

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, January 3, 2018 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

freedom
THE GRACE OF CHRIST IN GALATIANS

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF GALATIANS Delivered from a Curse *Galatians 3:10-14*

REVIEW: Just for review and to get back into our study of the book of Galatians, let's briefly remind ourselves of some of the background material to the book. These are important background facts to keep in mind as we navigate this important and strategic book in the Bible.

4 Important Background Facts on the Book of Galatians:

(1) **Written by the Apostle Paul** – Paul wrote a large portion of the New Testament. This particular book/letter may have been his first letter. Also interesting to note is that some scholars believe that Paul have penned this letter himself, with his own hand (all of his other letters/writings were done through/with a personal amanuensis [scribe, secretary, recorder]).

(2) **Written as a circular letter** – Most of Paul's letter that we have in the New Testament were written to individual churches (i.e. Ephesians, Philippians) or to individuals (i.e. Timothy, Titus). This letter is different because it was written to a number of churches, and was meant to be passed/shared or "circulated" to each of these churches.

(3) **Written to churches in the region of Galatia** -Galatians is written to a number of different churches that Paul established during his first missionary journey in the region of Galatia in Asia Minor, which would be located in present day Turkey. This area was particularly important in the advance of the gospel and the New Testament church because it represented the movement of the good news/gospel further toward the west and to the rest of world, something Jesus had commanded from the very beginning of the New Testament church in Acts 1:8, "8 *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*"

(4) **Written to oppose and expose false teaching of the Judaizers** – After Paul had left the region of Galatia, following his first missionary journey and the establishment of these new churches, false teachers came in and began to expose these churches and new believers/Christians to false teaching. These false teachers were known as "Judaizers" and they taught a "work-righteousness" system of salvation. Their teaching essentially said that in order to become a Christians you must first be circumcised and become a Jew, by obeying and following Jewish laws and customs. This was in direct contradiction to the good news/gospel Paul preached, which was salvation by grace, not by works.

By now we are neck-deep into the subject of legalistic salvation verses as a gift. Because the Galatian believers had deserted the message of grace for a gospel of works, Paul write to refute their faulty decision (Galatians 1:6; 3:1-3). In the first nine verses of chapter 2, he presented two strong points in his argument: (1) their own salvation experience had been based on faith plus nothing, and (2) their own respected “father,” Abraham (who lived long before Moses) had been declared righteous by faith rather than works. Those reading his letter could say, “Of course Abraham wasn’t expected to keep the Law... there was no Law to keep where he lived. Get the point! We live since the Law was given, so now we’re obligated to observe it.” Paul, while offering answer to that objection, intensifies his own criticism of the Galatians. Where before he spoke of them as being “bewitched,” he now turs to using the word “cursed,” meaning condemned.

A CONTRAST: TWO WAYS TO APPROACH GOD (Galatians 3:10-14)

2 Ways to Approach God According to Paul in Galatians 3:

- 1. By the works of the Law (Gal. 3:10)** – By this approach we try to do something to reach God, thinking that in the doing we win a hearing before God... gain audience with Him.

RESULT: Condemnation

REASON: Because no one can live up to it. Or as Paul put it no one can “... *abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, to perform them*” (emphasis added). Paul’s thoughts, written several years later to the Romans, provide further understanding of the problems (Romans 3:19-20) “... *Whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God, because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight...*” (emphasis added). Paul added that the Law had only the capacity to inform man of sin, not that of saving man from sin.

- 2. By faith, apart from the works of the Law (Gal. 3:11-14)** – This way is opposite to the first. This is a transaction of trust... works not even faintly included in the picture. Paul wrote, “*Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident...*” (v.11). Reiterating the words of the prophet who spoke on God’s behalf just prior to the Babylonian exile, Paul added, “The righteous man shall live by faith” (cf. Hab. 2:4, Rom. 1:7). The very same one who could be condemned for failure to perform all the works of the Law, could in faith turn to Christ.

RESULT: Redemption. In other words man, through faith in Christ, is redeemed by Him.

REASON: Jesus took our curse for us. Or as Paul put it Christ had “... *become a curse for us*”(v.13) (cf. Deut. 21:22-23)

Once again we saw the Apostle Paul’s message in strong terms. Work equals curse. Faith equals righteousness. It’s clearly a case of absolute black or white. A good question, often asked, is “What’s the value of works, anyway?” Do we need them? What does Scripture say? Let’s do a little study of the use of “works” from the New Testament. Using the chart below as a model, read each verse and write down the value of works as discussed in the verse. A helpful fact is to determine if the verse is discussing works before salvation or works as a result of salvation.

VERSE	BEFORE SALVATION	AFTER SALVATION	VALUE
<i>Matthew 5:16</i>			
<i>John 6:27</i>			
<i>John 6:28</i>			
<i>Romans 2:15</i>			
<i>Romans 3:20</i>			
<i>Romans 3:28</i>			
<i>1 Corinthians 3:13</i>			
<i>1 Corinthians 3:14</i>			
<i>Galatians 2:16</i>			
<i>Ephesians 2:9</i>			
<i>Philippians 2:12</i>			
<i>Colossians 1:10</i>			
<i>1 Timothy 6:18</i>			
<i>Hebrews 6:1</i>			
<i>James 2:18</i>			

A CLARIFICATION: ANSWERS TO THREE QUESTIONS

Questions, which need to be considered, naturally arise from Paul's presentation in these verses. The answers have direct impact on us today.

3 Important Questions:

Question 1: How could God's Law curse (condemn) anyone? (Gal. 3:10) – ANSWER: God's character must be viewed in full. Not only is He full of love, mercy, grace, and goodness, but He is also a God of holiness, righteousness, and immutability (unchangeability). With God there are laws that are non-negotiable. Our disobedience causes God to demonstrate His holiness and righteousness, and the result is a curse (or condemnation). The exercise of His holiness does not render His love extinct, nor does the exercise of His love nullify His holiness.

Question 2: What does "Christ redeemed us from the curse" mean? (Gal. 3:13) – ANSWER: According to Scripture, the sinner (man from birth) is trapped in the "slave-market" of sin... both by nature and by choice... helpless to do anything about his condition. In order to get the sinner from the "slave-market" into God's family, Christ purchased him with His life. Look at this passage with me from Paul in **1 Timothy 2:3:6**, **"³For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."** Through this "mediator" of exchange, Christ bought the sinner's freedom and the curse has been lifted. Jesus paid a dear price for our deliverance.

Question 3: Why, then, wouldn't everyone automatically be saved? (Gal 3:14) – ANSWER: Though the Father is anxious to accept all (see 1 Tim. 2:3-6 again), He can only accept **"... in Christ Jesus..."** The problem is that not everyone has made the choice to be **"in Him."** Only by faith can such a decision be made.

TWO LASTING PRINCIPLES

2 Lasting Principles Worth Keeping in Mind:

- 1. **Salvation is an “either/or” proposition** – And that doesn’t be either works or faith/grace... it mean you are either saved God’s way, through Christ by faith or you are not saved at all. There is no other way.
- 2. **Deliverance from the curse depends on Christ... not on me** – The good news is it doesn’t depend on you or what you do. It all depends on Christ and what He did and has done for you. You don’t have to be good enough to be saved, religious enough to be saved, spiritual enough to be saved, moral enough to be saved, etc. It doesn’t depend on you or what you do. It’s all Jesus!

It’s been said, “All the works of salvation have been done by God in order for us to have it as a gift.” If those words are commonplace to you, stop and reread the first sentence slowly, reflecting on its meaning.

- 1) What are “works” of salvation do you think?
- 2) What “works” were done by God?
- 3) Why are these works a gift?
- 4) What is the difference between a “gift” and a “wage” or earning?

God has provided us salvation as a gift. Have you personally received this gift by faith? If not, will you do it now? If you have already, how long has it been since you’ve thanked God for His indescribable gift? Let’s spend our closing time this evening writing God a “thank you note.” Try to articulate your true feelings through your writing. Think about the curse under which you lived, the deliverance Christ provided, the price He paid for your release, the results that followed. All too often we overlook expressions like this.

Dear Jesus,

**think about the curse you were under* _____

**think on the deliverance Christ provided* _____

**think on the price He paid for your release* _____

**think on the result that followed what He did for you* _____

**finish with your sincerest word to Jesus from your heart to His* _____

Your salutation _____

Signed _____