

Galatians #17

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[0 : 00] Well, we continue with our exposition of Galatians, and we are in chapter 3, which is designated as 4B on your scripture sheet. And we have just dealt with the question that the Apostle is asking his audience.

He is writing to these Galatians, and he is chiding them, rebuking them, for having turned their back on the gospel of grace that he had introduced them to sometime previously.

And we pointed out to you that there were those detractors of Paul's message who came in after him and began confusing these brethren who had been saved on the basis of grace through faith plus nothing.

And now these Judaizers are providing some add-ons to the gospel. And there are no add-ons, because if there are, then the work that Jesus Christ accomplished was really not adequate. There's something you have to add to it. And that, of course, does despot to the spirit of grace. So he began his letter right up front and hit the ground running in chapter 1 when he said, I am amazed, I'm shocked, I'm stunned, that you have so quickly removed yourself from the gospel, and you have bought into another gospel, which in reality is not another gospel at all, but it is a perversion of the truth.

[1 : 45] And now he is calling them back to their original position of their faith. And he says in verse 3 of chapter 3, continues his argument, Are you so foolish?

Having begun in the spirit, was it not by the spirit of God that you were regenerated internally and made a new creation in Christ?

Was that not the case? And, of course, they would have to agree, yes, it was, that we did begin in the spirit. Are you now made complete in the flesh?

Are you kidding me? What has come over you? And earlier in this chapter, he suggested that they are under a kind of spell or a hex.

He said, who has bewitched you? Who has hornswoggled you? You know, fellas, this is something that we have to keep uppermost in our mind, and that is that air is out there alive and well.

[2 : 46] And it just seeks to promulgate itself anywhere and everywhere it can. We are told, as Peter wrote his epistle, that the adversary, Satan, is as a roaring lion walking about the earth seeking whom he may devour.

How does he devour people? He devours people through deception, through trickery, through spiritual sleight of hand, through causing people to think that things are other than they are.

And there is a lot of that going on because there is far more error out there than there is truth. The simplest analogy of that is there is one right answer, the two plus two equals four.

Just one. But how many wrong answers are there? The number is infinite, really. That's how many wrong answers there are. So truth is to be appreciated and discovered and believed for what it is.

So he's continuing his argument. In verse 4, have you suffered so many things in vain? Weymouth translates it, have you experienced so much to no purpose, if indeed it has been to no purpose?

[4 : 00] Have all your great experiences been in vain? In vain they should be. He therefore, that ministereth to you the Spirit and worketh miracles among you, does he do it by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?

So he is continuing his logical kind of argument. He is forcing these Galatians to think along a logical, consistent line to show them how foolish their departure from the faith has been.

And he continues by saying, Even as Abraham believed God, and it, that is, his belief, was counted to him for righteousness, know ye therefore that they which are of faith the same are the children of Abraham.

In other words, he is simply saying, and of course Abraham has been dead for a couple of thousand years when Paul wrote this, but he is using him as the primary example.

And he is saying that those who have been justified by faith are like spiritual children of Abraham. He was one in the forefront. And those who have believed God, as Abraham did, they are spiritual children of Abraham in that.

[5 : 22] And by the way, let me just insert this. This does not make us Jews. Okay? It doesn't make us spiritual Jews either. But it does make us spiritual children of Abraham.

And we've got something in common there. The commonality is justified by faith. Well, Abraham wasn't a Jew either, was he? Well, in essence, he was not.

You could not call Abraham a Jew. No, that would be true. But we tend to think of him as the father of the faithful. Good point. I'm glad you brought that up. Because look at it this way. Abraham was originally referred to as a Hebrew.

And the word Hebrew means, as best we can determine the designation, the word Hebrew means one who has crossed over. And what it was, as best we can determine, what Abraham crossed over was the Euphrates River.

When he left his home in Ur of the Chaldees, at the call of God, separate yourself from your land, from your kindred, into a land that I will show thee. He drove. He drove.

[6 : 32] He walked. Maybe he rode an animal, but it was mostly on foot, up to the north to Haran. And there at Damascus in ancient Syria, he picked up this slave by the name of Eliezer, a servant.

And then he came down on the opposite side, that is west of the Jordan River, down on the opposite side, all the way down to Hebron.

And there he settled. And when he arrived there, he was a stranger. He was an out-of-towner. And everybody referred to him as the Hebrew, as the one who crossed over, because there wasn't very much crossing over done back in those days.

It took a whole lot of time and a lot of effort to make that journey. So that was the origin of what we would call the Hebrew nation. But when Abraham and Sarah brought Isaac into the world, then technically there still were no Jews as such.

But there was this Hebrew designation, this one who crossed over. So Isaac was born, and then Isaac and Rebekah gave birth to Esau and Jacob.

[7 : 47] And then Jacob, we know, had Rachel and Leah and Bilhah and Zilpah, these two handmaidens. And from those four women, you have the twelve tribes of Israel.

And one of those tribes is the tribe of Judah. J-U-D-A-H. And Judah will later become the appellation, or abbreviation of the word Jew.

But it's spelled J-E-W. And that's where the name came from. How that got tacked on to the Jew, or to Judah, is because when the tribes divided, back under Rehoboam, and the north seceded from the Union, and the south, the two southern tribes were Judah and Benjamin.

And eventually, those two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, were attacked by the Babylonians. And 586 B.C., they carried them into Babylonian captivity.

They destroyed Jerusalem and everything else. And they led the Jews, or they led the Hebrews, into Babylonian captivity. And to the Babylonians, who probably originally gave them this name, those of the tribe of Judah, were just referred to as Jews.

[9 : 20] And the name stuck. And to this day, they are referred to as Jews, or as the Jewish people. So, Hebrew and Jew really are inseparably connected.

But you can see the derivation of how the name Jew has stuck for centuries. And today, they are known as the Jewish people. And it all comes from the name of that one tribe, the tribe of Judah. Because that was the most significant tribe. And that, by the way, is the royal tribe. It's also the tribe of the monarchy, through which David came, the king, and our Messiah.

So, continuing on then. Mark? Yes, Dan? So, Jews today are descendants from all 12 tribes, or just that one tribe? Well, Jews today are descendants from one of the tribes, from one of the 12 tribes.

So, it could be any one of the 12 tribes. Yeah, it could be any one of the 12. And it's one of the most tragic, heartbreaking things that happened was in 586, when the temple was destroyed, all of the genealogical records went up in flames.

[10 : 33] Which is really so sad, because it was, it was, the, the temple contained what might be the equivalent of a national courthouse where all the records were kept, all of the ancestors, all of the names, all of the genealogies, of which there were thousands and thousands of them.

And, the Jewish people were very meticulous about recording these names, particularly, those of the males, much more than the female, because it was through the male that the property rights and the birth rights were descended.

So, that's why they paid so much attention to the male. And those records were all destroyed. So, as a result, pardon me? 586, yeah, 586 B.C.

Yeah. And, and as a result, Jews today really don't know very much which tribe they are from. A couple of exceptions. A couple of exceptions.

And it's interesting, I don't want to get too far afield here. Maybe I already am, but I've got to share this with you. There are a lot of Jews today with the name Levi.

[11:46] L-E-B-Y. And, there are a lot of Jews today with the name Cohen. C-O-H-E-N. It was a famous gangster in Chicago.

Mickey Cohen. Remember the name? And, these are pretty well distinguishable as descendants of Levi, of the priestly tribe.

Now, granted, there have been some changes through the years because one of the other problems that the Jewish people have to contend with today, which is of great concern to the Orthodox Jew, and that is intermarriage.

There are so many more Jews today who are marrying outside the Jewish faith. And, of course, this tends to confound and obfuscate the genealogical line because you have Gentiles intermarrying with Jews.

And, as a result today, a great many Jews, a great many of the Jewish people are Jewish primarily by tradition and heritage more than they are by religious conviction.

[13:07] And, many of them will share that with you. So, that's an interesting aside. But, this is all, this all stems from Abraham. So, in a sense, we, in a way, in a way, you could say Abraham was like the first Jew.

But, he was hundreds of years before the word Jew even came into being. But, technically, I guess you could say he was a Jew. Hebrews and Jews are pretty much synonymous. okay.

Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith the same are the children of Abraham. But, it isn't of just any faith. And, this is a common mistake that so many people make today because it sounds so good.

It doesn't make any difference what faith you have as long as you just really believe it. And, as long as you live by it. And, that really has a nice ring to it.

It just sounds good. But, it is deadly poison. And, while it is true that everybody has faith, that which distinguishes the true faith from all other faiths, insofar as salvation is concerned, is what or who is the object of your faith.

[14:22] Faith requires an object. Abraham's object was God himself who revealed himself to him. And, Abraham simply said, alright, all that you say you are, all that you say you will do, I believe that.

I accept you. I take you at your word. My faith is in you. Abraham's faith was certainly not in himself. The old hymn writer says, the arm of flesh will fail you.

You dare not trust your own. And, this is why our faith needs to be placed in a receptacle that is worthy of it.

And, that is the person of Christ. And, that did not become available until his death, burial and resurrection. And, now he has become the object of our faith, or the object of the Christian faith. So, they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And, the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen, through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee, the good news, preached the good news unto Abraham, saying, in thee, shall all nations be blessed.

[15:51] And, Knox renders this at the top of the page there. There is a passage in scripture which long beforehand brings to Abraham the good news. And, what was the good news?

God says, Abraham, through thee, all the nations shall be blessed. And, that passage looks forward to God's justification of the Gentiles by faith.

So, when God said to Abraham, through you and your seed, all nations of the earth are going to be blessed. Well, who does that include? Includes everybody.

Includes everybody. And, who is the capstone of that, through whom it is all to come to pass? Well, it is Abraham, but it is Christ through Abraham, out of Abraham, this long standing promise that God

did not fulfill until 4,000 years after he gave that promise to Abraham.

That's how much time was going to transpire between the promise given to Abraham and the announcement of John the Baptist, behold, the Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world.

[17 : 07] 4,000 years. So, I've often told Christians who think that we've waited too long for Christ to return for the second coming, you've got to remember that the Jew waited 4,000 years for the first coming, and then didn't accept him when he came.

So, we've only waited half as long as they did. So, let's continue on. So, then, verse 9, by way of conclusion, so then, they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

And the word blessed means well advantaged, well off, fortunate, and whatever other designation in a positive sense that you can add to that.

Blessed means fortunate or spiritually well off, for as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.

Why is that? because if you are going to see yourself as justified or made righteous with God on the basis of your observing the law, you're sunk.

[18 : 37] You're under the curse. You don't stand a prayer. You are as far away and as removed from God as you can get. If you are counting on your observance of the law, you're doing good things, doing right things, then you've just bought in to the inevitable consequence of advocating that the law is your savior because the law will turn on you and be your condemner.

And it has to do that because the law is holy and righteous and just. And the law knows nothing about grading on the curve. the law condemns.

The law cannot justify. It can reveal that you need to be justified, but it can't justify you. And the argument that Paul is laying out here is very powerful. As many as are under the works of the law, those who are going that way, Knox says, those who take their stand on observance of the law are all under a curse.

And by the way, this would be a good verse to share with anybody who says, I live by the Ten Commandments, I just keep the law. They have no idea what they're saying.

You can tell them in a nice way, well, if you're counting on the Ten Commandments and you're living under that, you realize, of course, that puts you under a curse, don't you? What? What are you talking about?

[20 : 09] Share this verse with them, because that's exactly what it's saying. Yes? But it's still alright after you accepted Christ as the soul way, plus nothing, you know, Christ, to keep the law afterwards, there's nothing wrong with keeping the law, because actually, you love one another, isn't that the new law?

You love one another, and if you love a person, you will keep every one of the Ten Commandments. Well, think about it, you'll keep every one of them, you won't murder them, you won't steal from them, you won't lie, if you love another person, you will keep all those commandments.

Well, you will, you will, I can't say that you will keep them all successfully or fully, but you will, you see, when you come to faith in Christ, you are made a new creature in Christ, we have a new heart, and one of the first things that I think becomes apparent in the life of a true believer is a change in attitude, and a desire to please the Lord out of a sense of appreciation and gratitude rather than out of a sense of obligation, and the posture of the heart is radically different, and I think this is what Paul is talking about in Romans 8 when he says that what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, that is our inability to keep it, the law cannot give you the ability to keep it, the law can't do that, it was never intended to do that, by the law is the knowledge of sin, the law reveals sin, that's why, that's why whenever the gospel is preached, and we give people the good news, the good news doesn't make any sense without the bad news, the bad news is we are condemned, we are under a just condemnation of a holy

God, that's the bad news, so you have to reveal the element of sin to people, because apart from the knowledge and buying into the idea of sin, who needs a savior?

We have to confront people with their sin, which is a very delicate business, because everybody likes to think, I'm a nice guy, I'm not one of those sinners you're talking about, are you saying I'm not as good as you?

[22 : 54] They just misunderstand the whole thing, so the gospel, the good news, is so vital, and is so wonderful, because the bad news is condemning, and the bad news is a curse, the good news brings us out from under that, but if you don't accept and acknowledge the bad news, you won't

have any interest in the good news, and this is exactly where many, many people are, they will not give an ear to the gospel, because they see themselves as okay, the way they are, I'm okay, you're okay, we're all okay, God is loving and forgiving, and everybody's going to make it in the end, you know, and we are called upon to do the hard business of gently, but honestly, revealing to people that we don't measure up, you don't measure up, and I don't measure up, and the only thing that makes me different from you, if we are different, if you are not a believer, is that I have received Jesus

Christ as my personal Savior, and that doesn't make me better than anybody else, it just makes me regenerated by the grace of God.

Dana? What I heard you say is, what is true for many people is they've got to hit rock bottom before they will accept Christ. Well, yeah. Rock bottom is at a different spot for different people.

Yeah, well, you're right, you're right. You have to come to the end of yourself, and most people have not done that. Most people have confidence in themselves, I can pull this out.

I can be what I have to be. I can make it. I can redouble my efforts. I can try harder. I can pray more. I can give more. I can go to church more. I can, you know, and when you come to the end of yourself, it is, woe is me, I am undone, and I cannot, I cannot provide what a holy God requires, and therefore, we turn to Christ, to the one who can.

[25 : 12] And when the scripture text says there in Romans 10, and whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Now, this question, why would you call? Why would you ask? Because I have a need. Yeah. Why would you call upon the Lord?

Because you recognize a deficiency, an inadequacy. You know you have come to the conclusion you cannot provide what is required.

Woe is me. Where can I get what God requires? What God requires? You can get it only from the one who has it to give.

And that is the person of Jesus Christ. So we come to him and we put our trust in him and he gives us his righteousness placed to our account.

[26 : 11] and he takes our sin and places it to his accomplishment on the cross. And Christ died for us. It's a glorious thing.

This is a wonderful message. You know, and guys, it completely still mystifies me that this message has been around 2,000 years and is still so little understood. Joe?

He had Jesus say himself. He didn't come to destroy the law but to fulfill the law. So it's as if when God looks at us and we accept Jesus, we are meeting the law.

We are righteous through Christ. That's why God sees us that way through what Jesus did. So then we are meeting the law 100% when he looks at us.

You know, we're still not, we can't because we still sinful here but when he looks on the law, that's how we can go to heaven. That's why he loves us. Amen. Thank you. That passage is in the Sermon on the Mount when Christ said, and some were misunderstanding him, you know, because he did things that in their estimation he shouldn't be doing on the day that he did them.

[27 : 23] For instance, his healing on the Sabbath. Now the law doesn't say anything about don't heal on the Sabbath. But that was part of the nitpicking regulations that they had imposed upon the law.

These were human additions to the law. And Christ clarified this thing. He said, listen, you think I came to destroy the law? To violate the law? I didn't come to destroy the law.

I came to fulfill it. And he fulfilled it in the most incredible way. In that Jesus never once violated the law as it was given in his spirit and intent through Moses.

What he did do was he consistently violated the pharisaical nitpicking interpretation of the law.

That's what he didn't measure up to.

And that's what they condemned him for. And when he said, I didn't come to destroy the law but to fulfill the law, Christ kept the law in its spirit and intent and the way it was meant to be kept.

[28 : 29] And then, when he died on that cross, he died as one who was a lawbreaker, although he wasn't.

That's the principle of substitution. He who knew no sin was made sin for us. And when he died on that cross, he fulfilled the just demands of the law imposed upon every lawbreaker, which is what?

Death. Death. That's why he died. He paid the penalty for breaking the law that he didn't break. He paid the penalty for your breaking the law and my breaking the law.

And he paid the ultimate penalty so that the law could demand nothing more from him. He paid the ultimate price and that was death. That's just amazing. That, wow.

Hmm. Well, we're in verse 11. But that no man, no man, no human being is justified or declared righteous by the law in the sight of God.

[29 : 49] And in Romans 3, Paul says, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. And no one is declared righteous before God on the basis of the law.

It is evident for the just shall live by faith. Those who are justified by God have spiritual life on the basis of their faith.

and this living by faith here is not talking about our physical life. That's a given. But it's talking about having spiritual life and it comes by grace through faith.

All right. Let's flip the page here. And we're in section now 5A. And the law, the law is not of faith.

You get that? The law is not of faith. The law is not connected with faith. The law can't do what faith can do.

[30 : 54] The law can tell you, you've got a need. I can't meet your need. But you have a need.

Remember the illustration that we've given before about the little boy that stands before the mirror in the bathroom?

And the mirror is like the law and he looks at the mirror. and he sees that his face is dirty. But the mirror can't cleanse his face.

All the mirror can do is reveal that he's got a dirty face, but it can't do anything about it. That's what the law does. The law reveals that we are morally unacceptable to God, but the law can't fix you.

The law can't make you right. The law can only say you're wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong. Sin, sin, sin, sin. And this is why he says also here in Galatians, the law is our schoolmaster.

The law is our tutor. To do what? To lead us to Christ. The law says, I can't save you, but here's one who can.

[32 : 04] And that is, of course, the Lord Jesus. The law is not a faith, but the man that doeth them shall live in them. The law, Weymouth renders it, and the law has nothing to do with faith.

It teaches that he who does these things shall live by them. And boy, that's not good news. Not at all. The law, however, does not rest on faith, but on works.

He who does them shall live by them. So, what is your modus operandi here? What path are you following? Are you following the law of works or following the law of faith?

If it's works, buddy, you're in big trouble because it's going to leave you out and condemn you. And only the law of faith that is deposited in Jesus Christ can be salvation.

And then he concludes that by saying, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us.

[33 : 07] For it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. So, we'll take this up next time. And, any comment before we close?

Yeah, Dana? Verse 12, the man, the law is capitalized even at the beginning of the sentence.

Where are we?

Verse 12, what? And the law is not of faith, but the man, the capitalized. I don't know why that is, but be advised that all of the capitalizations that are in the Bible, whether you're talking about the King James, the New American Standard, or whatever, all of the capitalizations are just man-made. And, they are not part of the original text. In fact, punctuation that we find in our Bibles, whether you're talking King James, New American Standard, or whatever, there's nothing inspired about the punctuation or the capitalization.

the original autographs, the original documents, well, there was the exception of the unseals. The unseals are Greek manuscripts that are written all in capital letters.

[34 : 38] Everything is in caps. Those are called the unseals. But the vast majority of the New Testament is all written in lowercase letters with no abbreviation and no apostrophes and no commas and no periods, no punctuation of any kind, no capitalization.

It is all smaller case letters. So, these things like the capitalization here in verse 12 of the word the, it is strictly a man-made thing.