

## **Gal.3:10-14 (WCF 7:3) “Redeemed from the Curse of the Law”**

**For the Children:** Somebody once wrote that asking sinners to save themselves is like asking people to try to swim from here to Australia. No one is going to be able to make it – no one is good or strong enough. Imagine if the only way for people here to stay alive was if someone could swim to Australia and then back again with some life-saving medicine. So the people line up and one-by-one, they all drown. Yet it is even harder for a sinner to win the gift of life by obeying God’s laws. The only way we can be saved is if Someone is strong enough to remove our death, pay for our sins and obey God perfectly – which is infinitely harder than swimming from here to Australia. But the Lord Jesus has paid for our sins; removed the curse of death by dying for us; obeyed His Father perfectly for us; and sent us His Spirit so we could have faith in Him. Questions: Why are men not able to keep the Law perfectly? What is the curse upon sinners? What is the difference between a “covenant of works” and a “covenant of grace”?

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### **Introduction:**

#### **First Point: Law and Curse**

- 1) The Incapable Man: WCF 7:3 points out that by his fall man has made himself incapable of obtaining life by a “covenant of works” i.e., by his “perfect and personal obedience” (WCF 7:2). Consider what WCF 6 summarized about man’s fallen nature: dead, defiled, disabled, opposed to good, inclined to all evil, guilty, bound under wrath and the curse of the Law. In a sense, the promise and condition of the covenant of works remain, but who can obtain this life in his own strength?
- 2) The Cursed Man: The problem is worse than simply having a spiritual disability. Man is *cursed* (v. 10). See also Dt. 27:26. The curse is death – physical, spiritual and eternal (Gen. 2:17). To obtain life by himself, man would therefore need to make himself alive, pay the penalty for breaking God’s laws and obey all of God’s Law perfectly.
- 3) The Unjustified Man: That is why the apostle states in v.11 that no one is justified by the works of the Law. The Pharisees and Judaizers of the NT, and the false religions, sects and cults of the present teach the opposite – that man can at least contribute to his justification by his good deeds. It is really only the Reformed faith that does justice fully to the Biblical teaching on this, since we believe that a sinner cannot contribute anything to his salvation; all the initiative, grace and glory is God’s.

#### **Second Point: Christ and Faith**

- 1) The Alternative Way: Since man cannot give himself life, pay his debt or obey the Law perfectly, life can only be his by an alternative way. That way is found in Christ, by a “covenant of grace” rather than works. It is called “covenant of grace” because, although God was gracious to reward man in the covenant of works, yet after the Fall the sinner needs super-abundant, redeeming grace.
- 2) Living by Faith: In v. 11, the apostle quotes Hab.2:4 to prove that life now comes to the sinner not by his own works of the Law, but by faith in Christ. The Lord Jesus is the ground of salvation, faith is the means by which we come to Him to receive that life. V.13 goes on to say that He has indeed redeemed us from the curse of the Law, by becoming a curse for us – as evidenced by His death on the cross (Dt.21:23). He also poured out His Spirit upon us, so that we could receive the gift of faith and believe in Him (v. 14). And He obeyed His Father perfectly on our behalf, so that the requirement of perfect obedience is met.
- 3) Fruits of Works: That does not mean that the Law has no part to play in the covenant of grace. Good works are fruits that demonstrate that we have indeed been made into a “good tree” by the gracious work of the Lord Jesus. See Mt.12:33, 35. That is a far cry from trying to earn God’s favour by our obedience.
- 4) A Crucial Teaching: These truths are necessary for developing the motivation of gratitude for the grace we have received; for humility before God and dependency on Christ; for assurance of salvation; and for us to give all glory to God.

### **Conclusion:**