

GALATIANS - SERMON 11
GALATIANS 3:10-14 — DEFENSE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH
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INTRODUCTION:

Read Galatians 3:10-14

In Galatians 3 Paul is setting forth the doctrine of justification by faith alone apart from the works of the law. He is proving this by several lines of argumentation.

- 1 Previously he has appealed to the personal salvation experience of the Galatians themselves, how did you get saved, by faith or by works?
- 2 Next Paul appeals to the example of Abraham (vv 6-9). Abraham was not saved by works of the law (circumcision), but by faith. Those who believe God in the manner of Abraham are Abraham's true spiritual offspring. The significance of blood relationships, ceremonial acts, and national identity are declared to be of no value or relevance in obtaining the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. Those blessings are obtained by one method, by faith. The example of Abraham expressly rules out the two elements that the Judaizers claimed to be essential to salvation, circumcision and law-keeping. Abraham was not saved by those elements and neither are his spiritual offspring. The question is not natural birth but spiritual birth in regard to the achieving and receiving of the benefits and promises of the Abrahamic covenant.
- 3 As a third line of argumentation in support of the doctrine of justification by faith alone apart from the works of the law Paul appeals to the statements of the Old Testament scriptures. In verses 10-12 Paul quotes three passages from the Old Testament, a different passage in each verse. By these passages Paul seeks to demonstrate that salvation by works is an impossibility.

OUTLINE:

- I THE SCRIPTURAL QUOTATIONS USED BY PAUL TO PROVE THAT JUSTIFICATION IS BY FAITH ALONE.
- II THE SCRIPTURAL CONCLUSIONS.

- I THE SCRIPTURAL QUOTATIONS USED BY PAUL TO PROVE THAT JUSTIFICATION IS BY FAITH ALONE.
 - A The first quotation cited in Galatians 3:10 is from Deuteronomy.

Galatians 3:10

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

Deuteronomy 27:26

'Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

By the use of this quotation Paul demonstrates that we cannot be justified by the law because the law does not justify it condemns. If we put ourselves on trial by the law we shall surely be condemned and lost. The law requires perfect obedience.

Galatians 3:12

Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them."

The problem with the law is that it requires absolute perfection with regard to obedience. Obedience to the law must also be comprehensive and perpetual, as well as perfect. There can be no flaws in our obedience (perfect). There can be no omissions in our obedience (comprehensive). There cannot have been any interruptions in our obedience. It must have been life long with no period of disobedience (perpetual). If there are short-comings in any one of these areas, we come then under the curse of the law, *cursed is everyone*. . .

"Cursed is everyone (no exceptions - perfect) *who does not continue* (no lapses - perpetual) *in all things* (no omissions - comprehensive) *which are written in the book of the law* (no ignorance of the law is permitted), *to do them* (no failures allowed)."

The question is - is there anyone (excepting the Lord Jesus Christ) who has rendered such a perfect obedience to the law? No!

1 John 3:4

Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

Romans 3:23

. . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

All have transgressed the law, therefore all are under the curse of the law.

If all are under the curse, then how bad is that curse?

Deuteronomy 28:15-68 lays out for us a description of the curses coming upon those who do not continue in the law. The curse is comprehensive, extensive, and severe. It touches every part of the individual and the things of that individual.

The point is that as transgressors of the law we are under the curse of the law. We surely cannot expect to be justified by that law by appealing to the law on the basis of our works. This is Paul's point. If we attempt to obtain justification by our works, then we have failed at the very outset. By our works we are already condemned and lost.

B The second quotation cited in Galatians 3:11 is from Habakkuk.

Galatians 3:11

But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith."

Habakkuk 2:4

"Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith."

Paul is now setting out to show that it was never the teaching of the Old Testament that justification was ever expected to be accomplished by obedience to the law. The reason he does this is because he seeks to show that another method of justification was declared by God in the Old Testament to be the proper way of justification. That method was justification by means of faith, *"the just shall live by faith."* This can also be translated *'the just, by faith, shall live.'*

In the context of this quotation this reference speaks of the fact that the just shall live and obtain eternal life (freedom from condemnation) by means of faith. The context is not a reference to how one who is justified will hence forth live.

Habakkuk 2:4

"Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith."

There is a contrast set out for us in this reference. The contrast is between two people. The one person is proud and his soul is lifted up. This man commends and exalts himself because of his own accomplishments. This man considers that he is good and that he has deserved salvation because he has kept the law. This man, with this disposition, is *not upright* according the Word of God. This man is a liar because he has deceived himself. He has not really kept the law at all for no one perfectly keeps the law - *there is no one who does not sin* (1 Kings 8:46).

The other man is the one whose dependence is not upon himself or his own good works, but rather is upon God. The man who has faith has looked outside himself for salvation. He has looked to God. The saved man depends not upon himself or his own works, but he depends on God. Therein lies his trust. It is in God.

Verse 10 of Galatians 3 demonstrated how men are not justified, not by works of the law. Verse 11 shows us how men are justified, by faith alone.

C The third quotation cited in Galatians 3:12 is from Leviticus.

Galatians 3:12

Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them."

Leviticus 18:5

'You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.'

The law, as a means of salvation, and faith, as a means of salvation, are two mutually exclusive methods of justification. Justification by means of the law has to do with performance, *if a man does...* This performance must be comprehensive, complete, and perfect. The law does not say that the just by faith shall live. The law says the just by works shall live.

Romans 10:1-13

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not

according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Vs 5 For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them." But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, " 'Who will descend into the abyss?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

Paul more fully lays out for us this contrast between the two methods of justification, by works or by faith. There are two ways to obtain righteousness. Beginning in verse 5 Paul quotes the same passage he has cited in Galatians 3:12. The righteousness which we obtain by means of faith is not something that is distant and far from us. Salvation is not distant or difficult. Salvation is near to us. It is in believing. In so believing in God a righteousness will be accounted to us so perfect and so complete as if we have perfectly and continually kept the law of God without intermission. The law is a stranger to faith. It is harsh and condemning. It only knows how to condemn.

By means of these three quotations Paul has established an air tight case against justification by works and in favor of justification by faith.

II THE SCRIPTURAL CONCLUSIONS.

Galatians 3:13-14

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The question that arises concerning the curse of the law. If the just obtain salvation by faith alone, what becomes of the curse of the law? If we are condemned by the law how can we find divine favor?

The answer is in verse 13.

- 1 Christ has removed the curse of the law from us, *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law.* The word *redeemed* is essential. It means to be set free by the payment of a ransom. We were indebted to the law and we owed it the penalty required. Christ has set us free from that debt, not by ignoring the penalty, but by paying the penalty Himself.

Think upon the awfulness and the horror of the curse and you shall have some idea of what Christ bore in our place on the cross. In redeeming us from the curse of the law, Christ bore all that we read in Deuteronomy 28.

Paul quotes from another Deuteronomy passage in verse 13:

Deuteronomy 21:22-23

"If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God."

Christ as one hung on the cross was thereby made *accursed of God* in our place as those who have been guilty of *sin deserving of death*. Being hung upon a tree was the appointed way of declaring that the dead man had died as a result of the claims of justice.

- 2 Christ has supplied the blessings of salvation to us. Why did Christ remove the curse from us? The answer is so that two great blessings might come upon us, verse 14.

Galatians 3:14

. . . that (purpose clause) the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The first was the blessing of Abraham. The second was the promise of the Spirit. It was not simply enough to have the penalty of sin taken away. In addition to that wonderful benefit, we are also given the blessings of Abraham and the blessings of the Spirit. These are the positive aspects of our salvation.

- a) The blessing of Abraham is the blessing coming to us through the covenant God made with Abraham. Those blessings were fundamentally two.

Genesis 17:7-8

"And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

The first blessing is that God will be God to them, the descendants of Abraham. Secondly God promises to give a land, an eternal dwelling place. The land promised to Abraham, which was a picture, was Canaan. The ultimate fulfillment (the antitype or reality behind the type) is heaven for *blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth*. The land promise is expanded to include the new heavens and the new earth.

- b) The second blessing of salvation promised is the promise of the Spirit. This is a reference to Ezekiel 36 which describe the terms of the new covenant.

Ezekiel 36:25-27

"Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 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."

Herein is the promise of the Spirit as one of the provisions of the new covenant.

John 14:16-17

"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever; the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you."

John 14:25-26

"These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."

John 15:26

"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me."

John 16:13-14

"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."

The Spirit is, for the believer, the means of regeneration, illumination, empowerment, comfort, wisdom, character transformation, and the seal and stamp of God's ownership upon us. All of this is through Christ and through faith. None of this comes by works of the law, by physical descent, or national identity. Those things have been ruled out.

Conclusion:

By these three lines of argumentation Paul proves that justification / salvation is by faith apart from the works of the law. From this place onward Paul will take up the topic of the true purpose of the law. Having destroyed that idea that the law was designed to justify us, the question would arise as to the true purpose of the law.

No Hymn