

~ BY ANGELS IN THE HAND....

GALATIANS 3:13 – 22

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~ Our Spiritual Safari has gone from a slow walk since reaching the halfway point of the last book we examined — the Book of Job — to an even slower crawl at this time with Paul the apostle in Galatians; and I have intentionally done so because these sections of Scripture are high water marks in the Word of God. There is a lot to see now on our expedition through the entire Bible, and I would be a terrible safari guide if you missed the sights available to us in this epistle. If we could simply get our thinking straight concerning the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ — and what it really is — according to the Bible — it would pave smooth, and straighten out, the highways of our lives....

***13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed of God is every one that hangeth on a tree:***

~ In our consideration of Deuteronomy, we read how a notorious or reprehensible criminal who had been stoned to death was to also be taken and hanged on a tree as a public warning to others; however, they weren't to be left hanging overnight. Well, Jesus became a curse, but not at His incarnation; because the Bible says of His birth, "... *that holy thing.*" Jesus didn't become a curse during the silent years of His youth; as the Scripture saith, "... *Jesus advanced in favor with God and with man.*" Jesus did not become a curse during His earthly ministry, either, because the Father in Heaven Himself says, "*this is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased.*"

Jesus became a curse for us on the cross — but only during the last three hours. When Jesus offered Himself, He was without blemish; and Hebrews says, "...*who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God....*" The first three hours on the cross are when man did his worst deeds; but the final three hours were when God did His best for mankind. That's when Christ was made a curse for us, friends. That's when it pleased the Lord to bruise Him and put Him to grief; making His soul our offering for

sin. The word for “tree” is “xulon” – and that simply means *wooden*. Christ was nailed to the tree of death in order that He might transform it into a tree of life for you and me....

***14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.***

***15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.***

***16 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.***

***17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.***

~ So, Paul continues to make the contrast between law and grace. As we have seen in previous reports, God made a covenant promise to Abraham; and when the law came along, four hundred and thirty years later, that promise to Abraham was not changed in any way. Even up to our present-hour, God has not changed His covenant. God told Abraham He would give him that land, and a son, and a people that would be as innumerable as the stars in the sky — or the sand on the seashore. God also promised that Abraham would be a blessing to all people.

Today, God has brought several nations from Abraham; but Israel is the nation Christ came through. The only blessings we know anything about come from the Lord Jesus Christ. Mankind does not act fairly towards their neighbors, friends, the business world, families — or even towards our churches. The world isn't prepared to offer a fair and honest deal – you can just write that down. The Supreme Gift that is the Lord Jesus is something none of us deserve. Well, God also made a promise that He would save all men and women who would trust Christ as their Savior....

***18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.***

~ The “*promise*” is the promise made concerning Christ a *LONG* time before the law was given to Moses on Mount Sinai. It holds as though no law had ever even been given; as the promise of the son was made irrespective of the Mosaic Law. So, the natural question arises; what value was the Mosaic System, and why was it given in the first place? Well, Paul isn’t playing down the law in Galatians; and I know some people attempt to play it down until it means nothing at all — but that’s the wrong approach, too. Paul is trying to help them understand the answer to those questions and explain the purpose of the glory, fullness, perfection, and majesty of the law....

***19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added for the sake of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.***

~ The reason the Mosaic Law was given to Israel — *after* they left Egypt — was to reveal a hurdle they could never surmount to become acceptable to God. The little four-letter time word “*till*” is critical in this passage; it means the Mosaic System of Law was a temporary arrangement; given in the interval “*till*” Christ came to this world and *FULFILLED* the law. Remember, Jesus said, “*think not that I have come to destroy the law nor the prophets; but to fulfill the law*” - Matthew chapter five verse seventeen. The law was given to Moses by God, but John said, “.... *grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*” The Mosaic Law was a temporary arrangement; in and of its own dispensation....

***20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.***

***21 Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.***

***22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.***

~ The law was given to reveal the total depravity of mankind; *NOT* to remove sin, nor save us by obedience to it – because that’s impossible. The law never saved man from sin, because mankind had already fallen to sin when the law was commanded. The law shows us we are naturally ugly, vile, crude, and abject sinners. Friends, we commit sins of commission, sins of omission, sins of intentional disobedience to God, and sins of complete ignorance every single day – and all day long. Oh, I *KNOW* the legalists do not like this talk from the Word of God; but don’t blame me – I’m just teaching you what the Bible says. You can read it for yourself. In fact, I suggest you read the entire epistle to the Galatians from beginning to end in one sitting, right now. If you have done it before, then it’s time to read it again.

Any honest person sees himself as hopelessly guilty in the light of the law. Are you lying to God and to yourself today? The liberal always makes the unlearned assertion that the law was given as a standard by which we are to become holy. Most people erroneously believe man is a pretty nice little creature, and he only becomes a sinner when he commits a sinful act; but, the reality is that man is *ALREADY* a sinner and, therefore, he sins. Men lie because they are liars. Men steal because they are thieves. We don’t become a liar when we utter the lie, my beloved. Scripture says, “.... *ALL men are liars.*” That’s you and me.

I can start out on any given day, and someone says, “.... *it’s a beautiful day.*” Well, I may have a dark brown taste in my mouth and feel like feces, but I just reply, “.... *it sure is.*” Someone else asks me how I am doing. I always tell them, “.... *I’m well, thank you*” – so, I have lied twice to the first two people I talk to in a day before I have even gotten started. Some of us commit *MUCH* more egregious lying than that. Lying is natural, friends, we *ALL* have that natural tendency; that’s why children — and always teenagers — are very good liars. I could always tell when my children were lying just because their lips were moving. If you say that *YOU* do not lie each and every day, then you are bearing false witness; something else you might want to write down.

If there were any way God could have saved sinners other than Christ dying on the cross, then I feel confident God would have used that other method.

If legislation could declare us innocent and clean, He would have used that process. Unfortunately, Scripture concludes *ALL* under sin; that the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ by faith might be given to those who believe. Make no mistake: the law brought *ONLY* death and condemnation. The degree of sin isn't even important; but the mere fact that we do sin. You may not have killed anyone physically, but we have that nature. Jesus said, "*if you are angry with your brother without a cause you are guilty of murder.*" The soul that sinneth it shall die. That edict has never been changed — and it never will be changed. The great German mind, Gerde, said, "*.... I never saw a crime committed that I, too, might have committed.*" We must recognize our sinful nature before we can become justified by faith, friends.

What you and I need is *LIFE*. Only the grace of God has kept *MOST* of us out of the penitentiary and given us life. Well, maybe not you — but it is true in my case. I don't think I need to illustrate that to those who are honest with God; and those who aren't honest with God stopped reading my reports a *L-O-N-G* time ago. The law simply cannot give us life — period. The law of sin works in all men and death follows wherever sin comes. The law of death for sin knows nothing about extenuating circumstances, the law of death for sins knows nothing about mercy; and it has no elasticity, either — it is rigid, inexorable, it's immutable, and final. The soul that sinneth, it shall die! The day Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, their souls died.

**Exodus 34:7** *.... and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation ~*

Death and condemnation come by sin — and nothing else. When Moses heard this, he bowed his face to the earth and worshipped. That's where our Spiritual Safari is going to have to conclude this leg of our expedition. We didn't travel as far as I wanted to in this report; but this is very, very important. I am intentionally placing the Gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ under the electron microscope of life so we can see every cell and fiber of His being.

The law mandated blood sacrifices to cover the sins of the Israelite. The sprinkling of blood on the Mercy Seat by the high priest was the *only* place mercy could be obtained. All of those things pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ! In our next report, we're going to see precisely what the law does — and the part it plays in salvation. I hope you can travel along with us as we continue through the entire Word of God together ~

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