

# Faith needed in order to escape the curse of the law

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*Galatians Explained*

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**Bible Text:** Galatians 3:6-14  
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Congregation, young people, there are things that don't mix. Maybe you know examples of that. Water and fire don't mix, certainly. Abraham also experienced something that they did not mix, Sarah and Hagar in one tent. It didn't work. It is either by the law or it's by grace. You know from the Bible we cannot serve God and mammon at the same time, and what also does not mix is the law and the gospel. I mean, in a way the law and the gospel belong to one another, we need the law, without the law we don't know what sin is. So there's nothing bad about the law but the law cannot save us, only the gospel can. Now you try to mix the law and the gospel, we get all confused and there's no salvation, there's no hope, no comfort. So that's what we'll see in the verses 6 through 14 of Galatians 3, that the law and the gospel don't mix.

Let's read those verses again, 6 through 14.

6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. 7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith [of faith], the same are the children of Abraham. 8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. 9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. 10 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 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.

So far.

"Faith needed in order to escape the curse of the law." Faith needed in order to escape the curse of the law. Four thoughts. The old faith, old? Yes, that faith of Abraham that's so

long ago, that that faith is still the same faith that's the old faith. It has not changed at all. Secondly, a worldwide faith. It is faith that at first looks like it was only for Israel but it's meant to be a worldwide faith that all nations of the earth be blessed. A nation-less faith. In the third place, a cursing law. You see that in verses 10, 11 and 12, then he shows the other side, the negative side. The curse of the law, If you would like to be saved by the law, you can't come further than being cursed. And the fourth thought, escaping the law in 13 and 14. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. Faith needed to escape the curse of the law: old faith; worldwide faith; the cursing law; and escaping the law.

Now who is Paul talking about, what person in this chapter in those verses? Who is he talking about? He's talking about Abraham, right? About Abraham. In his letter to the Galatians, he mentions Abraham I think nine times. He goes back to Abraham all the time like he also does in Romans 10 times, and eight times, in Hebrews 10 times. Why is epistles of Paul talking so often about Abraham? What do you think? Well, some people are boasting, "We are children of Abraham. We are the real Abraham people, the covenant people." They are circumcised. They are proud of that. And not only Orthodox Jews are saying that but Christian Jews who are genetically Jewish or proselyte Jewish and belong to the Jewish nation but also became Christians, and they began to bother the congregations, you remember that, in Galatia, from Galatian background, and they said, "You are Christians from the Gentiles but we are Christians from the Jewish people. We are children of Abraham. So I think you should also join us, become Jewish as well, and be circumcised and keep the Jewish food laws so then you also will be a step higher because otherwise you feel kind of a distance, we can't even sit at the same table with you." Remember even the Apostle Peter left and Barnabas and left and pretended not to belong to the Gentiles?

So in this epistle Paul is dealing with an issue that some people from Judea are influencing the churches, telling them that, "We are the children of Abraham and you are not." What does he answer? Well, it was as Paul says, "Let's talk about Abraham then. If you say to you are children of Abraham, you should look like him and you should be followers of Abraham. Let us see if you are. I read in Genesis that he believed God and that was counted unto him for righteousness. So he was justified by faith, so that makes someone really a child of Abraham, not circumcision, not birth, but faith, faith that old faith, that same faith as we believe with, the same faith," the Apostle Paul says, "it is the same faith and that faith makes you a child of Abraham and nothing else."

"Know ye therefore," verse 7, "that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." You see? Verse 7, "Know ye therefore," don't forget, realize that, "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith," of faith, "the same are the children of Abraham." Question: are you Jewish? Are you a son or a daughter of Abraham? You say, "Well, I don't know. I don't know what my genes are." No, that's not what I mean. Are you a real child of Abraham? You would say, "How do I know?" Well, if you have that true faith, that true faith in which you have heard, not doing something but have you heard of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and believed it? Because it's not doing that makes you a child of Abraham, it's believing that makes you a child of Abraham; that doing nothing but entrusting yourself completely unto him to be in the midst of death with everything

you have and seek your salvation outside of self in another, that makes you a child of Abraham.

So don't think that people in the Old Testament were saved in a different way than today. Don't think that they become saved [unintelligible] only by grace. It's nonsense. It's the same. There's only one book of life, we have only one Bible for Jew and Gentile. It's only one house, one tent, one church, one tree. Also the Lord Jesus spoke about these things, about Abraham not to the Judaizers, not to the Jewish Christians but to the Orthodox Jews. So that's a different context but yet we can learn from that, so let me just show you from John 8. They answered and said unto the Lord Jesus, "Abraham is our father." And Jesus said unto them, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. So you tell me you're children of Abraham but you try to kill me. Abraham did not try to kill me. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day and he saw it and was glad."

You see, the Lord Jesus said Abraham had the same faith, the old faith. He saw my day, he longed for me, he rejoiced in me, he believed the Lord Jesus Christ. No difference and that makes people children of Abraham because this happened even before circumcision was instituted. Abraham was a Gentile himself and that faith made him a covenant child. You see, old faith.

Those Judaizers, they said, "We are children of Abraham," and maybe they were because they were Christians and they also believed in the Lord Jesus and the Apostle Paul did not want to question them on that. Later on in the letter he says "us, he has saved us." He didn't exclude them but they're confused, though, and he was really mad with those teachers they had. Those teachers, he said, they're cursed, but he felt sorry about the people influenced by them and said, "No, don't be worried. Don't think that they are a better class of Christians. You are also children of Abraham by faith."

So that's verse 6 and verse 7, now verse 8 and 9 and 14, worldwide faith. You know, there are Judaizers, those people coming from Israel, they said, "The faith belongs to one nation," right? So you're not talking about how you become a child of Abraham is by faith, we're talking about a worldwide faith. There is no difference anywhere. It's meant to be for the Gentiles and the Apostle Paul said something to the Judaizers that they may have forgotten, that the Lord said to Abraham, "In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." All the nations. The Lord Jesus, the Lord in the Old Testament never meant to only stay with the only blessed people of Israel. He had always in mind to bless the whole entire world and all the nations. He only began with Israel but he didn't want to end with Israel. It was meant to be for the whole world. So here he is talking and looking in the face of those Judaizers and he says, "What do you think, that the Lord was willing to just limit himself to the people of Israel? Really? No way." You read Genesis again, "all nations will be blessed."

So therefore Abraham is the father of the worldwide church. Wherever there are God's people, whatever color, whatever race, whatever tribe, whatever occupation, whatever, it

is one church. The holy catholic church, and it's sad that there are Hispanic churches only for Spanish speaking people, and that there are Chinese churches only for Chinese people, and Dutch churches. No, not really. That's something is not right. That's why I like it to go to Bolivia and to sit in church there and to see different tribes [unintelligible]. If I liked it in Nazareth, the Reverend Decker is preaching. You see, all different people, all different colors, Jewish from origin, Jewish blood but also from Ethiopia, you know? The Lord had in mind when you think of the Old Testament to the New Testament, the Lord had in mind not to pitch a new tent for the New Testament believers so keeping the old tent of Abraham and building a new tent next to it. That was not the Lord's will. It was the Lord's will to extend the tent, to make the tent wider, bigger, more room, for the Gentiles as well.

So there is one church. I would love it if I would see Chinese people among us, and Hispanic people, and black people. I would love it because the Lord does not want it to be, does not want social barriers and cultural barriers. It's one church. And when you think of Romans 11, it's about the olive tree, you see the olive tree is one olive tree with all branches, natural branches of Israel, Israelites, and the Lord took natural branches out and put wild branches in, in that same tree. Not two trees, the tree of the Jews and the tree for the Gentile Christians. One tree all together.

So that's what we read in 8 and 9, "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." And also verse 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." Worldwide church. You know that it's possible that you are more family with some of Chinese background with a new heart than you are close to somebody in your own church, in your own pew without grace because what counts is not to belong to this congregation, what counts is if you are a child of Abraham and if you are in that tree, in that worldwide church of God. And the church is I wouldn't say international, I would say nation-less. It doesn't matter.

Well, let me stop myself here. Does it matter? Of course, the people of Israel are still a blessed people, they are really mixed up regarding grace and God and sin and forgiveness, they are really mixed up and the most anti-Christian religion you can think of, the most anti-Christian religion you can think of. The Roman Catholic Church at least talks about Christ. The Muslims, they still talk about Jesus, the prophet. But don't talk about Jesus to the Jewish people, the Orthodox people. They hate him still and they are still a confident people and out of a sense and beloved once because of the fathers, but they are not really children of Abraham if they miss the faith and they miss out and they don't even belong to the worldwide church, they don't belong to the worldwide church because there is no grace in their lives. Now if the Lord did not spare that olive tree and took branches, natural branches off, what do you think about the wild branches? It may look like as if you are a member of the church, you are not. So the Lord did not uproot the tree and plant a new tree, or have two trees. No, there is still one tree with new branches grafted in on the old.

So how did those influencers feel, those people from Judea? They felt like, "We are children of Abraham. We belong to our national church." The Apostle Paul says, "Whatever. Faith makes you a child of Abraham and they become a member of the worldwide church from Jews and Gentiles together. Mixed together." Also important for mission work, of course, that we view the people we labor among, we view them as potential children of Abraham because Abraham is the father of all the faithful. The faithful does not mean faithful in the sense of faithful doing your work, but faithful means the the faithful of all filled with faith, having faith.

Third thought, the cursing law. Now the apostle moves to the negative argument. First, he said how you can be saved, and now he's going to tell how you cannot be saved. How you can be saved by faith only. How you cannot be saved by the law. Oh, the law is important to prepare as a schoolmaster to Christ. Nothing bad about the law. We need that law, without the law we would not know what it is to covet, if coveting is a sin. And the law is also important for sanctification, for living a holy life in faith, after faith. But if you are in that rut under the law, you make it difficult for yourself and for others and you are making a mistake.

Verse 10, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." Desist of the lies, "Do this. Do that. Don't do that. Do that." Don't and do's. And where does it lead? It leads only to be accursed and feeling that you don't have enough, that you don't qualify, that you never measure up. The law lets you feel, "I fail. I don't have enough. I can't please God." And you drown. So that's not good because the Bible says, "Cursed is every one that continueth not," continueth not, "in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." So if you ask an Orthodox Jew, "Are you sure about your salvation?" He probably will ignore you, won't talk to you. He'll probably just turn around and walk away. They don't like to talk. But if you get him to talk, he would say, "You're never sure. You're never 100% sure because you may also do not enough." And that's exactly the faith in the Roman Catholic Church as well, and all them with the doctrine of good works. You hope you do enough, you hope for the best, you suppose the Lord knows you're doing your best but you never know after all, and you have that feeling of guilt all the time, the feeling of, "Oh, wrong again." The feeling of, "I don't qualify."

"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith." If the just shall live by faith, now think about that. That's a quote from Habakkuk. The just shall live by faith. By faith you become just. Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness, so justified by faith, justified by just hearing it and believing it. If you're justified by faith, then you are condemned by the law, right? Just the opposite. You're justified by faith, you can live with the law. What is the opposite of justification? Condemnation. So justified by faith are you condemned by the law? The law cannot possibly save anyone. It doesn't mix. It's not together.

It's without the law by faith only because the law does not bring acceptance, the law does not declare righteous, the law declares unrighteousness and that's a lesson for the

unconverted Gentiles because they have the law in their hearts, natural law, that's the lesson of other Jews, it's also a lesson for us. Have you come to the end of the law? Are you still working hard or have you given up? If you need to give up, don't take me wrong, the law is the law and the Lord wants us to obey but if we try to gain something and earn something, then we make a big mistake because that's not how it works. It is by grace only.

And the Apostle Paul experienced that himself. What? The curse because if there was anyone to be found to be a Pharisee living blameless, obedient, an example to others, a Jew of the Jews, an Israelite of the Israelites, a son of Benjamin, a Pharisee, if it was anyone doing his best, it was him and the Lord stopped him on the way to Damascus, remember, and said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He stopped and it dawned on him that he tried to obey the law and the Lord said, "It is worthless. You can't be saved this way. You're unsaved." And he writes of all that in Romans 7:9, that well-known verse, "For I was alive," I felt alive, I felt good, he means, "without the law." Not realizing he was without the law but he was. "I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came," and the Lord stopped me, "sin revived, and I died." That's what the law did. The law killed him and in a way that's good, to come to the end of the law and to see that the law cannot help me.

Remember from Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" that Bunyan had left the City of Destruction and was going to the Gate of the Lord Jesus, but also not only came to the Slough of Despond but also came on that steep hill it was called Legality and Civility, and it started thundering and he almost died and was so afraid he had to go back downhill, had to go to the gate [unintelligible]. And so it is also today and maybe you're still working on it, still busy with trying to please the Lord with your prayers, try to pray good, long enough and really thoughtful and warm, and hopefully you cry a little bit, and hopefully you feel emotional and hopefully you can pump yourself up a little bit and feel a real child of God in yourself. I hope not. I hope that you don't try to in an artificial way pump yourself up to be a child of God and to do your best but essential to salvation is to come to the end of the law, to not be able to go further anymore and to stop. Him that worketh not but believeth in him that justified the ungodly.

So where are you at? Are you a child of Abraham by faith? Do you belong to the worldwide church? And the worldwide doesn't think so much about the borders and congregations and denominations. It's important to have structure and be organized but the worldwide church is the catholic, the holy catholic church worldwide. You belong to that church? That's a nation-less church. Or are you in our church, sitting in our church still under the curse and with the condemnation, not being saved, having not one sin forgiven, and you hear about salvation, you hear about faith and there's that stubbornness?

It was last week that I told you about [unintelligible], that salvation is the easiest reason and that's why it is so difficult, right? We also said another example is a prison and the inmates are there and the door is opened but they'd like to stay. They don't want to leave. And that is being unconverted. The door has been set open. The Lord does not stop us

from coming unto him, we stop ourselves. There are huge obstacles not on the road by the Lord, with or by the Lord but in ourselves there are obstacles.

So the old faith and the worldwide faith and the cursing law, and then escaping the law is seen. The curse of the law is hanging over us. How can we escape the curse of the law? Well, the Apostle Paul writes about that so clearly in 13 and 14, "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." It's about the Lord Jesus, right? Think about that. He did not know what sin was. He had never sinned. He was the most innocent, the only innocent person [unintelligible], has done nothing wrong, nothing amiss, absolutely immaculate, no sin, and he said to his Father in eternity, "O give me the curse and let them go. I would like to suffer, I would like to die, I would like to be condemned, I'd like to bear the curse, I would like to absorb the wrath. Let them go free, then."

So the Lord Jesus bore the curse of the law and the Lord Jesus and his benefits become ours by faith, by hearing and believing, by the application of the Spirit. Faith is by hearing and that faith justifies, the law curses. Faith, the gospel, speaks of being justified by faith only. It sounds so simple that is doctrinally so essential. So one of my favorite Bible verses is 2 Corinthians 5:21. I love that text. "For he," that's God, "For he has made him," the Lord Jesus, "to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." God the Father, he has made him, the innocent one who knew no sin, to be sin, to be a sin offering, to have all the sins on his back that we might be made the righteousness of God in him by faith. Faith that hearing and believing it is the medium the Lord uses to justify a sinner, that to go through the gate that believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is the essential thing. So many stop short and come to the gate and never go through the gate.

Or think of Isaiah 53:6. I like that verse very much as well. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way," in our foolishness, "and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." All on him. All those iniquities. We've strayed as sheep, we've gone astray, we've turned everyone to his own way. You would say, "Well, then, they are all cursed. They should all fall." No, "and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all." And "us" is all them that truly believe in him and have come to the end of the law.

The Apostle Paul knows about this, right, and he writes about this more clearly even in Philippians 3 and he is kind of boasting, kind of bragging about himself. Not really, but listen, "Circumcised, yes, I was. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin even, I was an Hebrew of the Hebrews, the best one; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal," talk about zeal, "persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me," were gain to me, they looked like gain, "those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things," all things, "but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God

by faith." Do you see that? So the Apostle Paul writes in Philippians, "I was a good man. I lived a good life. I excelled in that. I was blameless. I kept the entire law as good as I could. But I came to the conclusion that it didn't bring me nowhere than to have to let go of being a goody-goody, of being such a smug person. I had to let go. It was all dung. It was all manure. It was all garbage. It was all nothing. I couldn't help myself with that. So I had no righteousness but I had to be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, not having my own righteousness. No. Righteousness of the law, no. But that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

You see, "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." Think of the cross. And then summarizing in verse 14, "That the blessing of Abraham," the blessing of Abraham, "might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit," or the promised Spirit, "through faith." It's by faith, by faith, by faith all the time in contrast to the works. So becoming saved in that area when we talk about that subject, it's being saved, the law and the gospel may not be mixed. It's by faith only. But preparing people by the law, the Apostle Paul speaks highly of the law, right? As I quoted before, "I wouldn't have known that coveting is a sin if the Lord would not have said in his law." And also people are misusing this chapter as well and saying, "You know, the law also fails so I can live the way I want. I don't care about the law. I am free from the law. I like the gospel. I can do whatever I want and I can go to the movies and I can do everything I want to because it's forgiven anyway. All those rules, I get sick of that." But that's not what the Apostle Paul meant regarding salvation, but if Christ becomes precious you also become willing to obey in thankfulness, in meditate to it, and there will be fruits on the tree as well but those fruits are the consequence, those fruits are not merits. You don't become saved by the fruits, the fruits come after salvation.

Are you a child of Abraham? Faith makes you a child of Abraham and nothing else. The prison door is open and the Lord calls people, he calls you, he calls the young ones and old ones, he calls us to come unto him with all our sins, not with anything good, leave that at home, come with empty hands and see your salvation only in that Savior who knew no sin, was made to be sin, to be made the righteousness of God in him. Amen.