

Christ's death liberates Israel from the Law's curse

^ Gal 3:10-14

Intro

One of the most difficult passages

Paul seems to read the OT texts
in strange ways

Astonishing claim: Scripture itself
pronounces a curse on those who
rely on the law

Seems to use scripture against
scripture

^ v11-13

What is going on?

Paul is still debating that
Gentiles can be saved by
Jesus

Without observing the law

That means using the law to
shape your life

As well as using the sacrificial system to atone for any breeches

Paul himself was righteous under the law

^ Phil 3:6

Identity in the Law vs Identity in Christ

"faith" and "works of law" are the opposite are opposite and incompatible sources of identity

Cursed by the law?

^ v10

This seems a suprising statement

All who rely on observing the law are under a curse

Can be read as: those who follow the law are under a curse

Cursed is everyone who does **not** continue everything written in the Book of the Law

^ Deut 27:26

But

1. Those under the curse are those who derive their identity from the works of the law

Not those who do the law

I.e. those who still live within the sphere of the deuteronomic covenant who are subject to the curse

As they live under the jurisdiction of the threatening world of Deut 27:26

Subject to strict judgment contingent to obedience

2. This curse applies to Israel as a whole

Not only individual Jews

God often punished the whole nation of Israel, when as a nation they did not follow the Law

If you affiliate yourself with those who place their hope in obeying the law, you are joining the losing team

Israel was sent away in exile

And despite the return from exile, has never recovered the blessings promised in Deut 28:1-14

Ask someone to read this

By faith

^ v11-12

Christ becomes a curse for us

^ v14

Life under the Law is a form of slavery

The result of the cross

Sets the enslaved people of Israel free from the curse pronounced in Deuteronomy

Not the law itself, but the curse pronounced by the law

Jesus entered so fully into Israel's enslaved condition that he absorbed and exhausted the curse fully in his own innocent death

For our sake [God] made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

^ 2 Cor 5:12

The shocking claim that Jesus became a curse is also from Deuteronomy

²² When someone is convicted of a crime punishable by death and is executed, and you hang him on a tree,²³ his corpse must not remain all night upon the tree; you shall bury him that same day, **for anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse** .

^ Deut 21:22-23

Paul omits that God is the source of the curse as he quotes this passage

So that we link this curse and the curse specified in v10 together

The curse that Jesus took upon himself is precisely the curse already mentioned in v10

Paul gives the Deut 21 passage a twist to refer to the Roman method of execution

which was also done by other Jewish interpreters in Paul's time

Abrahamic blessing available to all

^ v14

Logic of the argument becomes clearer, if we make a minor change in punctuation

There is no punctuation in the NT Greek

"Now because no one is justified by the Law, it is clear that 'The righteous live by faith" (Hab 2:4)

So it is turning the because and clear words around

¹¹ Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because "the righteous will live by faith.

from/by faith

Hab 2:4

Used by Paul only in Romans and Galatians

v12: clarifies the same meaning, as Paul often does

The law is not based by faith

As it relies on the person that does what the Law says

So works and not faith is the key to salvation

For those who are under the law

The purpose of Jesus taking the curse on himself is explained in v14

The blessing of Abraham, long

ago promised to the gentiles

⁸ And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you.' ⁹ For this reason, those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed.

^ Gal 3:8-9

Can at last flow to them

And the Spirit can be received by all God's people, through faith

In Isaiah and Ezekiel. God's promise of restoration is repeated depicted through the image of the outpouring of God's spirit

Particular in Isa 44:3, where Spirit and Blessing are used in synonymus parrallelism:

For I will pour water on the thirsty land,
and streams on the dry ground;
I will pour my **spirit** upon your
descendants,
and my **blessing** on your offspring.

Paul does not cite this passage, but it seems to underlie the whole of Gal 3:1-14 passage

Conclusion

This is only a section in Paul's argument to the Galatians

That they are saved by faith and not by works

That they do not need to adhere to following the law to be saved

It does not mean that the Law is defunct

It is still the gold standard on how God's people need to behave

But it removes the curse and threat that if you don't, you will not be saved

Instead Jesus took the curse on him

And by believing in him, the curse is also removed from us

Amen.
