

11123U

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS - Burwood - 1984

THE HOPE OF THE RIGHTEOUS BY FAITH

Speaker: Bro. J. Martin

Study #2 The unity of the gospel

Reading: Galatians 3

My beloved brethren and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, brethren and sisters, having outlined the problem which he does, of course, in chapters 1 and 2, of the problem of Judaism, and its very bad effects in ecclesial life; and having given also a graphic illustration of how deceitful it is in the case, of course, of poor Peter, whom himself was drawn aside momentarily by the specious arguments of these people, what the apostle now does from chapter 3 onward, is to provide us, of course, with the answer to Judaism.

Chapter 3 is quite a famous chapter among us, as it mentions on numerous occasions in this chapter, of the life of Abraham. And of course, b&s, as ever the principle of faith was manifested in any body's life, it was in the life of Abraham, and we're going to see, some very very wonderful lessons, how that the power of faith is the power, of course, that will gain for us the kingdom, and not by the works of the Law. But first of all, the first 6 verses of this chapter, he appeals to the experience of the Galatians themselves, that they ought to know, b&s, by practical manifestations among themselves, that what he's saying is right. And you know, very often, of course, the apostle argues this way; and do you know also, b&s, there's no argument in the scripture worth it's salt that can't be argued by both theory and practice. Every argument that the scripture raises in theory, can be demonstrated in practice. If it can't be demonstrated in practice, it's wrong. The theory is wrong, not the scripture, but the theory is wrong. If we present an argument from the scripture, it is capable of demonstration; and so the apostle sets before them, experiences in their life that they ought to know that what he was saying was right.

Now there are many wonderful things in this chapter, b&s, and again, we will just seize upon those wider issues with which we hope to illustrate the glory of the apostle's argument in relation to works of Law vs. of course, the power of faith. 'O foolish Galatians' and you know, b&s, they were foolish; the very word that he chooses here in the Greek is a word which means 'a failure to exercise the mind rightfully' (453 + 3539), failure to thing the matter out; he said, oh, you're foolish not to think this matter out! And they were foolish, they had spurned the offer of God's grace, b&s, and had gone back to trust in their own ability; that's how foolish they were! He said, 'who hath bewitched

you, that you should not obey the truth?' Strong word that word 'bewitched' - 'to mislead by

pretense' (940), you know, b&s, the word means 'to fascinate', to be fascinated by somebody and be misled by them! and it's rather interesting that back in the Old Testament, the Septuagint, that is the Greek version of the Old Testament scripture, that very word is used for the 'evil eye', someone with an evil eye that could fascinate you. Well, he says, 'I want to draw your attention to something that happened before your very eyes'. You know, b&s, there was nothing magical about the crucifixion of Christ. It was very poignant, very dramatic, but certainly not misleading; and it was their idea that it was a dramatic demonstration of God's truth, that the Law can justify nobody, it was in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ our Lord, there is no evil eye about that! 'before whose very eyes'. Jesus Christ had evidently been set before them, b&s, as the crucified One, very graphic illustration; but you know, there's more in that than meets the eye, you know, when the apostle Paul said that! He said, 'you should not obey the truth before whose eyes, Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified AMONG YOU'. How could he say that, b&s? when, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ was not crucified in Galatia, He was crucified in Jerusalem; but wasn't He crucified in Galatia? You see, it's like we said earlier, and this could provide a subject on its own, and believe me, that's no idle boast, it could be a subject in its own right.

Now the apostle Paul was not only the chosen ambassador to preach the gospel, b&s, but to demonstrate it. And there are two words that are picked up from the prophecy of Isaiah 52 which the Lord applied to him on the way to Damascus, and when he repeated that experience, he repeated those two words. And those words were these, that Isaiah prophesied that the crucified Messiah would be preached among the nations and that they would see and hear! And on the way to Damascus the Lord was to tell Paul, that 'you must be my witness of all that you've seen and heard', and when he repeated that story in Acts 22, he made that point that he was a witness to all that he'd seen and heard. What he was preaching, b&s, was a matter of faith, that Jesus Christ was crucified to prove that no flesh should glory in God's presence and that works of Law cannot commend a man to God, and he went around demonstrating that in his own body. And to the Colossians he said, 'that he filled up in his body that which was lacking with the afflictions of Christ in his flesh, for his body's sake, which is the ecclesia.

Now there was nothing lacking in the afflictions of Christ, b&s, in the sense that Christ failed to do something; He failed to do nothing, He did everything right. There was nothing lacking in that sense, what was lacking was that there was never a practical demonstration of the Gentile word to that point; Jews had seen it but Gentiles had never seen it! That was lacking and Paul said, 'God's going to fill that need up in my body', and he went around the Roman world, b&s, and suffered for Christ's sake, 'I will show him what great things he must suffer for My name's sake', as a demonstration that Jesus Christ would be crucified among them. And you know, b&s, when you talk about motive (now this is a beautiful thing really when you think about it) because Paul makes this point on several occasions; when we argue the point with people and we say, 'you're wrong and I'm right', and they say 'you're wrong and I'm right', sometimes,

b&s, it's very difficult in the evidence way of who's right and who's wrong. Sometimes it's difficult to try and discern whether it's personalities merely, or whether there is a real issue at stake; but inevitably, the person in the right will be given the opportunity and will be able to demonstrate what they say as being correct. Inevitably, b&s, that demonstration will take the form of some painful experience whereby they will be called upon to manifest deep and abiding humility, and if they can do that, then there's not a soul who's witnessed that argument that can say, that their motive was base. A person with a base motive will never abide humiliation.

Now you know, the apostle Paul often made that point, as a matter of fact, the last point he made in the Galatians, when he'd gone through all his arguments for and against Law and Grace, the last argument he made, b&s, was in a figure, as it were, to turn his back and lift his shirt and say, 'have a look at that!', 'I bear the lashes and the marks, the stigma of the Lord Jesus Christ; and across his back, b&s, were the welts of the lashes received in Galatia! If he had a base motive those welts would never be there, he would have avoided the defence of the cross. And the fact, that he was Jesus Christ crucified among them, there wasn't a man or a woman who could point to him and say he had a base motive. You know, b&s, motives are remarkable things, in chapter 4 he presents it like this, in verse 19, he was Jesus Christ crucified among them, he was the manifestation of our Lord and he says in verse 19, 'My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you'. You know, b&s, and especially the sisters, would appreciate this point far more than brethren, they would know exactly what I'm going to say now; you look at the motive of suffering when you're producing a child. You see a woman carry her child for the gestation period, right to the end, and many of them labour very heavily towards the end of that period; and we think, 'oh, we wish that person would have their child, it would be a great relief for them', are they complaining about that, b&s? They don't complain about it at all, they may bear it, they may suffer it, but there's no complaint because they've got that child; they've got all that travail and pain for one reason. And although as Jesus says, 'it comes into the world with great sorrow, yet joy follows in that a man is born into the world'. And nobody could ever doubt the motive of that woman as she carries that child with all her sufferings!

And what's the apostle Paul doing, b&s? he's going around the Roman world, as it were, being seized with the agonizing pains of childbirth, what for? that he might have a child? NO, b&s, this was his motive, that children might be born to Christ, that Christ might be formed in them! And here's a man agonizing that children might be formed in them which would be the manifestation of Jesus Christ our Lord. And do you know where he got that from? that's out of Isaiah 53, 'He shall see the travail of His soul and be satisfied'. And here's a man carrying that principle to the Gentile world; and on behalf of Jesus Christ, undergoing the pains of childbirth, that Christ might have a family! What a motive that is! 'O foolish Galatians', and you know, b&s, it is particularly noted in scriptures of truth, pointed out to Timothy, of the persecutions and afflictions which came unto me, where? at Lystra, Iconium and Derbe (Galatia) and if ever there was a region that saw those agonizing pains of childbirth, they saw them! and they

never should have, b&s, by the experience he gave among them, ever questioned the motive of the apostle as they were doing here.

O foolish Galatians! and foolish they were, but you know, b&s, there is even a more glorious point than that, in verse 1, because he mentions the fact, 'that Jesus Christ had evidently been set forth crucified among them'. Now I invite your closest attention to this, because here's a classic illustration of Paul's usage of scripture. Jesus Christ 'was evidently set forth', now those three words in the Greek make up an expression which means 'a placard' as bro. Carter in his book on Galatians uses that very expression, 'Jesus Christ placarded before you' like that banner along the wall. Written in big letters that everyone can read it, and I believe, that the apostle is getting that from Habakkuk chapter 2, and you know what it says in Habakkuk 2 and verse 4, 'the just shall live by faith'. Now what was Habakkuk told to do with that statement, b&s? God said to Habakkuk, 'you write that plainly, that a man running might read it'; and whilst that has been interpreted to mean, that a man would read that warning and run to safety, I do not believe for a moment that that's what it means, and I disagree with respect to that opinion, because I know it doesn't mean that, because Paul tells us what it means here! It means, b&s, that Habakkuk was to write on the wall a message, 'the just shall live by faith' in such letters that a man running along couldn't misunderstand it, he'd be able to read it easily. He was to use the tallest letters possible to write that message, that a running man could read it.

And what was the message? Listen, 'THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH', now says Paul, 'is Jesus Christ crucified among you' and he's written him up like a placard, b&s, verse 11, 'but no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God, it is evident, it is evident! For the just shall live by faith'. Let's run past the cross, b&s, what brother or sister, even if he was an Olympic sprinter, could go past that cross and miss the message? What's the message? THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH! So here we go, roaring along as fast as our legs can carry us and we race past the cross and we look around; what's the message? The message, b&s, that he's trying to tell us, hanging up on that cross is this, that no man is justified by Law, I ask you, b&s, how tall are those letters? That man is PERFECT! You look around and think, no man is justified by the works of the Law, the Law has cursed Him, and the man is 100% PERFECT. Brethren and sisters, it is humanly impossible to write letters as tall as that, but if it's right for a perfect man to say that, where is the man or woman who is imperfect that can turn around to God in the sight of that cross, and say, 'I can justify myself by works of Law'. Jesus Christ placarded before us, it is evident, the just shall live by faith. What a remarkable message that is, b&s, what a remarkable message that is!

It's like telling an interested friend, 'why do I have to be baptized to declare that all flesh is grass?' But He did, and He was a perfect man and He did it to fulfil all righteousness, and the all righteousness that He fulfilled in His baptism, was to declare that all flesh is grass; if He had to do it, where is the son or daughter of Adam who would dare to stand up to God and say, 'I don't have to be baptized'. You can't write taller letters than that!

But a perfect man should admit blandly before the whole world, that flesh profits nothing and you can't be justified by Law. A perfect man says that; letters, b&s, never, ever, could be written by man to equal the height of that message, placarded before your very eyes; that's what Habakkuk is talking about.

And then the apostle Paul says, 'I'll ask you a question', he says in verse 2', go back on your own experience. You see, it's all a question of experience, when did you receive the gifts of the Spirit? Well, if they only just spent a couple of minutes thinking, 'when did they receive the gifts of the spirit? They didn't get them while they were under the Law, they never got them, b&s, while they were heathen, so if there were Jewish believers in that congregation (and there were) they didn't get it under the Law, if there were Gentiles believers there, they didn't get it in the heathen world; but both Jew and Gentile were given the gifts of the Spirit after they believed Paul's preaching! Crazy, isn't it? can't understand it, so how could they ever deny that?

He says, 'if that is true, are you justified by the works of the Law or by the hearing of faith?' Did you notice the use of the terms, works of Law, hearing of faith? You see, Law is a question of doing, isn't it, b&s? faith is a question of trusting. You know, the Jews came to Jesus on one occasion in John chapter 6 and they said, 'what must we do to work the works of God?' to which He replied, 'this is the work of God that ye BELIEVE on Him whom God sent'. So working a work of God, b&s, is simply accepting the hearing the message of the scripture; so we're either justified by the works of the Law or by the hearing of faith. And they knew by their own experience, of course, when that happened; it happened when they listened to Paul's gospel.

Furthermore, he says in verse 3, 'is your faith so great that you've begun in the Spirit, and now you want to take over from God and complete that work? Is that how big their folly was, b&s? They all had to admit as a point of history, that God had worked in their lives, why then do they take over from God? You know, Paul wrote to the Philippians and said, 'He that hath begun a good work in you, will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ'. Let Him go, let God have His way in our lives, don't impede His progress in our life by taking over from God, b&s. That was the offer that God made to Job; God made that offer to Job, not that Job could ever take up the offer, but God offered him to sit on His throne; He said, 'you clothe yourself with majesty, Job; you throw a garment around yourself like light and you sit where I'm sitting, and you control the world, Job, and control the children of pride; and then I'll say, well, you're justified in your own eyes!' But who could do that? who's going to take over the work of God? and when God outlined to Job the work He was doing in the earth, he was flabbergasted! he knew, b&s, that no man could finish the work that God had started, why try! and that's how foolish the Galatians were.

Furthermore in verse 4 he makes this point and it's a powerful point! 'Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain', and when they thought back to all the things that they put up with, in the cause of the truth, and of course, in the book of Acts

it is recorded that the brethren suffered much and when the apostle came back in Acts 14 and verse 22, he preached to them that 'through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom. Paul says, 'isn't that worthwhile? Why did you suffer?' People don't suffer willingly, b&s, for no reason, and the reason that Paul is trying to bring home to them, is the fact, that if they suffered like that, there must have been a conviction about that matter! And so their whole argument to this point in Galatians chapter 3, is on the basis of practical experience, both in his own life and theirs, and yet they couldn't see that, they couldn't see that!

And so he moves, b&s, to another great example of faith: 'Even, he says, in verse 6, 'Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness'. Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to take an inventory, to reckon'; it was not said that Abraham was righteous personally, individually in his own strength, HE WAS ACCOUNTED TO BE RIGHTEOUS. Well, you might say, 'well, how can we ever be sure about what sort of righteousness it is in Abraham's life? Well, we know the apostle tells us, do you see, b&s, it's like this, so we're going to go back to Abraham's life and we're going to say, 'What sort of righteousness did Abraham have? Well, it won't take us long to search, because we'll just get a concordance and look up the word 'righteous or righteousness in Abraham's life. Once, once, once in his whole life! is he said to be righteous; and that, of course, is in Genesis 15 and verse 6, and it says, 'he believed in Yahweh and He accounted it to him for righteousness'. That's the only place, b&s, in the narrative of Abraham's life where that word appears! So we've narrowed it down to one place, so what kind of righteousness was it? Very easy to work it out when you think simply and clearly. You see, b&s, it's like this, it's not so much important to believe that Abraham believed, what is important is to know what it was that he believed! because if we can define what it was that he believed, then we can define what sort of righteousness that was; what was it that he believed? God took him abroad, b&s, on a starry night, and looking up into the canopy of the heavens; purple there and the black and yet spangled across with the glorious galaxy of the stars twinkling in all their finite glory and beauty, he looks up there an aged man, and God said, 'so shall thy seed be'. And Paul tells us what he thought, he looked at his body and he thought, 'it's dead, I'm beyond producing children; it's impossible, I cannot do it, it is humanly impossible; looked to the heavens and said, 'I BELIEVE IT'. Righteousness then, b&s, scripturally defined is 'to believe in a human impossibility', and when Abraham evidenced his belief in something beyond his body, God said, that is righteousness. Clearly identifiable! righteousness is to believe something beyond the power of our body to perform; and when a man or a woman puts their trust in God to that extent, that, and that alone is righteousness, and because they cannot do it, it's got to be imputed to them. Paul just lifts that figure and he takes it straight across the history of the world and he brings us to the resurrection of the dead and he says, 'like as Christ died and was raised again for our justification', that's the same as Abraham, because when that man laid in the tomb, b&s, he was dead, HE WAS DEAD! It was humanly impossible to bring Himself out of that grave, but God stood Him up out of that grave! And when we, as believers, believe in the resurrection of Christ, we believe in a human impossibility and God says, 'that is

righteousness'. Because we believe it, it's our righteousness, because it's imputed to us because we believe it. That's what he's talking about when he talks about Abraham being justified by faith because he was accounted righteous.

Now he makes another point, b&s, which they ought to know! Verse 7, 'Know ye therefore' (1097), now when he uses that expression 'know ye therefore' it's a very powerful expression; the verb is imperative it's saying 'you should know', know what? know this, 'that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham'. He points out, b&s, that they that are out of faith, they are the sons of Abraham', they should know that, why should they know that? Well, think back on Abraham's life, was it capable of a practical demonstration; what child of Abraham came out of faith?

The word 'ek' is there, 'out of faith'. Well, I'll tell you who didn't, Ishmael, he was the product of a scheme between Sarah and Abraham, he wasn't out of faith! But there was a boy, b&s, born but when it was announced that he was to be born, a woman because she thought it was absolutely impossible, laughed at it! And when that boy came into the world, he was in every sense of the word, OUT OF FAITH. You ought to know that , and because God said that in Isaac shall thy children be called, in Isaac shall the genealogy be covenanted, in Isaac shall the family be extended, YOU OUGHT TO KNOW THAT THE CHILD ABRAHAM HAD WAS THE ONLY ONE BORN OUT OF FAITH. And consequently, b&s, as he goes on to make the point, only those who are, of course, of faith can be known, as the children of Abraham; no doubt about that, he says, you ought to know that!

Now then, if true children are born out of faith, and if they're born on the basis of that which is impossible with flesh, then they've got to be born, b&s, according to the Spirit of God; in the case of Isaac, operating upon two old people, both of course, in whom it was beyond the power to produce children. In our case, the power of His word operating upon our morality, our intellect, our emotions, producing children in the likeness of His son, but whatever operation is necessary, the children are the product of the Spirit, b&s. And if they are the product of the Spirit, where are national distinctions? because God has no nationality. And that's what Paul is trying to tell us, and because he wanted to tell them that, he says 'the scripture knowing that God would do that, foreseeing that, said 'In Abraham shall ALL FAMILIES of the earth be blessed'. Now do you see the point that he's making? ISAAC WAS OUT OF FAITH, therefore, though the literal son of Abraham and Sarah, yet really in a spiritual sense, born of God. Only those are the children of Abraham that are so born, God knows no nationality, that's what He said to Abraham, ALL FAMILIES OF THE EARTH WOULD BE BLESSED. It's as simple as that and it's an anomaly that Jews trace their genealogy back to Abraham, whose very name means that 'he was a father of many nations' (85); it's unbelievable, isn't it? after having traced their genealogy back to prove that they were the elite nation upon the earth, the only nationality that God recognized, and they traced it back to a man whose name means 'FATHER OF MANY NATIONS', that's how blind Judaism is! That's how absolutely blind Judaism is, it couldn't see that! but God saw it and foresaw it and made application for it in the 12th chapter of Genesis, 'in thee shall ALL families

of the earth be blessed'!

You know, in Isaiah 51, b&s, that is summarized for us; in verse 1, 'Hearken to Me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek Yahweh: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bear you'. So if anybody wants to follow after righteousness, look unto Abraham; you've only got one place to look, Genesis 15, he found it by faith in a belief in human impossibility. Now what happens to people that believe that? well in verse 2 we read it again, 'Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him as one', as the Hebrew word 'yachiyd' (3173) means. 'I called him as one, blessed him, increased him', so those that be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham, says Paul in Galatians. I called him as one, blessed him, increased him, that's a summary of all that Paul's teaching in Galatians 3. God called him as one, He preached before the gospel unto Abraham; there's only one kind of seed, and when Abraham believed God, He blessed him, and all those who share that faith and that blessing are increased in Abraham, you're all the children of God by faith, you're all Abraham's seed; He called him as one, blessed him and increased him! that's the characteristic of Abraham's faith, although the children spring forth as the stars of the heaven for multitude, not one of them, b&s, are noted according to their nationality, but according to their characteristic identification with Abraham and his faith, and all of them believing in the human impossibility. And that constitutes, says the apostle, righteousness.

Now coming back to Galatians 3 with us again, you see how this argument flows on! He comes now to a question of the works of the Law; verse 10, 'For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse: 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'. See, b&s, works of Law and the righteousness of faith are mutually exclusive; if a man believes in the works of the Law, if he practices the works of the Law, what it produces is pride, and pride itself produces independence. The righteousness of faith, b&s, does not produce pride but thankfulness, and the thankfulness of the person has towards God who saved him from himself, produces a oneness. They're so different! and so the apostle is going to contrast works of Law and the righteousness of faith.

He makes the point first of all, that man can't be saved by Law because the Law was comprehensive, that is, if you broke one part of the Law you were guilty of the lot. You've got to do all that the Law had said, and nobody could do it, let's face it, it was just impossible! Nobody could do that, and so anybody who says I'm going to be justified by the Law, had set before themselves to be 100% perfect; and they couldn't do it! And when they broke one part of the Law, the apostle Paul said, they were guilty of all of it; so in that sense, the Law couldn't justify them! **THAT'S NEGATIVE!** but in verse 11, the word 'but' the Diaglott says 'beside', Rotherham says 'moreover', the RSV says 'now', in other words, the Law couldn't justify you negatively, it couldn't even justify you positively, why? It's a simple answer, b&s, it was never designed to do that. Law was never designed to do that, so whether I could keep it or not, it can't give me eternal

life, I can't be justified to eternal life by works of Law, even if I could keep it. Because the rewards of keeping Law were never that! 'But that no man is justified in the sight of God, for the just shall live by faith'.

Now immediately a problem arises, and every time I quote this verse I get the same question from the audience later on. But John, 'if a Jew understood the Law pointed forward to Christ, if he saw the principles involved in the Law, would that not justify him?' Of course it would! well, where's the point? The point is this, the Law is not of faith! in other words, here's the Law of God; if I read that as Law, that's not going to justify me, but immediately that I interpret it in the terms of the sacrifice of Christ, b&s, it is no longer Law! it's faith! and they're different. They are different, the Law is not of faith, and faith is not of Law; Law in the interpretation that the Jews put on it is, I do, I get. Faith says I can do nothing but I depend upon God, they are poles apart; and the Law is not of faith, and immediately I interpret that Law in terms of faith, it is no longer Law. And people who are justified under the dispensation of Law like David and the others, Jeremiah, Isaiah and all the prophets, they weren't justified by Law, b&s, they were justified by faith because they interpreted that Law; and when they interpreted that Law, it was no longer Law to them.

Now the just shall live by faith, and because he wants to point out that you can't be justified by works and by Law, you can't be justified by both, he quotes Leviticus. First of all, Habakkuk says 'the just shall live by faith', but then Leviticus says, 'the man that doeth them shall live in them', now if I'd have brought my transparencies along I'd have showed you the balanced statement there and the part that's missing. You see, 'The just shall live by faith, three things, but the other statement has 4 things, 'the man that doeth them shall live in them', so there is no equivalent in the statement for 'doeth them'. So here we find, b&s, people being justified by faith, the just shall live by faith' against, the man that doeth them shall live in them. Now whereas the 'just' lived by faith to eternal life, The man who's doing what he thinks will get him into the kingdom, shall only reap the reward in them, that is, in them that's in the limited scope of what the Law promised him. So when you see those two statements parallel with one another, you see the deficiency in the one of the Law, b&s, it doesn't depend upon being justified, it depends upon the man. It doesn't depend upon God, it depends upon doing something yourself, it doesn't give you eternal benefits, but it's limited in what it can do to you within the scope of what the Law promised. So whatever way you look at it, says the apostle Paul, negatively or positively you cannot be saved by the Law. The Law is not of faith.

So then he says, 'If this is so, what are you going to do with the Law? Verse 13, well, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us', now you imagine, b&s, you put this in other words, you notice that Paul skillfully, look, he doesn't say 'Jesus Christ', and he doesn't say 'Christ Jesus' and you know, many places in Paul's writings he deliberately used the title without the name; now I could show you a half a dozen examples of this, because when he said 'Christ', alright we relate that to

Jesus Christ, but to them he's talking about MESSIAH. Now just try and orientate your minds to how they thought about Messiah! and he's telling them in plain language that the Messiah, by virtue of the Law, was made a curse! Messiah was! Now to say the Messiah was made a curse, is bad enough but to say that that curse was the result of that Law, b&s, with that explanation, that would have been absolutely horrendous to the Judaizer; but they are the facts of the case.

And how is He made a curse? Well, the Law said, did it not, 'Cursed is everyone that hangeth upon a tree', and the statement in Deuteronomy, b&s, is parenthetical, it doesn't say, 'Cursed be the guilty one that hangeth upon a tree, it says 'Cursed is everyone' and it doesn't qualify whether He's guilty or innocent, it simply says that anyone hanging on a tree is a curse by the Law; and those who had believed in Jesus Christ and are now being duped to go back to Judaism, still trying to accommodate that with their belief in Christ, had to face the reality of the fact, b&s, that they who they believe to be the Messiah, hung upon a tree! That's a fact of life! it can't be gainsaid, it can't be forgotten, it can't be scrubbed out, it's a historical fact that Messiah hung on a tree. They had to accept that, there was no way around it, and the Law simply said, everyone. And so Messiah was made a curse for us, why would He have to be made a curse for us? why did He have to be made a curse?

B&S, this is a difficult thing! people find difficulty with this, but it really shouldn't be if we take Paul's equation. He points out that Jesus Christ was made a curse under the Law that He might remove the Law; we may not at this stage understand that, or how it happened, but this we do understand. That He also partook of our nature, cursed with mortality that He might remove the mortality; we understand that, because we are so much related to that whereas we are not related to the Law. But if we can see them as parallel, that there is a double curse upon the Jew and one curse upon the Gentile. The curse upon the Gentile was the curse of mortality, but the Jew had the double curse, he had the curse of mortality like the Gentile, but he had hanging over his head the curse of the Law, because the Law kept condemning him as a sinner. So that Jesus Christ had to be made of a woman, made under the Law, to remove a double curse. Two curses for the Jew and one for us, and so the apostle said, right, this is the way it had to be done!

Now it still begs the question however, why did He have to be accursed under a divine law? well again, b&s, it will help our understanding if we take the equation, let's take the second one first. Why did He have to suffer crucifixion as the son of Mary? Well, we know why, to abolish mortality; but why did He have to suffer that way to do it? because the law of mortality, b&s, is God's law! it isn't just a human law, it's God's law, and when God issues a law, b&s, there is no repealing of that law; there's no stage where God would say, 'well, we're now at that stage of history, call that off!' It stands until it's fully discharged. And so the law of mortality was a divine law, Jesus had to give that law all that it could ask for, He had to die; 'in Adam all die', that, b&s, was the divine law. When He had given that law all that it could ask of Him, being a perfect man, God could

redeem Him from the curse of that mortality, bringing forth from that tomb, standing up in life and God could truly say to the world, 'in death I was right, and in life I was right'. Though life and death are antithesis one to the other, yet in death and in life God is right!

Same with the Law of Moses, the Law of Moses was a divine institution, therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ could not come along and say, 'we'll forget the Law', He had to give the Law all that it asked of Him. Having obeyed the Law of His heavenly Father, perfectly, b&s, He gave the last He could give to it, He made Himself accursed for the sake of that Law, the Law had discharged itself upon an innocent man, it could do no more with Him. When the Law had discharged itself upon an innocent man, it ran its course in Him, and God brought Him from the ground and said, 'My law was on Him' as Isaiah 42 verse 21 says, 'He may have been honourable, but God was able to stand Him up in life, and say, 'I'm not justifying you by that Law, He made it honourable, He demonstrated for what purpose the Law was given, He gave it fully what was intended in the beginning, there's no more the Law can do with Him; God then gave Him life'. And you see, that's why, b&s, He had to be made that double curse, to remove divine ordinances, they are not easily remove, they have to be fully discharged, as any law of the Creator has to be fully discharged. In our baptism, what do we say to God? 'that because of our belief in Christ, we shall escape death?' NO way do we say that! we go down in that water and we say to God, (tape turned) discharged, and when they are discharged and acknowledged, then God will operate on that basis to forgive us; then, b&s, we're on our way to the kingdom of God, and that's what He did with Jew and Gentile.

Now you'll notice this, that at the end of verse 13 we should read straight into verse 14 you see, 'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; THAT the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles'. Now why is that connected, well you see, immediately He died upon that cross, as a curse under the Law of Moses, He discharged that law; the law no longer operates, there's no longer a distinction in humanity. You know what Psalm 147 verses 19 and 20 says, 'He showed His law unto Israel, His statutes unto Jacob. He hath not dealt so with any nation', so Psalm 147 tells us that God showed His law to Jacob and His statutes to Israel and He hasn't dealt with any other nation like that! So God's law made a distinction, and the distinction was made for a good purpose; when that law was removed properly and righteously discharged and it no longer operated, then no longer does God merely show His law unto Israel, He shows it to all the world, 'that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles'. Because the law is no long operative, that distinction no longer exists, and God now has sent His message into all the world, that all who would come to Him can be saved.

'That we might receive, saith the apostle, the promise of the Spirit through faith', you know, I've had that quoted to me to prove that Christadelphians today ought to have the Spirit gifts, 'the promise of the Spirit through faith'. He's not talking about the Spirit gifts, b&s, he's talking about the Spirit's promise, and when you look at the context of Galatians chapter 3, he's not talking about the Spirit in that sense, but the Spirit's

promise, in other words, those promises of God that could only be fulfilled spiritually! Like Isaac was born spiritually, the child of promise, he was the promise of the Spirit. The Spirit said he would be born and he was born of the Spirit. There's the promise of the Spirit or the Spirit's promise, and those of us who believe those promises, b&s, in their spiritual sense, we've got those promises today. That's the Spirit of the promise that Paul's talking about.

Then he says, 'Look, I'll illustrate it in verse 15, after the manner of men'. He says, 'if men make an agreement and it's confirmed, no one can disannul or add thereto'. Now he says that's just a human illustration; two men make a contract, it's confirmed by both parties, once it's confirmed, he says, no man can disannul it, no man can add to it. The point he's making is this, b&s, as he goes on to explain, the covenant that God made to Abraham was confirmed in Christ. The Jew can't disannul that, nor can the Gentile add to it until that covenant is confirmed; in other words, the Jew can't annul it and go back to the Law, nor can the Gentile come into the truth until that covenant is confirmed, but both of them meet in Jesus Christ. That's the point he's making, both of them meet there. And he goes on to illustrate that: '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'. Now there's a difficulty there, b&s, and people get around that difficulty and they say, 'well, we'll go to Genesis 22 and they say when you get one of the promises it says, 'he shall possess the gate of his enemies' and that's the singular, and that's the promise to which Paul is referring. But b&s, verse 16 reads, 'Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises (plural) plural made'; and it is plural, he's not talking about the one promise, he's talking about the promises, all of them. Nor is he talking literally of one single seed in that sense, what he's saying, b&s, and I believe this is supported by the rest of the argument and it's this; let me paraphrase it for you, verse 16, 'Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made', he is not talking about many kinds of seeds, but one kind of seed which characteristically is Christ. That's what he's saying, b&s.

Now you look at the sweep of his argument! So when God was speaking to Abraham, He says, 'I will raise up your seed, his seed, Abraham's seed, not anybody else's; it wasn't Pharaoh's seed, it wasn't Abimelech's seed, it wasn't Terah's seed, it wasn't anyone else's seed, He's talking about that man's seed. One kind of seed, that's what Paul is saying, and if we want to know what that one kind of seed is, then it's seen in the character of Jesus Christ, that's the one kind of seed. Yes, He is preeminently the seed of Abraham, but you see, b&s, you cannot separate the promises of Abraham into singular and plural. And so Paul argues throughout this chapter, look at the word 'one', he says 'one kind of seed', there's one God, we're all one in Christ Jesus, we're Abraham's seed. See the argument? one kind of seed, one Christ which is characteristically that seed, one God, we're all one in Christ Jesus, we're Abraham's seed. So you see the argument he's making, so it's a question, b&s, of an identification with He who is preeminently Abraham's seed, and that's the one kind of seed, that God said He'd produce for Abraham.

What did the Lord say in John chapter 8 to His detractors? He said, 'If ye were Abraham's sons ye would do the works of Abraham', what's He telling them? that Abraham's sons are characterized by Abraham's character, that's what He's telling them. If ye were the sons of Abraham you would be able to demonstrate it by doing what Abraham did; and that's the one kind of seed which the apostle is referring to here, which is preeminently seen manifest in Jesus Christ our Lord when we become identified with Him in baptism, b&s, we are of the one seed of Abraham. That's the point that he is making, we must never forget that! because he's trying to tell us that as he moves down through this chapter, Jew and Gentile, you've got a double curse, you've got a curse which you share with them, a man is crucified as a curse under the Law to take away that curse. He demonstrates the curse of mortality, He takes away both those curses for Jew and Gentile, you come together in oneness, now the promises to Abraham can really have effect, because God is talking about one kind of seed! And when that comes together like that, we're all the children of God by faith, and if such then we are the seed of Abraham. It's a question of the unity of the gospel, b&s, of bringing those factors together.

Now Paul makes this point, talking about the unity of the gospel, verses 17 and 18. Now he says you're talking about Law and faith, but he says, the covenant that was confirmed before of God', and by the way, the words 'in Christ', b&s, the students of the original text tell us that it is doubtful whether those words are there! 'The covenant that was confirmed before of God, the Law, which was 430 years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the Law, it is no more of promise, but God gave it to Abraham by promise'. Now what he's saying is this, he's pointing out the oneness of God, not only in the sense, b&s, that God is one, but He acts in the sense that He is one. Now try and understand that! He's not simply saying that there's only one God, what he's saying is, that that one God acts in a singular fashion. He can't do anything else, you cannot accuse God of duplicity, and so because He acts in a singular fashion, this is what the apostle is saying! Assuming that that desk is 430 years long (which it isn't) but it's 430 years long; that's the distance between the Law and the promise, so here on this side of the 430 years, the one God says, 'I act singularly', this is My method of eternal life-faith in the promise; 430 years go along and He gives a law. Now Paul has already told us that the Law is not of faith and faith is not of Law, they're different; now have we got one God telling us there are two ways to eternal life? is that what he's doing? He's saying that 430 years before the Law to Abraham, you go to eternal life by faith; 430 years later He says to the Jews, 'there's the Law of Moses, you obey that and you'll get eternal life'. Have we got one God telling us that we've got two ways to eternal life and they are different? That's Paul's point!

For if the inheritance be of Law it is not of promise, why? Law says, 'you do this, and I'll give you that Land'; the promise says, 'I'll give you that Land'. Two different things entirely, b&s, this statement here would induce human endeavour and would be

calculated to produce human pride. This statement of the promise of God would produce a tremendous gratitude because God is going to do something that doesn't depend upon us, and because we're promised that, we act in a manner towards God to demonstrate our gratitude. There are two different ways to that kingdom - God is one! Paul's point. So if we follow the Law of Moses, the singular God had made a singular promise and this is the way to the kingdom, Paul's point is this that when the Law came along, it can't alter that promise one way or the other! it stands!

Now he tries to illustrate that another way. He says now in verse 19, that the question would come up, 'look Paul, if God made a promise to Abraham here and He says that's the way to the kingdom, and He gave the Law there and said, that can't be the way to the kingdom, well, why did He give the Law?' That's a sensible question, why give it at all? Well, he points out in verse 19, 'wherefore, then serveth the Law?' what's the point of it? Well, he says it was added because of the transgressions until the seed should come to whom the promise was made'. Now why do we say 'the transgressions', you see, when the Law was given, b&s, it highlighted it's own weaknesses inasmuch as it highlighted their

weaknesses. When the law is, 'thou shalt not covet', Paul said, 'oh, he's aware that he's got a weakness of covetousness; I wouldn't have known that if the Law hadn't said it; but the Law highlighted that, now here's the point, now you listen to this carefully because this is what the apostle is saying in the context of these words. If God is one and He's trying to produce one kind of seed in Abraham which characteristically was seen first of all in His Son, then that one seed will ultimately become one with God. Now when you've got a holy, just and wonderful God, b&s, only those can be one with Him, who are like character. They've got to be forgiven people, and there's got to be inculcated in their life, the fruits of righteousness; positive things have got to be produced in their life, that the more they act positively towards God, the more they understand about God Himself, and they become closer and closer together with Him, and they become one. You give this man a law which says what a terrible sinner he is, and it keeps convincing him that he is a sinner, everyday of his life until he's absolutely convinced he is a sinner; and he gets depressed about it and morose and despondent, he can't ever come towards that holy God, can he? and the more the law is applied to his life, the further and further away he gets from the unity which was intended in that gospel message. 'IN THEE, IN THEE, the one kind of seed, I will bless all nations', and Peter says in Acts chapter 3, 'that the blessings of the promise of Abraham was that He might remove our iniquity'. And when their iniquity is removed and people have their sins forgiven, and they no more become conscious of them, nor depressed and are able to build on God's positive qualities, they can come to the oneness with the holy God. Now there's a difference! So you say, why was the Law added? it was added to teach people that they're never going to come to God like that! It was added, b&s, to emphasize that point!

And then Paul gives a practical demonstration of that! 'Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one' he says. The point he's making is this as the RSV puts it, 'Now

an intermediator implies more than one', so if we're talking about intermediator, we're talking about parties which are separated which needs someone between them. But God is one, now he says, the Law was ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator; now an intermediator implies more than one. Of course, it does! Here's God, b&s, in heaven above, He sends down on Mount Sinai the angels, they handle all the Law of Moses, and Moses goes down and gives it to the people, one, two, three, four, so there are many connections between God and the people under the Law of Moses. When they get the Law, in the verbal expressions first of all by God, and then later on in the written form, the Law drove them away from the mountain, further and further back until they got to the point where they said, 'please stop Him from talking'. So what the Law of Moses did for the people was to separate them from their God to the point that they said we don't want to hear Him talk any more! and it was because, b&s, there were so many connections there, that they never could bring together in that true unity. Now we say that Jesus Christ is our mediator, but b&s, it is not God, Jesus Christ and us; that is not so! We are taught in the bible to make our requests known unto God, and it is absolutely a direct connection, God and His people. And Jesus Christ is certainly the mediator, but b&s, in Him is seen all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; He represents God in the full sense of the Godhead bodily. As Paul puts it in another place, 'He is the effulgence of the glory of God' or the 'exact impress of His character'. He, therefore, b&s, is not a stepping stone to God, He represents God to us FULLY! and because He was Himself and is a man, He can be one with His fellows. We meet God DIRECT, and that's the difference. Now there were stepping stones from God to the people, through the Law and angels. There is no such stepping stones with us, b&s, our contact with our Father is DIRECT! 'A mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is One'.

That raises another question then, 'well, alright, Paul, you say that's the purpose of the Law, to produce that feeling of 'away from God' but, you know, we don't find ourselves 'at one' with God, that we might seek that unity! But look, if that is true isn't God's law against the law of faith, verse 21?' Is the Law then against the promises of God', is it against it in the sense that it's the opposite? NO, says Paul, it's not! 'For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe or have faith.' Now the question, b&s, is this, is the Law against the promises of God? The answer is NO, it's complimentary! complimentary in what sense, Paul? Well, it is concluded all under sin', now here's an interesting thing, what's he getting at? Well, if you look at the word 'concluded', b&s, you'll find that the word in the Greek means 'to shut up', (I don't mean from speaking, I mean 'to lock up in a room') 'to shut somebody up in a room' (4788); you'll find that it's used later on here in verse 23, 'but before faith came we were kept under the Law, shut up unto the faith, same word in the Greek, same word for 'shut up' and 'concluded'. The Law was complimentary in this sense, that it shut people up until faith came, what does he mean? Well, let me explain what he means! because the word 'shut up' is taken straight out of the Law and this is what happened in Leviticus 13 and 14; when the priest came to a man and he had some scab or some rash, he was inspected, because

he may have the plague of leprosy. And the record of Leviticus 13 and 14 says that he was 'to be SHUT UP for seven days', seven itself being a significant number. And they shut him up in ward for 7 days, after those 7 days, the priest went in and inspected him; of course, if it was leprosy, he was put outside the camp, but if you hadn't as yet proved what it was by development, he was shut up again for a future 7 days. Now, b&s, Paul uses that expression deliberately to show that the Law is not against the promises of God, it's complimentary ! For this reason, he said, 'what the Law did, was to take a man who may have leprosy', now you imagine this: you're suspected of having leprosy. We all live in dread of cancer, we'd hate to go to the doctor and be told that we've got cancer; I don't suppose there would be a person alive, who at some stage in their life, have this feeling in the pit of their stomach that they might get cancer one day. Now that was like leprosy to the Jew, and not only that, but there were many lepers in Israel. They had manifestations of it in their midst, and they lived in fear and dread of that! Now when the priest came to you and said, 'ah, just look at that, I don't like that! You come with me!', slammed that door; would you behind that closed door, b&s, believe that you're going to be justified by works? would you believe behind that closed door, that God would heal your plague, because of your righteousness? For seven days, what could you do behind that closed door for a week? except, b&s, fall on your knees and pray to God with all your fibre, that He'd heal you of that plague, which was impossible for human nature to do! No physician in Israel could handle that! it is beyond the power of man, and so when the Law of Moses came along, it said to everyone, you are all moral lepers, you are corroding on your feet, you're heading for the grave, everyone of you! and it shut them all up, b&s. A Jew who got that Law and was condemned by it day after day after day after day, learnt that he was a moral leper. There's no way that he can be cured by it. And the Law therefore, shut him up to the point where he fell on his knees and said to God, forgive me! It was a schoolmaster in that sense, to bring them unto Christ, until the faith should come!

And when faith came, they were released from that form of bondage, b&s, and so the apostle sweeps on to tell us in verse 24 to take another figure. The Law's like a pedagogue, a boy leader, one who is appointed by the master of the house, to take this children to kindergarten as it were, before they reached maturity. They were lead in and out of school, all their life was regulated under the jurisdiction of this pedagogue (the boy leader) who did this for them and did that for them, they couldn't act maturely on their own. But when faith came, b&s, we're no longer under that schoolmaster. When did faith come? IN JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD, the faith of Christ, the faith that says, 'no way, Christ is the end of righteousness by the law; He's the end of that sort of thing. If a perfect man says in no way it be done, then that leaves everybody else, b&s, to do nothing else by to believe a fallacy. If that man says it's got to be done that way, that's how it's got to be done, because He's perfect. And He came and was manifested perfectly by faith.

And when that mature man came and we grew up, we are the children of God', and you know, there's a beautiful expression here, b&s, verse 26 and in verse 29, 'For ye are all

the children of God, for ye all are Abraham's children. Isn't that beautiful? when you see the equation between the children of God and Abraham's children. Why is that? because when God took Abraham aside in Genesis 17, and He said, 'I'm going to give you a ceremonial right; I'm going to ask you to practice circumcision, and you're going to circumcise all your children on the eighth day when they're born Abraham. Of course, Abraham was much older than 8 days old at that stage, but nonetheless, he had to be circumcised. When Abraham was circumcised, b&s, it was, of course, in the immediate future, the children wouldn't have been born of him in that state, he could not have produced a child immediately after circumcision, and that's the point that God made with him; when He asked him to be circumcised, He said, 'Now Abraham, I WILL MAKE YOU, a father of many nations; and by the very right of circumcision, Abraham would know that the immediate time from circumcision, he couldn't be the father of anyone! So God said, I WILL MAKE YOU THE FATHER OF MANY NATIONS. Then God said 7 times to Abraham, 7 times in that chapter He says, 'this is My covenant between Me and you, you and Me, Me and you; you're all the children of God, you're all Abraham's children. And you see what God has done! He's demonstrating His own fatherhood in Abraham. You act like Abraham, you manifest his faith, you're the children of Abraham; if you're the children of Abraham you only are because I made you so! 'I will make you a father of nations, children of God, children of Abraham, the same thing, b&s. Wonderful things when you think about it! You know Jesus said to His disciples, 'call no man your father on the earth', and Paul deliberately calls Abraham the father of us all; not in contradiction to what Jesus said, b&s, because he's following it out to the letter, but because Abraham was given that wonderful distinction of manifesting on the earth, the fatherhood of God, to be developed on the basis of the character of that man who put his trust in God and believed in an inhuman possibility. And as such, God said, 'I will make you, Abraham, a human manifestation of My own fatherhood; children of God are Abraham's children. They are all one, in Christ Jesus; there's the unity of the thing, b&s, that's the wonderful unity we have!

So there's neither Jew nor Greek; there no such thing as national distinction. There's no such things as bond or free, there's no such thing as being a slave under Law, or living like a libertine in Gentile lands. It doesn't happen in Christ Jesus! There's no such thing as male or female, because in order to produce Abraham's child of the Spirit, b&s, it was necessary for both of them! We're all one in Christ Jesus; and if we've been baptized into Christ Jesus and if we manifest His character, then we're Abraham's children because He, characteristically, is that one seed; and there is only one kind of seed; every seed after his own kind. And nature is a witness to that! and if we are, b&s, that one kind of seed, then there's no doubt about it whatever!

The chapter finishes on a note of triumph, 'if we are that one kind of seed of Abraham, b&s, we are heirs of God's kingdom; and an heir (and you listen to this) 'an heir doesn't get something by Law, he gets it because of his relationship and identity with his father. And so the apostle closes that chapter on a wonderful and triumphant note, and it's a real thrill, b&s, to think of ourselves, that here we are in 1984, we've got the gold of

Babylon in Iraq, we've got the silver of the image in Iran, we've got the Russian bear poised over the borders of both of them, we've got Britain moving in with Saudi-Arabia along with America to support them in the south, we've got Jordan also entering into that alliance, according to the prophecies of Edom and Moab. B&S, it's absolutely wonderful to think here we are in God's eyes, heirs according to the promise, it isn't as if we're in doubt, it's absolutely certain, that if we are identified with Abraham, through our baptism into Christ, and our subsequent life is characteristically like them, **BRETHREN AND SISTERS, WE ARE GOING INTO GOD'S KINGDOM VERY SHORTLY!** Think of it! And you know, you read those chapters in Galatians, you expound them, but they are real **AND ACCORDING TO THAT PROMISE!**