



The Amish Voice

MAP ♦ P.O. Box 128 ♦ 575 State Route 250 N ♦ Savannah OH 44874 ♦ (419) 962-1515 ♦ September 2012

The Proof That A Man Is Justified By Faith Alone And Not By Works

Study 2: Galatians 3:6-14

—Teacher's Outline and Study Bible™

<p>1. Scripture uses Abraham to illustrate the truth</p> <p>a. He believed God—thus he was judged righteous</p> <p>b. Those who are of faith, who believe God, are the true sons of Abraham</p> <p>2. Scripture promised the gospel to Abraham long ago</p> <p>a. Scripture foresaw that God would judge men righteous through faith</p> <p>b. Those who are of faith are judged righteous with Abraham</p> <p>3. Scripture says the law puts a man under a curse</p>	<p>B. The Proof of Scripture, 3:6-14</p> <p>6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.</p> <p>7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.</p> <p>8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.</p> <p>9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>book of the law to do them.</p> <p>11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: or, The just shall live by faith.</p> <p>12 And the law is not of faith: but, the man that doeth them shall live in them.</p> <p>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:</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>a. Because a man does not keep the whole law</p> <p>b. Because God's way is "to live by faith"</p> <p>1) The law is not of faith</p> <p>2) The man of law will be judged by the law</p> <p>4. Scripture says Christ has redeemed us from the curse</p> <p>a. He was made a curse for us</p> <p>b. His purpose: To open the door of blessing to all men</p> <p>1) The blessing of Abraham</p> <p>2) The blessing of the Spirit.</p>
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Section III

THE PROOF THAT A MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE AND NOT BY WORKS

Galatians 3:6-14

Galatians 3:1-4:7

Study 2: THE PROOF OF SCRIPTURE

Text: Galatians 3:6-14

Aim: To be totally convinced by Scripture that man is justified by faith in Christ alone.

Memory Verse:

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree" (Ga.3:13).

INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever thought about what the world would be like if there were *no* Bible?

A certain man dreamed that he went to consult his Bible and found every page blank. In amazement he rushed to his neighbor's house, aroused him from sleep, and asked to see his Bible; but they found it also blank. In great consternation they sought

other Bibles, with the same result. Then they said, “We will go to the libraries and gather the quotations from books, and remake our Bible.” But when they examined all the books, they found blank spaces where any Scripture quotations had been. When the man awoke, his brow was cold, yet covered with perspiration, so great had been his agony during the dream. Oh, how dark this world would be without the Bible!

Thank God for the truth that His Word is not going to vanish—heaven and earth will pass away, but His Word will remain forever. His eternal Word proves that we are justified by faith in Christ and by faith in Christ alone.

Some false teachers had arisen in the churches of Galatia. They were teaching that a man must focus his life upon the rituals and teachings of religion—upon the works of the law—instead of focusing upon Christ. Simply stated, they were saying that a man had to be ritualized (circumcised, have church membership, be baptized) and give his life to keeping the law in order to be acceptable to God. They placed ritual and law—their own works and effort—before Jesus Christ.

⇒ They focused upon what they had to do instead of Christ.

⇒ They concentrated upon themselves—upon what they could do to save themselves and make themselves acceptable to God—not upon Christ and His saving power.

⇒ They stressed the flesh, the physical and the natural, the strength of man instead of God’s love given to the world in His Son, Jesus Christ.

The answer of Paul is forceful: Scripture proves that a man is justified by faith and not by works or law.

OUTLINE:

1. Scripture uses Abraham to illustrate the truth (vv.6-7).
2. Scripture promised the gospel to Abraham long ago (vv.8-9).
3. Scripture says the law puts a man under a curse (vv.10-12).
4. Scripture says Christ has redeemed us from the curse (vv.13-14).

5. SCRIPTURE USES ABRAHAM TO ILLUSTRATE THE TRUTH (vv.6-7)

Abraham held a unique position in the Jewish nation, for he was the founder of the nation. He was the man whom God had challenged to be a witness to the other nations of the world—a witness to the only living and true God. God had appeared to Abraham to challenge him to leave his home, his friends, his employment, and his country. God made two great promises if Abraham would follow God unquestionably: Abraham would become the father of a new nation, and all na-

tions of the earth would be blessed by his seed (Ge.13:14-17; 15:1-7; 17:1-8, 15-19; 22:15-18; 26:2-5, 24; 28:13-15; 35:9-12).

Note two points.

1. Abraham believed God; therefore, he was judged righteous. He went out—left his home and risked all—not knowing where he was going (He.11:8). He completely and unquestionably trusted God and took God at His word.

Now note: it was not Abraham’s keeping of the law that pleased God. In fact, the law had not yet been given (Ga.3:17). What pleased God and what caused God to justify Abraham was Abraham’s doing as God had said. Abraham simply believed the promise of God that God would give him a new life—in a new nation—with a new people.

- a. Abraham and his seed were the only ones to whom God gave the promises. This is emphatically stated (Ro.4:13-25; Ga.3:6-16, 26, 29).
- b. Only a promise was given to Abraham (Ro.4:13-21; Ga.3:14, 18-21, 29). No other information whatsoever was given. God did not identify the country nor tell Abraham where he was to go. Neither did God tell Abraham when his wife Sarah would bear the seed (the male child) from whom the promised nation would be born. God made a simple promise, and all Abraham had to go on was that simple promise, that is, the sheer Word of God.
- c. Only one condition was attached to the promise: Abraham had to believe God. No works whatsoever were involved.
- d. Abraham did believe God (Ge.12:4-5; Ro.4:3, 11-22; Ga.3:6; He.11:8f).
- e. Abraham was counted righteous because he believed God (Ro.4:3-5, 9-13, 19-22; Ga.3:6; see Ge.15:6). God did not count him righteous because of who he was or what he had done. He simply believed God. Therefore, God took his faith and counted his faith as righteousness.
- f. The proof that Abraham really believed God was that he did what God had said. His faith preceded his obedience. He believed God, and then he obeyed God. If he had not believed God, he would not have left his home or his employment. He would not have left his surroundings and friends, his meaningful relationships and personal attachments. The fact that he did as God asked was evidence that he believed the promise of God.

2. Those who are of faith are the true sons of Abraham. The person who believes God is the person who receives the promises of God (Ro.4:5-12, 16-17, 23-25; Ga.3:7-9, 14, 22, 26, 29). Paul argues that neither heritage nor nationality, neither merit nor works, neither the law nor the rules of the law have anything to do with the promises of

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God (Ga.3:6-7). The true sons of Abraham are those who believe God—any person of any nation. Abraham are those who believe God — any person of any nation. In fact, God’s promise that a nation would be born to Abraham and “his seed” was the promise of an eternal nation. This eternal nation is to be of another world, of another dimension of being: the spiritual dimension, a dimension just as real as the physical dimension. But it is to have one distinction: every citizen is to be a believer—one who has believed God and His Word. This is exactly what this passage is saying: “They who believe are the children of Abraham, the children of God’s promise. They are to be blessed along with faithful Abraham. They are to be the citizens of God’s Kingdom, ‘the new heavens and the new earth.’” (See He.11:8-18; 2 Pe.3:10-14.)

QUESTIONS:

1. What condition did God attach to the promise to Abraham? Are His promises to you also conditional? In what way?
2. Contrast the principle of faith with the principle of works. Which one is the easiest for you to live by? Why?
3. Abraham chose to believe God. In what areas of your life do you have a difficult time believing God? What things can you do to help yourself trust in the Lord?

mer note, God told Abraham that He would accept him and bless him if Abraham would believe (love and follow) the promise of God. What was the promise?

“In thee shall all nations be blessed” (v.8)

Abraham believed God; he separated himself from the world, giving his life totally to God; therefore, God accepted and judged Abraham righteous.

2. Those who are of faith are judged righteous with Abraham. Abraham was justified by believing God. What happened was this. Abraham believed God, and God took Abraham’s belief and counted his belief as righteousness. It was not Abraham’s works, but his faith that God took and counted as righteousness. It was all an act of God; therefore, all glory belonged to God, not to Abraham. Man is saved by faith; in other words, God takes a man’s faith and counts that man’s faith as righteousness. This has to be the case:

- ⇒ God is perfect; He is perfectly righteous. No man can achieve perfection; therefore, no man can live in the presence of God.
- ⇒ However, God is love; therefore, what God does is take a person’s faith and counts that faith as righteousness and perfection. Therefore, a man is able to live in God’s presence by

faith or justification

“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Tit.3:4-5).

ILLUSTRATION:

How close are you to the Word of God? Is it your desire to absorb it and infuse it into your life or do you read it and hope that something sticks?

There is a story of a missionary in Korea who had a visit from a native convert who lived a hundred miles away, and who walked four days to reach the mission station. The pilgrim recited proudly, without a single mistake, the whole of the Sermon on the Mount. The missionary was delighted, but he felt that he ought to warn the man that memorizing was not enough—that it was necessary to practice the words as well as to memorize them.

The Korean’s face lit up with happy smiles. “That is the way I learned it,” he said. “I tried to memorize it, but it wouldn’t stick. So I hit upon this plan—I would memorize a verse and then find a heathen neighbor of mine and practice it on him. Then I found it would stick.”^{2 2} From Earnest Worker. Walter B. Knight. *Knight’s Master Book of 4,000 Illustrations*, p.26-27.

The Bible is not just a book about people who have changed...it is a book that *changes* those who read it and live out what they read!

A CLOSER LOOK:

(3:8-9) **Abraham:** the Scripture...preached the gospel to Abraham (Ga.3:8). What does this mean?

God had promised Abraham...with the same promise...with the

QUESTIONS:

1. How would you explain to a non-Christian how God speaks to you through His Word? How else can God speak to His children?
2. What attitude should you have if someone claims to speak for God but his words contradict the Scriptures?
3. Did Paul see any difference between the spoken Word of God and the written Word of God? Why do some Christians struggle with this issue? What kind of encouragement can you give to them?

2. The major events of Isaac's life parallel the life of Christ.

- ⇒ First, Isaac was miraculously born (Ge.15:2-3; 18:11; see Ro.4:18-22; He.11:11).
- ⇒ Second, Isaac was to be offered up as a sacrifice (Ge.22). Abraham was willing to offer up Isaac, and God accepted his willingness and motive as an actual fact. The word of He.11:17 tells us this: "by faith Abraham...[who] received the promise offered up his only begotten son."
- ⇒ Third, Isaac was delivered from death by a miracle of God (Ge.22:10-13). Abraham knew that God was able to raise up Isaac from the dead in order to fulfil His promise, if need be (He.11:19).

3. SCRIPTURE SAYS THE LAW PUTS A MAN UNDER A CURSE (vv.10-12).

Note a critical point: in this verse the word *curse* means to be condemned and doomed to punishment by the righteous judgment of God. How do we know this? By verse 13 where it is said that Christ bore the curse of the law for us (the condemnation, doom, death, and punishment due us for having broken the law). The law carries with it a curse. A person either keeps the law or else he is cursed; that is, he is to stand before the Judge and bear the punishment of a lawbreaker. The curse (penalty or punishment) for violating the law is...

QUESTIONS:

1. What does the promise that God made to Abraham mean to your Christian walk?
2. What particular character traits do you find in Abraham's life that you would like to have as your own? What do you need to do in order to achieve this for your life?

by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me" (Ro.7:10-11).

Why does the law put a curse upon men? There are two clear reasons.

1. The man who approaches God by law is cursed because he does not keep the whole law. Note a crucial fact: there is a righteousness that is of the law (Ro.10:5; Ga.3:12). That righteousness promises life to any man who can obey the law perfectly. If a man can meet every requirement of the law during his lifetime and never once fall below God's holy standard, then that man can escape the penalty for sin, which is death. However, every thinking and honest man knows that he cannot keep the law of God in every single detail—not all the time. He knows that he sometimes comes short in...

Every thinking and honest person knows that he is nowhere close to being perfect nor to attaining perfection. He knows that he fails and comes short too often. He knows that what this verse says is exactly true: no man can continue in and do *all things* which are written in the law of God.

"For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them" (Ro.10:5).

2. God's chosen way for approaching Him is to "live by faith." Scripture declares as clearly as it can: no man is justified by the law in the sight of God. As stated above, God is perfect; He is perfectly righteous. No man can achieve perfection; therefore, no man can live in the presence of God. No matter how good he is or how much good he does, he cannot achieve perfection. The fact is evident; for if a man had achieved perfection, he would be perfect—living forever in a perfect state of being, even on this earth.

- behavior
- motive
- service
- emotions
- worship

But note this: God is love. So what God does is take a person's faith and count that faith as righteousness, as perfection. Therefore, a man is able to live in God's presence by faith or justification. The point is this: God's way for a man to approach Him is the way of faith: "The just shall live by faith."

Note also that the law is not of faith, but any man who attempts to live by the law will be allowed to so live. But the man must realize: he shall be judged by the law.

"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" (Ro. 3:20).

A CLOSER LOOK:

(3:10-12) **The Law:** Chapter 3 gives an excellent study of the law.

1. The law carries with it a curse (Ga.3:10). The curse is the mark of death and the mark of condemnation or guilt: alienation from God both in this life and throughout all eternity (see De.27:1f; 28:15; Ro.6:23; 2 Co.3:7, 9).

2. There is a righteousness which is of the law (Ro.10:5-10; Ga.3:12). That righteousness promises life to any man who can obey the law perfectly. If a man can meet every requirement of the law during his lifetime and never once fall below God's holy standard, then that man can escape the penalty of sin which is death.

QUESTIONS:

1. Do you believe that men are under a curse? What is a curse? What steps have you taken to escape this curse?
2. What are some of the logical results of a man who lives under the curse?
3. Why do you think God wants you to approach Him by faith?

HIMSELF. HE OFFERED TO SWAP HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR MAN'S UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, TO SWAP HIS LIFE FOR MAN'S LIFE. THIS GLORIOUS EXPRESSION OF SUBSTITUTIONARY LOVE WAS THE VERY PURPOSE FOR WHICH GOD HAD CREATED THE EARTH. GOD WILLED TO SHOW HIS GREAT AND UNSEARCHABLE LOVE THAT GAVE ITSELF SO PERFECTLY (EP.1:5f). THE GREAT TRAGEDY IS THAT MAN HAS SO MUCH DIFFICULTY ACCEPTING SO GREAT A LOVE (1 CO.1:18).

It also means another thing. Jesus Christ accomplishes the same purpose that God intended for the law, except much more. He not only sets the same ideals and standards before us, but He also relates Himself to us. Whereas the law is a set of cold letters with no power to give life (Ga.3:21), Jesus Christ is a living person possessing the power to raise the dead to life again. He sets the standards and gives the power to keep the standards. He has replaced the law in showing men the awfulness of their sin (through His death), and He adds the extra dimension of strength to live as He lived (Ga.5:22f; Ep.1:19f; 3:20).

4. The law was only meant to be a temporary arrangement between God and man (Ga.3:16). It was to extend only from Moses to Jesus Christ, for Jesus Christ is "the seed" to whom the promise of righteousness was given (see Mt.5:17). God never intended the law to be the way of salvation. It was for the temporary purpose of showing men their sin and its awfulness. Since Jesus Christ has come, He (His perfect life and righteousness) is to be the standard for men.

5. The law was given to show men their sin and to instill within them a personal guilt for disobeying God and His law (Ro.3:19-20; 7:7; Ga.3:19). This guilt was to lead men to seek and trust God for salvation. Thus, the law stops every mouth from claiming self-righteousness and makes all the world guilty before God.

6. The law is inferior to God's promise of grace (Ga.3:19c-20). Three arguments show this.

- ⇒ First, the law was not given directly by God. The law was given by angels to men through Moses (Ga.3:19; Ac.7:53; He.2:2). Moses was a mediator. But God and God alone gave the promise of grace and righteousness to Abraham.
- ⇒ Second, the law was between two parties—man and God. If man kept the law, he would receive the reward of righteousness. The gift of righteousness was conditional under the law. But the promise of grace is given by God alone. No one can break that promise. If man simply believes, he receives the promise of righteousness.
- ⇒ Third, the giving of the law came after the promise to Abraham—four hundred and thirty years after. The promise of grace was given first before the law. Therefore, the law cannot void the promise. The promise of

God stands.

7. The law has no power to give life (Ga.3:21). The law demands that each commandment be kept and obeyed. But it is mere words, cold and lifeless. It is entirely external to man; it sets outside the being of man. It has no energy whatever to help in keeping the law.

8. The Scripture is conclusive: all men are lawbreakers and under sin (Ga.3:22).

9. The believer is no longer under the law but under grace (Ro.6:14; 7:4; Ga.3:22). Man is unable to participate in the righteousness of the law, for he is totally incapable of fulfilling the law. But he can experience the grace of God by trusting the righteousness which Jesus Christ has secured. When a man believes in Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ judges that man righteous. That man becomes a "partaker of the divine nature of God" (2 Pe.1:4).

10. The law shuts man up under sin (Ga.3:23). Man is a permanent prisoner under the law. Under the law he is put in bondage and held captive all the days of his life. The only avenue of escape is Jesus Christ, that is, faith in Him. If Christ fails to deliver, then there is no escape, for the law does not free man; it enslaves.

11. The law was man's guardian to lead him to see his need for Christ (Ga.3:24). The schoolmaster was usually a trusted slave who was in charge of a child's moral welfare, but he had one particular duty to which Paul was referring. Every day the guardian took the child to school and delivered him to the teacher. And then at the end of the day, he returned for the child and brought him safely back home. This was what the law was to do. The law was to lead man to Christ, the true Teacher. The law does this by showing man that he cannot secure righteousness by himself. He must look to Christ, the real Teacher, for righteousness and acceptance by God. And once faith in Christ has come, there is no need for the law nor for any other guardian, for Jesus Christ brings us face to face with God.

12. The law is still in force for the unbeliever (1 Ti.1:8-14). It remains in force to condemn and to lead the unbeliever to see his need for God.

13. Men were not always transgressors (Ro.4:15; 5:20). There is no transgression where there is no law, for there is no law to transgress. But men were still sinners before the law was given to Moses. They were just not as aware of their sin nor did they sense as much guilt as was necessary to show their need for God. For that reason the law was given, that men might be more and more aware that they were sinners before God.

A CLOSER LOOK:

(3:10-12) **Justification—Faith:** this verse is used three times in the new Testament. A different point is emphasized each time it is used. It tells how a man can be just with God (see Hab.2:3-4).

1. **“The just shall live by faith”** (Ro.1:17). Who can live by faith? Only the just. People make two claims to justification. The man who says “I am justified by doing the best I can” is simply saying that he expects God to excuse his sin. But God does not excuse sin; God forgives sin. Excusing sin is nothing more than license—allowing man to go on living as he wishes and always coming up short. Therefore, a man is not justified by doing the best he can—by living after the law. He is justified by faith, by trusting God to forgive him. Once a man has really trusted God, he is just. And the just then begins to live by faith. The former man, whether a legalist or a man of fleshly indulgence, has no opportunity to live by faith. Why? Simply because he never started the life of faith. It is the just, not the legalist or the man of sinful indulgence, who lives by faith.

2. **“The just shall live by faith”** (Ga.3:11). By what rule does a person live? By the principle of faith, not by the principle of works. The person declared just by faith shall live apart from works. The believer is saved by faith, and the believer lives by faith (Gal.3:11).

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did not Christ abolish the law when He came to earth?
2. Contrast the law with God’s grace. How have you learned to balance the two in your life?

4. SCRIPTURE SAYS CHRIST HAS REDEEMED US FROM THE CURSE (vv.13-14).

The word *redeemed* means to buy back or to buy from or to ransom. Christ has bought man back and ransomed him from the curse of the law. That man has broken the law of God is unquestionable; every honest man knows this. Therefore, every man stands guilty before God and must be judged and condemned to bear the curse and punishment of the law. But this is the glorious news: Jesus Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. How?

1. Jesus Christ was made a curse for us. Simply stated, Jesus Christ took our condemnation, doom, death, and punishment upon Himself, bearing them all for us. Jesus Christ took our place as the lawbreaker and guilty party before God, and He bore the punishment of the lawbreaker for us. How was this possible?

⇒ Because Jesus Christ had obeyed and kept the law of God perfectly. He had never broken the law, not even once. He was sinless and perfect. He had secured the Ideal Righteousness and Perfection before God. Therefore, He bore no guilt and no penalty and no mark of death. He had the right to stand before God to claim eternal life, the right to be accepted by God so as never to experience death. He was perfect; He had secured incorruptible righteousness.

⇒ Because God is love. The glorious gospel is that instead of

QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think of when you hear the word justification?
2. What effect should justification have upon you day by day?

perfect me, for man’s sinful me. He substituted His obedience to God for man’s disobedience. He bore man’s sin and punishment so that man might stand righteous and perfect before God. Jesus Christ bore the curse of the law for us.

Note the Old Testament quotation: “Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree” (De.21:23). This does not mean that a man is cursed because he is executed upon a tree, but rather that a man who is executed upon a tree is there because he is cursed, having been judged as a lawbreaker. Jesus Christ was the lawbreaker, taking the place of the transgressor; therefore, He was cursed (condemned) to die as the unlawful and disobedient sinner.

2. The purpose for Jesus Christ’s bearing the curse of the law was to open the door of blessing to all men. Christ’s bearing the curse of the law was the way God fulfilled His promise to Abraham: that all nations would be blessed in him. Christ’s bearing the curse of the law is also the way that God gives the promises made to Abraham to the world. Any man who believes in Jesus Christ—that Christ bore the curse of the law for him—is accepted by God and given the blessings of the promised land eternally.

In summary, the man who believes in Christ receives the promise of God’s Holy Spirit, that is, the promise...

- ◆ of the divine nature.

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pe.1:4).

- ◆ of the new birth.

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (Jn.3:3-6).

- ◆ of being made a new creature.

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Co.5:17).

- ◆ of being made into a new man.

“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ep.4:24).

ILLUSTRATION:

It took a *curse-breaker* to set us free from the guilt of sin. Jesus Christ took our place and took the curse upon Himself when He shed His blood for our sins.

In his book Written in Blood, Robert Coleman tells the story of a little boy whose sister needed a blood transfusion. The doctor had explained that she had the same disease the boy had recovered from two years earlier. Her only chance for recovery was a transfusion from someone who had previously conquered the disease. Since the two children had the same rare blood type, the boy was the ideal donor.

“Would you give your blood to Mary?” the doctor asked.

Johnny hesitated. His lower lip started to tremble. Then he smiled and said, “Sure, for my sister.”

Soon the two children were wheeled into the hospital room—Mary, pale and thin; Johnny, robust and healthy. Neither spoke, but when their eyes met, Johnny grinned.

As the nurse inserted the needle into his arm, Johnny’s smile faded. He watched the blood flow through the tube. With the ordeal almost over, his voice, slightly shaky, broke the silence. “Doctor, when do I die?”

Only then did the doctor realize why Johnny had hesitated, why his lip had trembled when he’d agreed to donate his blood. He’d thought giving his blood to his sister meant giving up his life. In that brief moment, he’d made his great decision.

Johnny, fortunately, didn’t have to die to save his sister. Each of us, however, has a condition more serious than Mary’s, and it required Jesus to give not just His blood, but His life.

SUMMARY:

Throughout the ages, men have hammered away at the Word of God. But as men have come and gone, the Scriptures, like an anvil, remain unmarred. This *anvil* proves that a man is justified by faith:

1. Scripture uses Abraham to illustrate the *truth*.
2. Scripture promised the gospel to Abraham long ago.
3. Scripture says the law puts a man under a curse.
4. Scripture says Christ has redeemed us from the curse.

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES (Reflection & Response)

1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:
2. The area that I need to work on the most is:
3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:

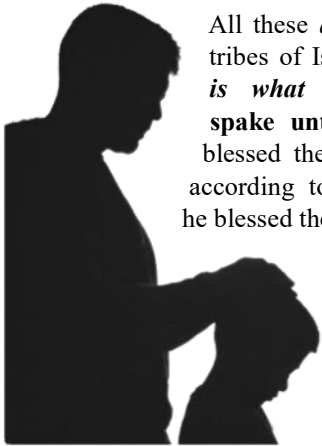
4. Closing Statement of Commitment:

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some ways you can thank Jesus for breaking the curse upon your life?
2. Why did Jesus go to the cross for you?
3. How would you explain His willingness to become a curse for you? Is this kind of love a part of your character—to lay your life down for others?

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All these *are* the twelve tribes of Israel: and **this is what their father spake unto them**, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them.

—Genesis 49:28

Shortly before Jacob, who was also called

Israel, passed away, he took the time to formally bless his twelve sons. The giving of a father's blessing is not something that most people are familiar with in our own day. Although, I am aware that this has become more popular in some circles, but my guess is that most people wouldn't understand why something like this is important.

There are some people who think that our lack of receiving blessing from our fathers is the cause of many problems in our lives. Concepts like "the father wound" attest that there is a great need in our hearts for good relationships with our fathers.

Our fathers have a special role to play in our discovery of who we are in life. That is why a father telling his child statements like "You'll never amount to anything" has such a devastating effect. On the other hand, a father who lovingly affirms his child is giving him a solid foundation towards developing into a healthy, well-adjusted adult.

But if current trends continue, more and more people will grow up without a father's blessing. Not only that, many will grow up with no relationship to a father at all. Some will not even have a biological father as science paves the way to make fatherhood ob-

solete. The result will be a level of lost-ness in the hearts of people that has never before been seen in history.

You might be someone who fully understands all this. You long for your father's blessing but have no hope of ever receiving it. Maybe your father is no longer alive. Maybe your father is alive, but the nature of your relationship is such that you believe he will never bless you. Maybe so.

Thankfully whatever your relationship is to your biological father, there is another Father who longs to bless you. God, the Heavenly Father, has the ability to heal the father wound in you. Not that you will be able to satisfactorily address every unresolved issue you have with your earthly father, but the greater Father can mend every broken part of your heart.

This is not to say that we should not hope for resolution with our early fathers. In fact, allowing the Heavenly Father to heal us will most likely be the beginning of healing with our natural dads. God's desire is for us to have good, healthy relationships with our natural parents. It is true that due to our broken state we will not see every relationship flourish the way they were meant to. Still, if we would receive God's blessing, we will begin to see even our broken relationships in a new light.

With what I have personally experienced, I can say that The Heavenly Father's blessing has brought much healing into my heart, and I have felt much more secure in my earthly relationships (protection). I have also been able to discover who I am and what I am here on the earth for (identity and purpose). Another aspect that this father's blessing brings into our lives is financial provision and inheritance. Inheritance is much more than financial blessing. Inheritance has to do with receiving something that you did not

earn, but we receive it because of who we are, and that may be financial, emotional, or spiritual.

We all look for our father's approval, and in Matthew 3:16-17 it says that Jesus received the Heavenly Father's blessing.

*And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him, and lo a voice from heaven, saying, **This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.***

If it was possible for Jesus to receive the Heavenly Father's blessing, then we can receive it too because of the atoning blood of Jesus. We will never be good enough of ourselves but, because of his shed blood, we are reconciled back to the heart of The Heavenly Father and can receive his full blessing. Receive and believe.

***The LORD bless you, and keep you:
The LORD make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you:
The LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. Numbers 6:24-26***

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The Two Covenants

—by Eli Stutzman

The **Old Covenant** was established when the Law of Moses came down from Mount Sinai. The children of Israel had just been delivered from slavery in Egypt. They were now a nation with a promise, but without land. And the law they were about to receive would contain many of the regulations and guidelines on how Israel was to govern the coming land they were about to possess. As Israel

stood around the foot of Mount Sinai and waited for the law to be given, they experienced sights and sounds that were very frightening to a group of slaves that had just been freed. What a trip! Just a few days ago they had been serving Pharaoh and his slave masters. Now they were in the presence of the God of all creation! Plus they were about to become a special people through whom

the whole world would be blessed. God was about to make a special nation out of slaves.

Remember, our ancestors were Gentiles without any part in this promise. The law and promises did not apply to us. We were on the outside. The people on the inside were former slaves, freed on the night they applied

—continued on next page—

blood on their door frames.

But now, the children of Israel looked on as their leader, Moses, went up the mountain to meet with God. And it was there that he was handed laws such as the world had never seen. The laws of the land were designed to keep God in the center of their activities so that they would never forget who had set them free. Those who obeyed were promised a blessing, and those who disobeyed received punishment.

Later, the law was confirmed when the covenant was established.

Exodus 24:6-8 says; *And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.*

The covenant was now confirmed with blood.

The **Old Covenant** included much more than Exodus 20-23. Hebrews 9:1 tells us that it also included directions for the tabernacle. Verse 7 says “*he took the book of the covenant and read it*”. The response of the people was, “*All that the LORD has said will we do*” Now the children of Israel had become heirs of a promise.

As we read the history of Israel and their first 750 years, we see many, many failures. Was God surprised? Obviously not. He knew that the great majority of men would fail. That same failure still remains today, even among us Gentiles. The old covenant was unable to do the job because of man’s weakness. Hebrews 8:7 says;

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

The Sermon on the Mount, recorded in Mat-

thew 5-7, points out a different kind of law, known as the *spirit of the law*. If anyone thought they were doing pretty good at obeying the law, Jesus’ sermon quickly showed a failure in everyone who listened carefully. We needed a savior! We also needed a **New Covenant** desperately. Israel could not live up to the demands of the **Old Covenant**; neither can we. And God had already promised a **New Covenant** way back in the prophet Jeremiah’s time. In Jeremiah 31:31-34, it says:

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD,

unbending requirements. Now the law is put into our *inward parts*; that is, our minds and our hearts. This happens only when a person surrenders their life to Christ.

The trouble with the **Old Covenant** was that it saved no one. Not one person was able to fulfill the righteous demands of the law. Mankind was unable to reach that high demand. So it was necessary that the **New Covenant** address that problem. That is precisely what Jesus came to do. He fulfilled the law for us and extended salvation by His grace. As seen on Pentecost (Acts 2) and

many other occasions, Jesus Christ—the Saviour of the world, gave us His spirit—to live inside us. This is how it works out for us to have the law of the Spirit written on our hearts and in our minds. We also have the awareness of sin put inside us. 1 John 1:9 says:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Fortunately, for us who are Gentiles, the **New Covenant**

extends to all mankind. God had told Abraham that in his seed *all nations* would be blessed. Not just one or some nations, but all nations. There are about 6,900 languages on earth. Every language is represented in that great scene in Revelation 7:9, where it says: *A great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne...*

Will you be there?

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Old Covenant or Testament Is Fulfilled
(Matthew 5:17-18)

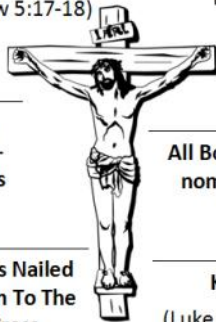
New Testament Is Written In The Heart And Mind

(Hebrews 8:10-13; and Jeremiah 31:31-34)

Israel Performed Mandatory Ceremonies and Strict Guidelines Under the Law of Moses
(Hebrews 9:10; 10:1-7)

- ◆ Animals Sacrifices
- ◆ Circumcision
- ◆ Ordinances
- ◆ Feast Days
- ◆ Suppers
- ◆ Tithing

Jesus Nailed Them To The Cross
(Colossians 2:10-14)



All Born Again Believers, Regardless Of Denomination, Are Immersed In One Spirit
(1 Corinthians 10:13)

Kingdom Of Yahsua Is Within
(Luke 17:20-21; 2 Cor 5:17; Rom 14:7-9)

- ◆ Spiritual Sacrifices (1 Peter 2:5)
- ◆ Law Of The Spirit (Rom 8:2; Gal 6:8)

that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel;

After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity [sins], and I will remember their sin no more.

Let’s take a closer look at the **New Covenant**. Hebrews 9:33b says: “*I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.*” This, dear reader, is the core of the **New Covenant**. No more is the law inscribed on stone and enforced with hard

Having a plain background myself, I tend to spend a fair amount of time studying the ways of the plain Amish and Mennonites. One of the primary definitive cultural beliefs maintained by the plain people surrounds *separation from the world*. In fact, while studying our rich culture, I discovered that if you look past that one particular belief, the average plain person isn't different from any other person alive.

Because adherence to separation from the world is central to the Amish and Mennonite religion, my studying involves asking a lot of 'why' and 'what' questions to learn more: "Why do plain people shun contact with the world?" "What does the average plain person believe defines 'the world?'" "Why does the plain community think separation from the world is so central to God's commandments?" And so on...

In this column I'm going to share some of the information I gleaned from my studies. This isn't meant to be an all-inclusive study of the plain people; rather it's a study of how and why these plain people cling so hard to their long held and most important tradition of separation from the world.

In order to establish a foundation for this study, we'll briefly need to revisit the roots of our ancestors. It's important to note that a lot of the current Amish traditions are actually a continuance to Jakob Ammann's core beliefs, and if it were not for Mr. Ammann, we'd likely not have a modern day Amish denomination.

In 1693, Jakob Ammann took issue with Swiss Mennonite leaders Hans Reist and Benedict Schneider over what he saw as a lack of overall discipline in the Swiss Brethren congregations. This lack of discipline was exemplified by the lapse of the ban (or *meidung*) against those who violated ethical rules after being baptized into the Church. The disagreement over the practice caused a rift between him and Hans Reist; which resulted in Ammann's congregation splitting from the Swiss Brethren. Those who followed Jakob Ammann became known as the Amish.

Highly influenced by Dutch Mennonite beliefs, Ammann insisted on the implementation of the 1632 Mennonite *Dortrecht Confession of Faith*. He rejected modern clothing

and established strict regulations concerning apparel. He increased communion from once to twice per year; and instituted the practice of feet washing in connection with communion; which was not practiced by the Swiss Mennonites.

Later, Ammann regretted the schism and made several attempts to reunify his group with the Mennonites. To show his regret for the disunity he had caused, Ammann offered to ban himself from his own congregation. However, despite his own admissions of being rash and overzealous, he would not give up the belief of strict shunning.

Amish lifestyle today is dictated by the *Ordnung*, which differs slightly from community to community, and, within a community, from district to district. What is acceptable in one community may not be acceptable in



another. Groups may separate over matters such as the width of a hat-brim, the color of buggies, or various other issues. These rules tend to be put in place as some new thing comes into the world, or when some disunity crops up, resulting in a new rule in an attempt to solve the problem.

Today there are hundreds of thousands of Amish living in America and across the world. Scattered as they are, each group maintains a uniform desire to be separate from the world in order to fulfill their interpretation of the Bible. Interestingly, the world has an intense interest in the plain lifestyle, believing it to be peaceful and idyllic due to the *perceived* slow pace of life. This is only logical when you think about it, however, since everyone that doesn't know Christ is going to have an empty heart which can only be filled with peace and fulfillment by

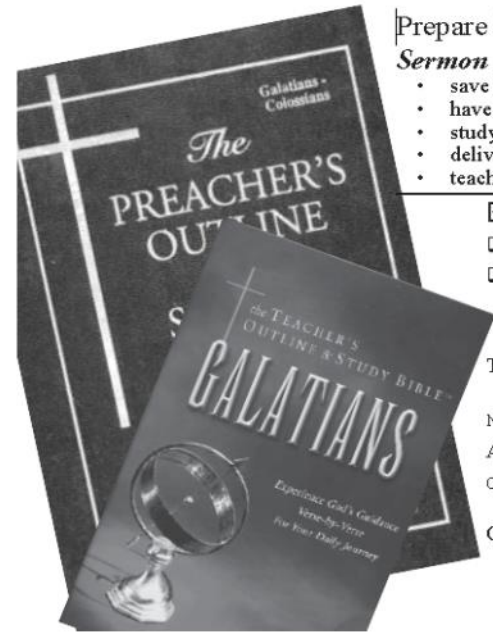
Christ Himself. It is our belief that these various groups of Amish and Mennonite people could yet bring about a great revival among all unbelievers. Because the world is watching the plain people, this could all come about as these plain people start openly confessing Christ as their Savior.

In order to fully understand *separation from the world*, we'll need to define the word 'world'. It's important to note that the Amish and Mennonite definition of the 'world' is relative to their surroundings. For example, a plain person living in the United States would classify as 'worldly' anyone whom acts and dresses as an unbeliever does here in the United States. In another country, the plain person's lifestyle would need to change in order to remain separate from the 'world' situation in that particular country.

The Amish *Ordnung* maintains that all clothing should be plain and dark colored, whereas Mennonites are ok with clothing with a pattern if it is small and not very obvious. Essentially, what has happened is that the plain people have established a dress code according to their own standards. This becomes obvious when you consider the fact that if God would have ordained a particular dress standard, Christ would certainly have been our model. It's most interesting to note that an Orthodox Jew male clothes himself very similarly to a plain Amish or Mennonite man, for many of the same reasons. This is a strange similarity considering that orthodox Jews do not profess Christ, rather loving their own 'righteousness'.

Fortunately, we all, including plain people, have many scriptures which clarifies the true purpose of the scriptures, including John 5:39 (*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me.*) Which is to say "they [the scriptures] testify of Christ," meaning that scripture itself leads us to Christ instead of being a book of law which we need to fulfill ourselves. The Jews in this situation were blind to Christ, instead leaning on the scriptures as their method of attaining salvation. Similarly, Galatians 3:24 tells us *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.* We have a clear verse here which tells us that the Bible isn't a book of

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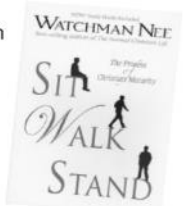
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Separation From The World —continued from page 10—

law which we must follow, but that the law was put in place to lead us to Christ, who is the fulfillment of the law by His own admission.

This Ordnung regarding clothing then is a very slippery slope. For it is true that as a Christian, it behooves us to deny the flesh and the lusts thereof. No mature Christian, I daresay, will entertain the idea of wearing clothing that tempts the viewer thereof. Instituting a set of rules has to be very tempting for the leaders of the plain churches, as they truly feel responsible for their congregations and the *natural man (without the Holy Spirit)* and without constraint is like a loose cannon and surely will get into much trouble.

Please join me in my next article as we continue down this path of learning more about our plain background and the deep seated roots guiding plain groups today. We'll look into more of the rules of the Ordnung, which institutes separation from the world, and dig

down even deeper to take us all back to the Holy Bible, where we can learn so much of Christ's will for our lives. Christ truly is the perfect vine, and we are told that as His life flows through us as branches, we will bear the most beautiful fruit. Praise Him!

—J. Martin

YOU Are Very Special

—continued from back page—

you around, special relationship! And He is waiting for you too. Let your heart be still and receive the love He has for you.

Tell Him you are listening, and you want to know Him. Ask Him to open your eyes to what He is doing and saying for you and in you. And

be patient and wait. He IS there, and He is capable of the most intimate, original stuff ever! —Lynn

Romans 10:8-13
 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the

dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call (ask) upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

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YOU Are Very Special!

— by Lynn Miller

Did you know there are as many different kinds of relationships as there are people? How can that be? Well, God is going to have a relationship with you that is tailored to meet your needs! His relationship with you, or your relationship with Him is going to be different from every other person's relationship with Him! That is how intensely personal our God is.

Have you been through times when it feels like God is sooo far away He might not even exist? Yeah, me too. And have you watched Him work in other people's lives in wonderful ways, while it seems He is completely ignoring you? I went through a time when it

seemed God was doing all these amazing things for my husband, through him, and in his life. I was like, "God, what about me? I am here too! I want to hear You too!"

God seemed so silent, and everything I want-

ed to experience and prayed for, and tried to achieve and receive, my husband was experiencing! I literally got upset with God, and felt He was holding out on me. I felt it was so unfair.

After awhile I began to notice subtle ways God was speaking to me. I began to sense He

was working in my life quietly, subtly. Now this might not sound so amazing to you. It didn't to me either. I still wanted the big bang! Until....I began to sense this feeling of God pulling me away, privately, beckoning secretly, saying, "Come here! I want to talk to you alone. I want to talk with you and see you and work with you...alone...with nobody

else watching!"

I began to feel like I was very special to Him, like a unique, special flower, He handled with special care. He was doing a special work in my life. He knew some of the pain in my life was so deep and He pulled me aside,

where no one else could see. He had to make me long for Him, make me so hungry for Him, and all of it was done in a deeply personal way.

It was lonely at times—very lonely; that is, until I started talking to God rather than other people.

Once I got my focus on God and Him alone, then I started hearing His voice, softly telling me that He knew me—He knew what I needed more than I did. He understood me more than I understood myself.

I began to see the different, little things He was doing in my life that would not mean anything to anyone else, but meant the world to me. He showed me ways to be creative in difficult situations. As He works to beautify the ugly parts of me, He is giving me opportunities and the ability to transform things in my environment.

And you know, I would NOT trade this off-to-the-side, special, intensely personal relationship with God for anything. This 'whisking me off, alone, none of the rest of

—continued on page 11—

