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Salvation and the Law

Gal 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?

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

Gal 3:3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

Gal 3:4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if *it be* yet in vain.

Paul was writing to reprove and rebuke the Galatian people.
He had visited them on his first missionary journey and led them to the Lord.

Others had come in and confused them, teaching that they were saved by faith, but to keep their salvation they needed to obey the Law.

That is a similar doctrine to what many are taught even now – live a good life or you will lose your salvation.

These people that were creating the problem were called Judaizers.

They were trying to create a mixture of salvation by faith and the Law.

They completely misunderstood the purpose of the Law.

The Law has never been a means of:

- gaining salvation
- keeping salvation

In a sense, the Law was given to be broken.

- No matter how hard you try, you can't keep it to perfection. You will fail.
- That makes you aware of your sin and makes you realize you can't save yourself.
- That causes you to flee to Jesus.

This evening we will look at the purpose of the Law for the unsaved and for the saved.

I. The Law Was Given to Show Us That We Are Under the Curse

Gal 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Gal 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 hangeth on a tree:

Man was placed under a curse in the Garden of Eden because of his sin.

But there needed to be a law in order that man would be aware of the fact that he was falling short.

The Law shows us that, even when we are trying our hardest, we have still broken the Law.

This would show us that we are unable to save ourselves.

II. The Law Was Given to Reveal Sin

Rom 7:7 What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

Rom 3:19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Rom 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is*

the knowledge of sin.

God gave us the Law so that we would look at it and see that we are sinners.
It was not intended to show us how righteous that we are.

James 1:23-25 compares the Bible to a mirror.

You look into the mirror of the Word and it reveals what is on the inside – things you didn't see.

Sometimes it reveals to you what others already knew about you, but you didn't.

Have you ever felt that everyone was looking at you?

No one says anything, but you start to feel self-conscious.

You look in a mirror and see part of your lunch on your shirt.

Other people knew it was there, but you had to look in the mirror to see it.

The Law is the mirror that reveals your sin to you.

In the Old Testament, Amos had a vision of God using a plumb line to measure Israel. Amos 7:8

A plumb line was a long chain or rope with a weight at the end.

The line was held at the top of a wall to reveal whether it was straight or crooked.

A wall might look perfectly fine to the naked eye but its crookedness is revealed with a plumb line.

The plumb line doesn't repair the wall; it just shows the need of repairs.

That is what the Law does.

It shows us that we are crooked and sends us to Jesus to straighten us out.

III. The Law Was Given to Bring Us To Christ

Gal 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Gal 3:25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

Paul called the Law our schoolmaster.

The Greeks and Romans employed schoolmasters to train their children.

The schoolmaster was usually a faithful servant entrusted with the care of the boy from childhood to puberty, to keep him from evil, physical and moral, and accompany him through his studies and everywhere that he went.

He was to prepare him for adulthood.

Once the boy became a man, this slave was no longer useful and was released from that duty.

The law was an instructor to turn us to Christ.

IV. The Law Cannot Save. Salvation Must Always Be By Faith

Gal 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

A Christian is someone who looked at the Law and saw that he was a sinner and then ran to Jesus.

As far as salvation is concerned, the Law is finished.

How was Abraham saved? Was it by his works?

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

Rom 4:1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

Rom 4:2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God.

Rom 4:3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Rom 4:4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

Abraham was the founder of the Jewish nation, so he held a unique place in the hearts of the Jews. People were saying that they needed to keep the Law for salvation, so Abraham then becomes the perfect example to prove what Paul is preaching.

How did Abraham receive righteousness? -- he believed God.
Abraham shows us clearly that justification is by faith alone.

Abraham left his home country and family and risked everything that he had – not knowing where he was going. (Heb 11:8)

“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.”

But it was not his obedience that caused him to be justified.

What pleased God was that Abraham **believed** the promise of God enough to step out and obey.

Abraham was justified by only one thing – he believed God.

What happened was this:

- Abraham believed God
- God took Abraham’s belief and counted it for righteousness

The key to it all was faith.

The Bible is consistent when it comes to the presentation of what is required to be born again or saved. Many mistakenly think that God has changed how a person can be justified, **but it has always been by faith**

Rom 4:3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

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

Whether Old Testament or New Testament the requirement for salvation is the same - simple faith in God.

Yes, in the Old Testament, God wanted them to obey the Law and offer sacrifices.

What we have to remember is that there are a number of Scriptures where God says that their offerings were an offence to Him.

God wanted the offerings, but only when they were offered from a heart of faith.

We saw earlier that the Law shows us we are under the curse.

Gal 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 hangeth on a tree:

Gal 3:14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

“Redeemed” means “to buy back.”

Christ has bought us back from the debt that we owed under the Law.

He did what we never could do by ourselves.

- He was “made a curse for us.”
He took our condemnation upon Himself.
- The purpose for Jesus bearing our curse was to open the door of blessing for all men.
He brought the blessing of Abraham to all men through faith.

The basic problem with the Law: the Law cannot change the sinner and it cannot make him alive.
All the Law can do is point out our weakness and remind us of judgment.

Does that mean that the Law is of no benefit to us?

Not at all.

It is necessary so that we see that we are sinners.

Then we turn to Jesus by faith.