**CHRIST REDEEMED US FROM THE LAW**

Galatians 3:1–14

Key Verse 13

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.””

**Introduction**

In today’s passage, Paul helps the Galatians to continue to live by faith, not by the law. He shows God’s salvation work in history from Abraham to Jesus, with Moses in between. God gave Abraham his promise and Moses the law. Both the promise and the law point to Jesus Christ. But Paul proves that God’s salvation work is based on his promise to Abraham, not based on the law. Through today’s passage, may we learn God’s blessing through faith in the promise.

1. Read verses 1-5. Why did Paul rebuke the Galatians? (1) How had the Galatians received the Spirit and experienced miracles? (2-5)

1-1, Read verses 1-5.

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. **2** I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? **3** Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians%203#fen-NIV-29106a)] **4** Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain? **5** So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?

1-2, Why did Paul rebuke the Galatians? (1)

***You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified.***

* Here Paul uses strong language in rebuking the Galatians for discarding the gospel faith after false teachers influenced them.
* Paul’s question, “Who has bewitched you?” implies that they were bewitched by Satan.
* As their shepherd and Bible teacher, Paul rebuked them harshly to awaken them and help them come back to their senses. He urged them to come back to their gospel faith and hold to it firmly.



* Here it’s interesting to think about the phrase, “before your very eyes.” Jesus’ crucifixion happened about 15 years ago. So they must not have been able to see it.
* However Paul’s message was always focused on Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection.
* Though the Galatians never saw Jesus’ crucifixion with their physical eyes, Jesus’ crucifixion must have been personal to them, through their believing when they heard the message.
* So nothing is more important than to attentively hear and believe the truth of the gospel message.

1-3, How had the Galatians received the Spirit and experienced miracles? (2-5)

***I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? 3 Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? 4 Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain? 5 So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?***

* Paul asks the Galatians 5 questions through which he reminds them of their personal experiences.
* The Galatians believed Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection that Paul had preached to them.
* It was God’s miracle through the Holy Spirit that they believed in Christ Jesus who died for their sins.
* We all became Christians after accepting the message of the gospel. Our faith in Jesus is also God’s miracle through the Holy Spirit.
* We did not become Christians by human effort. Neither did the Galatian believers. But they betrayed the gospel and turned to observing the law.
* Many Christians who started to live by faith in Jesus’ death and resurrection fall into the trap of trying to keep the law instead of continuing in faith. They do so because they think faith alone seems too easy and abstract.
* Faith seems unreal to them because they cannot touch it or grab it. They try to do some tangible things for God, forgetting the gospel.
* But we Christians must live by faith, always remembering what Jesus has done for us. We must live by faith from first to last.

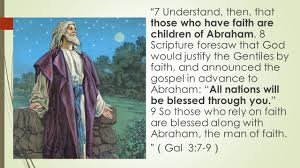
Romans 1:16-17 reads,

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. **17** For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

2. Read verses 6-9. How was Abraham credited as righteous by God? (6) Who are the children of Abraham? (7) How did Abraham become a father of faith to all believers, including the Gentiles? (8, 9)

2-1, Read verses 6-9.

So also Abraham “believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

**7** Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. **8** Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” **9** So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

2-2, How was Abraham credited as righteous by God? (6)

***So also Abraham “believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”***

* Before God’s call, Abraham was godless, serving idols in Mesopotamia. But God promised to make him a father of many nations.
* Abraham simply believed in God’s promise, left his old lifestyle and country and followed God’s leading all the way to Canaan.
* But 10 years after living by faith in God’s promise, Abraham became exhausted and fearful, because he became 85 years old and was still childless.
* To him, God’s promise seemed uncertain. He felt utterly hopeless. He suffered from doubt, fear and a sense of loss.
* Then God visited him and planted faith in him again (Gen 15) by taking him outside and saying, “Look up at the sky and count the stars…so shall your offspring be.”
* To a 85 years old man, God’s promise sounded ridiculous and unbelievable. Amazingly, however, Abraham believed God and in his promise again.
* He believed that with man it was impossible, but that with God it was possible. God was pleased with Abraham’s faith and credited it to him as righteousness.
* Abraham didn’t do anything for God. He just believed God and in his promise and God credited it to him as righteousness.
* This quote from [Genesis 15:6](https://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Genesis+15:6&t1=en_nas) is one of the clearest statements in the Bible, revealing the truth of salvation by faith alone. It is the gospel in the Old Testament.
* It is quoted again and again throughout the New Testament.

Romans 4:9-11 reads,

Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness. **10** Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! **11** And he received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them.

* Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness before he was circumcised ([Genesis 17:1-27](https://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Genesis+17:1-27&t1=en_nas)). No one could say Abraham was made righteous because of his obedience or his fulfillment of religious law or ritual. It was faith and faith alone that caused God to credit Abraham as righteous.
* Abraham’s faith did not make him righteous. God made him righteous, by crediting his faith. “His faith was not his righteousness, but God so rewarded his exercise of faith.

2-3, Who are the children of Abraham? (7)

***Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham.***

* In the same way, those who have faith as Abraham did are the children of Abraham.
* There are two kinds of righteousness; righteousness we accomplish by our own efforts, and righteousness accounted to us by the work of God when we believe.
* Since none of us can be good enough to accomplish perfect righteousness, we must have God’s righteousness accounted to us by doing just what Abram did: Abraham believed God.

Romans 4:12-17 reads,

And he is then also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised. **13** It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. **14** For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, **15** because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression. **16** Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. **17** As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.” He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.

2-4, How did Abraham become a father of faith to all believers, including the Gentiles? (8, 9)

***8 Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham:***

* Paul is speaking here from the Scriptures. It shows how Paul’s teaching is correct according to the Bible itself.
* Paul refers to the Scriptures virtually as a person, who foresaw and announced what is to come in the future. This shows just how strongly Paul regarded the Bible as God’s word.
* Paul believed that when the Scriptures speak, God speaks. It may remind us of John 1:1-3a. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was with God in the beginning. **3** Through him all things were made”

***“All nations will be blessed through you.” 9 So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.***

* Paul points out that this blessing of righteousness by faith was intended for every nation, for Gentiles as well as Jews, for God pronounced that in Abraham all the nations shall be blessed. (Gen 12:3)
* It is therefore imperative for each of us to have personal faith like Abraham who believed God in person.
* What a great comfort it was to the Gentile Christians who were often times regarded as “second class Christians” by many at that time.
* Now they could know that they had a personal connection to Abraham, and could consider themselves to be the sons of Abraham.
* Nothing is more important for them to be the spiritual children of Abraham instead of the physical children.

Matthew 3:7-10 reads,

“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? **8** Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. **9** And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. **10** The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

3. Read verses 10-14. Why can’t we be justified by relying on the works of the law? (10-11a) What is the one and only way to be justified? (11b-12) What did Christ do for us to redeem us from the curse of the law? (13) What are the outcomes of Jesus’ redemption? (14)

3-1, Read verses 10-14.

For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” **11** Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because “the righteous will live by faith.” **12** The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, “The person who does these things will live by them.” **13** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.” **14** He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

3-2, Why can’t we be justified by relying on the works of the law? (10-11a)

***For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” 11 Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God,***

* It was a quote from Deuteronomy 27:26, **“Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.”**
* “To do everything written in the Book of the Law” indicates that God’s words are like a manufacturer’s manual. When God created us in the beginning, God gave us His words.
* The important words are do and everything. If God would approve of you based on the law, you would first have to do everything that the law requires. Otherwise you would be cursed!
* But who on earth can continue to observe all of the laws, every day, without fail throughout his or her lifetime. No one.
* Even a rigorously disciplined man as Paul couldn’t do this. So salvation through keeping all the laws is impossible because of our sinful nature.

3-3, What is the one and only way to be justified? (11b-12)

***because “the righteous will live by faith.” 12 The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, “The person who does these things will live by them.”***

* This quote is from Habbakuk 2:4, **“the righteous will live by faith”**, which reminds us that the just live by faith, not by law.
* The Jews themselves sensed that because none could keep it perfectly, salvation could not come through keeping the law. This is why they placed such emphasis on their descent from Abraham, essentially trusting in Abraham’s merits to save them because they sensed that their own merits could not.
* It is easy to comfort ourselves with our good intentions. We all mean well; but if we want to find our place before God by our works under the law, good intentions and our effort is never going to be enough. Under the requirements of the law, only actual performance will be acceptable.
* However we can not keep every law through our own integrity and effort. We understand that we don’t actually keep all of the law. And we understand that this puts us under a curse. But now Paul begins to explain the good news in verse 13.

3-4, What did Christ do for us to redeem us from the curse of the law? (13)

***Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.”***

* Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law. In other words, Christ paid the price to free us from the consequences of sin by becoming a curse for us.
* Christ took the curse to free us from the curse of the law. We thank and praise Jesus who redeemed us in his unfathomable love.
* “Redeemed” means “buying back” or “purchasing out of.” It isn’t just rescuing; it is paying a price to rescue the other person. Jesus bought us out from under the curse of the law.
* Redemption came from the practices of ancient warfare. After a battle, among the defeated, the poorer ones would usually be sold as slaves. But the important men would be held for ransom. The people in their homeland would pay a ransom to the victors and the captives would be set free. The process was called redemption, and the price was called the ransom.
* How did Jesus do it? How did He pay a price to rescue us? Having become a curse for us means that Jesus became cursed on our behalf; He stood in our place and took the curse we deserved.
* In fact the price He paid to buy us out from under the curse of the law was the price of Himself. It didn’t just cost Jesus something, but it cost Jesus Himself. He made Himself the target of the curse.
* The principle of Deuteronomy 21:22 shows that Jesus received this curse upon Himself as He hung on the cross.

3-5, What are the outcomes of Jesus’ redemption? (14)

***He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.***

* That the blessing given to Abraham might come - Jesus received this curse, which we deserved and He did not, so that we could receive the blessing of Abraham, which He deserved and we did not!
* It would be enough if Jesus simply took away the curse we deserved. But He did far more than that; He also gave a blessing that we didn’t deserve!
* What is the blessing of Abraham? It is what Paul already described in [Galatians 3:8-9](https://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Galatians+3:8-9&t1=en_nas), the blessing of being justified before God by faith, instead of by works.
* Who does the blessing of Abraham come to? The Gentiles in Christ Jesus. Paul doesn’t mean that it only comes upon Gentiles, as if Jews were excluded. It comes to all, Jew and Gentile alike, who are identified in Christ Jesus, and not by their own attempts to justify themselves.
* Because this blessing is ours in Jesus, we receive the promise of the Spirit through faith - not through coming back under the law as the principle for living. The promise is received, not earned.

**Conclusion**

Praise Jesus who hung on a tree to redeem us from the curse of the law. May the Lord help us to be found in Christ Jesus by faith so that this blessing of redemption may be shared with those who have yet to know Him. Amen.

**One word: Hung on a tree!**