

## **“The Curse Of The Law”**

*“For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse, for it is written, cursed is everyone who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them”* (Gal. 3:10; Deut. 27:25). Paul’s conclusions were justified, namely: *“Now that no man is justified by the law before God is evident: for, the righteous shall live by faith, and the law is not of faith, but, He that doeth them shall live in them”* (Gal. 3:11f). All who sought to be justified by the law were under a curse, for cursed were those who did not keep the law and that embraced everyone for *“all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”* and *“sin is transgression of law”* (Rom. 3:23; 1 Jn. 3:4).

Do not misunderstand the apostle’s words *“... the law is not of faith.”* He did not mean that faith was not expressed nor required during the time when the law held sway. It did and was. Even before the giving of the law, God had given Moses signs to show Israel He sent Moses to them that they might believe (Exo. 4:1-31)! Furthermore, most fell in the wilderness and failed to enter Canaan because of their unbelief (Heb. 3:19). God’s people did believe in God and were required to do so while the law was in force. Why, if faith was both present and required, did Paul say, *“The law is not of faith”*?

The law was in essence an “experiment;” an experiment which result God already knew but which results man had to learn: justification does not come by perfect law keeping. Its precept was, *“He that doeth them shall live in them”* and the Law had no permanent remedy for sin thus, *“cursed is everyone who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.”* If justification comes to man, it must be upon some other basis than “perfect law keeping.” No justification is possible apart from grace and forgiveness.

Had Paul’s discourse stopped with these words, *“As many as are of the works of the law are under a curse,”* despair would surely fill our souls. But his further words brought much joy: *“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is every man who hangeth upon a tree”* (Gal. 3:13; Deut. 21:23). This thought is akin to that uttered by Paul to the Corinthians: *“Him who knew no sin, he made to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in him”* (2 Cor. 5:21). One of the cardinal points in redemption is that God allowed His Son to die in our stead. The sacrifice of Christ was needful that *“upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith”* (Gal. 3:14).

Although Paul's arguments are far from a conclusion, one cannot help but wonder what the reaction of Gentile Christians in the Galatian churches must have been when he read what Paul had written thus far; to realize that the efforts of the Judazing teachers to bind circumcision and the keeping of the law upon them would result in placing them under a curse. Were they enlightened? Or, had they become so deluded already that this warning from him who in fact was their spiritual father fell upon deaf ears? These Galatians are dead and gone, of course, but for their eternal security we hope that they opened their eyes to the dangers the teachers they were disposed to heed. We hope they rejected them! NEXT: "I Speak After The Manner Of Men."

Jim McDonald