

Sunday, January 17, 2010—Grace Life School of Theology—Understanding Galatians and the Law—Galatians 3:13-16

Galatians 3:13

- “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law,*”
- The first part of the verse tells the whole story, “Christ hath redeemed us.” To redeem means to rescue from loss, or to deliver by paying a price.
- A complete understanding of redemption is gained from looking at the three Greek words that are translated redemption:
 - *Agorazo*—to purchase in the market. The underlying thought is of a slave-market. The subject of redemption are sold under sin, under the sentence of death, and the purchase price is the blood of a redeemer who dies in their stead.
 - *Exagorazo*—to buy out of the market. The redeemed are never again to be exposed to sale.
 - *Lutro*—to lose. To set free by paying the price.
- Romans 3:24
- Ephesians 1:7
- Colossians 1:13
- What has God redeemed us from? The curse of the law. In other words, Christ paid the necessary price to redeem or deliver us out from under the curse of the law.
- The word for curse in verse 13 is same word that is used in verse 10. Our English word “curse” comes from the Greek word *kata*, which carries the following meanings: a) the curse proceeding from God, b) the rejection caused by judgment, c) the destruction caused by judgment. It is the equivalent to judgment without mercy.
- We were all under the curse of the law because the law declares us all guilty.
 - Romans 3:19-20
 - I Timothy 1:7-10
- “*being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:*”
- How did Christ redeem us from the curse of the law? By being made a curse for us. That is to say that Christ accepted the punishment the law required for disobedience which is death. The curse of the Law means ultimate physical death, and unless a way of salvation is provided it results in eternal death.
 - Hebrews 2:9

- The second half of this verse is a quotation from Deuteronomy 21:23.
- Deuteronomy 21:22-23—what is the punishment according to the law for failing to obey the law? Death. What should our punishment be because we are under the curse of the law due to our failure to obey it? Death. Who has made it possible for us to be saved from the curse of the law (i.e. death)? Jesus Christ.
- Christ did what no other human being has ever done. He kept the entire law perfectly. Judicially he did not deserve the death of Deuteronomy 21:23
- Matthew 26:65-66—Christ is charged with blasphemy. Christ should not have been the one to hang on the tree but he did.
- What happened to Christ while he was upon the cross is as close to blasphemy as you can get without being a heretic.
 - John 3:14
 - II Corinthians 5:21—on the cross Christ was made sin for us and suffered the curse of the law on our behalf.
 - Matthew 27:46—while on the cross Christ became so identified with our sin that God the father had to forsake him.
- In light of these scriptural realities, how pitiful and pathetic are our good works?

Galatians 3:14

- *“That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”*
- What is the first word of verse 14? That. Always remember in your Bible study when you see the word “that” it deals with the purpose or the intent of what was just said.
- The reason that was made a curse for us in verse 13 is so that the blessings of Abraham might come upon the gentiles through Jesus Christ.
- The blessings of Abraham within the context Galatians 3 are righteousness in verse 6 and justification in verse 8.
- The blessings of Abraham deal with the fundamental issue of eternal life.
- Romans 4:13—in order for Abraham and his seed to inherit the world what must they possess? Eternal Life.
- Genesis 15:12-15—God told Abraham he would die before his decedents entered into the land.
- Hebrews 11:19—Abraham understood that in order for God to fulfill the promise made unto him, He would have to be a possessor of eternal life.

- This is Paul’s point in Galatians 3, because God did something special in the justification of Abraham he provided for our eternal life as well through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- Notice how Paul also answers the question he raised in verse two about how the Galatians received the Holy Spirit. As gentiles we received the Holy Spirit in the same manner in which we were justified, through faith.
- The Holy Spirit was one the things promised to Israel
 - Joel 2:28
 - John 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7, 16
 - Acts 2
- In Galatians 3 we learn from Paul how the gentiles can receive this spiritual blessing also because of how God justified Abraham.

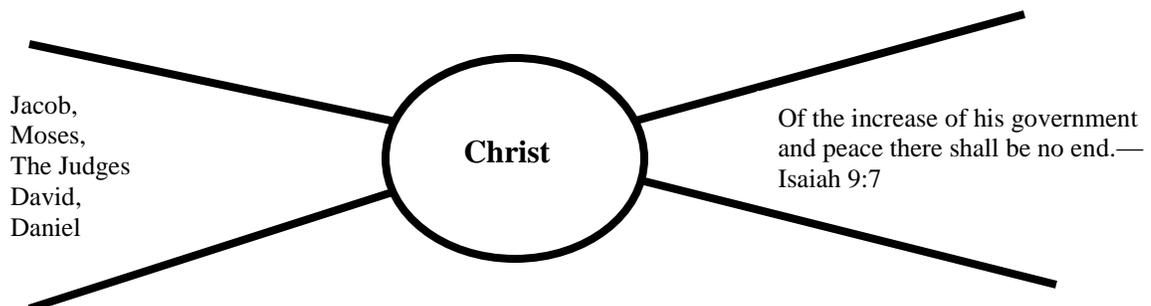
Galatians 3:15

- *“Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.”*
- Paul is saying that he is speaking in terms of a human covenant. Once a covenant is signed one party cannot go back and change the terms of the agreement.
- Paul has two main points that he wants to firmly establish in the minds of the Galatians:
 - Even as a human covenant is final and not changeable; likewise the Abrahamic Covenant has not been disannulled.
 - As a human covenant cannot have anything added to it; likewise the Abrahamic covenant the Abrahamic covenant did not have the law added to it. (Campbell, 77).

Galatians 3:16

- *“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.”*
- In order to understand this verse you have to difference between the seeds plural and the seed singular.
- Some of the promises given to Abraham were:
 - That a special land with specifically defined borders defined borders would be given to him (Genesis 15:18-20)
 - That his offspring would become a great nation (Genesis 13:16)
 - That in him all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3)

- Notice that the promises plural were given to the seed singular which is defined in the verse as Jesus Christ.
- Are we to understand from this verse that the promises made to Abraham did not extend to his seed plural?
 - Genesis 13:14-16
 - Genesis 15:5
 - Genesis 17:6-8
 - Genesis 22:17-18—who could read these passages with unbiased mind and question that in all these promises God had the multiplied seed of Abraham in mind.
 - Genesis 26:4
 - Genesis 28:14—not only do these promises extend to Isaac and Jacob but to the rest of Abraham’s multiplied seed.
- It is clear that this is how Moses and prophets understood the promises God made with Abraham.
 - Deuteronomy 1:8-10, 21
 - Isaiah 60:1-3
 - Jeremiah 23:3-6
 - Zechariah 8:13, 23
 - Acts 3:25-26
- Consider the following passage from Stam’s commentary on Galatians: “Perhaps it will help at this point first to notice what the verse does not say. It does not say that God would not bless Abraham’s multiplied seed, or through them the world. It does not say that God would bless only Christ, the single seed, and make Him alone a blessing to the world, though in a sense this is true, for all blessing flows through Him. The Apostle simply states that in making the promises to Abraham and his progeny, God used the word seed, which is singular in form, and that he did this because he had Christ in view. In other words, God specially avoided the use of plural words which might have been used . . .”(Stam, 182-183)



- Please glance at the foregoing chart and note how the possibility of blessing the world through Israel’s multiplied seed diminishes steadily until we get to the One person—just one of the seed of Abraham the Lord Jesus Christ. Does it not follow, then, that God’s promise concerning the multiplied seed will not be fulfilled because they forfeited the blessing through failure and unbelief, and that therefore the nations will be blessed

through Christ alone? Not exactly. Are we hedging when we answer the question in this way? No, for God will indeed bless the world through the multiplied seed of Abraham. This has been proven, not only by the unconditional promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob , but also by repeated prophetic confirmation both before and after Pentecost. However, Israel will never become the world's blessing until she does so through Jesus Christ because the blessing of the world is wrapped up in Him alone. (Stam, 184-185)

- Even for Israel the only way to inherit blessings is through Jesus Christ.