

Under the Law

By Warren Zehrung – March 5, 2011

Brethren, as we study through the epistles, we are striving to understand the mind of God, and the mind of Christ. We want to be like God, think like He does, and see things as He sees them. I sometimes wonder how people can say, "Well I don't see it the way that you see it." When we are reading directly out of the Bible, we have to change our ways to conform to God's ways. Sometimes it is difficult to understand what we read in the scriptures. We work from translations, and sometimes things have entered into the translations that make it a little bit hard for us to comprehend.

For example, you have heard me say before that I wish that there were different words, separate words, in English to describe Godly love, brotherly love and romantic love. But, unfortunately, in English we only have one word – love. In the Greek, they are three separate and distinct words, agape, philo and eros. There is no confusion in the scriptures if we could study in the Greek, which we cannot. But if we look it up, we can see what is being spoken about.

Today, we are going to face a similar problem, because in Greek, one word describes both the Law of God and the law of rituals and sacrifices. It is very important that we are able to distinguish and discern whether the scripture is talking about the Law of God, or on the other hand, if it is talking about the law of rituals, sacrifices, circumcision, or some such thing.

Paul is really hard to follow at times, but it is important to us that we understand the point that he was making, because it is the word of God. Paul's writings have become scripture.

Look at what Peter admitted about Paul's writings:

II Peter 3:16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

So even the Apostle Peter is saying, sometimes when he is reading what Paul wrote it is difficult to follow him. But, he makes the point very clearly, that it can be followed and it can be understood, except for those who are unlearned and unstable.

So, if Peter found Paul's writings hard to understand, then what about us? It goes without saying, that we can expect some difficulties.

This is just me speaking, but I believe that the church of God has not taken Paul's words seriously enough. I think that there are some things there that are very, very important for the Church of God today. These epistles are warnings to the Church of

God today – just as assuredly as when they were written to the first century Church of God.

The Galatians were going through a tough time. We saw that Paul had given the Galatians a foundation in Christ, and in faith. Paul had set them on their course, and yet men from afar came in and turned their minds, and their hearts around to another gospel, which is not a gospel.

We are going to continue in that vein today, where Paul is explaining to the Galatians the way that it is. He will use some examples that demonstrate to them how it works, and how salvation in Christ is so much superior to anything else. In fact, it is the only way; there is no other gospel, as Paul put it.

I tried to think of an example that I could use. On a television show last week, a very popular and well-known television personality had on his program, a Jewish rabbi, a Theologian, a Protestant minister, and a few other religious men as guests. Surprising to me they all agreed that one of the basic problems in America today, is that the Ten Commandments are not being kept by the citizens of America.

The television host asked his audience if anybody could name any of the Ten Commandments. A few hands went up in the audience.

The first man to respond started off with, "Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not lie..." I think that he got four or five of the Commandments correct, but he did not begin with the first four Commandments that have to do with the reverence and the worship of God. He started it like the man that Jesus Christ was speaking to, when Christ asked him if he knew the Commandments; He started after the Commandment to keep the Sabbath, and started speaking about the ones that relate to man, rather than the Commandments that relate to God.

Finally, a lady in the audience recited, rather quickly, a memorized version of all Ten – including, "Keep the Sabbath holy."

I thought to myself, this is good to hear somebody on national television, with a tremendous audience, saying "Keep the Sabbath holy." What struck me as fascinating is that all of the men, sitting at the round table, agreed that American society would be a much better place if people would just know, and obey, the Ten Commandments. That is a little bit out of place. That is not something that has been accepted in America, at least not for a long time.

I found the comments of these rather informed men to be outstanding, because at least since the reformation of Martin Luther all the way back in 1517, (right after Christopher Columbus' trip to America) a major doctrine of Protestantism has been that abiding by the Law of God, including the Ten Commandments, is unnecessary for salvation. Because, Martin Luther and Protestants surmised that Jesus kept the

Commandments perfectly in our stead. He kept them in our place, He kept them for us, and so we do not need to keep them. That is the basic tenet of Protestantism. So to have all of these men agreeing that it would be good to keep the Ten Commandments, I thought that was rather remarkable.

Martin Luther used a scripture like:

Galatians 5:18 "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law,"

The title of today's sermon is "Under the Law."

We are going to discuss what this means. Martin Luther, all of the Protestants, and many, many variations of church groups that broke away from Catholicism, believe that they are not under the Law. They believe that the Commandments, the Law of God, need not be kept.

Martin Luther used Galatians 5:18, to "prove" that the Law of God has been done away with. You are not under the Law.

We need to explain what that means. Some people would say, "Yes, the Law of God – the Ten Commandments was nailed to the cross". There is no place in the Bible where it says that. We need to be able to answer "What does it mean that the Law was nailed to the cross?"

All of those men, of different and very diverse backgrounds, were in solidarity with the notion that the Law of God – the Ten Commandments – would be good for our nation!

I would suppose that, at that point, most of the supportive viewers were feeling all warm and fuzzy inside, with brotherly love for all mankind. People of all backgrounds and persuasions were going along with it.

On the other hand, as I thought about the process that I was witnessing, I would also suppose that the real cohesion of the dissimilar guests of diverse backgrounds was rather superficial. Yes, it is nice to agree while you are on television, and your host and everybody else is being so cordial. But, I believe that their cohesion was superficial.

Brethren, keep in mind that the end-time beast power is going to bring all religious persuasions under one banner. It will be so attractive, it will be so alluring, and it will be so tempting. The Bible says, "*that insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.*"

Matthew 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

God warns us that we will see everybody getting on the same bandwagon, and saying that they all agree, and it will work. Especially when their history, their written doctrine, and what they stand for, is so diverse and so different one from the other.

I will give you an example. The Mormons believe that Satan and Jesus Christ are equal sons of God. Well the Mormons hold a divergent view on the nature of Jesus Christ from that of the Protestants. The Protestants are into the Trinity. They will say that Jesus is the Son of God, but they would make Him a member of a triune Godhead, a Trinity. They have very different understandings and beliefs on the nature of God.

With regard to the Sabbath, the Jewish rabbi would confess that they keep the Saturday Sabbath holy, just as you and I do. All of his compatriots, at the table, would insist on a Sunday Sabbath. When they see Sabbath Day, they think Sunday, the Lord's Day. They were not on the same page at all.

A foundational tenet of Protestantism is that a "Christian" is not required to keep the Law of God, especially the Sabbath Day, as found in both the Old Testament and the New Testaments.

When it comes right down to it, I believe that everybody at that table, most everybody in America, would say that they believe the Commandments "Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal..." They would go along with that. But when it comes down to the Sabbath Day Commandment, they really want to repudiate that. Yet they know that they can just say, "We keep all of the Commandments except the Sabbath", or "We changed it to a day of our choosing". The Protestant world, and the Catholics, moved away from the Sabbath to Sunday. They just moved it over one day; but the Muslims they moved it over the other way, and they keep Friday as a holy day. You can see that they are not covered by the sign between God and His people, which is the Sabbath day. It is the Sabbath day that they wish to repudiate.

So here they were, all around the table, pretty much agreeing that the Commandments should be kept.

I suppose that when the Jewish rabbi returned to his synagogue, some of the Jews probably gave him grief for not differentiating between Saturday and Sunday. His Jewish followers would have liked him to have said that he does not believe in the Sunday worship, but that he believed in the Saturday worship.

And, by the same token, the Protestants probably returned to their congregations to suffer some misery for saying that the Law of God must be obeyed.

But none of these men understood what it means to be under the Law. When we read that in the scripture what does it mean? It would help us, brethren, to understand what it means too. We read very, very clearly in Galatians 5, *But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law,*"

Protestants think that belief, or faith in Jesus is entirely sufficient for salvation, and that they do not need to be doers of the word, or that they do not need to keep the Law of God. Brethren, do we understand that we do need to be doers of the word, and that we do need to keep the Law of God?

The Protestants would refer to scriptures like:

Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

So all you have to say is that there is salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is the way that you are saved. If you believe that, then you are saved.

Acts 16:31 Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,

So you ask somebody, "Do you believe in Jesus Christ?" He says, "Yes, I believe." They usually tell you that they were saved on April 17th, and that is when they gave their heart to the Lord, and were saved. That, for them, is the process of salvation, because they believe on the name, and know the name, and they can say it often.

Brethren, is that what our two inch thick Bible is all about? Is that what God is saying to us, that if the Muslims, the Protestants, the Jews and everybody, would just say "Jesus Christ", that they would be saved? Sitting there, at that table, those people did not all believe in Jesus Christ. The Jewish Rabbi would think Jesus Christ is a holy man, maybe some kind of a prophet or a good person by all means. But, he would not agree with the others, unless he was one of these Jews that had accepted Christianity and renounced what the Jews believe.

So these Protestants have all been taught that Jesus did it all for us, and that there is nothing required of us, except "belief."

Let me give you an example, brethren, if we can take it out of the context of Christ and God.

Suppose that there were two men running for the office of President of the United States. The two men running were Mr. Smith and Mr. Jones. One man would say "I believe in Jones," and the other man would say "I believe in Smith."

We all understand what that means; we understand that the one person supports the platform, the policy, the ideology of the one man over the other. I like Smith better than Jones. You do not believe in a Presidential candidate and say, "I believe in Smith." I don't care what he does, where he lives, what he does for a living. I don't care how he is going to change the country, what kind of a fiscal policy he has, what kind of geo-political policies he wants to ensue. I just believe in Smith or Jones. You would not do that. So why then, do men become so lame-brained when it comes to

belief or faith in Christ? It is as though the words of Christ – what He taught, how He lived, what He believed, what He stood for, had no relevance at all. When we say that we believe in Christ, we believe in His platform, His policy, His ideology, how He lived, how He sacrificed, and all of the things that He taught. You cannot separate one from the other; you cannot just say, "I believe in Christ". It goes much deeper than just the word belief, or faith.

For example, God's Word says that we are to keep the Sabbath holy, but Protestants conclude that Jesus kept the Sabbath perfectly, so we do not have to keep it anymore. They believe that it has been fulfilled. As Peter said, they twist the scriptures from what they clearly say, and what they clearly mean.

Protestants would conclude that by keeping the Sabbath, we are trying to work for our salvation. That wars against faith, because they say that true faith in Jesus Christ just believes on His name.

But, brethren, what is true faith in Jesus Christ? True faith means believing that we must do what Jesus taught that we should be doing. Jesus Christ many times said, "Do this." Jesus believed in His Father, and He did what the Father told Him, and He went where the Father said to go. That is the faith of Jesus Christ. He did the works of His Father; He was obedient unto His Father. His meat was to do the Will of His Father. Do we believe God? We have to believe God in the same way if we are to have the faith of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is our Savior, yes. What did He stand for? What did he teach? What did He do? What did He promise? How did He say that we should live our lives? We are to live our lives with His mercy, compassion, forgiveness and love? We are to lay our lives down and help one another.

True faith, therefore, results in our obedience to the Word of God. If you say and then do not follow up, which one is truly a follower of Christ?

The Bible speaks of works, but the Protestants rule out works. They say that you are just trying to save yourself, you are trying to work your way into salvation.

From a scriptural standpoint, the definition of "works" means doing what God says to do. Doing what God says to do is works. When does God say this has been done away with, or this is to be done always? God says that we are to keep the Ten Commandments, all the way down to visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction.

James 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

What does "under the law," mean?

Galatians 5:18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Paul very subtly distinguished between "under the Law," and "under Law." In one case, I am using the specific definite article, and in one case I am leaving out the article altogether.

Paul, in his writings, flip-flopped back and forth, sometimes he would say "the Law," and sometimes he would say, "Law." He was making the distinction when he did that.

Here is a terrible thing, brethren, you cannot pick up your King James, or most any other Bible, and read it with certainty and think that it has been true to the original. Men very easily add something like an article like "the" or "in" or "of" to make things flow.

I wish that we had a copy of the original manuscript of Paul to see how it was that he emphasized "**The** Law of God" as opposed to simply "law" when referring to any law, including circumcision, sacrificial laws, or the subsequent ritual laws of Judaism. But when Paul was talking about rituals, unless he had mentioned a specific thing like circumcision, he might use the definite article "**The** Law of circumcision." Paul is not entirely consistent every time he speaks about a ritual or a work, sometimes he will use "**The**" there. You have to be careful and read it in context, and you have to really work hard to understand what is being said. But it is clear if you get yourself a Greek interlinear, and look it up and go through and mark your Bible and say this "**The**" belongs there, but this "**The**" does not. A lot of times the Bible says Spirit of God rather than "the" Spirit of God. If it is not in the Greek, then I take out the "the."

People that translated the Bible were fallible, and they made mistakes. They thought that the Holy Spirit was the third member of the Trinity. So they put "the" Spirit a lot of time when it should be Spirit of God. Just like, if you were breathing out on a cold day, I would not say, "I can see your the breath". But that is what happens with languages. But you can figure it out brethren.

Galatians 5:18 "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law."

When Paul wrote Galatians 5:18, he used the saying "works of law" (he let out the definite article, "the") to refer to the works of any law, including circumcision, sacrificial laws, or the subsequent ritual laws of Judaism.

The correct understanding of Galatians 5:18, is this: "*But if you be led by Spirit, you are not under law.*"

We have come a little ways, but that is still not clear to us. Take the "the" out, it does not belong there. "*You are not under law*". Paul is addressing the Galatians; they had been led away from the true gospel of Jesus Christ, and that it has to do with believing, and having faith in Jesus Christ. He was telling them that it has to do with

believing, having faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior, and doing the things that Jesus Christ demonstrated, taught and required of us. So a correct translation of Galatians 5:18, would be, "*If you be led by Spirit, (that is God's mind, God's life) you are not under law.*" Or I could maybe take a little license there and say, "*You are no longer under law.*" In other words, for converted Christians – led by God's Holy Spirit - circumcision, sacrificial laws, and the ritual laws of the Jews are not the controlling factors that bring salvation. Keep in mind that the Galatians were being taught by those coming from Jerusalem, telling them they had to be circumcised, and the needed to wash pots, and wash up to their elbows. They told them that they had to do all of these ritualistic works, or they were not a true Christian. They were bringing in the "works" of law.

The phrase "*not under law*" has nothing to do with abrogating God's laws, God's Ten Commandments, but it refers to not being under, or dependant on, works of law for justification. It is not the washing of a pot that justifies you. It is not circumcision that removes your sins. That existed for a while, and as time goes on we will explain what the purpose of circumcision was. "*But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under [works of] law.*" You are not justified by going back to these factors that had been done away with.

God's Spirit in us leads us to live by God's Law, and therefore we do not fall under the authority or the jurisdiction of circumcision, sacrificial laws, or the ritual laws of Judaism.

Paul wrote the book of Hebrews to explain what is still to be kept, what is still to be performed; and what has been fulfilled or done away with, or is no longer relevant.

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

In that phrase, we did not see anything about the ritualistic washings, and so forth. But if you are one of the Judaizers, and you only walk so many steps on the Sabbath, and you still do the sacrifices, and so forth, you are not led by God's Holy Spirit, but you are led by the works of the law.

Paul never wrote anything about abolishing the Law of God, or the Ten Commandments. This is what Protestants think that Paul did. Paul never wrote anything to abolish the Ten Commandments.

We covered some of Galatians 3 last time, but I want to go through and give you a start as to how to study these things out. I want to show you how to work out some of these phrases, and put it into your own words, until you get your mind around why Paul wrote this important letter to the Galatians. It was to help save them, for their salvation. It was to teach them correctly, to put their feet back on the narrow path, so that they would be headed back to God. He was fearful that they would lose their salvation, and that they would be carried away. Last time we saw how Peter became

caught up in the dissimulation of the Jews, and went back to not eating with the Gentiles. In their mind the Jews were saying that the Gentiles were filthy and uncircumcised. They said, 'We cannot eat with them because they do not wash their hands like we do', ritualistically and so forth. The reason that is in Galatians is because Paul is giving some real life examples to the Galatians to show what Christianity is about. It is a new, magnificent and wonderful thing, and it does not have to do with these ritualistic washings and so forth. It has to do with having faith in what Jesus Christ Himself taught. What He did for us, how He laid His life down for us. That is where salvation comes from.

I do not know if Paul meant to be subtle or obvious when he wrote his letters, or perhaps it might have been perfectly clear to those to whom the letter was written. Maybe, when they read it, they could very easily distinguish when Paul was speaking of the Law of God and when he was speaking about the law of works, like circumcision and rituals, and so on. It could have been like in today's writings. We can make something bold or we can italicize for emphasis, or we can underline it or put it in brackets. I do not know whether that was on the original letter or it was just the way it was read, but I believe that it was clearer to the Galatians than it is to 99% of the people that read the book of Galatians today.

If we are to understand the scripture as the word of God, it is going to take some diligent study on our part to know the intent of God's Word. We are going to have to study it and we are going to have to have ownership of the process, figure it out and get down to the bottom of it. Think of it this way, we have the Bible and we become complacent. How many people are asleep now, they have died, that did not understand so much of what God has put in the scriptures. Brethren, time is short! It is important that we delve into these scriptures and understand what God was saying to the Galatians, because He is saying the same thing to us. There are things that we need to know. The Church of today is making some of the same mistakes that the Galatians were making. They have a substitute religion. They are not doing what Jesus Christ said to do; they are not living as Jesus Christ lived. They are not laying their lives down, and they do not love one another as Jesus Christ taught, but having these substitutes in there. They go to Sabbath services and they meet with their friends, and they have their favorite chair, their favorite spot where they sit. They love the potlucks, and they love the singing and the summer camps. It is a great place to meet women, and it is a nice social event. If that is why people go to the church it is as bad as these works of the law that Paul is condemning here.

Let me give you some examples of where Paul uses these words in the same verses and yet they have entirely different meaning:

Galatians 3:10 For as many as are of the works of [...] law [there is no "the" there] are under the curse.

In other words, if you think that you are going to have salvation by scrubbing up to your elbows, washing pots, and all those other things, you are under the curse.

Galatians 3:10 Cursed is every one that continues not in all things which are written in the book of **the** law [God's Law] to do them.

If we do not do God's Law then we are cursed. That includes the Ten Commandments. The reason that I picked Galatians 3:10, is because both kinds of law are spoken of.

The first one, "*works of the law*," is talking about things like circumcision, sacrifices, and so forth. But, as we go down to the end of Galatians 3:10 it says, "*the book of **the** Law*." This is speaking of God's Law. They look almost identical in the King James Version. But he is comparing and contrasting in that case.

Galatians 4:21 Tell me, ye that desire to be under [...] law, [Not "**the**" law] do ye not hear the law? [God's Law]

He is speaking to the Galatians, who he had set straight, but the Judaizers came in and said that they had to be circumcised, and who knows all that they had to do. Did they tell them that they had to do the daily sacrifices and all of the rituals? The Jews have hundreds of things that they have added to the Law of God. Paul is saying to them, "Do you desire to do all of those things?" He says, 'Do you not hear what God says? Do you not hear **the** Law of God?' So in verse 21, the first part is speaking of the works of the law, and the second part is speaking of God's law. Unless we delve into the scriptures, mark our Bibles and try to understand, we will not understand what Paul is saying at all in the book of Galatians.

Think of it this way, brethren, it is just like the example that I gave a little while ago on Smith and Jones. Some were saying "I believe in Smith, you believe in Jones." But that is nothing unless we know what they stand for, what they are going to do, and how it will affect our lives, and how it is going to change the country. It is the same way with the Law of God.

Circumcision does not change a person's heart. Ritualistic washings do not change a person's mind; it does not make them a better person, or make them God-like, it does not make them Christ-like. But the Law of God does.

Psalm 19:7 The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

God's Law changes us. It changes us to have the mind and the heart of God. The other law, the one that Paul is speaking against, and the one that the Galatians were perverted with, does not change the person at all. It becomes a pretense, and this is

how it applies to the churches of God today. Does the congregation that you attend, does the fellowship, do the relationships change you to be more like Christ? Or does it feed your ego, or satisfy some other desire that you have. The Law of God is what we seek.

The sacrificial laws, or the ritual laws of Judaism, do not change us, whereas God's Law becomes an integral part of us.

Hebrew 8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

Washing your hands up to your elbows, with so many strokes, and so much soap, is not putting the Law of God in your mind. That is not changing you at all. Maybe you will have clean hands to eat with, but Christ says that is not what we are talking about. Christ says that it is not what goes into your mouth that corrupts a person, but it is the things that go into your mind; the hateful and envious things. Paul was pouring his heart out to the Galatians saying, "Do not return to the ritualistic things." It does not save you, or bring you to God; it does not change who you are, and what you stand for. It does not make you like Christ.

Romans 7:22 For I delight in **the** law of God after the inward man [with the definite article, specific article]

Romans 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to **the** law of God, neither indeed can be.

There is a part of us that is selfish, mean, conceited, and self-centered. That is the carnal mind, and that is at war with God.

Let us go through Galatians 3, and with the understanding that we have picked up let us try to see if we can glean a little bit about what Paul is talking about in Galatians. He had told the Galatians that he could not believe that they were so soon removed from the Gospel to another gospel. But it is not another gospel at all; it is not "in Christ."

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

There is the problem. They are no longer obeying the truth as Paul originally taught it to them, and as they confessed it when they were baptized. They were turning back into working out their own salvation with works. Actually some of these people, even though they were Gentiles, they were compelled to be circumcised, and to start doing the ritualistic things of the Jews. Some translations say, "you have written proof that

Jesus Christ was crucified among you.” Jesus Christ came and He died, and you believed that He was the Savior. You believed that He was the Messiah, the Anointed One, who is going to establish the Kingdom of God.

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

That is talking about the life of God, becoming the children. In I Corinthians 2, it says, *“leaving this world.”* We have the mind of Christ, and not the mind of the world. Do you receive the spirit by the works of law? Did you receive God’s Holy Spirit by washing up to your elbows, washing your pans clean? Did you receive God’s Holy Spirit by works of law? Or, did you receive the Spirit by the hearing of faith? That is the answer, yes, they received God’s Spirit by hearing, and by the faith that they had that Jesus Christ was indeed their Messiah. That they emulated His life in every way, by laying their lives down as He laid His life down, that they too would have salvation.

Galatians 3:3a Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit...

That is the highest, the best, the greatest, the most wonderful thing that there can be.

Galatians 3:3b ...are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

In other words, these holy things of God transcend every thing mortal and fleshly, and now you are going to work your way into the Kingdom of God with your own hands and feet? Are you so foolish to begin in the Spirit and then revert back to these animalistic ways that you had before you were called.

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

Paul is saying, “Look at the things that you have been through, and look at what you have suffered.” Paul is hoping against hope that some of these Galatians who have gone backwards, back into the world, and into these Judaizing practices, will realize what they have done. It is like we go back into the Church of God, but then some Church of God congregations, except for meeting on Saturday, you could not tell the people from Protestants. The thoughts, and the way that they treat each other with contempt, disdain, or separation. Have we suffered all of those things in vain?

Galatians 3:5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of [...] law, or by the hearing of faith?

There is no **“the”** there, just works of law. Did these miracles come by washing a pot the right way, or by the hearing of faith?

Galatians 3:6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

Brethren, whether you know it or not, Abraham was a sinner just like you and I. But God counted his belief in Him, and his trust in God, even to the point of being willing to slay his son. That is how much faith he had in God. God counted it to him for righteousness, for justification. His past evil life wiped out. Being dead in Christ and having Christ's righteousness. Abraham had God's Spirit. He was a converted man. But it was not because of the physical works that he did, it was because he believed God. This is what God wants us to do. If you believe God you are going to do what God says, and you will live according to the things that God asks.

Galatians 3:7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, [as opposed to works of law] the same are the children of Abraham.

They knew about the promises to Abraham and his seed. But it has to be of faith, you have to believe what Jesus Christ taught, so much so that you live as Jesus lived.

Galatians 3:8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

He is talking to the Galatians themselves, the Gentiles. They would be justified by believing in Jesus Christ, and changing their lives and becoming children of God. That all happens through faith. Abraham heard the gospel, he heard the good news. He knew of salvation in Christ, even though he would not put it in the same words that we put it today. Abraham did not have any children and yet God is saying, "*...In thee shall all nations be blessed.*" This includes the Gentiles.

Galatians 3:9 So then they which be of faith [not circumcision] are blessed with faithful Abraham.

If you believe in Jesus Christ, you have become the children of Abraham.

Galatians 3:10 For as many as are of the works of [...] law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law [God's Law] to do them.

He is saying, "You are not a child of Abraham, and you are not being saved by Jesus Christ, you are still under the curse." You are cursed unless you believe in God, and do what He says. You are not continuing in all things of God, not just the Ten Commandments, but all of the things that God said is how to be a righteous person in Christ. In that verse, you can see law in one place is trying to work your way into God's Kingdom, and the other case it is talking about **the** Law of God. We need to distinguish that, otherwise those verses do not make a bit of sense.

Deuteronomy 27:10 Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the LORD thy God, and do His commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day.

Deuteronomy 27:26 Cursed be he that confirms not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.

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

You do not have your past adulteries, thieving, fighting and murders wiped out by washing the pots, or getting circumcised. You have to believe that Jesus Christ is your Savior, and that He is the one that justifies us and wipes out our past guilt and so forth.

Galatians 3:12 And the law [of circumcision is of works and] is not of faith: but, the man that doeth them shall live in them.

Faith is God-given. This is one of those examples where Paul is speaking specifically of the law of circumcision, etc. What it is saying is that if you try to live by every jot and tittle of the law of rituals and sacrifices – you had better not even make a single mistake, or you will be cursed.

Do we live in the faith of Jesus Christ or do we live like the Judaizers and live perfectly? Never miss a sacrifice, never wash a pot wrong, never take an extra step on the Sabbath. If you do, there is nothing to cover your sin, and you have become cursed under the law.

Paul says this is how it works:

Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree...

Jesus Christ died for our sins. Jesus paid our death penalty for us. We were under the curse of the law that said "You sin -- you die." The wages of sin is death.

Galatians 2:20-21 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness comes by [...] law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Paul is saying to the Galatians that they had made a wrong turn to go back, like a dog returns to his vomit, or a sow returns to her mud hole. Paul is saying, you were clean and washed and you return to the quagmire. I hope that this helps us to understand what Paul is saying about the law, and which law it is that we are not to keep, but the Law of God we keep it with all of our might being led by God's Holy Spirit.

WZ/pp/sl