

# Galatians 3

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## Synopsis

Human beings clearly have a sin problem. Our desires and actions have clearly and significantly departed from God's original plan for our lives. Because of this diversion, we have become cursed. As Galatians 3 teaches, however, Christ has become that curse for us. He stood in our place so that we might have life and freedom. The result of that act of sacrifice is forever becoming a part of God's family, a family that breaks down social barriers and unites all people.

The **recommended passages** are Galatians 3:10-14 and Galatians 3:26-29. These passages are about the human condition and Jesus standing in for us. An **alternative scripture** is Galatians 3:15-18, focusing on Abraham and his relationship to salvation.

**The win this week:** learn both about the nature of our curse (sin) and the remedy (the cross of Christ). The implications of this: all people have a chance to be a part of God's family.

## Blessing through Curse

**Read Galatians 3:10-14 & 3:26-29**

## Commentary

In Galatians 3:10-14, Paul interestingly quotes two different passages from Deuteronomy about curses. He does this to show a connection between the two. He first quotes Deuteronomy 27:26, which states that unless you perfectly keep the law, you are cursed. In Galatians 3:13, he quotes Deuteronomy 21:23: "cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole." The curse of the law, announced in verse 10, finds the remedy in verse 13. Jesus' death on the cross is the remedy for sin.

The law is a curse because our separation from God is too great for us to achieve reconciliation alone. You might think of Sisyphus in Greek mythology: he is forever consigned to rolling a huge boulder up a mountain each day only to have it come crashing back down again. The law is like this. It's ultimately incomplete and insufficient; no matter how hard we try, our best efforts will never succeed in the end. The curse will still be on us, regardless of how perfectly we try to keep the law. The cross of Jesus opens the door to salvation for us. Only through Jesus' death can this curse be lifted. Eugene Peterson said: "The single, overwhelming fact of history is the crucifixion of Jesus...it is not a minor incident in the political history of the first century that is a nice illustration of courage. It is the center."

Paul then ties this to Abraham. In Genesis 18:18, God makes it clear that he intends to make Abraham into a great nation. That he plans to bless the world through his family. God intends

to keep his promise of blessing the world through Abraham, saving his whole family. Through the cross of Christ, this promise of salvation is brought to the entire world. We are all now invited to become a part of the family of God, not just Jews but also Gentiles. And just like Abraham, we can be called righteous because of our faith. And with our faith, comes the Spirit (Gal. 3:14).

Paul beautifully illustrates this in Galatians 3:26-29. In Jesus Christ, we are all children of God. We are a part of his family. And with this family status, so are we saved. Most remarkably, all man-made social structures and hierarchies are demolished. Before Jesus, Jewish men prayed every morning: “Thank you God that I am not a *Gentile*, a *slave*, or a *woman*.” In Galatians 3:28, Paul (in what is perhaps the most morally progressive statement ever) says: “now there is no Jew nor Greek (Gentile), slave nor free, male nor female, we are all one in Christ.” This statement was henceforth the foundational creed for every human rights movement (whether they knew it or not). Fighting for human rights wasn’t a thing until Jesus came around.

Where there was once disunity, there is now unity in Christ. Through the law have we all found our curse. Through Christ have we all found our freedom.

## ② Questions

“Cursed” is not really a word we use anymore unless we’re talking about witches or bad words. What do you think Paul means by it here?

Jesus died for everyone, right? Does that mean all people will be saved?

Galatians 3:28 has been called by some one of the most morally progressive statements ever. Why would that be? Could there be any other things in Paul’s world that might lead us to think that is true?

Paul says we have “clothed ourselves with Christ.” What does this mean?

In Galatians 3:26, Paul says that we are all “sons of God”...but not daughters. Why might this be significant?

## ② Application Questions

We don’t really have “Jew and Greek” anymore. What might be other social distinctions that we create and hold against people?

Sadly, most people think generally being a good person will get them to heaven. These scriptures don't really jive with that. What do we say to those people?

Paul says that we "receive the promised Spirit through faith." Sometimes we don't feel close to God—if that's the case, are you putting yourself in a position to receive his Spirit?

What might we say to people that think "they're too bad" to go to heaven and are resigned to hell?

Is there a sort of "law" that still sneaks into our version of Christianity today? Do you know of any practices that you might consider "under the law"?

Talk for a minute in your groups about your own experiences with being saved by Jesus: curse, saved, spirit. Can you recount each of these moments in your life?

Why would we have ever been given the law if it's just a curse?

If we are really free from the law and instead live by faith in Christ, what does this mean about how we live now? Is there a certain prescribed way to live?

What does it really mean to have faith? Will you be able to move mountains? Or how about just pass next weeks test?

### **Accountability**

Even though we know we have been saved by Jesus, it's often very easy to revert back to old ways. We start feeling condemned if we don't read our Bible or pray enough. We feel like we better go to church at least 3 times per month. We might even feel guilty if we don't feed the homeless every week. But the cross of Christ is bigger than that.

- What are some ways we can learn to experience the freedom of Christ?
- Guilty isn't always bad—in fact it's good when it forces us to repentance. Where are you experiencing healthy and unhealthy guilt or conviction?

### **Resource Toolbox**



[Francis Chan on Grace](#)



[John Wesley on Sin](#)



[C. S. Lewis, \*Mere Christianity\* "The Perfect Penitent"](#)



[King's Cross by Tim Keller](#)