

Discourses on the Law of God

Lesson 4: All Transgressors of the Law are Under a Curse, Gal 3.10

- I. The Law consist of 2 parts: a system of precepts and the sanction and enforcement of those precepts by promises and threats.
 - A. According to the first, it's the Rule of our Obedience, showing what we ought to render to God
 - B. According to the second, it is the Rule of Divine Justice, showing what God will render to us
- II. The sanction of the Law is 2fold:
 - A. A promise of life and happiness to those who obey it, Rom 10.5 (Gal 3.12; Ezk 20.11; Lev 18.5)
 1. **But**, because our natures are woefully degenerated from their original excellence, and we have contracted such an impotence and depravity, that the same obedience we could've rendered in our upright estate is now impossible (Gen 6.5; Rim 8.7), we can receive no consolation from this promise, nor entertain any hopes of life and salvation according to the tenor of the Covenant of Works, "for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Rom 3.23).
 2. The precepts of the Law convince us of sin and our sins convince us that, in ourselves, we no right to the promise of the Law. So as we've been convinced of sin by the precepts of the Law, we must now be convinced of the wrath of God which is due to transgressors of the Law.
 - B. For there is also a sanction of the Law which condemns all that transgress it with a curse that will blast and wither their souls forever, Gal 3.10. The great design of the Apostle in Galatians is to convince his readers that justification cannot possibly be obtained by the righteousness of the Law; and one of his strongest arguments he uses to prove it is this: "for all who rely on works of the Law are under a curse."
- III. See what a universal curse this is for all the sinful sons of Adam. No man living can possibly escape it if God should judge him according to the condition of the Covenant of Works. For,
 - A. Everyone is accursed who *doesn't do* the things commanded by the Law.
 1. This cuts off all those who are negatively righteous, grounding all their hopes for heaven and happiness upon what they've not done. But this account won't pass on the day of reckoning. The Law requires you not only to forbear the gross acts of sin, but also to perform the duties of obedience.
 2. And it also cuts off all those who have behaved contrary to what the Law commands—not only gross and scandalous sinners, but also sinners in thought and affection. They all fall under the curse of the Law.
 - B. Everyone is accursed who hasn't *done all* that commanded.
 1. And where is the man who would dare to justify himself against this charge!? Is there no one duty of the Two Tables that you've neglected? Is there no one sin, that you haven't committed, either ignorantly or knowingly, either out of weakness or willfulness, by surprise or upon deliberation? Certainly the Law of God is so comprehensive that we can scarcely know all that it demands, and our impotence and corruption so great that we can scarcely perform what we do know of it. And yet, we're cursed if we fail in a single point of it, even if it be the least of all.
 2. And suppose we were able at some time to perform every duty, have we *continued* in all of them to do them? Have we spun an even thread of obedience? Are there no flaws, no breaks, no breaches at all in our obedience? Have we been always constant and fervent in our zeal for God, in the fear of God all the day long? Have our affections never languished, our thoughts never turned aside? Have we never dropped an evil word, nor

do any one action, which in the matter and manner of it, wasn't perfectly agreeable to the Law? If we have, then we're still under the curse.

- IV. This curse is most dreadful, extending over all persons unto all things. Everything a sinner does or has us accursed to him. "Let us a little rip up the bowels of this curse, that you may see how much rancour and venom is contained in it."
- A. He's accursed in all his temporal enjoyments, Dt 28.16-20. His very mercies are curses to him; as, on the contrary, a true believer's afflictions are blessings. His plenty and prosperity but feeds his lusts; and all the abundance God gives him only makes provision for his flesh.
 - B. He's accursed in all his spiritual enjoyments, Pr 21.27. Though the ordinances of the gospel are appointed to bless, yet his use of them while living in sin only serves to harden and confirm him in his sins and ripen him for judgment. For as the rain makes a living tree to bud and flourish, so it rots a dead and withered tree. The ordinances call forth the graces of believers, but they rot the rebellious like dead trunks, making them fit fuel for hell.
 - 1. What a sad and dreadful curse this is! That the Word which is a savor of life to others is a savor of death to him! That the sound of the gospel deafens his ears and the light of truth should blind his eyes, and that the sacraments of grace should bring damnation to him. How deplorable is their estate when mercy itself ruins them, and salvation itself destroys them!
 - C. He's accursed in all his chastisements and afflictions. True believers can undergo all their afflictions with calmness and peace because there's not an ounce of God's wrath in them; and they only serve as medicine to purge them of their sins and make them partakers of His holiness. But what a sad and dreadful condition is that of unbelievers when there's not the least affliction that befalls them, not the least pain or loss, but it's a part of the curse of God. God is beginning to satisfy His justice upon them; He's beginning to take them by the throat and extract from them what they owe Him. Every affliction is but a part of that payment that God will require of them in hell.
 - D. He'll be cursed to purpose and lie forever under the revenging wrath of God.
 - 1. All the curses he faced in life is but preparation to this fatal and final curse. For he will be eternally cursed,
 - a) In his separation from the sight and favorable presence of God. He'll have the presence of God's wrath to torment him, while the power of God upholds him to bear them, and enlarges his souls to drink all the vials which He'll pour upon them.
 - b) In the society of devils and damned spirits, a hideous company who will chastise and torture him for his sins.
 - c) In the work of hell, given over to an eternity in the anguish and horrors of blaspheming and cursing, Ps 109.17-18
 - d) In the pains and torments which he must eternally suffer. Every limb will drip with flakes of unquenchable fire and the worm of conscience will prey upon him and sting him with unsupportable anguish, and he will live a never-dying death. This is his final curse, the coals of fire and sulfur and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup, Ps 11.6
- V. Application
- A. See here what an accursed thing sin is, that carries, wrapped up in its bowels, wrath and eternal death.
 - 1. The Law is not to be condemned for condemning the transgressors of it. The justice of God is not to be censured for carrying out a just sentence. But rather, all our misery is to be charged upon ourselves; upon our corrupt natures, and our sinful lives. It is sin, that is the fuel of those unquenchable flames and lays in all those stores of fire and sulfur, which shall burn in hell forever. It is sin that disrobes man of his innocence, turns him out of

Paradise, and will certainly, if not repented of and forsaken, turn him into hell. And therefore, if you love God or your own souls, be sure that you hate sin, Rom 8.28; 2Tim 2.19. Don't entertain it, no matter how it solicits and tempts you; but remember that the curse of God is tied inseparably to it, and that none who cleave to it will be able to avoid the curse which follows it.

2. If every transgressor of the Law is accursed, then see the desperate folly of those all who make a joke of sin or take it lightly. They play with death and dally with woes and curses. Did we but seriously consider with what a weighty curse sin is burdened, we'd be as fearful to touch or come near it as to take up a grenade ready to explode. And surely they are to be counted fools who rashly venture upon their everlasting destruction by sin and say to themselves, "Isn't this fun!?"
3. If every transgression exposes us to the curse, beware that you never encourage yourself to commit any sin just because the world counts it small. The least sin is as much a transgression of the Law as the greatest and carries the same curse with it.
4. See what reason we have to bless God for Jesus Christ, who has delivered us, who are believers, from the curse of the Law, Gal 3.13

Next week: Lesson 5: Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, Gal 3.13