

The Just shall live by Faith

Volume 1 - Study 3 Galatians 2:19, **I through the law am dead to the law; I am crucified with Christ:**
C. Ronald Johnson, Christian Wilderness Press: Galatians 3:1-3, **Who hath bewitched you? Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect [i.e. completed] by the flesh?**

Studies - The Just shall live by faith --

The Blessing of Abraham confirmed to the Gentiles for Righteousness, Faith, and the Promises.
The Galatians Walked by Faith in the Promises as Guaranteed in Jesus Christ.

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“teachings” or “doctrines”.

Volume 1, Study 3

Galatians 1:6 through 4:4-5

In Rome many Christians were persecuted and perhaps dazed by all the religions among which they lived (and still lived) after they had accepted Jesus Christ. The only people nearby and familiar to them that spoke allegiance to the Bible (our Old Testament) were Israelites, proselytes to the Israelite religion, and the often outspoken and in-your-face ‘Jews’ who consider themselves the keepers of the Mosaic Law as well as keepers of the sacred things in the temple in Jerusalem. See Volume 1, Study 2 for some discussion about ‘the Jews’.

The previous study in Romans covered how Paul was writing 1) to persecuted Christians about ‘righteousness’ and 2) about ‘faith’, by means of which ‘righteousness’ can be ‘accounted’ to the Christian, but also that 3) by faith ‘righteousness’ could even be somewhat ‘experienced’ by the Christian. Paul had received news of the Christians in Rome, which demonstrated to him that they were (as were most of the early churches) having trouble with pervading influences coming against the things that Paul was teaching.

Furthermore, the strongest influence against Paul’s teaching was either by the religiously zealot ‘Jews’ or by Christian leaders influenced by ‘the Jews’. As some of the Christian leaders studied their Bibles (the Old Testament), they had in their communities these very religious and pious ‘Jews’ who were ‘specialists in the scriptures’; therefore, to better understand their Bibles, some Christian leaders went to the Jews for learning so that they could better teach their followers. This was especially the case when there were no apostles nearby like Paul, Barnabas, or Appolos. Therefore, many Christians were coming under the influence of pious ‘Jews’ who were very much into *doing the actions of the Law* without being into *the faith that the Law required of them to become pleasing to God*.

In the previous study, Paul focused upon 1) why the great majority of ‘the Jews’ missed out on the kind of ‘righteousness’ which God had for them within the ‘righteous law’ (the Mosaic Law); and then he 2) went on to explain to Christians why so many Christians were also missing out on ‘righteousness in Christ’ due to much the same reason that ‘the Jews’ had missed out on ‘righteousness’.

To repeat, Paul in the Book of Romans focused upon how the Jews have missed out on ‘righteousness’ due to their misconstrued concepts in ‘the Jew’s religion’. However, in the letter to the Galatians he takes on the task of explaining to Christians that to be taught in the *modern interpretation* of ‘the Jews’ (thinking that it will help them in their Bibles to better understand Christ) would only confuse them regarding God’s real message in scripture that has everything to do with Biblical faith. Paul is very concerned about how much ‘the Jews’ religion’ is affecting, indeed, invading the early churches of his day.

In his discussion, Paul interjects something of Israel’s history because ‘these self righteous Jews’ had gotten into trouble with God by (self) righteously ‘working at their own concepts of the law instead of simply believing’ (i.e. ‘faithing’) God regarding the original Law. Like Paul would say, “They walked by their understanding and their works instead of walking by faith, which faith is of God and not of their own understanding.”

Israel’s environment had changed (i.e. greatly deteriorated) since the days of David and Solomon. Only the southern portion existed of the original inheritance, and the land’s glory had diminished

to the point that only by means of Jerusalem and the temple was the little nation known for its Yahweh religion. Even so, that religion had in varied ways and means (mostly unknown to us moderns) invaded the nations such that it had many believers in the nations. Indeed, many of the scattered Israelites had been used of God to bring many Gentiles to Him. Therefore, not only were Israelites of all the original tribes making pilgrimages to Jerusalem, but so were many Gentile believers in Yahweh; the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 is a prime example. Such was the environment into which Christ Jesus arrived unto the world, and it was still the situation when Paul was called to preach to the nations. That period was a conjunction of ages in God's Plan of the Ages. It was a time when the Promises of the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant were fulfilling and upgrading into the higher Covenant in Christ.

This "upgrading" environment (controlled by God, thank goodness) was spreading into the nations. The new-born Early Church was struggling to keep its head above the waters of apostasy. The church leaders who were leading believers away from what Paul was teaching were essentially walking in the same error as 'the pious Jews', having caught the religious zeal of 'the Jews'. These Christian leaders focused upon 'working at' Christian teachings in all of their strength instead of 'faithing in' Christian teaching. (Now when a person works hard at something, laboring much in time and perhaps finances, it is easy to become persuaded by his own well-thought-out and well-intentioned ideas... which soon enough become doctrine for him.) These leaders worked so zealously in the new Christian teachings that they even became influenced by 'the zealous Jews'. Here were two different groups that had the same love of their Bibles; how often do zealous people try to out-hustle other zealous people? The lives of both zealous types became skewed by working hard at what they understood (i.e. their mental concepts).

However, Paul wanted Christians to be changed by God *simply within walking the faith that God had given them*. This is why Paul used 'the Jews' as his example to Christians, because 'the Jews' had turned from the Law of Righteousness given them by God to their own interpretation of the Law (which interpretation they had evolved over some four hundred plus years) so that their skewed interpretation had become 'the law of the Jews'. They thoughtfully consider their modern times and they decided that the times called for "a law better adapted for their day". I fear that the Church today, in its many splintered forms has essentially done the same.

Yes, I know, "Not my church or your church", but I repeat: I fear that all of the Church today in its many splintered forms has essentially done the same. Are we ready to survive in the drastically and quickly changing world? On more than a few occasions God took his people Israel though some very difficult times and only those who 'walked by faith' - as Paul calls it - survived with the obvious hand of God upon them. During the early Christian age we can tell by the Epistles (and also by history) that God introduced much of the Church to His Son and then directly into very difficult times, even persecution. When only 'walking in faith' (therefore pleasing God by doing so) is the ultimate key to survival in such times, it is amazing that only a minority of God's people did so and were therefore included in a survived remnant. Also amazing are the stories of those who 'walked by faith' and did not survive on earth, but who are beneath the altar in heaven as beloved martyrs.

Dear reader, note what God did to His own people Israel. Note what He has done to the empires of history. Does the rapidly growing wickedness in Europe and America deserve any less? If you could ask one of the surviving faith-walkers of past judgments upon the nations what it was like for him, I am sure he would say something like this, "Well...it was interesting...and overall it was victorious; that is, for me and others like me. I say this even though I did not meet up with many like me, but the few testimonies I did hear verified that it was pretty much the same with them. And thankfully, God saved many of the brethren who clung to my shirttails for dear life. God surely was good to us."

Who are the few that will have long shirttails for such clinging? Who will have even enough faith to even cling on to such a faith-walker? I am not speaking of Jesus' second coming. I am speaking of God's judgment on Europe and America coming.

Paul begins this epistle by declaring his ‘apostolic position before the Lord’. He did this because he would go on the offensive against ‘another Gospel’ (1:6) that differed from the Gospel he preached. In his declaration, then, Paul is ‘**not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father**’. Paul declares that he has gotten his authority and mission directly from Christ Jesus himself...therefore he says, “Listen up!” Furthermore, all of the brethren with Paul, by sending their greetings, were *verifying the things that Paul will be preaching in this letter*.

Gal 1:6-10) I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him [i.e. God] that called you into the grace of Christ [to go] unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or [is it] God [who persuades men]? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

1:11-16) But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in *the Jews' religion*, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in *the Jews' religion* above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly *zealous of the traditions of my fathers*. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

‘**To reveal his Son in me...**’ is Paul’s way of saying that his experience with Christ so fired his inward parts that he began to see in all of the scriptures (i.e. the scriptures of his up-bringing and training) that the promised Messiah and his coming were everywhere in those scriptures.

Moreover, that his (renewed) learning in the scriptures came to him of God and not of man.

1:17-2:2) Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me [i.e. the evidence and manifestation of God]. Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation [i.e. he was told or it was implied by God], and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but [I did it] privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

2:3-5) But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: And that [knowledge seemed to be a problem to some] because of false brethren unawares brought [it] in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for [even] an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you [i.e. with the Galatians and all the gentile churches].

Here we see Paul introducing his theme to the Galatian Christians, which theme had to do with the evil effect of ‘another Gospel’ influenced by ‘the Jews’ that has been sweeping through the churches and even into places where Paul has not yet been, like Rome. Paul explains how even some of the Christian ‘Jews’ (or ‘Jewish’ Christians) were strong enough and zealous enough in their bias toward their olden beliefs that they continued persuading and pushing their errors such that the errors were alive and growing even in Jerusalem where some of the apostles lived and worked.

Indeed, Jerusalem at the time was where some of the church fathers lived and therefore it

was still the Center of the Church. Soon with the destruction of Jerusalem this situation would abruptly end.

2:6) But of these who seemed to be somewhat [important], (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference [i.e. a group of men coming before the council of apostles and elders in Jerusalem where Paul was visiting] added nothing to me: But contrariwise, when they [i.e. the council] saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision [i.e. the Gentiles] was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision [i.e. Israelites] was unto Peter; (For he [i.e. God] that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be [the] pillars [of the council], perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen [i.e. Gentiles], and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

At this point and following, Paul goes into how he steadfastly defended gentile Christians even from seeming-intrusions of the 'other Gospel'. Note how Paul details a time when Peter and other important Christians from the headquarters in Jerusalem were visiting in Antioch and conducting themselves as did the gentile Christians. However, when other visitors from Jerusalem arrived in Antioch, Peter and friends slipped into the error of which Paul is so concerned.

Remember: the Church (among God's people of the nations and God's people Israel) was in a war and Satan, through varied means, was seeking to destroy the Church...or at the least he wanted to confuse and misdirect the Church. (Oh, how splintered the Church has become.)

2:14-15) But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

Here Paul is turning, as he sometimes did, to sarcasm. Though Paul considers himself an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin, clearly he no longer considers himself 'a Jew'. Nor does he consider Peter 'a Jew'. So he says to Peter something like this, "Are you going to somehow be a Jew among gentiles and teach gentiles to live as Jews...yet you yourself claim to live as do the gentiles...and so you cannot possibly really and truly be 'a Jew' because 'Jews' only live 'like Jews' or they become condemned among their people. Peter you are making no sense!"

Consider that Peter was born and raised a fisherman, though by now he was a great apostle in the hand of God, and Paul was the smooth-worded, elite-trained preacher who, nevertheless, considered himself 'least of the apostles'. So how dare Paul speak like this to Peter?! Indeed, there were some things that surely drew Paul out of his normal humility, which demonstrates just how focused and concerned was Paul regarding this 'another Gospel'. He was concerned about the damage it was doing to the Early Church.



Now Paul turns to 'justification' which arrived to the family of God through Christ Jesus.

Gal 2:16) Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we [who at one time were Jews] have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Paul is now back to addressing the Christians in Galatia, and he has shown how he had taken on even the great Apostle Peter for the sake of the gentile Christians under his charge. Moreover, Paul has turned in this letter from the Jews' *interpretation of the law* and now he quotes from scripture. He is not speaking here of 'the Jews religion', but of the original Mosaic Law when he states 'for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified'.

Among other things, this verily infers that any Israelite in the age before Christ's coming, if

he or she was justified before God, then essentially it was by means of a ‘walk of faith’ before God, and thereby God ‘accounted him or her as righteous’, even as with Father Abraham.

2:17) But if, while we [i.e. Israelites] seek to be justified by Christ [instead of by the righteous law which God had give to Israel], we ourselves also [even as the gentiles] are found [to be] sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? [I.e. Paul is asking this of the Galatians: Is Christ Jesus turning away God’s people Israel from the Righteous Law? And thereby is he becoming a minister of sin to the Israelites by turning them from the Righteous Law?] God forbid.

Paul is clear that when an Israelite is upgrading from the flock of God (fed by the Mosaic Law) unto the new flock in Christ (fed by the more fulfilling but simpler food of heaven’s faith) then the Israelite will recognize that he, like any gentile believer, is in fact a sinner and has missed the mark of ‘righteousness before God’. Indeed, those Israelites turning to Christ Jesus were suddenly recognizing that they, even like the gentiles, were sinners...whereas they had been taught, in the modern version of the law (i.e. ‘the law of the Jews’), that *by obeying the law as best as they could that they were no longer sinners before God.*

Paul states that ‘justification’ regarding their sins had never been given to Israel in the Law. Assuredly Israelites had received *forgiveness* (which, however, is quite different than *not being held guilty*). Their *forgiveness* was *conditionally maintained by the full function of the Sacrificial Law*. On the other hand, the wonderful aspect of ‘*justification*’ had come in as a *higher and all-encompassing function within the family of God*...available in and of Christ Jesus within the *new and higher Covenant*.

So, dear reader, what was it that Abraham and many others received *before* the Law arrived particularly unto the nation of Israel? It was ‘an accounting as righteous’, because ‘accounting as righteous’ had been in effect from the days of the sin of Adam and Eve, and so it came into the lives of and affected every person who actively sought out and believed (i.e. faithed) their God, Yahweh Elohim. Adam and Eve did so, and so did Able and so did Seth; but Cain did not. In Genesis, many believers are listed who did so. And I am persuaded that there were myriads that did so...of whom we will not know until we join them.

But please understand that such ‘accounting as righteous’ also was not ‘justification regarding sins’. Justification came in by the higher Sacrificial Blood of Christ Jesus and therefore ‘justification’ is higher than *forgiveness* and higher than *accounting as righteous*. This does not mean that any person in the ages-long family of God was any less saved. It only means that God used other methods in their salvation, which methods pointed to and culminated in Christ Jesus’ Sacrifice and Resurrection. Everyone in and of the family shall be raised.

Now as regarding Biblical faith, which is necessary in each mode of God’s salvation, does the reader remember the ‘manna in the wildernesses? It came to Israel *before* the Mosaic Law. Therefore, Christ in saying that ‘he is the bread of life’ points back to that simple ‘manna’ which was gathered in faith every morning for the day. Such is ‘the simple food of simple faith’, which is the *very faith taught and available throughout Old and New Testaments*. In other words, regarding ‘faith’, God has done in Christ Jesus something like “back to the future”; in that, He has returned His people of the Mosaic Law back to the simple ‘manna’ (i.e. a feeding by means of ‘faith alone upon Christ Jesus our Lord’). Jesus also implied this.

Furthermore, early on, such ‘food of faith’ had also been offered to the gentile nations as well. Though we have little in the Bible describing much of it, we do have scriptural evidence that the same sustenance was eaten by the huge multitude of gentiles who followed the Israelites for forty years through the wildernesses of the Sinai Peninsula.

However, in Christ Jesus in the time of Paul, God was in the process of effectively spreading spiritual sustenance among the nations as the ministry of Paul clearly shows. But also, Paul was making it clear that God, in Christ, was *not* turning Israelites away from the Mosaic Law which He had particularly and especially given them...‘God forbid’. Instead, God was offering them the new Manna in Christ Jesus, their Messiah.

Now Paul turns to the necessity of the Mosaic Law both to Israel as a nation and to the entire world in its teaching and pointing to and explaining of the multiple functions of Christ Jesus' Sacrifice and Resurrection. (The duty of this explanation was especially taken on by the Writer of Hebrews.)

2:18-19) For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I [Paul is speaking of his own experience] through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

Paul was indebted to the law. For by means of the Law he became dead to the Law by way of his new "upgrade" into life in Christ. Just as Christ was crucified to fulfill the Law, so Paul, with life in a resurrected-Christ, was crucified with Christ. That is, Paul was no longer bound under the 'Righteous Law'; instead he was bound under the 'Righteous Christ' who is the 'Fulfillment of the Righteous Law'.

For years I have been using a great software program called "e-Sword", which can be obtained free on the internet. Recently I upgraded to the latest version of e-Sword and at this moment I am copying scripture from it into my word processor. The old version worked well. The new version does the same thing, but with more capabilities added. I will not go back to the old. Yet, it was the old version that served me well and introduced me to the new version.

This is a rather low illustration of a much higher "upgrade by God in Christ", but I hope that it serves the purpose. Paul loved the righteous law in which he was raised as a child and as a young man had intensely studied; for by it he became slain and, within Christ, became crucified unto the higher Law of Christ. Moreover, it was in continued study of the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets that Paul preached his Spirit Inspired words that have come down to us.

2:20) I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of [i.e. pertaining to] the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. [Therefore,] I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Paul, in all of his writings, makes it clear that the Mosaic Law was a 'law of (i.e. pertaining to) righteous'; however, the *godly kind of righteousness* witnessed to in scripture of the olden saints did not come by the Law. Instead came (i.e. was 'accounted') to a person only by God Himself. Paul makes this clear by using Abraham as the example. Albeit, the law *does pertain to righteousness*, in that, if an Israelite would *in faith* obey the law given to him, then God most definitely would 'account him righteous', even as was the case with Abraham before the time of the Law. (I am trying hard not to become too repetitious; yet, Paul is repetitions and we are following his arguments.)

This is similar to when Jesus taught his disciples for three years, and then he gave them his commandments, and then he said to them, '**He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.**' (John 14:21)

The Israelites, in keeping God's Law, had done exactly to God what Jesus had said to his disciples about keeping his commandments. Moreover, Jesus had said 'not one jot or tittle of the Law shall be done away until all is accomplished'. Christ's coming, death, and resurrection introduced something higher than the Law, which was the Law's Fulfillment. But the Fulfillment did not condemn the Law. Instead the Fulfillment justified all the more God's giving of the Law to His people Israel...as a way to please Him in faith so as to be 'accounted righteous'.

3:1) O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

These Galatians (extremely fortunate to have had the Fulfillment of the Law set forth before them, indeed he was crucified for them) had turned to the method of 'the Jews' in trying to become righteous *by working at the law*...even though the Law (and the working at it) had not even accomplish God *accounting them as righteous in their working at the Law*. Paul had set Christ's truth before the Galatians, and certainly the Spirit had given witness of Christ's truth, and the Galatians had been saved out of their sinful ways and... But, "Who hath bewitched

you?” Paul wants to know.

3:2) This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

In the previous study, the meaning of ‘the hearing of’ was given: It infers “that which is ‘heard of God by a messenger’ and then it is told to more ‘hearers’...then the thing ‘heard by these hearers’ becomes, in fact, ‘the word of God’.” Paul uses ‘hearing’ in regards to the Galatians having ‘heard the words of God’, which ‘hearing of the word’ (in faith) resulted in them becoming Christians and receiving ‘the Spirit’.

3:3) Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect [i.e. completed] by the flesh [i.e. in working at the Law]?

In trying to become better or more complete Christians, they had *not* adopted the Mosaic Law as it existed in the scriptures. Even so, they had adopted the twisted version espoused by ‘the pious and zealous Jews’ and they had zealously applied it in a twisted fashion to the truths that Paul had been teaching them. (Yes, this is repetition, but it is Paul’s repetition.)

3:4) Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.

Remember our previous study wherein Paul was writing to the Christians in Rome who were experiencing much the same troubles as these Christians in Galatia? Both had been and were continuing to experience tribulations. Yet, in their sufferings they had experienced God’s clear and very obvious help. (This is what our previous study was about.) Had the experiences of God’s help amid their sufferings been in vain?

3:5-8) He [i.e. God] therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it [i.e. His workings] by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith [i.e. the things you have heard pertaining to faith in Christ that has saved you made you His]? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the [spiritual] children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would *justify* the heathen *through faith*, preached before [the coming of Christ] the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

Here Paul makes it clear that being *saved by grace* (a New Testament phrase) was always in effect by means of ‘faith’...which the early parts of the Old Testament emphasize in the stories of the saints portrayed in scripture...which is why the New writers speak of those saints so often...and thus Abraham (whose story is expansive) even more portrays it...which is why Paul likes to use Abraham as an example in his writings.

Always, God ‘accounted a person righteous’ by the means of ‘this Biblical faith’. God did so before the Mosaic Law, during the time of the Mosaic Law, and now during this *time of waiting for our Lord’s return...which season has been extended to include ‘justification’ even for the sake of the gentile nations.*

3:9) So then they which be of [i.e. pertaining to] faith [in Christ] are blessed [along] with faithful Abraham.

3:10) For as many as are of [i.e. pertaining to] the works of the law are under the curse [which is contained in the Law]: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

The word ‘curse’ here means that a person *has fallen into contempt to the point of having evil invoked upon him*. It is what is meant in the Old Testament ‘the chastisement of the Lord’ when God would call unto nations to come in and give Israel much trouble and even defeat Israel in war and even take Israelites into exile.

Paul quotes scripture as it pertained to Israel: Not only was *faithfully obeying the law pleasing to God*, but God *protected* Israel by *chastising them* in attempts to keep them in the straight and narrow road. Thus, both ‘blessing and curse’ were incorporated within the Righteous Law. Will the Church today be *protected* by similar *chastising*? If so, how will a Christian survive?

3:11) But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, *The just shall live by faith.*

This ‘justification’ was emphasized above. Before the time of the law, and during the time of the law, it was only by faith that God ‘accounted a person righteous’. In the Old Testament stories, then, observe all of the ‘just’ men and women who were ‘accounted as righteous’. Many of these stories are in the book, God’s Hook.

3:12) And [though] the law is not of [i.e. pertaining to] faith: but [i.e. even so] The man that doeth them shall live in them.

Paul had used this phrase in our previous study quoted from olden scripture. It means that the Israelite who *walks in faith* amid his God-given Law *shall live within the promises given* in the Abrahamic Covenant and also *the promises given* in the Mosaic Covenant. Therefore, the ‘Righteous Law’ not only offered ‘forgiveness’, but it also offered *life* amid the Covenants and their Promises to the ‘forgiven ones’.

3:13) [On the other hand,] Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

Here we see Paul explaining the ‘curse’ or ‘chastisement’ that God had placed in the Law in an attempt to keep the nation of Israel upon the straight and narrow road. And so Paul explains that since Christians are under the Law of Christ and not under the Mosaic Law that the ‘chastisement or curse contained in the Law for rebelling against it does not affect Christians. Israel’s Messiah, Christ Jesus, redeemed rebellious Israel from ‘the curse of the law’ that was upon them, him ‘being made a curse for’ them (and for us gentiles).

For just as gentiles were estranged from God and had to be brought into favor with God through Christ, so it was with Israelites who were under the curse. Therefore, Christ Jesus has accomplished both, making those of the nations and those of Israel to be brothers in Christ. And just as any Israelite accepts Christ as his Savior (Messiah), so it is with any gentile.

Now Paul switches to the Promise of God to Abraham, for therein is the salvation of both the Israelites and the gentiles.

3:14) [So] That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through [the] faith [that pertains to Christ].

3:15) Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant [i.e. as compared to God’s Covenant], yet if it be confirmed [i.e. legally], [then] no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.

The Covenants of God with men are entirely *legal*. So it was with the Abrahamic Covenant and with the Mosaic Covenant, which is why breaking them had *legal* ramifications which often brought on chastisements. The ‘curse’ or ‘chastisement’ incorporated in the Mosaic Law does not affect Christians. Yet, God spans us each and every one when it is to our good.

3:16-17) Now to Abraham and his seed were the [Covenant] promises made. [And in that Covenant] He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ [i.e. to Abraham], [that] the [Mosaic] law, which was four hundred and thirty years after [the Covenant to Abraham], cannot disannul [the former Covenant], that it should make the promise [to Abraham about the Seed, Christ] of none effect.

3:18) For if the inheritance [of the Christ Covenant to Abraham] be of the [Mosaic] law, [then] it is no more of promise [but rather of a responsibility of being faithful to the Law]: but God gave it to Abraham by promise [which promise, if Abraham and any other man, woman, or child believed in by means of faith, then God would surely work His magnificent part regarding salvation].

In the following, Paul will give us more of the reason for God giving the Mosaic Law to Israel.

3:19) Wherefore then serveth the law [to God’s people]? It was added [unto the Abrahamic Covenant] because of [the] transgressions [of God’s people Israel against Him], till the seed [i.e. Christ] should come to whom the promise [by way of Abraham] was made; and it [i.e. the Law] was ordained by [i.e. through] angels [i.e. messengers] in the hand of a mediator [i.e. to be used in the

hand of a mediator, Moses being the initial mediator].

The last part of the verse means that the Law, as given through Moses, would be a tool in the hand of a mediator, which mediator according to the Law was a priest or even the high priest. People that had a problem between them were to go to the priests, who would use the Law as the Standard for all things including mediation. Though the priest was the person acting in mediation, it was actually the Mosaic Law which was the real mediator.

3:20) Now [i.e. but] a mediator is not of one, but God is one.

A mediator called in to settle a disagreement is there for mediating between at least two people...and he does not belong to (i.e. is not connected to) one of the persons. Moreover, the word 'one' more fully expresses 'a primary one' which in this context means *the higher person in the dispute to whom the opposing parties must obey*. This would be like you having a dispute with a president of a bank, and your lawyer has arranged with the court to bring in an independent moderator to work out a settlement.

'...but God is one' infers that God is the Primary One in this verse. Moreover, it infers "What man could possibly mediate between God and His people?"

Paul is indicating that the Mosaic Law was given as something of a *mediator* between God and His people Israel. That is, God set it up so that the Law was neither of Him nor of the people. Therefore, the Law was *nonaligned*. This means that neither the people, nor God, nor the priest acting in the mediating position could or would modify the Law's judgments and commandments. Therefore, the Law stood between God and the people as a Covenant. Each party to the Covenant was responsible for his part of the Covenant. Therefore, there was no man (not even Moses), but rather a Covenant that would mediate between God and His people.

If the people (or a person) broke the Law's commandments, then within the Mosaic Covenant there was a special *sacrificial part of the Law*. By means of the *sacrificial part of the Law*, if the people (or a person) would turn in obedience to the sacrifices, then they (he) would automatically be forgiven according to the Mediator, the Law. The Law, then, removed man from dealing directly with God in regards to the forgiveness contained in the Covenant of the Law, which is why Paul states that the Law 'is not of faith', rather it is of 'the letter'. Even so, God smiled in pleasure upon those Israelites who faithfully followed, trying in earnest, to obey the law and then took advantage of the sacrificial part of the Law.

The Mosaic Law was written down and taught to the people. In this, there existed the commandments and the penalty; but also there was the means of forgiveness from the penalty.

Now consider this: Faith between a person and God had always been in play from the earliest of days, being the Prime Factor between man and God. But with the Exodus of the chosen nation there came a need for a national law, the Mosaic Law. Just as God expects every Christian today to be obedient to 'the law of Christ' (and in lesser degree obedient to the law of the land) so it was with God and the Israelites, to be faithful to Him as Giver of the Mosaic Law.

However, to escape punishment for their sins against the Mosaic Law, the Israelites had the sacrificial part of the Law for forgiveness. (God is ever Merciful.) And they need not go directly to God for such forgiveness. Ah, but because they did not have to deal directly with God, *all too soon* the nation as a whole sadly became somewhat impersonal in their connection to God. They became more personally and religiously connected to the Law and more impersonally connected (almost disconnected) to God. This often resulted in straying and experiencing trouble from God.

However, Christ's coming, death, and resurrection made complete and effectual the *Covenant with Abraham pertaining to the Seed*. And with it a *walk with God* became more accessible through Christ Jesus to each child of God. The Abrahamic Covenant had always superseded the Mosaic Covenant. 'So, why then turn back from the Abrahamic Covenant unto the Mosaic Covenant?' is Paul's agonizing and repeated question to Christians of the early church.

I wonder if Paul would say to us, "Why do you substitute *a walk with your church and its fellowship of believers* for a secret *walk with God by means of the 'walk of faith'?*" One of these

is greater and more highly rewarding than the other, both being necessary.

3:21) Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life [i.e. in and of itself without faith involved], verily righteousness should have been by the law.

We cannot get away from the fact that ‘righteousness’ and ‘being accounted righteous’ (so as to exist ‘just’ before God) is Paul’s prime quest for every child of God. Our preceding study dealt with it. Indeed, Paul and the other apostles always deal with it 1) because ‘righteousness’ was the very reason for the Mosaic Law and the coming of the Fulfillment of the Mosaic Law, Christ Jesus, and 2) because so many of God’s people simply do not ‘walk by faith’ so as to become established *experientially* in the promise of Christ (the Fulfillment of the Righteous Law) so that a person might walk with God...as Abraham shows us how to do it in faith.

3:22-27) But the scripture hath concluded [that] all [God’s people are] under sin, [so] that the promise by faith of [i.e. pertaining to] Jesus Christ might be given to [all] them that believe. But before [the things of] faith came [to the nation of Israel], we [Israelites] were kept under the law, shut up unto the [time of] faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we [Israelites] are no longer under a schoolmaster [if we accept justification by faith]. For ye [Galatians] are all the children of God [also] by [means of] faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ [i.e. by means of faith which supersedes the law].

3:28-29) [Therefore] There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all [i.e. Paul is speaking to gentile and Israelite Christians] one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed [of the earlier Covenant], and heirs according to the promise [to Abraham].

4:1-4) Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

Paul is speaking to gentile and Israelite Christians (the gentiles still experiencing the world’s influence and the Israelites still experiencing ‘the Jewish’ influence) who are struggling amid ‘the war between the spirit and the flesh’.

4:4-5) But when the fulness of the time [i.e. pertaining to faith] was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we [both Israelites and gentiles] might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.



Here this study ends. I pray that Paul’s explanations to the Galatians help the reader. It seems that so few Christians understand what Jesus said, ‘**Not one jot or tittle of the law shall diminish until that all has been accomplish**’. Far too many Christians somehow think that the Law “is bad and that God finally corrected Himself and sent Jesus to make things right”. However, God is always the Same, and if He was wrong then...?

The Father and the Son are never wrong and are ever Mercy...but also Justice.

Dear reader, if you stay in the Word you will be amazed at how much you will come to ‘see’; and such ‘seeing’ will be between you and God (without my little interference with my little concepts). May our Lord Jesus and his Father have Mercy on us all.

Regarding the Book of Galatians, our study began with:

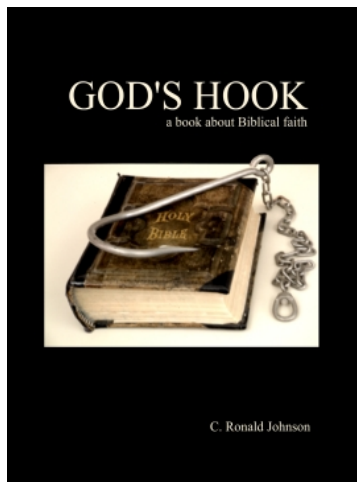
“However, in the Book of Galatians, Paul is dealing directly with a modern interpretation of the Mosaic Law by ‘the Jews’ of his day, to which he refers as ‘the Jews’ law’, or in 1:13 as ‘the Jews’ religion’. He is exposing how their interpretation differs from God’s original intent of the Law and therefore how it differs from the Gospel of Christ

Jesus.”

Paul also tells how the Mosaic Law was designed to work as a mediator between God and His people. Then he explains how the ‘law of the Jew’s religion’ worked against the true Law. In this, then, the reader of scripture is left to see how God was Good to His nation Israel...and how the nation rebelled against Him by their law-modifications.

The reader of scripture also is informed about *how strict men can be in their religious fervor and in their offenses against others not inclined toward their beliefs*. Paul observed it and experienced it among the Christians of the early church...even to the point where they did not want Paul and the other apostles to visit them. We see it today among so many Christians as they “defend the faith” (i.e. as they envision it) and thereby are caught up in varying degrees of offensiveness to other Christians and to non-believers alike. Let us allow the scriptures and the Spirit which inspired the scriptures to inspire us toward the Son and the Father. If we do this then we will become so humbled in the scriptures that our offensiveness will be washed away.

These are short Bible studies by C. Ronald Johnson at Christian Wilderness Press



a book
about
Biblical
Faith

the life of
Moses
and the
Exodus

