

GALATIANS 3

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Galatians chapter 3 as we continue our study through this powerful and, I believe, a very timely letter.

As you remember from our previous studies, the churches in Galatia were moving away from a salvation that was based upon God's Grace by faith and now they were embracing a salvation that was based on the Law and accomplished by works.

Thus, Paul's letter is a strong rebuke and a call to return to the faith that was entrusted to them!

As we move into Galatians chapter 3 Paul continues to hammer them on this issue showing them that salvation by Grace through faith is not a New Testament idea but the prophets of old spoke of it and he will show us that by faith they too were saved!

Obviously an important fact for those who were going back to the Laws of Judaism instead of falling upon the Grace of God!

And I am not sure why I am so surprised today, but I am, at how quickly people will move away from the truths of God and follow the words of men!

In fact, Paul is going to say that this is just foolishness, and I have to agree.

Let me share these words with you and then we will get to our text. We are told,

Human beings have a remarkably high capacity for foolishness. My favorite is the story of a man who woke one morning in the dead of a Minnesota winter to find that the engine of his car had frozen. His solution? Pour hot gasoline into his car. So he put some into a pot and warmed it on his kitchen stove. As you can guess, that didn't go so well.

Or there's the story of two truck drivers who stopped before a low-hanging overpass to decide whether their eighteen-wheeler could go under it. The driver pointed out that the overpass only had a clearance of thirteen feet, one inch, yet their truck required at least fourteen feet. But his colleague had an even more astute observation. There weren't any cops around, so they should just go for it. And they did. Again, it didn't go well.

The only way you could top this kind of folly would be to try to *finish the Christian life in your own strength*. That's not a good idea; in fact, it's foolish. Yet how prone we are to do this very thing!

The Christians in Galatia are trying to finish the Christian race in their own strength. And Paul is beside himself as a result. He can't believe it; surely some devilry is at work in Galatia, prompting such madness. Hence Paul peppers them with a string of Rhetorical questions.

- Todd Wilson, Galatians, Gospel-Rooted Living, p. 91

With that said, let's begin reading in Galatians chapter 3, starting in verse 1 and let's see what Paul has to say regarding this mixture of Law and Grace.

GALATIANS 3**VERSE 1**

Let me break this down for you.

First of all, when Paul calls the Galatians “**foolish**” or ANOETOS, (an-o’-ay-tos) in the Greek, he is not saying that they had some kind of mental deficiency but they failed to use the brain that God had given them, they failed to use their spiritual minds to discern if these things the Judaizers were saying was true.

Remember what the Lord said in Isaiah 1:18, “**‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ Says the Lord, ‘ Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.’**”

God does not want us to be brain dead. He wants us to think this through. But they were not doing that because if they did, they would have seen that there are no good works that we can do to save us because all of our righteousness are like filthy rags! (Isaiah 64:6)

Now, because of their mental laziness it clouded their judgment regarding salvation and Paul wants to know who has “**bewitched**” them or used flattering words to deceive them from the truth!

No, it was not Samantha Stevens from Bewitched, but the Judaizers who were mixing them up, clouding their minds!

Think about it, most people that are involved with cults, get sucked into cults are not stupid. They are very intelligent people who have been misled by people who appealed to their emotions; their feelings and they bought into those lies just as the Galatians were doing!

You see, the truth was right before them, “**portrayed**” and yet, they listened to the lies even though they knew that Jesus Christ was crucified for their sins. A past event that has everlasting consequences, is the idea!

Yes, they did not see Christ crucified but they were taught these truths, saw these from the Word of God just as plain as a sign on a billboard!

The word that Paul uses for “**crucified**” is in a perfect passive participle that means it was a historical fact and its results continue on, as I have said.

But now the Judaizers were clouding this picture. They allowed their flesh, their pride to convince them they could work their way into heaven by keeping the Law but as William Hendriksen tells us, “A supplemented Christ is a supplanted Christ.”

Or, if you add anything to the finish work of Christ, you have replaced Him! I hope that sinks in because that is the reality of all this.

And I have seen this more and more lately, where people will twist the Scriptures to make them say what they want them to say. Foolishness.

One writer put it like this, “It is wonderful to have a soft, tender heart before God. But some people have softer *heads* than hearts. Their minds are too accommodating to wrong, unbiblical ideas, and they don’t think things through to see if they really are true or not according to the Bible. This is a sign of spiritual immaturity, even as a baby will stick *anything* into its mouth.” (David Guzik)

VERSES 2-5

This first question that Paul is asking them is a very important question. And Paul wants them to think about and answer it. Paul wants them to get their heads out of the clouds and think about how they were saved – by Grace through Faith.

Now, after all that God has done for them, given them, they think they can be more spiritual, they can grow in the Lord by adding works to Grace – not at all!

It is foolish to think that way.

Listen carefully to this, it is important.

If your salvation is based on the Law, then you are blessed, and you will grow spiritually by **EARNING** and **DESERVING** it! You see, God owes you in a sense.

On the other hand, under Grace, you are blessed, and you grow by **BELIEVING** and **RECEIVING** it! You see, we don't deserve it, but God gives it to us freely!

And Paul is basically asking them this question, ***“If your salvation was based totally on God's grace, then why in the world do you think so foolishly and believe He needs your help to finish the work that He has begun in you?”***

And if you think about it, we are saying that God can't finish what He started, He needs our help.

Now you may be thinking that I am going overboard with that, but I am not!

That is exactly what the Judaizers were doing. They were convincing the Gentile believers that just receiving Jesus by faith was not enough, they had to go further.

They needed to add the Law to Grace to fulfill God's plan of salvation for them, they would be real Christians then!

And so many Gentile believers who were already saved were now undergoing circumcision, observing dietary laws, keeping the Sabbath and so on.

And that is exactly what we are seeing in this Hebrew Roots foolishness. Who has bewitched them to believe such nonsense? It was not God!

Now I know that some freak out with this liberty we have in Christ. And they may even say something like this, *“What are you saying Joe, that I don’t have to read my Bible, I don’t have to have devotions, I don’t have to go to church?”*

EXACTLY!

You don’t have to, but you get to read God’s Word!

You don’t have to, but you get to have devotions with Him!

You don’t have to go to church, but you get to go to church!

You see, you don’t earn blessings from God you receive them by faith!

God can’t love you any more than He already does, and He can’t love you any less! His love is unconditional! And I am so thankful for that because if His love for me was based upon my righteousness, look out, I am in trouble! But God loves me unconditionally and He extends Grace to me, not because I am so great, but because He is so great!

Amazing Grace, how sweet a sound, that saved a wretch like me!

But what about the Old Testament saints, how were they saved? Paul is going to answer that, and his answer may surprise you!

VERSES 6-9

Of all the places to start, to show that salvation was and has always been by faith and not by works, Paul takes them back to Abraham!

Remember, father Abraham was highly esteemed by the Jews. They believed that father Abraham would pluck the worst Jew from the fires of Hell and that Hell was reserved for Gentiles!

So Paul uses Abraham's salvation to show these Judaizers their error, it is not the physical birth that saves you but spiritual birth, being born again.

You see, Paul just finished showing the Galatians that they were saved by Grace through faith and now he shows them this is not a New Testament idea, that is how Abraham was saved!

And I want you to think about this because sometimes we just read through the Scriptures, but we miss the big picture.

Abraham was righteous before God because he believed God – ***FAITH***.

Now, keep in mind that the Judaizes said that they had to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses to be fully saved.

But Paul's point here blows that idea out of the water. How can that be?

Keep in mind that Abraham was not circumcised for another 14 years from when the promise was given, after God gave him this blessing in Genesis chapter 15 and the Law was still over 430 years down the road! (Genesis 17:24 – Abraham Circumcised)

Paul makes this powerful point in Romans 4:9-12 as he tells us, **“Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.”**

This must have been a shock to them for the Rabbis taught that Abraham was saved by God because he kept the Law hundreds of years before the Law was given to Moses and Paul exposes the truth about Abraham’s salvation- it was by faith and not by works!

You see, God’s provision and our appropriation – receiving and believing the free Gift of God into our lives by faith!

And if you really think about it, there are only two types of righteousness. The first is a righteousness that we accomplish on our own, by our own efforts. And as you can see, we don’t do too well with that. As I have said, God says that our righteousness before Him is like filthy rags!

The other righteousness is the righteousness of Christ that has been imputed into our lives by faith.

Thus, since none of us are perfect, none of us are righteous, then we should be so thankful and believe and receive the free gift of life that is found in Jesus Christ so that His righteousness can be imputed into our lives by faith! (II Corinthians 5:21)

And here is another thing that the Jews moved away from and that was that salvation was also for the Gentiles.

You see, the salvation of Gentiles is not a New Testament idea or thought, but God spoke of it in the Old Testament, that we can become children of Abraham by believing by faith in what Abraham believed – faith in the coming Messiah for Abraham and for us, faith in the living Messiah – Jesus!

It is as Paul said in Romans 2:28-29, **“For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.”**

It is as Luther said, “The faith of the fathers was directed at the Christ who was to come, while ours rests in the Christ who has come.”

Now, as we continue on, Paul is going to show us that the Law cannot save people, it cannot make them part of the family of God. It has no power to do that. All the Law could do is show us how far short we come to the perfection, the righteousness that God requires. And, in reality, it is the Law showing us this that brings us to our Savior, to Jesus!

VERSES 10-12

Keep in mind that Paul just finished speaking of Abraham, the father of the Jews, and how he was saved by faith.

Thus, it would only make sense that the lesser, his descendants are not going to be saved by good works if Abraham wasn't, but by faith as he was!

That is what Paul is saying here. You see, living under the Law of Moses was not a path to blessings but it put them under the curse! The Law can't justify, it can only condemn!

But what about the many Old Testament verses that seem to say there is a blessing in keeping the Law?

There is Psalm 119:1-2 which says, **“Blessed are the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the LORD! Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart!”**

And in Psalm 1:1-2 we are told, **“Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.”**

Please understand that keeping the Law doesn't save us but walking according to God's Word there is a blessing.

Think of all the warnings that God gives to us not to hurt us but to help us and in following His Word is a blessing; it keeps us out of trouble!

Now, here's the thing. If you think the Law can save you, you are right, it can!

Before you start throwing your Bibles at me, listen to what I have to say, it will make sense.

Paul is quoting out of Deuteronomy 27:26 which says, **“Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law . . .”**

Then in the New Testament James tells us, **“For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.”** James 2:10.

Here's the thing. If you want to be saved by the Law, then you need to be perfect from the time you are born until the time you die. If you break one Law, like lying, stealing, whatever it may be, then you are guilty of breaking all the Law!

"You can't do it!" you say!

Exactly, that is the point that Paul is making, and he will shed more light on this as we move on.

It is as Calvin tells us, "The law holds all men under its curse. From the law, therefore, it is useless to seek a blessing."

Paul also quotes out of Habakkuk 2:4, which says, "**. . . But the just shall live by his faith.**"

In this passage Habakkuk is reminded by God to look to Him rather than the circumstances that faced him and the nation, the Babylonian invasion of the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

For us, the just shall not live by the Law but by faith. Don't look at the circumstances but the Savior and you shall live!

Think of it like this. If a ship is moored to a dock by a chain, as strong as that chain may be, if one of the links is weak, when a strong storm comes, it will break, and the ship will break away and go out to sea.

Therefore, if you try to come to God by your own perfection, by works, that is a very weak link and it will break, and you will be lost forever!

That is the bad news; listen to the good news that Paul now shares with them.

VERSES 13-14

Paul is telling the Galatians, and us that our hope *MUST* be in Christ and not the Law! The Law has us under the curse, the judgment of God, but Christ has brought us out from under the curse by paying in full the penalty for our sins!

I hope that makes sense to you.

As I have shared many times before, the Law is like a mirror and it only reflects the way we are, sinners separated from God. That is all the Law could do, the Law could not save, but Jesus can and does!

It is as Peter tells us in I Peter 2:24, **“who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness - by whose stripes you were healed.”**

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“He personally bore our sins in His [own] body on the tree[as on an altar and offered Himself on it], that we might die (cease to exist) to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed.”**

And in I Peter 3:18, again from The Amplified Bible, we are told, **“For Christ [the Messiah Himself] died for sins once for all, the Righteous for the unrighteous (the Just for the unjust, the Innocent for the guilty), that He might bring us to God. In His human body He was put to death, but He was made alive in the spirit.”**

Now, what are the blessings of Abraham that He has given to us? Remember what Paul said in Galatians 3:8-9, **“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed.’ So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.”** Galatians 3:8-9.

Again, we need to remember that the promise is **RECEIVED**, not **EARNED**!

Listen to what one writer had to say regarding what the Galatians believed and what Paul is saying here.

We are told, “The Galatians imagined that Christ only half purchased them, and that they had to purchase the rest by their submission to circumcision and other Jewish rites and ceremonies. Hence their readiness to be led away by false teachers and to mix up Christianity and Judaism. Paul says here: (according to the Welsh translation) ‘Christ hath wholly purchased us from the curse of the law.’” (Cynddylan Jones)

VERSES 15-18

Paul now speaks of God’s unchanging nature in regard to His covenant with Abraham and to prove his point, he looks at human covenants that are made and how they are not broken or changed. And if that is true, for the most part with man, how much more with God!

And think about this for a minute. Let’s look at it like this. If your wealthy uncle dies and in his will he promised to leave you a million dollars, what do you have to do to earn that money? Nothing, it is given freely to you!

And, when a will is made out and signed, it is a legally binding contract and no other person can alter it or annul it!

I think we are all in agreement on that.

Now, if a human will is a contract that cannot be broken, why do we think that God’s covenant can be broken? That is foolishness!

Now some Jew’s feel that this promise made to Abraham and his descendants speaks of the nation of Israel, the Jewish people – the seeds!

Not at all for Paul makes sure we don't miss the point as he says "**to your seed**" or singular and if they still didn't get it, he tells them that the seed is Christ, Jesus, the Messiah!

Yes, the Mosaic covenant, the Law was a bilateral covenant, if you did this then God would do that.

But the Abrahamic covenant was a unilateral covenant based upon the faithfulness of God and not man!

And yes, the Law came over 430 years later but it cannot invalidate a covenant that was previously ratified by God to Abraham!

In Numbers 23:19 we are told, "**God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?**"

In fact, the word "**gave**" in verse 18 of Galatians chapter 3 is the Greek Word, CHARIZOMAI, (khar-id'-zom-ahee) and it is based in the Greek word *CHARIS* or grace.

You see, God freely *gave* Abraham this promise and this word is in the perfect tense, showing the gift is permanent; it can't be voided or taken away! Praise God for that.

Listen to what Paul is saying here, "***For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave [graced] it to Abraham by promise.***" It was freely given to him, not because he earned it, but God gave it to him!

Now let's play this out.

If this promise of salvation was based on our keeping the Law, then this promise of God would be worthless because it would be based upon conditions that none of us would be able to meet!

But God does not make that kind of promise to us. He tells us, ***“I promise to give you eternal life if you believe in My Son, based on what He did and not on what you do!”*** Then that promise would be attainable by every single person because everyone can believe!

That’s why God could promise us eternal life the moment we put our faith in Jesus. It’s because it’s based on what He did for us and not on what we do for Him.

Again, if this salvation was based upon our good works, then God couldn’t have promised us eternal life!

Now we also have another problem. If this is all true, which it is, then why was the Law given in the first place?

Great question and Paul is going to answer that question for us and I’m sure it was a question these Judaizers also had.

VERSES 19-21

One of the reasons the Law was given was to show man God’s holy standard and in doing so it may restrain man from transgressing against God and ultimately destroying himself.

Also, when a law is made, we see the heart of man in rebelling against it.

When you see a sign that says, “Don’t walk on the grass!” what do you want to do? You want to walk on the grass!

Paul tells us in Romans 7:5-8, and this is from The Amplified Bible, **“When we were living in the flesh (mere physical lives), the sinful passions that were awakened and aroused up by [what] the Law [makes sin] were constantly operating in our natural powers (in our bodily organs, in the sensitive appetites and wills of the flesh), so that we bore fruit for death. But now we are discharged from the Law and have terminated all intercourse with it, having died to what once restrained and held us captive. So now we serve not under [obedience to] the old code of written regulations, but [under obedience to the promptings] of the Spirit in newness [of life]. What then do we conclude? Is the Law identical with sin? Certainly not! Nevertheless, if it had not been for the Law, I should not have recognized sin or have known its meaning. [For instance] I would not have known about covetousness [would have had no consciousness of sin or sense of guilt] if the Law had not [repeatedly] said, You shall not covet and have an evil desire [for one thing and another]. [Ex 20:17; Deut 5:21.]”**

Not only does the Law show us we are sinners, but Paul tells us the Law was only temporary, until the Messiah came!

That means the Law is inferior to the promise, why?

Because the Law was limited in what it could do, it can't save us but only show us how far short we are to God's standard of perfection. As we are going to see, the Law brings us to Jesus!

Now, the question may be, “Does that mean the Law is bad or evil?”

Not at all!

In Psalm 19:7-11 we are told, **“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward.”**

You see, the Law is good; the Law is perfect.

The problem is not the Law, but us, we are not good, we are not perfect, we can't keep it!

Thus, Paul tells us, **“Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.”** Galatians 3:21.

You see, righteousness doesn't come by the Law, but by faith in Jesus as Paul tells us back in II Corinthians 5:21, **“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”** It is His righteousness that has been imputed into our lives by faith!

VERSES 22-23

Sin, in a sense, are the bars that keep us in prison and the Scriptures show us what we have done wrong to keep us in prison, our failure to keep the Law perfectly!

Morris puts it this way, “Sin is personified as a jailer [bars], keeping sinners under its control so that they cannot break free.”

How then can we get out? How can we escape?

By faith in Christ, the finished work on the cross of Calvary that He accomplished for us.

Again Morris tells us, “Far from being the gateway into a glorious liberty, it turns out to be a jailer, shutting people up. The result is that the only way of escape was through faith.”

In verse 22, when Paul said that, “**. . . the Scripture has confined all under sin**” it is a different idea from what Paul wrote in verse 23, “**under guard.**”

The idea behind *confined* is imprisonment; the idea behind **under guard** is protective custody.

What is the point here?

Simply, we are imprisoned by our own sin under the Law, we know that.

But we also see that we are guarded or in protective custody by the Law. It is there to protect us, not hurt us or imprison us.

As one writer put it, “How does the law protect us? It protects us by showing us God’s heart. It protects us by showing us the best way to live. It protects us by showing what should be approved and disapproved among men. It protects us by providing a foundation for civil law. In these ways and more, **we were kept under guard by the law.**” (Source Unknown)

I hope you see the point that Paul has made in these verses, the difference between the two.

VERSES 24-25

Once again, what is the purpose of the Law?

The Law was there to bring us to Jesus!

That is important as we share our faith, that we present the Law correctly.

Look at the way that Jesus presented the Law. He did it in such a way that people saw that they could never fulfill it by their own efforts. They needed someone or something outside of their own ability to free them, to find a righteousness greater than the Scribes and the Pharisees. (Matthew 5:17-48)

One writer put it like this, and this is a good perspective to have of the situation. He wrote, “Satan would have us prove ourselves holy by the law, which God gave to prove us sinners.” (Andrew Jukes, cited in Stott)

Paul tells us that the Law is our **“tutor.”** What does he mean by that? I like the way one writer put it. He wrote,

A paidagoegos (tutor) was not a teacher or schoolmaster proper (KJV) but rather a slave employed by Greek or Roman families, whose duty was to supervise young boys in behalf of their parents. They took their young charges to and from school, made sure they studied their lessons, and trained them in obedience. They were strict disciplinarians, scolding and whipping as they felt it necessary.

Paul told the Corinthian believers – who often behaved like spoiled children – that, even if they “were to have countless tutors [paidagoegos] in Christ,” he would be their only “father through the gospel” (1 Cor 4:15). Continuing the contrast of paidagoegos and father, he later asks, “Shall I come to you with a rod or with love and a spirit of gentleness?” (v. 21).

The role of the paidagoegos was never permanent, and it was a great day of deliverance when a boy finally gained freedom from his paidagoegos. His purpose was to take care of the child only until he grew into adulthood. At that time the relationship was changed.

Though the two of them might remain close and friendly, the paidagoegos, having completed his assignment, had no more authority or control over the child, now a young man, and the young man had no more responsibility to be directly under the paidagoegos.

The sole purpose of the Law, God's divinely appointed paidagoegos, was to lead men to Christ, that they might be justified. After a person comes to Him, there is no longer need for the external ceremonies and rituals to act as guides and disciplinarians, because the new inner principles operate through the indwelling Christ, in whom is "hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3). The law in the ceremonial sense is done away with, though in the moral sense it remains always an intimate friend that one seeks to love and favor.

Before Christ came, the law of external ritual and ceremony, especially the sacrificial system, pictured the once-for-all, perfect, and effective sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the world. When the perfect Christ comes into the believer's heart, those imperfect pictures of Him have no more purpose or significance.

- John MacArthur

Since there is so much confusion in the church in general today about Law and Grace, with this Hebrew Roots movement and other legalistic teachings, let me make myself perfectly clear on this.

Again, how does the Law drive us to Christ?

By showing us that we are sinners separated from God.

In Isaiah 59:1-2 we are told, **“Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.”**

Just as Moses the Lawgiver couldn’t take the children of Israel into the Promise Land, neither can the Law lead us into the Spirit filled life – it can’t save us.

Who brought the children of Israel into the Promise Land?

Joshua or Jesus and Jesus leads us into the new life by faith!

The Law could only take us so far; it is Jesus who brings us in!

I like the way that Warren Wiersbe summed this up for us. He wrote,

By using this illustration, Paul is saying several things about the Jews and their Law. First, he is saying that the Jews were not born through the Law, but rather were brought up by the Law. The slave was not the child’s father; he was the child’s guardian and disciplinarian.

So, the Law did not give life to Israel; it regulated life. The Judaizers taught that the Law was necessary for life and righteousness, and Paul’s argument shows their error.

But the second thing Paul says is even more important: the work of the guardian was preparation for the child’s maturity. Once the child came of age, he no longer needed the guardian.

So the Law was a preparation for the nation of Israel until the coming of the promised Seed, Jesus Christ.

- Warren Wiersbe

And Martin Luther put it this way,

We are not to think that the Law is wiped out. It stays. It continues to operate in the wicked.

But a Christian is dead to the Law. For example, Christ by His resurrection became free from the grave, and yet the grave remains. Peter was delivered from prison, yet the prison remains.

The Law is abolished as far as I am concerned, when it has driven me into the arms of Christ.

Yet the Law continues to exist and to function. But it no longer exists for me.

- Martin Luther

Now here is the problem for some. If that is true, and it is, then what you are saying is I can live anyway I want because I am free from the Law!

No, that is not what I am saying.

The purpose of the Law was to drive us to Christ and now its job is done.

Then what happens?

Once we are saved it is the Holy Spirit that has come to live in us and He has given to us a new heart and now we desire to obey the commandments of God, not because the Law says so, but out of love!

One writer put it like this,

The Christian has died to the law; he has nothing more to do with it. Does this mean that the believer is at liberty to break the Ten Commandments all he wants? No, he lives a holy life, not through fear of the law, but out of love to the One who died for him.”

- William MacDonald

And that is exactly what we are told in the Old Testament, where the Lord said, **“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.”** Ezekiel 36:26-27.

And in John chapter 16, Jesus tells us of the Holy Spirit, **“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.”** John 16:13-15.

I hope that is clear regarding the Law and Grace!

VERSES 26-27

Please understand what Paul is saying here because it is born out of what he has been saying about Law and Grace.

One writer put it like this, “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus: Compared to what was being taught among the Galatians, this was a revolutionary statement. In traditional Jewish thinking (carried into Christianity by Jewish Christians), your standing before God was measured by your obedience to the law. To truly be close to God – considered sons of God – you had to be extremely observant of the law, just as the Scribes and Pharisees were (Matthew 23). Here, Paul says we can be considered sons of God in a completely different way: through faith in Christ Jesus.” (David Guzik)

So, how do we become sons of God?

We don’t have to do this and not do that. Paul tells us it is by faith in Jesus Christ, clothing ourselves with Him or putting on Jesus!

Paul admonishes us in Romans 13:11-14 to, **“... do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”**

Keep in mind that the phrase, **“put on Christ”** here in Galatians 3:27 is speaking of a change of garments!

This should just make sense. The believer has laid aside the filthy garments of self-righteousness or the Law (Isaiah 64:6) and, by faith, has received the robes of righteousness in Christ.

Paul put it like this in Colossians 3:8-17, **“But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”**

Put off the old clothes and put on Christ. We are clothed in Him, hidden in Him. And think about it like this.

The One who perfectly kept the Law and fulfilled it, Jesus, has come into my life, I have put on Christ and thus, because I'm in Jesus the Law has been perfectly fulfilled in my life also, positionally speaking. We know on a practical day by day living; we fall far short. But again, it is not my righteousness, but His that has been imputed to me by faith!

And I think what Paul is speaking of in these verses flows from what he was speaking about regarding the tutor. One writer gives to us this insight as he tells us,

The ancient Romans had a coming-of-age ceremony called toga virilis, which was somewhat like the Jewish bar mitzvah. The ceremony signified a boy's reaching the age of manhood (which varied between the ages of 14-17) and full Roman citizenship, with all its rights and privileges. He no longer had a paidagogos, but was now a recognized adult, responsible for his own welfare and actions. "You have all experienced a spiritual toga virilis," Paul told the Galatian believers, in effect, "and in light of that stupendous truth, why would you consider going back under the tutorship of the law?"

- John MacArthur

Again, I think that is very clear. We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus and not by the Law through works! ***DON'T GO BACK TO THE LAW!***

VERSES 28-29

Make no mistake about it, this was a radical statement by Paul. The reason it was so radical is that the Rabbis, in their morning prayers, would often pray, ***"I thank God I was not born a Gentile, a slave or a woman."***

Paul says it doesn't matter your background to God, in Christ we are all on the same playing field! Thus, don't put up walls of division or draw lines of division because Christ has removed them.

Stott summarized it like this as he gives us this perspective. He wrote,

This doesn't mean that there are no differences. Paul knew that there was still a difference between Jew and Greek, and his evangelistic approach might differ to each group. The slave still had a daily obligation to obey his master, though they might be equal in Jesus. There are still different roles for male and female in the home and in the church, though they are equal in standing before God. There are differences in role and in function, but none in standing before God through faith in Jesus. "When we say that Christ has abolished these distinctions, we mean not that they do not exist, but that they no longer create any barriers to fellowship."

- John Stott

Absolutely, we are one in Christ. And remember that this is not some big ecumenical movement that Paul is speaking of but a movement that is based in a common denominator and that being Jesus Christ and our salvation by grace through faith, which is what unites us!

Today, man is trying to come together and yet, we are farther apart than ever. You see, this unity can't be based in human effort, but in Christ. Morris tells us, "He is not writing about a unity that comes about as a result of human achievement. He is saying that when people are saved by Jesus Christ they are brought into a marvelous unity, a unity between the saved and the Saviour and a unity that binds together all the saved."

Law and Grace, it should not be confusing, there should not be any doubt. We are saved by Grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone and not by the Law through works.

Again, John Stott summarizes this for us as he tells us, “We cannot come to Christ to be justified until we have first been to Moses to be condemned. But once we have gone to Moses, and acknowledged our sin, guilt and condemnation, we must not stay there. We must let Moses send us to Christ.”

Absolutely, so simple and yet, so many get so confused because they ignore what the Scriptures are saying, and they believe what a man is saying!

As I close, let me speak just a minute on this last verse about *Abraham’s seed*. You see, the Galatians were deceived into thinking that they could become Abraham’s seed by keeping the Law.

But Paul has and is and will continue to show them otherwise. Christ is the seed of Abraham; the inheritance promised to Abraham was fulfilled in Christ.

Therefore, when sinners believe on Him, they become one with Him. Thus, they become *Abraham’s seed*, and, in Christ, they inherit all of God’s blessings.

And that promise was also to the Gentiles, not just to the Jews as Paul told us in Galatians 3:8-9, “**And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed.’ So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.**” Galatians 3:8-9.

Praise God for His indescribable gift that He has given to us, a salvation by Grace through faith that is based in Jesus Christ His Son! And thus, we have assurance of our salvation not because we are so great, but, because He is so great, and He is able to save us to the ***UTTERMOST!*** (Hebrews 7:25)