty on the cross. Again, when Jesus died, He cried the words, "Tetelestai," which means it is finished or paid in full.

Notice in verse 14 we have also the purpose of His redemption or the purpose of His death on the cross. Notice these two words, "that," in verse 14. "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ," and "that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." This is not by any means exhaustive as to why Jesus died on the cross, but there are two reasons given in verse 14 why Jesus died. The first reason is that we might get the blessing of Abraham.

What is the blessing of Abraham? Listen to me very carefully. This is not so hard to figure out in the book of Galatians. The blessing of Abraham is the doctrine of justification by faith. Why am I emphasizing that? I'm emphasizing that because I've heard over and over and over and over again the health and wealth and prosperity preachers, that are so prevalent today, use that verse, that "the blessings of Abraham" is monetary, physical, wealth and health. That, "Abraham had lots of flocks, lots of herds, lots of sheep, lots of goats, and that Abraham's blessings now come to us. That by faith, if you only have enough faith," you can have a Cadillac faith rather than a Volkswagen faith, you can have a Mercedes Benz faith or a Rolex watch faith, "you can have all those things," the blessings of Abraham. I can't tell you how many sermons I've heard using this verse completely and totally out of context. The blessings of Abraham isn't money, wealth, animals, herds, flocks (for us material possessions), it's being justified by faith. This is why you need to always take a text in context and ask yourself, "Is that what is being spoken of in this passage?" Abraham was justified before the covenant of circumcision, which is what the Judaizers were promoting to the Gentiles. He was justified before the law was ever given on Mount Sinai.

Notice the second blessing. Not only does Jesus redeem us from the curse of the law but gives us the blessings of Abraham, we're declared righteous by faith; but, I love it, in closing, verse 14, he says, "...that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith," not by the keeping of the law, but by faith. I want you to understand, and I emphasized this last week, that being



justified means that you also are given the Holy Spirit. No one is justified before God—the blessing of Abraham—who does not have the Holy Spirit. No one is a Christian who does not have the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes Christians will say, “Hey, I know you’re saved, but have you received the Holy Spirit?” The answer is yes! You can’t be saved without the Holy Spirit. Now, it may be that you’re not living the Spirit-filled life, you’re not surrendering to His power, and you’re not in His control; but certainly the Holy Spirit has regenerated you, certainly the Holy Spirit has indwelt you, certainly the Holy Spirit has sealed you unto the day of redemption, certainly the Holy Spirit is comforting, guiding, directing, and teaching you. Even as you sit here tonight and listen to this lesson from the Bible, my words can do nothing unless the Holy Spirit quickens you and you see and understand these truths. You should be praying, “God, give me eyes to see and ears to hear and a heart to receive.” How important it is to understand no one is going to go to heaven by doing good deeds.

You say, “Well, this is basic elementary stuff,” but you can’t believe how many people are confused and messed up in this world thinking that you can get to heaven by some other means than trusting Jesus Christ. How many people think it’s saved by faith and good works or saved by being religious or saved by punishing your body by, “I’m not going to eat anything this week,” or “I’m going to fast,” or “I’m going to punish myself.” Nothing you do can bring you a right relationship before God, “...the promise of the Spirit.”

Romans 8:9 says that we are not even saved if we don’t have the Holy Spirit. Not only that, we’ll get to Galatians 5:22-23 where the Holy Spirit brings His fruit into our lives, the fruit of the Spirit. He not only indwells, regenerates, and guides us, but He produces the fruit of the Spirit. I’m excited to get there, but not until Galatians 5. I don’t want to get ahead of myself, but the greatest evidence of the Spirit-filled life is the fruit of the Spirit. It’s Christ-like character.

In closing, two options. First, works of the law, and the result is cursing; or option two is faith—living by faith—and the result is blessings. How do you want to live, cursed or blessed? All God’s blessings come to us in Christ, by grace, through faith. All the blessings of God come to us in Christ Jesus, by faith in Christ, and by the grace of God. Amen?