



Note: The following Bible Study is not a lesson on “witchcraft, vampires, or Can someone be accursed for something he or she has done?”

Does anyone think they are under a curse?

Who is cursed in this Bible Study class?

THE CURSE OF THE LAW

Galatians 3:10-14, *“All who depend on the deeds which the law lays down are under a curse, for it stands written, “Cursed is everyone who does not consistently obey and perform all the things written in the book of the law.” It is clear that no one ever gets into a right relationship with God by means of this legalism, because, as the Bible says, “It is the man who is right with God through faith who will live.” But the law is not based on faith. And yet the scripture says.. “The man who does these things will have to live by them.” Christ ransomed us from the curse of the law by becoming accursed for us--for it stands written, “Cursed is every man who is hanged on a tree.” And this all happened so that in Christ Abraham's blessing should come to the Gentiles, and so that we might receive the promised Spirit by means of faith.”*

Paul's argument seeks to drive his opponents into a corner from which there is no escape. "Suppose," he says, "you decide that you are going to try to win God's approval by accepting and obeying the law, what is the inevitable consequence?"

- 1. The man who does that has to stand or fall by his decision; if he chooses the law he has got to live by it.*
- 2. No man ever has succeeded and no man ever will succeed in always keeping the law.*
- 3. If that being so, you are accursed, because scripture itself says (Deuteronomy 27:26) that the man who does not keep the whole law is under a curse. Therefore, the inevitable end of trying to get right with God by making the law the principle of life is a curse.*

***"It is the man who is right with God by faith who will really live."
(Habakkuk 2:4).***

The only way to get into a right relationship with God, and therefore the only way to peace, is the way of faith.

Definition: FAITH = Scripture: *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1*

"Isaiah 7:9b, "...If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all."

But the principle of law and the principle of faith are directly opposed to one another/incompatible; you must choose the one leading to life.

The only logical choice is to abandon the way of legalism and to venture upon the way of faith, of taking God at his word and of trusting in his love.

How can we know that faith and trust in God is the right choice is?

The final guarantor of its truth is Jesus Christ; and to bring this truth to us he had to die upon a Cross. Now, scripture says that every man who is hanged on a tree is accursed (Deuteronomy 21:23); and so to free us of the curse of the law, Jesus himself had to become accursed.

The Cost of the Christian gospel—Paul could never forget that the peace, the liberty, the right relationship with God that we possess, cost the life and death of Jesus Christ, for how could men ever have known what God was like unless Jesus Christ had died to tell them of his great love.

THE COVENANT THAT CANNOT BE ALTERED

(Galatians 3:15-18), *"Brothers, I can use only a human analogy. Here is the parallel when a covenant is duly ratified, even if it is only a man's covenant, no one annuls it or adds additional clauses to it. Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his seed. It does not say, "and to his seeds," as if it were a case of many, but, "and to his seed," as if it were a case of one, and that one is Christ. This is what I mean, the law which came into being four hundred and thirty years later cannot annul the covenant already ratified by God and thus render the promise inoperative. For, if the inheritance is dependent on law, it is no longer dependent on promise; but it was through promise that God conferred his grace on Abraham."*

Paul's aim is to show the superiority of the way of grace over the way of law.

- ***He begins by showing that the way of grace is older than the way of law.***
 - ✓ When Abraham made his venture of faith, God made his great promise to him. That is to say. God's promise was based upon an act of faith; the law did not come until the time of Moses, four hundred and thirty years later.
 - ✓ Therefore, the later law cannot alter the earlier way of faith. It was faith which set Abraham right with God; and faith is still the only way for a man to get himself right with God.

Paul's argument is that "seed" is used in the singular and not in the plural; therefore, God's promise points not to a great crowd of people but to one single individual; That one person in whom the covenant finds its consummation is Jesus Christ. Therefore, the way to peace with God is the way of faith which Abraham took; and we must repeat that way by looking to Jesus Christ in faith.

If we take the way of law or works...we will be forever in default, for man's imperfection can never fully satisfy God's perfection.

However, if we bring ourselves and our sin to God and fall on our face and repent, God's grace opens its arms to us and we find ourselves at peace with a God who is no longer judge but father.

SHUT UP UNDER SIN

(Galatians 3:19-22, "Why, then, have the law at all? The law was added to the situation to define what transgressions are, until the seed should come, to whom the promise, which still holds good, had been made. That law was enacted by angels and came by means of a mediator. Now there can be no such thing as a mediator of one; and God is one. Is, then, the law contrary to the promises of God? God forbid! If a law which was able to give life had been given, then indeed right relationship with God would have come through the law. But the words of scripture shut up everything under the power of sin, for the very reason that the promise should be given to those who believe through faith in Jesus Christ."

Why introduce the law at all?

- *It was introduced, as Paul puts it, for the sake of transgressions. What he means is that where there is no law there is no sin. A man cannot be condemned for doing wrong if he did not know that it was wrong.*

- *Therefore the function of the law is to define sin. But, while the law can and does define sin, it can do nothing whatever to cure it.*

Example: It is like a doctor who is an expert in diagnosis but who is helpless to clear up the trouble which he has diagnosed.

Difficult Scripture: (BARCLAY) In the old story in Exodus 20:1-26 it was given direct to Moses; but in the days of Paul the Rabbis were so impressed by the holiness and the remoteness of God that they believed that it was quite impossible for him to deal direct with men; therefore they introduced the idea that the law was given first to angels and then by the angels to Moses (compare Acts 7:53; Hebrews 2:2). Here Paul is using the Rabbinic thoughts of his time. The law is at a double remove from God, given first to angels, and then to a mediator; and the mediator is Moses. Compared with the promise, which was given directly by God, the law is a second-hand thing.

Now we come to that extraordinarily difficult sentence--"There can be no such thing as a mediator of one; and God is one."

- An agreement founded on law always involves two people, the person who gives it and the person who accepts it; and it depends on both sides keeping it. That was the position of those who put their trust in the law. Break the law and the whole agreement was undone.
- A promise depends on only one person. The way of grace depends entirely on God; it is his promise. Man can do nothing to alter that. He may sin, but the love and the grace of God stand unchanged.
- To Paul it was the weakness of the law that it depended on two persons, the law-giver and the law-keeper; and man had wrecked it. Grace is entirely of God; man cannot undo it; and surely it is better to depend on the grace of the unchanging God than on the hopeless efforts of helpless men.

GRACE IS GIVEN WHEN WE CHOOSE TO TRUST/HAVE FAITH IN GOD AND UNDERSTAND THE BLOOD COVENANT/PROMISE.

THE COMING OF FAITH

(Galatians 3:23-29) *Before faith came we were under guard under the power of the law, shut up and waiting for the day when faith would be revealed. So that the law was really our tutor to bring us to Christ so that we might get into a right relationship with God by means of faith. But now that faith has come we are no longer under a tutor; for you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is no longer any distinction between Jew and Greek, slave and free man, male and female, for you are all one*

in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are the seed of Abraham, and heirs according to promise.”

These last verses (23-29) summarizes what has been taught throughout this lesson:

If you are Christ's: This is the issue.

The issue is not “Are you under the law?” The issue is not “Are you a Jew or a Gentile?” The issue is not “Are you slave or free?” The issue is not “Are you a man or a woman?”

The only issue is...IF YOU ARE CHRIST'S.

If we are Christ's, then...

- ✓ We find our place in *eternity*, because we are sons and daughters of God.
- ✓ We find our place in *society*, because we are brothers and sisters in the family of God.
- ✓ We find our place in *history*, because we are part of God's plan of the ages, related spiritually to Abraham by our faith in Jesus.

“It enables me to answer the most basic of all human questions, ‘Who am I?’ and to say,

- ✓ **‘In Christ I am a son of God.**
- ✓ ***In Christ I am united to all the redeemed people of God, past, present, and future.***
- ✓ ***In Christ I discover my identity.***
- ✓ ***In Christ I find my feet.***
- ✓ ***In Christ I come home.”***

