# Galatians 3:10-14

## 4. Arguments in support of the proposition, 3:1-4:7

### iii] The third argument

**Argument**

From 3:1 to 4:7 Paul sets out to show that as a gift of divine grace, a person who rests in faith on the faithfulness of Christ, apart from the law, stands right and holy before God and an inheritor of God's promised blessings - the gospel, of itself, apart from the law, facilitates new life in Christ.

Paul now outlines the third argument in support of his proposition: It is simply not possible to inherit the blessing of new life, in all its fullness, through obedience to the law. The blessing of new life is a product of Jesus' faithfulness to God's will, not our own, v10-14.

**Issues**

i] Context: See 3:1-5.

ii] Background: See 1:1-10.

iii] Structure: *The third argument in support of the proposition*:

Proposition:

The gospel, of itself, apart from the law, facilitates new life in Christ.

Supporting argument:

#3. It is not possible to inherit the blessing of new life through obedience to the law, 3:10-14.

Christ supersedes the Law, v10-14;

The curse of the Law ends life, v10-12;

New life in the Spirit is found in Christ, v13-14.

iv] Interpretation:

#3. The third argument: In his third argument, 3:10-14, Paul establishes from scripture that the promised blessing of life is not a product of law-obedience. All that law-obedience does is inculcate the curse of the law, v10. The promised new life is not facilitated by a faithful attention to the law, rather, it rests on the faithfulness of Christ, Hab.2:4, v11, and this because the commandments must be "done" to find life in them, Lev.18:5, v12. The simple fact is that the promised Abrahamic blessings, blessings now realised in this present moment through the gift of the Holy Spirit and experienced by Gentile believers as well as Jewish believers, rests wholly on Christ's atonement, v13-14.

*Is Justification about Reconciliation, or something more?* This passage is central to the reformed argument that a person is reconciled to God wholly on the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ appropriated through faith. Yet, Paul's argument is not about reconciliation, given that his opponents agree with him on how a person is reconciled to God. All parties in this debate agree on how a person becomes a Christian, but disagree on how they go forward in the Christian life. Paul's argument is that a person's faith in Christ's faithfulness ("faith / faithfulness of Christ" = Christ's willing commitment to the promises and commands of God the Father, even unto death) justifies / rectifies for the full appropriation of the promised Abrahamic blessing of new life, and this apart from their faithful obedience to the law.

Note that new perspective commentators struggle with this passage because Paul certainly doesn't define the law in terms of an identifier of Jewish exclusivism. Wright's argument that "the curse of the law" is the exile, leaves us here with Christ undertaking the exile for us, but then, what about our sin?

v] Homiletics: *Delivered and blessed*

I well remember the speech by a member of parliament, on the day of his retirement, making the point that at the end of a term all gather to congratulate each other on the number of matters legislated. He made the point that each bill succeeded in reducing our freedoms, and he wasn't quite sure whether that should be congratulated.

In our reading today there are four important statements on how Christ, through his death, has delivered us from the curse of the law, and has obtained for us the totality of God's promised blessings:

- Christ submitted to the curse, pronounced by the law of God, on those who do not render perfect obedience. Although Jesus was actually the obedient son of God, he suffered as if he were a disobedient son.
- Christ's submission to the curse was "for us" (for our sake). He suffered the consequence of the curse on our behalf - instead of us. As Luther put it, "forsaken for me".
- By means of his submission, Christ has "redeemed" those under the condemnation of the law's curse. By fulfilling the law's demands on our behalf, both keeping it and submitting to its punitive

punishment ("curse"), we are set free, liberated, from its punitive claims over us.

- The ultimate purpose of Christ's redemptive work is so that the promised "blessing", once offered to Abraham, might now extend to the whole world, v14. This blessing is encapsulated in one word, "life". Our right-standing before God, by grace through faith, carries with it the fullness of God's blessings, unto eternity.

Thus we sing, "Amazing grace", for in Christ Jesus there is now no condemnation, just life eternal.

**Text - 3:10**

Arguments in support of the proposition:

#3. *Scripture also makes clear that it is not possible to inherit the blessing of new life, in all its fullness, through obedience to the law. Rather, the blessing is a product of Jesus' faithfulness to God's will*, v10-14.

Paul now quotes three Old Testament passages (Deut.22:26a, Hab.2:4b, Lev.18:5b) in support of his proposition that a person who is set right before God on the basis of Jesus' faithfulness appropriated though faith, freely receives the promised blessings of the covenant - the blessing of new life in Christ. Being found right and holy before God in Christ and in possession of this new life, is totally apart from obedience to the law. Law-obedience for blessing serves only to evoke God's curse (expose sin and thus prompt condemnation). It is the righteous by faith who live.

γαρ "- / for" - FOR. More reason than cause; introducing a counter argument to v7-9 / a logical connective / a stitching device; "everyone, however, who is involved in trying to keep the law", Phillips; "on the other hand", NEB.

ὁσοι pro. "**all who**" - AS MANY AS. Nominative subject of the verb to-be; "All those who".

εξ + gen. "**rely on**" - FROM. Possibly with the sense "on the basis of", so "rely on / depend on", but a more technical sense is probably intended, as of a "member of a certain class", Zerwick. A similar construction is used by Paul with reference to "those from circumcision", meaning, "those who are members of the circumcision party", as with "those from faith", ie., members of the faith party, or as Martyn has it, "those whose identity is derived from faith" (their faith in Christ and Christ's faith / faithfulness). So here, the law party, "those whose identity is derived from observance of the law", Martyn.

νομου [ος] gen. "**[observing] the law / [works] of the law**" - [WORKS] OF LAW. The anarthrous genitive "of law" is adjectival, epexegetic, limiting by specifying the "works": "obedience *which is demanded by* the law *of Moses*."

Probably a descriptor of nomism; "performance will win (better "maintain / improve") acceptance (approval) before God", Bruce.

ὑπο + acc. "**under**" - [ARE]. UNDER. Here expressing subordination; "under".

καταραν [α] "**a curse**" - The divine curse prompted by covenant noncompliance. New perspective commentators argue that the curse only applies to an intentional, defiant noncompliance, although this seems unlikely. It is true that the sacrificial system only really covered inadvertent sin, but the perspective of scripture is that all Israel is under the curse (people and nation) and that God will have to supply a sacrifice worthy enough to turn aside the divine wrath (note how Burton does not like the link between the curse and divine judgment). The noun is anarthrous, giving the sense "curse opposed to blessing", Hendriksen.

ὁτι "**-**" - [FOR IT HAS BEEN WRITTEN] THAT. Here introducing a dependent statement, quotation.

επικαταρατος adj. "**cursed**" - *is* CURSED. Predicate adjective of an assumed verb to-be. Under the wrath of God for sin.

πας "**everyone**" - ALL. As with "everything" (found in the LXX), the "everyone" is not found in the MT. Paul is generalising and so extending the legal requirements of the law, something that Jesus was always doing. Reflecting 2nd temple Judaism, Paul's opponents know that covenant inclusion is not gained by obedience (legalism), but is certainly maintained by obedience (nomism). Of course, perfection is impossible, so mercy and forgiveness are not foreign to a judaizer. Yet, Paul is not going to let them get away so easily. If "works of law" were to restrain sin and promote holiness, they would need to be perfect - "everyone" and "everything". Without perfection, the tool of law-obedience serves only to expose the human condition of sin and inculcate the curse of the law, namely divine judgment.

ουκ εμμενει [εμμενω] pres. "**does not continue**" - [WHO] DOES NOT ABIDE, CONTINUE. The durative sense of the present tense and the verb itself, "continue", in the quote from Deut.27:26, reminds us again that the maintenance of covenant standing for blessing is the issue at hand. "Persevere in", Zerwick.

του ποιησαι [ποιεω] aor. inf. "**to do**" - A genitive articular infinitive. Translated in the NIV as a complementary infinitive, completing the sense of "continue", but it could well introduce a purpose clause, "in order that", or a result clause, "with the result that"; "cursed is everyone who is not steadfast in observing all the things written in the book of the law, so as to do them", Martyn. Possibly serving as a type of Latin modal ablative, "by doing them", Bligh. Possibly, "cursed is every who does not adhere to ....., and practise them", Cassirer.

τοις γεγαμμενοις [γραφω] dat. perf. pas. part. "**written**" - [BY/IN ALL] THE THINGS HAVING BEEN WRITTEN. If we read πασιν “all” as a substantive,

“everything”, then the participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting “everything." The dative is probably instrumental, expressing means; "does not abide by all the things written in the Book of the Law", ESV, or local, "does not abide in all the things written ..."

εν + dat. "**in**" - IN [THE SCROLL OF THE LAW]. Local, expressing space. The genitive του νομου, "of the law", is adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic / content, "the book *which contains* the law." The whole law is obviously intended, not just the new perspective "boundary markers" of Jewish exclusivism. "Book of the law" is a little confusing since Paul is referring to the totality of God's law recorded in the scriptures so "everyone who doesn't obey everything in the law is under a curse", CEV.

**v11**

*"The person who is right with God* (articular adj. = the set/judged right before God person) *is a person who is grounded on the faithfulness of God. Such a person will experience God's promised new life"*. Habakkuk 2:4.

The context, and traditional interpretation of this quote, is obviously well known to Paul. The "just" person, the person who is right (in the right with God and thus in a right relationship with God) is someone like Abraham. Such a person is "right" because they rely on God's faithfulness, they trust his promises, even in the face of a Babylonian invasion where everything seems lost. Such a person "will live", they will experience God's putting things right, they will experience his kingdom with all its blessings, all the eschatological blessings of the realised / inaugurated kingdom of God. The means of being set right before God, and thus of experiencing God's setting things right, is faith in the faithfulness of God.

Again, the obvious problem we face with this text is the intended sense of "faith", given that the LXX has "my faith" = God's faithfulness. Paul has dropped the "my", but surely not to deny that God's faithfulness (realised in the faithfulness of Christ) is the ground upon which a person is right before God, but to allow a person's faith / trust to be included in the equation. If this approach is correct, we are best to reject the NIV translation and opt for "the righteous by faith will live"; "the righteous [those right before God] by faith [on the ground of God's faithfulness appropriated through faith] will live [will possess the fullness of God's covenant blessings]". By the time Paul gets to write Romans, this verse has become his key text from scripture in support of his understanding of the gospel, cf., Rom.1:16-17. This verse certainly encapsulates the argument that Paul is running in Galatians, as it does in Romans, namely, that new life in Christ is not facilitated by obedience to the law, but rather, it is the product of being set right with God on the basis of God's faithfulness realised in Christ.

ὁτι "-" - [BUT/AND] THAT. Here introducing an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing what "[is] evident"; "it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law."

δηλον adj. "**clearly**" - IT IS EVIDENT. Serving as a predicate adjective.

δικαιουται [δικαιοω] pres. pas. "**is justified**" - [NO ONE] IS BEING JUSTIFIED. For the meaning of "justified" see 2:16. The present tense, being durative, with the [divine] passive, gives the sense "is being set right". In reformed circles this "setting right" is usually expressed in forensic terms, so "count / treat as right", Barrett, "judged in the right", Dumbrell, but what God declares right, is right, so "is set right."

παρα + dat. "**before**" - WITH [GOD]. Local, expressing space, metaphorical, "in the sight of, before"; "with God" = "in the sight of God", AV – of "a participant whose viewpoint is relevant to an event", LN.

εν νομῳ "**by the law**" - IN LAW. Instrumental, expressing means, as NIV. Obviously short for "by [means of] works of the law", Bruce.

ὁτι "**because**" - THAT. Here causal, as NIV. "*Because of the fact stated in the scriptures* that ....."

ὁ δικαιος [ος] "**the righteous**" - Obviously "the righteous before God", those right before God.

ζησεται [ζαω] fut. "**will live**" - A difficult term often explained either in an ethical sense, or an eternal sense. Yet, given that it is the promised new life of the covenant, it has all the now / not yet qualities of the kingdom of God. It is the eschatological life now realised by those who have discovered that "the kingdom of God is at hand." So, "will live", is just as much ethical (possessing a new heart within) in the *now* as it is possessing the riches of eternity in the *not yet*. So, "will live" involves possessing the fullness of new life in Christ, now and in eternity.

εκ "**by [faith]**" - OUT OF, FROM. Source / origin leaning toward cause / basis, "because of", "by reason of", "as a result of", "by means of"/ "on the basis of". The ground of this "life" is not works of the law, but the faithfulness of Christ appropriated through faith. See εκ 2:16.

πιστεως [ις εως] "**faith**" - As already noted, particularly with reference to 2:16, the noun here is usually understood verbally as "faith *in Jesus Christ*". The sense does not necessarily mean "to believe", but can mean, among other things, "trustworthiness". It is likely that πιστις is used here of God's faithfulness / trustworthiness, so the sense is probably "God's faithfulness revealed in Jesus Christ", so Barth, Hebert. Taking the word to mean "faithfulness *of God*" here does not undermine the necessary response of our faith / trust / belief in God / God's faithfulness revealed in Christ. In fact, both ideas are likely present. "Faithfulness", Howard.

**v12**

By quoting Lev.18:5, Paul "shows how one is not justified before God (by law)", Bruce. Again, Paul exegetes the verse before quoting it. Given that the verse seemingly counters Habakkuk 2:4, it is likely that it was used as a rebuttal text against Paul's thesis drawn from Habakkuk 2:4. So, Paul jumps in first, using the verse to argue that law-obedience ("law") does not rest on / find its origin in God's "faith / faithfulness" (what God does for us in the fulfillment of his promises), but by implication, it rests on our own effort, the doing of it, and of course, it must be done perfectly to possess life, cf., Rom.10:5. Of course, there is debate over whether it was, certainly for an Old Testament saint, possible to obey the law and thus "live". For Paul, the law enacts the curse and this because it cannot be done. Jesus drives this truth home on numerous occasions, cf., Luke 10:25-37, "do this and you will live", v28, but then who can love like the Good Samaritan?

δε "-" - BUT/AND. Transitional, introducing the next step in the argument, although Betz opts for adjunctive; "also".

εκ "**based on [faith]**" - [THE LAW IS NOT OF] FROM. As already noted, best understood as "on the basis of", but "from" is a possibility. The law is "not grounded in", Zerwick, "does not lean on / does not find its strength in [faith] as a way of redemption", Ridderbos.

πιστεως [ις εως] "**faith**" - Usually understood here as "trust", but again "faithfulness", as of God's faithfulness in fulfilling his promises and of our faith in the faithfulness of God.

αλλα "**on the contrary**" - BUT. Strong adversative in a counterpoint construction, "not ...., but .....", as NIV.

ὁ ποιησας [ποιεω] aor. part. "**the man who does**" - THE ONE HAVING DONE, PRACTISED. Participle serves as a substantive, subject of the verb "to live". The aorist expresses punctiliar / completed action.

αυτα "**these things**" - Direct object of the participle "having done." The commandments, precepts, of the Mosaic law.

ζησεται [ζαω] fut. mid. "**will live**" - SHALL LIVE. The middle voice is used by convention with a future active verb. For an Old Testament saint, "live" simply means to live a good, healthy, happy and long life, but for a New Testament saint, we "live" in Christ, the source of life eternal, the fullness of new life.

εν + dat. "**by**" - IN [THEM]. Possibly expressing space / sphere, "in the doing of them", or better, instrumental, expressing means, as NIV.

**v13**

Paul now explains how a person is set right before God (justified) on the basis of Christ's faithfulness, 2:16, given that law-obedience only serves to inculcate the curse of the law (it draws out our sinfulness and places us under God's condemnation). In his faithful obedience to the will of God, Christ took the curse upon himself, redeeming those under the curse.

εξηγορασεν [εξαγοραζω] aor. "**redeemed**" - [CHRIST] BOUGHT BACK, REDEEMED, RANSOM / DELIVERED. A technical term used for buying the freedom of slaves, so of Christ buying the freedom of those confined by, and facing execution under, the curse of the law. The aorist is punctiliar, describing the nature of Christ's once and for all act on the cross. The prefix is perfective, expressing the idea of completion, so "completely redeem". Redemption terminology is intended rather than that of facilitating an escape, eg., "Christ bought us freedom", REB. The sense of a payment is intended, without implying a payment to someone.

ἡμας "**us**" - Direct object of the verb "to buy back." Who are the "us"? Presumably Jewish Christians are in Paul's mind, as in 2:15, although Gentiles are similarly under the curse of the law. For the Gentile, the revelation of nature, rather than the Torah, is judge and executioner, Rom.1:20.

εκ + gen. "**from**" - Here expressing separation; "away from."

της καταρας [α] gen. "**the curse**" - Presumably "the curse that the law brings". Some suggest that it is the law itself, but it is more likely the divine punishment, outlined in the covenant, destined for those who disobey the law, eg., the blessings and cursings outlined in Deuteronomy.

του νομου [ος] gen. "**of the law**" - The genitive is adjectival, often taken as verbal, subjective, but possibly just descriptive, idiomatic / source; "the curse *that issues from* the law."

γενομενος [γινομαι] aor. part. "**by becoming**" - HAVING BECOME. The participle is probably adverbial, instrumental, expressing means, "by means of", as NIV, although temporal is possible, "when he became a curse for us", even possibly causal, "because"; "Christ has bought us free from the curse of the law inasmuch as he became a curse for us", Berkeley. Ridderbos opts for both temporal and causal. The curse on those who fail to obey the law entails divine wrath. Christ, on our behalf, expends that wrath on himself, and since he is the one just man, the grave cannot contain him. Those in Christ similarly cannot be contained. Although not defined here, Christ's death is most likely propitiatory, "a curse offering", Betz, although the sense may be that Christ takes the place of the sinner.

ὑπερ + gen. "**for [us]**" - [A CURSE] INSTEAD OF / FOR THE SAKE OF, ON BEHALF OF [US]. Here expressing representation, or advantage / benefit for, so "for us / for our sake", or substitution, "in our stead", Zerwick.

ὁτι "**for [it is written]**" - THAT. Here causal; "because".

επικαταρατος adj. "**Cursed *is* [every one]**" - Verbal / predicate adjective. Deut.21:23. Both LXX and MT have "An accursed of God is ..." Note, Paul again exegetes the verse before quoting it. The point of the quote is that the form of Jesus' death indicates that it was the product of the divine curse, a curse he did not deserve and therefore a curse taken for others.

ὁ κρεμαμενος [κρεμαννυμι] pres. mid. part. "**who is hung**" - [ALL] THE ONES HAVING HUNG. The participle may be classified as adjectival, attributive, limiting the substantive adjective "everyone."

επι + gen. "**on**" - Spatial; "on, upon."

ξυλου [ον] "**a tree / a pole**" - A TREE, WOOD, POST. Obviously the cross is in Paul's mind.

**v14**

Finally, the punch-line of Paul's argument. A person who is set right before God is a person who lives, ie., a person who is redeemed is a person who inherits the promised blessings of the covenant, life in all its fullness. This promise is for both Jew and Gentile, a promise which, in the present moment, is experienced in the gift of Christ's indwelling, compelling, Spirit.

ἱνα + subj. "***He redeemed us* in order that**" - THAT. Possibly introducing a purpose clause, "in order that", "and the purpose of it all was that Abraham ....", Cassirer, so Ridderbos, Fung, Bligh, Bruce, Martyn, Garlington, Betz, Dumbrell, Longenecker, Guthrie, yet a consecutive clause expressing result / hypothetical result seems more likely, "with the result that ..."; "thus the Gentiles are given the happiness promised through Abraham", Junkins; "so that the blessings of Abraham might come ... so that .....", NJB, cf., NAB, Barclay, Williams, Barnes. Note that there are two *hina* clauses in this sentence. The second could be "subordinate in logical and temporal terms to the first", Dumbrell, but it is more likely that both are coordinate with each other such that the verse "states the results of Christ's death in a two-fold form", Guthrie; "this happened with the result that / so that / such that ..... and with the result that / so that ...."

ἡ ευλογια [α] "**the blessing**" - Subject of the subjunctive verb "to become". "The promise to Abraham is one of blessing", Guthrie, and in the context of Galatians, the blessing is "life", life in all its dimensions. As far as the here and now is concerned, it is a life lived in the Spirit. It could be argued, particularly from v6-9, that the blessing is justification, but it is more likely that it is the "will live" of Habakkuk 2:4, cf., v11, ie., the promised blessings of the covenant, a

land, people and a blessing for the whole world, in all its eternal dimensions, not just for Jews, but also for Gentiles.

του Αβρααμ gen. "**given to Abraham**" - OF ABRAHAM. The genitive is usually taken as verbal, objective; "the blessing *which was promised to* Abraham", TH.

γενηται [γινομαι] aor. subj. "**might come**" - "Might come to rest upon the Gentiles", Cassirer.

εις "**to [the Gentiles]**" - TO, INTO [THE NATIONS]. Local, expressing the direction of the action and arrival at. Possibly of the blessing (inheritance) coming to the Gentiles, so Turner, or simply just taking a local sense, that "salvation goes out from the Jews to the Gentiles", Bligh.

εν + dat. "**through [Christ Jesus]**" - IN [CHRIST JESUS]. The NIV opts for an instrumental / agency sense, but cause is possible, "because of", as is a local sense expressing incorporative union; "in *union with* Christ Jesus".

ἱνα + subj. "**so that**" - THAT. The NIV takes the first *hina* clause as final, expressing purpose, and the second as consecutive, expressing result, see ἱνα above.

δια + gen. "**by [faith]**" - THROUGH, BY MEANS OF [FAITH]. Instrumental; through the faithfulness of Jesus' death on our behalf, cf., 2:16, "the faith of Christ".

λαβωμεν [λαμβανω] aor. subj. "**we might receive**" - Note the 1st person plural; "so that all of us, Jews and Gentiles, might receive ....."

την επαγγελιαν [α] "**the promise**" - THE PROMISE. Accusative direct object of the verb "to receive." Either "a promise", or "that which is promised", ie., "the promised blessing", Bligh.

του πνευματος [α ατος] gen. "**of the Spirit**" - The genitive is adjectival epexegetic / of definition, limiting by specifying the "promise / gift"; it is the promise *which consists of* the gift of the Spirit; "the promised Spirit", NJB, NEB, Moffatt; the Spirit is the substance of the promise, certainly in the here and now.