

Paul's Epistle to the Galatians The Curse of the Law

Galatians 3:10-14

1. **The Merciless Nature of the Law** (v.10)

The Law and the prophets constituted the entirety of God's specific and written revelation about who He is and what He required for holiness in life. Though the Law was never intended to be a means of attaining righteousness before God (cf. Gen. 15:6), the dominant religious authorities in Judaism had been bewitched into believing that it was. God's Law is absolutely incompatible with any miscarriage of justice that would condemn a just man or justify a guilty man (Prov. 17:15).

A. All Who Strive to Keep the Law are Cursed

Paul's use of "works of the Law" in Galatians has been specifically in reference to the false teachers who taught that obedience to the Law resulted in justification (Gal. 2:16; 3:2, 5). Here he reminds the Galatian believers that the Law required an exacting standard of perfection and is incapable of mercy (Dt. 27:26).

B. All Who Do Not Strive to Keep the Law are Cursed

There are none who escape the curse of God for their own sin even if a person has not been exposed to the specific revelation of God in His Word (Ro. 1:18-21; 2:12-16).

2. **No One Justified by Law** (vs.11-12)

Paul states the impossibility of justification by the Law as a settled conclusion with no place for disagreement within the church (cf. Gal. 1:8-9).

A. Justification by Faith Requires God's Grace (v.11)

Paul quotes Hab. 2:4 as sufficient evidence to prove the truthfulness of exposition of Abraham's justification before God in Gen. 15:##. Furthermore, any honest personal assessment in light of the Law reveals manifold violations of the Law (cf. 1 Jn.3:4) and a need for God's mercy (Lk. 18:10-14; Ro. 4:16)

B. Justification by Law Requires Personal Perfection (v.12)

The standard for justification by the Law is one of absolute perfection throughout the entirety of one's life. Any single violation of any of the Laws of God voids any claim to righteousness by the standard of the Law (Dt. 27:26; Ja. 2:10).

3. **The Cursing of Christ for Our Justification** (vs.13-14)

A. Christ Was Cursed by God (v.13)

When someone was put to death for violating the Law in Israel, following the execution his body would be hung on a pole or a tree as a display to the community that this man was cursed by God and received a just penalty (Dt. 21:23). This is one reason why a crucified Messiah was a stumbling block to the Jews, though they should have hoped for it (Isa. 53:9-10).

B. Christ Redeems Men through Faith (v.14)

It was God's good plan to exact His justice upon an innocent substitute so that those who could not keep the Law could be justified and receive the blessings of God (cf. Isa. 53:11; Rom 3:26; 2 Cor. 5:21).