

KEY

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Parsing Verbs and Declining Nouns

Verbs:

ποιμανατε (ποιμαινω = to tend, shepherd || Verb: Aorist Active Imperative, Second Person Plural).
ἀποκαλυπτεσθαι (ἀποκαλύπτω = to reveal, disclose || Verb: Present Passive Infinitive).

Nouns (gender before case):

πατημάτων (παθημα = suffering || Noun: Neuter Genitive Plural).

Participles (gender before case):

μελλουσης (μελλω = to be about to || Participle: Feminine Genitive Singular Present Active).

Adjectives (gender before case):

(ἐπιεικης = gentle, kind || Adjective: Masculine Dative Plural).

Independent Personal Pronouns:

ἡμιν (ἐγώ = I || First Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Dative Plural).
ὕμιν (σύ = you || Second Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Dative Plural).
αὐτῷ (αὐτός = He, Him || Third Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Masculine Dative Singular).

Near Demonstrative Pronoun (gender before case):

(τοῦτο = this || Near Demonstrative Pronoun: Neuter Nominative Singular).

Far Demonstrative Pronoun (gender before case):

(οὗτος = those || Far Demonstrative Pronoun: Masculine Nominative Singular).

Reflexive Pronouns (only masculine and feminine - the genitive is the lexical form as there is no nominative case):

(ἐμαυτοῦ = myself || First Person Reflexive Pronoun: Masculine Genitive Singular).
(σεαυτοῦ = yourself || Second Person Reflexive Pronoun: Masculine Genitive Singular).
(ἐαυτοῦ = himself, herself, oneself || Third Person Reflexive Pronoun: Masculine Genitive Singular).

Relative Pronouns:

(ὅς = who/that, of whom, to whom, whom [referring to people]; that/which, of which, to which, which [referring to things] – Translation depends on case || Relative Pronoun: Masculine Nominative Singular)

Sentence Structure

Reference in my study:

Lukaszewski, Albert L., Mark Dubis, and J. Ted Blakley. 2011. The Lexham Syntactic Greek New Testament, SBL Edition: Expansions and Annotations. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Also, see: Randy A. Leedy, *SBL Greek New Testament Sentence Diagrams* (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2020).

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

GREEK TEXT:

Galatians 3:10–14 (NA28 GBS)

10 Ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσὶν, ὑπὸ κατάραν εἰσὶν· γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά. 11 ὅτι δὲ ἐν νόμῳ οὐδεὶς δικαιούται παρὰ τῷ θεῷ δῆλον, ὅτι ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται. 12 ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως, ἀλλ' ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς. 13 Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα, ὅτι γέγραπται· ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὁ κρεμᾶμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου, 14 ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

10 For as many as are of the works of Law are under a curse. For it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW TO DO IT.” 11 Now that no one is justified by [the] Law in the sight of God is evident; for, THE RIGHTEOUS WILL LIVE BY FAITH.” 12 But the Law is not of faith, but, “HE WHO PRACTICES THEM WILL LIVE BY THEM.” 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us, for it is written: “CURSED IS EVERYONE HANGED UPON A TREE.” 14 So that the blessing of Abraham, in Christ Jesus, might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what's t/passage talking about): The curse of the Law prevents anyone from being saved by keeping it

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what's the passage saying about what it's talking about): Our only hope is through faith in Christ who was cursed for we who believe

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): The only hope for salvation is that which comes through faith in Christ, not the works of the Law

CENTRAL PROPOSITION OF THE SERMON: The curse of the law has been conquered by Christ

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: This Road Closed: Paul's Third Defense of Justification by Faith

SERMON OUTLINE:

I. Damned if you Don't: The Road of Law (10, 12b)

A. Road Closed: The Law's Curse (10a)

B. Road Closed: The Law's Demand (10b, 12b)

II. Freed if you Do: The Road of Faith (11-14)

A. Road Open: Justification by Faith (11-12)

1. Righteousness comes through faith alone (11)

2. Faith and Law are Incompatible (12)

B. Road Open: The Curse Satisfied (13)

C. Road Open: The Blessing of Abraham (14)

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

This is part of a larger parenthetical section:

On one level the passage can be analyzed in terms of four major propositions, each of which is confirmed and elucidated by a citation from the Old Testament. Thus (1) those who rely on observing the law are under a curse. Why so? The Bible says that those who do not continue to do everything written in the book of the law are cursed (Deut 27:26); (2) no one can be justified by means of the law anyway. Why not? The Scripture declares that the righteous ones live by faith (Hab 2:4); (3) law and faith are not mutually compatible ways to God. How can you be so sure? Because the law itself says that those who keep the commandments will live by them (Lev 18:5); (4) Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law. How did this happen? He became a curse for us by hanging on a tree (Deut 21:23). A closer examination of these propositions will show that (1) and (4) are closely related as problem and solution, while the two scriptural texts cited in support of (2) and (3) stand in apparent contradiction to each other. The entire passage is brought to a concluding crescendo in v. 14, which reaffirms the key element in proposition (4), Christ redeemed us, and then adds two purpose clauses—in order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles and that by faith we might receive the promised Spirit.

Before looking at these verses in greater detail, it is important to recognize that, from another perspective, 3:10–25 constitutes a long parenthesis in the overall structure of Paul's argument concerning the true children of Abraham. As we saw earlier, Paul had been arguing from the continuity of the covenant of grace with Abraham cited as the paradigm of justification by faith. The blessing he received was not only for the Jews but for "all nations" (*ethnē*, "Gentiles"). Thus today those who believe as Abraham believed are declared righteous before God just as he was. From a strictly logical point of view, it would have made good sense for Paul to move directly from 3:9 to 3:26—"Those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham.... You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." Paul deliberately did not do this but rather indulged in an intricate digression on the law, a passage that, as N. T. Wright has observed, must surely rank high on any list of "the most complicated and controverted passages in Paul." [Timothy George, *Galatians*, vol. 30, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 227–228]

Paul could not ignore the law because it was crucial for his understanding of salvation and Christ—not, however, as the source of obtaining righteousness but rather as the gauge of damnation. The law tells us what we are being saved from—the curse. This takes us to the heart of Pauline soteriology. "The faith that justifies comes only through deliverance from the curse. Those who know nothing of the curse also know nothing of the blessing. Only the Christ who bears the curse can be the bearer of the blessing."^{fn}

^{fn}. Ebeling, *Truth of the Gospel*, 171. Ebeling's reading of Galatians reflects Luther's interpretation. For example, Luther referred to "the chief and proper use

of the law” as the revelation of “sin, blindness, misery, wickedness, ignorance, hate and contempt of God, death, hell, judgment, and the well-deserved wrath of God.... The law is a hammer that crushes rocks, a fire, a wind, and a great and mighty earthquake that overturns mountains.” Nonetheless, “this use of the law is extremely beneficial and very necessary” [Timothy George, Galatians, vol. 30, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994).

Verse 9 is about “those who have faith,” while v. 10 concerns those who observe the law; the former are said to be blessed, while the latter are cursed. [George]

Note the connection to the previous section:

6 Just as Abraham BELIEVED GOD AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. 7 So then, understand that it is those of faith who are sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel ahead of time to Abraham: “ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU.” 9 So then, those of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. [my transl.]

Note 3:26-28:

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (NASB95)

Two ways:

The absolute use of ὅσοι (“all who”) coupled with ἐξ ἔργων νόμου (“rely on the works of the law”) marks out a particular group of people in contrast to those designated in v 9 as οἱ ἐκ πίστεως (“those who rely on faith”). [Richard N. Longenecker, Galatians, vol. 41, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1990), 116]

3:10 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

Ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσὶν, ὑπὸ κατάραν εἰσὶν· γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά.

Ὅσοι γὰρ (ὅσος, η, ον = as many as || Pronoun: correlative, nominative, plural, masculine).
ἐξ ἔργων (ἔργον, ου, τό || Noun: genitive, plural, neuter).
νόμου (— || Noun: Masc. genitive, plural).
εἰσὶν, (εἰμί || Pronoun: Present Active Indicative 3PP).
ὑπὸ κατάραν (κατάρα, ας, ἡ = curse || Noun: Accus. Fem. Sing.)
εἰσὶν· (εἰμί || Pronoun: Present Active Indicative 3PP).
γέγραπται γὰρ (γράφω || Verb, perfect, passive, indicative, 3PS).
ὅτι (ὅτι = that || Conjunction).
ἐπικατάρατος (ἐπικατάρατος = cursed || Adjective: nominative, singular, masculine).
πᾶς (πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν = everyone || Adj.: Nom. Masc. Sing.).
ὃς (ὃς, ἡ, ὅ = who || Relative Pronoun: Nom. Masc. Sing.).
οὐκ ἐμμένει (ἐμμένω = to abide by, persevere, remain || Verb: present, active, indicative, third person, singular).
πᾶσιν (πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν = everyone || Adj.: Dative Neuter Plur.).
τοῖς γεγραμμένοις (γράφω || Verb: perfect, passive, participle, plural, dative, neuter).
ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ (βιβλίον, ου, τό || Noun: Dative Neut. Sing.).
τοῦ νόμου (— || Noun: Masc., genitive, plural).
τοῦ ποιῆσαι (— || Verb: aorist, active, infinitive). The infinitive may also be understood as exegetical, explaining what it means to “remain” in the things written in the book of the Torah. [David A. deSilva, Galatians: A Handbook on the Greek Text, ed. Martin M. Culy, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 60–61]
αὐτά. (αὐτός, ἡ, ὁ || Personal Pronoun: Accus. Neuter Accus. 3PP).

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

For as many as are of the works of Law are under a curse. For it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW TO DO IT.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

For as many as are of the works of Law are under a curse. (Ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσὶν, ὑπὸ κατάραν εἰσὶν·)

Note what was argued (see 2:16) regarding the phrase “works of law” (ἔργα νόμου). Paul refers here to the deeds commanded by the law.

Anyone who places himself under law to be right before God (religion). The γὰρ connects to what has preceded.

Talking about people who are attempting to be right with God by means of keeping the Law of Moses. That’s the specific sense. Cf. Judaizers. Generally, all men are under the curse of sin, regardless of the Mosaic Law which was given to Israel. The totality of the moral law (universal law) speaks to our failure to align ourselves with God’s glory (Rom. 3:23). There is no sin where there is no law:

Romans 4:15 for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.

Romans 5:13 for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

As Paul argued in Rom 1–3, both Jews and Gentiles are “under the law,” albeit in very different ways. Thus when Paul spoke of the curse of the law he was not thinking merely of Jews, anymore than when he showed how one becomes a true child of Abraham through faith he had only Gentiles in mind. Thus the “us” of 3:13—those whom Christ has redeemed from the curse of the law—are not merely Jewish Christians but instead all the children of God, Jews and Gentiles, slaves and freed ones, males and females, who are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise because they belong to Christ through faith (3:26–29). [Timothy George, Galatians, 233]

For anyone familiar with the Torah, the juxtaposition of blessing and curse would immediately evoke the locus classicus of Deut 27–28. In this passage the twelve tribes of Israel are depicted as an antiphonal choir, six standing on Mount Gerizim, six on Mount Ebal. The Levites were then to recite the litany of blessings for obedience and the catalog of curses for disobedience, at which the tribes on Mount Gerizim would ratify the blessings, and those on Mount Ebal the curses, with a hearty “Amen!” If there were any doubt that Paul had this passage in mind, he quoted the concluding curse as a confirmation of his statement that those who relied on their performance of the law for acceptance with God were under a curse: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.”⁴⁷ As Longenecker has pointed out, Paul may well have had the words of the Deuteronomic curse painfully impressed upon his memory, not only from his rabbinical training but also from the five times he received “forty lashes minus one” at the hands of certain synagogue authorities (cf. 2 Cor 11:24). The synagogal manual outlining detailed procedures for such lashings required that the curses of Deuteronomy be read intermittently while the punishment was being meted out.

Judaizers in our day within Xn circles: Note the demands of Roman Catholicism as to law keeping (cf. Catechism).

For it is written, (γέγραπται γὰρ)

Deuteronomy 27:26 ‘Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.’
And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

“CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW TO DO IT.” (ὅτι ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά.)

See Deut. 27-28.

ἐμμένει (ἐμμένω = to abide by, persevere, remain || Verb: present, active, indicative, third person, singular). Abide = remaining in, to continue to do. Legacy of the Judaizers. It was about doing over that of believing. Belief was deemphasized.

Paul was obviously quoting from a variant of the LXX, which contains two words not found in the MT: “Cursed be every one who does not abide by all the words of this law, in order to do them.” However, the word “all” is found in the very next verse following the pronouncement of the twelfth curse: “If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands” (Deut 28:1). Thus Paul may simply have conflated the two texts into a single quotation as he did earlier in 3:8 with Gen 12:3 and 18:18.
[Timothy George, Galatians, 229–230]

Curse is in this verse contrasted with “blessing” in verses 8 and 9.

This is a view popularly ascribed to the school of Shammai, which is said to have reckoned a 99 percent achievement as a failure whereas the school of Hillel in effect treated 51 percent as a pass-mark, carrying entitlement to enter the world to come; [F. F. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982), 159]

“Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it” (Jas 2:10).

The Judaizers, of course, did not view being “under the law” in any pejorative sense. Much like Josephus, they probably invited their Gentile hearers in some such words as follows: “To all who desire to come and live under the same laws with us [ὕπὸ τοῦς αὐτοῦς ἡμῖν νόμους], he [Moses] gives a gracious welcome, holding that it is not family ties alone that constitute relationship, but agreement in the principles of conduct” (Ag.Ap. 2.210). Paul, however, wants his Galatian converts to know that if they insist on taking up the requirements of the law they will bring themselves under a curse. And he appeals to Deut 27:26 in support for that association of law and curse. [Richard N. Longenecker, Galatians, 117]

The citation from Deuteronomy 27 occurs in a context of blessing and cursing, in which the blessings and cursings of the covenant are rehearsed. In particular, Deut 27:26 occurs in a section in which Moses exhorted the twelve tribes to stand on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal to declare covenantal blessings and cursings. In 27:15–26 twelve curses are listed. The people will be cursed for idolatry, for dishonoring parents, perverting justice, sexual sin, taking bribes, etc. The last curse in Deut 27:26 capsulizes the whole, functioning as a summary statement and emphasizing that the curse falls if one does not keep the Torah. [Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 203–204]

How does the quotation from Deut 27:26 function in Paul’s argument?⁵ The emphasis in both the Deuteronomic context and in Paul is that the curse applies if one fails to keep God’s law.⁶ Those who do not do everything (cf. also Deut 28:58) enjoined in the law are cursed. [Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, 204]

Imagine the scene: An entire nation gathers on the sides of two mountains to worship. Half the people stand on one mountainside, half on the other. They worship responsively, alternating their praise. First one group cries out to God, and then the other, with every man, woman, and child shouting in unison.

This was the scene when the people of God crossed the Jordan River and entered the Promised Land. According to the command of Moses, six tribes stood on Mount Gerizim and six on Mount Ebal to form an antiphonal choir. Rather than singing in harmony, they recited a litany of blessings and curses. The tribes on Mount Gerizim blessed the people of God, while the tribes on Mount Ebal cursed them.

What curses they were! “Cursed be the man who makes a carved or cast metal image” (Deut. 27:15). “Cursed be anyone who dishonors his father or his mother” (Deut. 27:16). “Cursed be anyone who perverts the justice due to the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow” (Deut. 27:19). “Cursed be anyone who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them” (Deut. 27:26). The Levites recited a dozen curses in all, and after each one, all the people said, “Amen!” [Philip Graham Ryken, *Galatians*, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, *Reformed Expository Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005), 106]

Five times Paul was punished by the Jews for preaching the gospel, and each time he received the standard punishment: “forty lashes minus one” (2 Cor. 11:24). The synagogue manuals of that time required someone to read out the curses of the law while the prisoner was being whipped.¹ Thus as Paul received the final stripe on his back, he may well have heard the very words that he later quoted to the Galatians: “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them” (Gal. 3:10). [Philip Graham Ryken, *Galatians*, 107]

Note the curse (anathema) in 1:8-9.

“What does every sin deserve?” asks the Westminster Shorter Catechism. The answer is, “Every sin deserves God’s wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come” (Q. & A. 84).

Also, “No mere man since the fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed” (A. 82). Total depravity.

3:11 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

ὅτι δὲ ἐν νόμῳ οὐδεὶς δικαιούται παρὰ τῷ θεῷ δῆλον, ὅτι ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται·

ὅτι δὲ (ὅτι = that || Conjunction).

ἐν νόμῳ (— || Noun: Masc. Dative Pl.).

οὐδεὶς (οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδέν = no one, no body, nothing || Adj.: Nom. Masc. Sing.).

δικαιούται (— || Verb: Present, passive, indicative, 3PS). Gnostic present tense.

παρὰ (the prep. can be translated as “in the sight of” according to BAG).

τῷ θεῷ (— || Noun: Masc. Dative Sing.).

δῆλον, (δῆλος, η, ον = clear, evident || Adj.: Nom. Neut. Sing.).

ὅτι ὁ δίκαιος (— || Noun: Nom. Masc. Sing.). The term “righteous” (δίκαιος) is a substantival adjective.

ἐκ πίστεως (— || Noun: Gen. Fem. Sing.).

ζήσεται· (ζάω || Verb: Future Middle Indicative, 3S). Gnostic future. Cf. 2:14 on ζῆς and 2:19 on ζήσω.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Now that no one is justified by [the] Law in the sight of God is evident; for, THE RIGHTEOUS WILL LIVE BY FAITH.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Here Paul expands the contrast between faith and law. The Law demands (doing); faith receives the promise.

Now that no one is justified by [the] Law in the sight of God is evident; (ὅτι δὲ ἐν νόμῳ οὐδεὶς δικαιούται παρὰ τῷ θεῷ δῆλον,)

Cf. 2:16. How is it evident?

for, THE RIGHTEOUS WILL LIVE BY FAITH.” (ὅτι ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται·)

The impossible demand of living by Law (v. 10) is contrasted with eternal life by faith. Eternal life = context of justification (first half of the verse). However, we not only gain eternal life by faith (justification), we also live our present lives by faith (sanctification).

The recitation comes from Hab 2:4. The Hebrew Bible and Greek Septuagint differed in regard to whether or not a person would live by “his (or her) faith” or by “my (i.e., God’s) faithfulness.” Paul omits any personal pronoun whatsoever, putting the entire focus on “trust” or “faith” as the path that brings the righteous person to life before God. [David A. deSilva, *Galatians: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, ed. Martin M. Culy, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 61]

Habakkuk 2:4 is quoted three times in the New Testament, once again by Paul in Rom 1:17, a key text in Luther’s “discovery” of the doctrine of justification, and in Heb 10:37, where the Old Testament prophecy is set forth as an antidote to discouragement in light of the delayed return of Christ. [George]

This verse from Habakkuk had a tremendous influence on the life of Martin Luther. Luther encountered it in the monastery at Erfurt, although at first he was uncertain what it meant. Later he went through a dark period of illness and depression during which he imagined that he was under the wrath of God. Lying on a bed in Italy, and fearing that he was soon to die, Luther found himself repeating the words over and over again: “The righteous will live by his faith. The righteous will live by his faith.”

Not long after he recovered, Luther went on to Rome, where he visited the church of St. John Lateran. The pope had promised an indulgence forgiving the sins of any pilgrim who mounted its staircase, which was alleged to have come from the judgment hall of Pontius Pilate. Believing that the steps were stained with blood of Christ, pilgrims mounted the stairs on their knees, pausing frequently to pray and kiss the holy staircase.

The story continues in the words of Luther’s son, from a manuscript preserved in the library of Rudolstadt: “As he repeated his prayers on the Lateran staircase, the words of the prophet Habakkuk came suddenly to his mind: ‘The just shall live by faith.’ Thereupon he ceased his prayers, returned to Wittenberg, and took this as the chief foundation of all his doctrine.” Luther no longer believed that there was anything he could do to gain favor with God, and he began to live by faith in God’s Son. As Luther himself later said, “Before those words broke upon my mind I hated God and was angry with him.... But when, by the Spirit of God, I understood those words—‘The just shall live by faith!’ ‘The just shall live by faith!’—then I felt born again like a new man; I entered through the open doors into the very Paradise of God.” [Philip Graham Ryken, *Galatians*, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, *Reformed Expository Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005), 111–112]

“Live” = “eternal life.” Note how this verse, quoted in Romans, set Luther free. It is not only living by faith that is righteousness, it is by faith that we are made righteous. Cf. Rom. 1:17 (on our pulpit) and Heb. 10:38 (context).

The curse of the law has been borne entirely by Christ, and so now only faith remains as the prerequisite to receiving the Abrahamic blessing and God’s Spirit.

Hab 2:4 was understood by Jews in Paul's day in various ways. The MT reading . . . (wēšadiq be-ēmūnātô yiḥyeh, "the righteous shall live by his faith/faithfulness") evidently raised uncertainties as to how to understand the pronominal suffix "his" and the word אֱמוּנָה ēmūnâ, "faith/faithfulness"). The LXX, for example, reads the text in two ways: either ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται ("the righteous shall live on the basis of my [God's] faithfulness," so LXXB) or ὁ δίκαιός μου ἐκ πέστεως ζήσεται ("my righteous one shall live on the basis of faith/faithfulness," so LXXA). The rabbis seem to have coupled Hab 2:4 with Gen 15:6 as two important testimonia having to do with the nation's inheritance of Abraham's meritorious faith (cf. Exod. Rab. 23.5), viewing Hab 2:4 in particular as the summation of the whole Mosaic law in one principle—i.e., faithfulness rewarded by faith . . . [Richard N. Longenecker, Galatians, 118–119]

The LXX translation of Hab 2:4 understands the text to refer to God's faithfulness ("the righteous shall live by my faithfulness," ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται), which represents an interpretation remarkably different from Paul's and deviates from the Masoretic Text ("the righteous will live by his faith").³¹ The Qumran community understood the text in yet another way: "this concerns all those who observe the Law in the House of Judah, whom God will deliver from the House of Judgement because of their suffering and because of their faith in the Teacher of Righteousness" (1QpHab 8:1–3).³² Such an interpretation is dramatically different from Paul's, for at Qumran law obedience is the pathway to blessing, though it is combined with faith in the teacher of the community. [Thomas R. Schreiner, Galatians, 207–208]

Does Paul distort the meaning of Habakkuk in its historical context? Many claim that Habakkuk speaks of human faithfulness rather than faith.³⁴ Such an interpretation misreads the prophet.³⁵ Habakkuk predicts a day of judgment when the Chaldeans will punish sinful Judah because the nation has failed to keep God's Torah (1:4–11). Such a judgment is a test of faith for the remnant. Will they still believe God's promises, which include a future judgment of Babylon (ch. 2) and a future renewal of the work of the exodus for Israel (ch. 3)? The many allusions to the exodus in Hab 3 indicate the promise of a new exodus, a new deliverance for the people of God. Hence, Habakkuk functions as a paradigm for the people of God. He will continue to trust the Lord even if the fig tree does not blossom and vines are lacking fruit (Hab 3:17–18). He will continue to trust in and rejoice in God's promise of future salvation. [Thomas R. Schreiner, 208–209]

We should observe as well that the words "shall live" (ζήσεται) refer here to eternal life, not merely to life on earth. Eternal life, or as the first part of the verse expresses it, justification, is by faith. [Thomas R. Schreiner, 209]

In the original setting of this oracle, Habakkuk cries on God to intervene and punish the oppression that he sees around him. The tyranny of the native rulers of Judah has been checked by the Babylonian invaders, the executors of divine judgment, but the invaders have proved more oppressive by far. Are they 'to keep on . . . mercilessly slaying nations for ever?' (Hab. 1:17). The prophet waits patiently for a response to his complaint, and at last it comes. 'The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly small': the

vindication for which he longs will indeed be realized, 'it will surely come, it will not delay' (Hab. 2:3). [F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982), 161]

There is, therefore, much to be said in favor of Dodd's hypothesis that Hab 2:4 was used widely by Christians and that Paul is here reinterpreting this passage in *ad hominem* fashion for his Galatian converts in contradistinction to how the Judaizers were using it. [[Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 119]

Paul sets up a sharp antithesis to v 10: righteousness is to be associated with faith alone; curse is the result of trying to observe the law in order to gain righteousness. [Richard N. Longenecker]

3:12 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως, ἀλλ' ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς.

ὁ δὲ νόμος (— || Noun: Nom. masc. sing.).
οὐκ ἔστιν (— || pres. active. ind. 3S).
ἐκ πίστεως, (— || Verb: Gen. fem. sing.).
ἀλλ' ὁ ποιήσας (— || Participle: Nom. Masc. Sing.).
αὐτὰ (— || Personal Pronoun: 3P, accusative, plural, neuter).
ζήσεται (ζάω || Verb: future, middle, indicative, 3S).
ἐν αὐτοῖς. (Personal Pronoun: 3P, dative, plural, neuter).

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

But the Law is not of faith, but, “HE WHO PRACTICES THEM WILL LIVE BY THEM.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

But the Law is not of faith, (ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως,)

Paul explains further why no one can be righteous by the law. Righteousness is not by the law, for the law requires perfect obedience and human performance. Faith, however, looks to what God has done in Christ for salvation, relying on God's work rather than one's own. [Thomas R. Schreiner, Galatians, 210]

Could a Jew, under t/Mosaic code, have endeavored to live that code by faith? Yes! But that wasn't salvific. Salvation is always by faith, hence the antithesis between Law and faith as a means toward righteousness before God: “His point in quoting Lev 18:5 is obvious: the law has to do with “doing” and “living by its prescriptions” and not with faith.” [Longenecker, 120]

Israel had willingly placed herself under the stipulations of the covenant (cf. Exod 24:3, 7), and in so doing had accepted the threat of being cursed for nonfulfillment (cf. Josephus, Ant. 4.302, 307). Coming under a curse was therefore inextricably bound up with receiving the law, and Paul seeks to make that point explicit in his treatment of Deut 27:26. [Richard N. Longenecker, Galatians, 117]

Note: (1) the law cannot justify (v. 11a) because (2) it is faith that justifies (v. 11b) and (3) the law is not a matter of faith.

The Puritan William Perkins explained it like this: “If we could fulfill the law, we might be justified by the law: but no man can be justified by the law, or by works: therefore no man can fulfill the law.” [William Perkins, *A Commentary on Galatians*, Pilgrim Classic Commentaries, ed. Gerald T. Sheppard (London, 1617; repr. New York: Pilgrim, 1989), 163]

Contrast t/O.C. w/Israel w/the N.C. in X. The demands of the O.C. Law involved doing. The demands of the N.C. is singular: belief.

When Paul says that the law is not of faith, it is a mistake to read this as a wholesale rejection of the law in the lives of Christians. Paul can speak positively about believers fulfilling the law by the power of the Spirit (Gal 5:13–15; cf. also Rom 8:4; 13:8–10). He maintains that Christians, through the work of the Spirit, are empowered to keep the law of Christ (Gal 6:2), which can be described as the law of love (5:13–14). So what does Paul mean when he says “the law is not of faith”?

We must begin by observing the context, where Paul discusses justification—what is required to be right with God. We must recall that he addresses those who believed that circumcision was mandatory for salvation, that one must keep the law to be justified. Paul rejects any notion that the law is the source of life.⁴⁹ One does not become right with God by doing but by believing. Paul has already taught in 3:10 that righteousness by works of law is impossible since the law requires perfect obedience. We must also keep in mind that he writes from the perspective of fulfillment of God’s promises in Christ. The covenant with Moses, then, is no longer in force.⁵⁰ What makes one right with God with the arrival of the new covenant is faith in Christ—not keeping the commands found in the Sinai covenant. [Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, 211]

but, “HE WHO PRACTICES THEM WILL LIVE BY THEM.” (ἀλλ’ ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς.)

Quoting Lev. 18:5.

ἀλλ’. A strong contrastive conjunction, introducing a recitation from Leviticus (18:5) as evidence for seeing “the Torah” and “trust” in stark contrast to one another. Paul introduces this new text on the basis of *gezera shawa*, a Jewish principal of exegesis that seeks to interpret two texts, brought together on the basis of a shared term or terms, in light of one another. Here the shared term is ζήσεται, augmented by the parallelism in form between the two verses. [David A. deSilva, *Galatians: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, ed. Martin M. Culy, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 62]

ζήσεται. Fut mid ind 3rd sg ζάω. The verb carries again the more special sense of “to gain life before God,” a special quality of life resulting from God’s blessing upon the person. This is certainly how the Palestinian Targums interpreted Lev 18:5: the life of which it spoke was “everlasting life” or “the life of eternity,” and it was attained, notably, by

aligning one's life with the Torah (Tg. Onq. and Tg. Ps-J. Lev 18:5; Longenecker 1990, 120). [David A. deSilva, *Galatians: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, ed. Martin M. Culy, *Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 62]

In connection with v. 10 this statement can be understood as a hypothetical contrary-to-fact condition: if someone really were to fulfill the entire corpus of Pentateuchal law, with its 242 positive commands and 365 prohibitions (according to one rabbinic reckoning), then indeed such a person could stand before God at the bar of judgment and demand admittance to heaven on the basis of his or her performance. Yet where on earth can such a flawless person be found? [Timothy George, *Galatians*, 235]

In his further discussion of the law in 3:19–25, however, he sets out several reasons that apply here as well: (1) the law was given in salvation history to uncover sin, at times even by rousing it to action, and so functions for another purpose and on a different level than faith (3:19, 22; cf. Rom 5:20; 7:7–12); (2) the law has no power to make alive (3:21), a statement indirectly presupposing the spiritual death of all mankind (cf. Rom 5:12, 17–18; 8:3); and (3) the redeeming work of Christ is God's answer for sin-enslaved mankind (3:22, 24). [Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 120]

In the targumic tradition arising out of the synagogues of Palestine, Lev 18:5 is seen as having reference to the life of the age to come, which is the reward of obedience to the Torah: "And you shall keep my statutes and my judgments, which if a man do he shall live by them an everlasting life" (Targum Onqelos) [cited in Longenecker]

. . . no one can be righteous by law since the law requires perfection. The word "live" (ζῆσεται) refers here to eternal life, and hence Lev 18:5 promises eternal life to those who keep the law.⁵³ The law does not bring life, for human beings are unable to fulfill the required condition.⁵⁴ Human sinfulness intervenes.⁵⁵ "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23).⁵⁶ Law obedience, then, is contrary to faith since it is predicated on obeying instead of believing to obtain salvation, on performing what is required instead of trusting God's work in Christ.⁵⁷ The attempt, then, to be righteous by keeping the law is fundamentally opposed to believing, to trusting what God has done in Christ for justification.⁵⁸ [Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, 211–212]

Note Israel's failure in that regard. They were chronically failing to keep the Law and were punished for doing so. Cf. the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, the destruction of the temple in AD 70. Cf. also Stephen's sermon and Peter's words in Acts 15:10.

The coming of Christ spells the end of the Sinai covenant (3:15–4:7). Those who live under the law must keep it perfectly to be saved, for in returning to the law they are forsaking the atonement provided by Christ (2:21; 5:3). Returning to the law is futile, however, for the sacrifices of atonement under the Sinai covenant pointed ahead to the sacrifice of Christ. Hence, animal sacrifices no longer provide forgiveness now that the

definitive sacrifice of Christ has been offered (3:13). [Thomas R. Schreiner, Galatians, 213–214]

The words of Lev. 18:5 contextually refer to the fledgling nation, delivered from Egypt, enjoying the blessings of life in the promised land. But beyond that is the hope of life eternal.

Its crucial phrase וַיִּחְיֶינָה בָּהֶם (wāḥay bāhem; LXX ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς, *zēsetai en autois*) will mean, then, not “live one’s life in them” but “find life by [obeying] them” (cf. NAB, NJB, NLT).¹⁴ In other words, the verse intends to motivate Israel to obey God’s law by promising them life if they obey. The “life” in view here, as typically in the Pentateuch in these kinds of texts, is the blessing of God’s covenant promises: health, fruitful crops, security in the land (“a happy life in which a man enjoys God’s bounty of health, children, friends, and prosperity” [G. Wenham 1979: 253]). [Douglas J. Moo, Galatians, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 208]

Paul’s readers, us!, are now between a rock and a hard place. There is nowhere to turn but to Christ (vv. 13-14).

3:13 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα, ὅτι γέγραπται· ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὁ κρεμᾶμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου,

Χριστὸς —

ἡμᾶς (ἐγὼ || Pronoun: 1PP, accusative, plural).

ἐκ τῆς κατάρας (κατάρα = curse || Noun: genitive, singular, feminine).

τοῦ νόμου (— || Noun: Masc. Gen. Sing.). Genitive of description.

γενόμενος (γίνομαι || Participle: Nom. Masc. Sing.). Adverbial participle of means, demonstrating how we are redeemed from the Law's curse.

ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν (ἐγὼ || Personal Pronoun: 1P, Gen. plural).

κατάρα, (κατάρα = curse || Noun: Nom. singular, feminine).

ὅτι γέγραπται· (γράφω || Verb: perfect, passive, indicative, 3S).

ἐπικατάρατος (ἐπικατάρατος = cursed || Adj.: Nom. Masc. Sing.).

πᾶς (— || Adj.: nominative, singular, masculine).

ὁ κρεμᾶμενος (κρεμάννυμι = to hang || Participle: Nom. Masc. Sing. Pres. Midd.).

ἐπὶ ξύλου, (ξύλον = tree || Noun: Neut. Gen. Neut. Sing.).

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us, for it is written: “CURSED IS EVERYONE HANGED UPON A TREE.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, (Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου)

ἐξαγοράζω (s. ἀγοράζω) 1 aor. ἐξηγόρασα. The commercial associations of the vb. ‘buy, buy up’ τὶ ‘someth.’ (Polyb. 3, 42, 2; Plut., Crass. 543 [2, 5]) or ‘redeem’ (lit. ‘buy back’), ‘deliver’ τινά ‘someone’ (Diod S 15, 7, 1; 36, 2, 2; not in LXX) invite a variety of extended usage: to secure deliverance of, deliver, liberate τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον those who are subject to the law Gal 4:5. The thing from which deliverance is obtained is added with ἐκ: ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου 3:13 (Dssm., LO 270–78 [LAE 322–34]; w. ἀπὸ Ar. 11, 3). [William Arndt et al., A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 343]

The word “redeemed” means literally “to buy off,” “to set free by the payment of a price.” The root word for redemption in Greek is *agora*, “marketplace,” the site of the slave auction where everyday in ancient Rome human beings were put up for sale to the highest bidder.⁶⁴ The word “redemption” declares that we have been bought with a price. “We are not saved by the Lord Jesus Christ by some method that cost him nothing.”⁶⁵ The “ransom” for our sins was nothing less than the very life blood of the Son of God himself. [Timothy George, *Galatians*, 237–238]

Redeemed, see 4:5.

having become a curse for us, (γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα,)

In some ancient contexts, slaves could purchase their own freedom. Not so with sin.

for it is written: “CURSED IS EVERYONE HANGED UPON A TREE.” (ὅτι γέγραπται· ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὁ κρεμάμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου,)

The lot of the criminal.

The quotation from the Old Testament that follows (Deut 21:23) gives, as indicated above, the reason why Christ’s hanging on the cross can be interpreted as his becoming accursed. In its original context the verse refers to the practice of hanging the bodies of criminals on trees and leaving them there; the Jews believed that to do so would defile their land. One can see how easy it was to include in the reference of this text those who later were put to death by means of the Roman practice of crucifixion, including Christ himself. [UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1976), 66]

The Talmud recognizes four modes of capital punishment that were sanctioned by the Jewish people: stoning, burning, beheading, and strangling the criminal as he stood on the ground. After the execution had been carried out, the corpse of the criminal would then be hoisted onto a piece of timber, a stake or “tree,” as an indication that this person had been justly condemned as a transgressor of the divine law.⁶⁶ It was important that the criminal’s corpse not be exposed beyond sundown because this would dishonor God and defile the land. Thus, according to John’s Gospel, the bodies of Jesus and the two thieves crucified with him were removed from their crosses before nightfall so as not to desecrate the Passover Sabbath (John 19:31). Thus by being impaled on a cross, becoming a gory spectacle for all to see, Jesus exposed himself to the curse of the law. [Timothy George, *Galatians*, 238]

The reference to Jesus’ death as a “hanging on a tree” occurs frequently in early Christian presentations of the kerygma (cf. Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29; 1 Pet 2:24) as a witness to the fact that Christ’s death on the cross was a fulfillment of Old Testament Scripture. [George]

According to a later tradition preserved in the Mishna, even an innocent person crucified by a miscarriage of justice still blasphemed the divine Name. Thus “when Paul was compelled to recognize that the crucified Jesus, risen from the dead, was Messiah and Son of God, he [was] faced with the problem how and why he nevertheless had died under the divine curse.” [Timothy George, 239]

Deuteronomy 21:22–23 22 “If a man has committed a sin worthy of death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, 23 his corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day (for he who is hanged is accursed of God), so that you do not defile your land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.

. . . in Jos. 10:26f.: when Joshua captured the Canaanite kings who were defeated in the battle of Beth-horon, he ‘put them to death, and hung them on five trees. And they hung upon the trees until evening; but at the time of the going down of the sun, Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees, and threw them into the cave where they had hidden themselves, and they set great stones against the mouth of the cave’ (cf. the treatment of the king of Ai in Jos. 8:29). So, in the Johannine passion narrative, the bodies of Jesus and the two robbers who were crucified with him were removed from their crosses before sundown, at the instance of the Jewish authorities, who were specially concerned that the sanctity of the ensuing sabbath should not be violated (Jn. 19:31; cf. Mk. 15:42f.). [F. F. Bruce, 164]

Note substitutionary atonement (2 Cor. 5:21) and propitiation.

MARTIN LUTHER: Paul does not say that Christ became a curse on his own account but that he became a curse for us. He is innocent in himself and should never have been crucified. His punishment came because he took our place, and that is why he died the death of a thief—it is we who are the thieves! SECOND LECTURES ON GALATIANS.

A stumbling block to the Jews: “As late as the time of Jerome (d. 420) the shocking image of a crucified and accursed Messiah was a major point of contention between the church and the synagogue.’ [George, 240] Also for the Gentiles, as witnessed in Corinth: No one by the Spirit can say, Jesus is accursed” (1 Cor 12:3). This was an anti-Christian polemic in ancient Greece.

Jewish hostility to this idea is documented in several ancient texts. Writing in the second century, Justin (c. 100–165) recounts a conversation with Trypho the Jew, who refused to believe that God’s Messiah could die on a tree. He said, “But whether Christ should be so shamefully crucified, this we are in doubt about. For whosoever is crucified is said in the law to be accursed, so that I am exceedingly incredulous on this point.” [Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew, in Ante-Nicene Fathers, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, 10 vols. (New York, 1885; repr. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 1:244]

We cannot be saved partly by faith and partly by works. The roads are distinct. We must keep the whole law if we would be saved by it. Our only hope is in the righteousness of

the Lord Jesus Christ received by faith. [Charles Spurgeon, Galatians, ed. Elliot Ritzema, Spurgeon Commentary Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2013), Ga 3:12]

Expressed beautifully in the words of the old American folk hymn:

What wondrous love is this,
O my soul, O my soul,
What wondrous love is this,
O my soul!
What wondrous love is this,
that caused the Lord of bliss
To bear the dreadful curse
for my soul, for my soul,
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul!

3:14 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραάμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως.

ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη (ἔθνος, οὗς, τό || Noun: Accus. Neut. Pl.).
ἡ εὐλογία (εὐλογία, ας, ἡ || Noun: Nom. Fem. Sing.).
τοῦ Ἀβραάμ —
γένηται (— || Verb: aorist, middle, subjunctive, 3S).
ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, — Dative / Locative of sphere.
ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν (ἐπαγγελία, ας, ἡ = promise || Noun: accusative, singular, feminine).
τοῦ πνεύματος —
λάβωμεν (Verb: aorist, active, subjunctive, 1P).
διὰ τῆς πίστεως. — Instrumental / Genitive of means.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

So that the blessing of Abraham, in Christ Jesus, might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

So that the blessing of Abraham, (ἵνα . . . ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραάμ γένηται)

Note the ἵνα. See context of vv. 6-9.

The promise of Gen 12:3—that all nations would be blessed in Abraham—has now become a reality in Christ Jesus (cf. Gal 3:8), not by circumcision or submission to the Mosaic law. In Gal 3:8–9 the blessing of Abraham belongs to those who trust in Christ. [Thomas R. Schreiner, Galatians, 218]

in Christ Jesus, (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,)

Note the connection to the “blessing of Abraham.”

might come to the Gentiles (εἰς τὰ ἔθνη . . . γένηται)

Thus fulfilling the Abrahamic covt.

so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως.)

Note the ἵνα. Here we see the curse turned into blessing. Cf. the inclusio with 3:1-5. The Galatians have experienced the Spirit by means of “hearing accompanied by faith.”

Ezekiel 11:18–19 18 “When they come there, they will remove all its detestable things and all its abominations from it. 19 “And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,

Ezekiel 36:26–27 26 “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

Joel 2:28 “It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions.

Romans 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Cf. Matt. 5:17.

To be brief, there is nothing handled here concerning the bodily life, but concerning everlasting life, where no blessing is to be hoped for, or righteousness to be sought, either through the law, or the traditions of men, or whatsoever can be named in this life, besides the promise of Abraham’s blessing. [Martin Luther, Commentary on Galatians (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 241]

Already the Galatian Christians are sons of Abraham by faith; already they have been blessed by God, as foreseen in the Abrahamic covenant itself. Thus by faith they are joined to Abraham, “the man of faith,” and so need no further teaching from the Judaizers as to how to enter, maintain, or perfect that relationship. [Richard N. Longenecker, Galatians, 124]

We walk by the Spirit, through faith (cf. chapt. 5). Cf. also 4:4.

Faith is laying hold of Jesus Christ personally. There is no merit in it. It is not another ‘work’. Its value is not in itself, but entirely in its object, Jesus Christ. As Luther put it, ‘faith ... apprehends nothing else but that precious jewel Christ Jesus.’ Christ is the Bread of life; faith feeds upon Him. Christ was lifted up on the cross; faith gazes at Him there. [John R. W. Stott, The Message of Galatians: Only One Way, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 82]

The Law had provision for sin in the atoning sacrifices. However, they were temporary, being fulfilled in Christ. Now that the M.L. has been done away with, those sacrifices are worthless.

Hebrews 10:1–4 1 For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

With the coming of Christ the new era of salvation-history has arrived, and the Mosaic covenant is abrogated. Therefore, animal sacrifices cannot forgive the sins committed.¹⁰⁷ The only means of atonement is the cross of Christ. [Thomas R. Schreiner, Galatians, 220]

Our salvation is by grace alone through faith alone. Faith is a needy cry for God, while works try to impress God. Faith is a hand reaching out for help, while works insist that no help is needed. Faith trusts that God alone can accomplish salvation, while works smuggle in human effort and cooperation. [Thomas R. Schreiner, Galatians, 220–221]

As Luther said, “trying to be justified by the Law is like counting money out of an empty purse, eating and drinking from an empty dish and cup, looking for strength and riches where there is nothing but weakness and poverty, laying a burden on someone who is already oppressed to the point of collapse, trying to spend a hundred gold pieces and not having even a pittance.” [Luther, Galatians 1535: Chapters 1–4, 406–7]

But battle against that feeling, and say, “Even though I feel myself completely crushed and swallowed by sin and see God as a hostile and wrathful judge, yet in fact this is not true; it is only my feeling that thinks so. The Word of God, which I ought to follow in these anxieties rather than my own consciousness, teaches much differently, namely, that “God is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit” (Ps. 34:18), and that “He does not despise a broken and contrite heart” (Ps. 51:17). [Martin Luther, Galatians 1535: Chapters 1–4, 26]

Beautiful Terrible Cross
Song by Selah / 2009

There is a beautiful terrible cross
Where though You committed no sin
Savior, You suffered the most wicked fate
On the cruelest creation of men

Yet on that beautiful terrible cross
You did what only You could

Turning that dark inspired evil of hell
Into our soul's greatest good

We see the love that You showed us
We see the life that You lost
We bow in wonder and praise You
For the beautiful terrible cross

There on that beautiful terrible cross
Though darkness was strong on that hill
You remained sovereign, Lord, still in control
As Your perfect plan was fulfilled

Oh, we gained the riches of Heaven
Jesus, You paid the horrible cost
We stand forgiven and praise You
For the beautiful terrible cross
For the beautiful terrible cross

In the cross, in the cross
Be my glory ever
Till my raptured soul shall find
Rest beyond the river

Beautiful cross
Terrible cross
Beautiful cross
Terrible cross