

Title: Blah Blah Blah – Galatians 3 13-27

Read:

¹³⁻¹⁴Christ redeemed us from that self-defeating, cursed life by absorbing it completely into himself. Do you remember the Scripture that says, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"? That is what happened when Jesus was nailed to the cross: He became a curse, and at the same time dissolved the curse. And now, because of that, the air is cleared and we can see that Abraham's blessing is present and available for non-Jews, too. We are all able to receive God's life, his Spirit, in and with us by believing—just the way Abraham received it. ¹⁵⁻¹⁸Friends, let me give you an example from everyday affairs of the free life I am talking about. Once a person's will has been ratified, no one else can annul it or add to it. Now, the promises were made to Abraham and to his descendant. You will observe that Scripture, in the careful language of a legal document, does not say "to descendants," referring to everybody in general, but "to your descendant" (the noun, note, is singular), referring to Christ. This is the way I interpret this: A will, earlier ratified by God, is not annulled by an addendum attached 430 years later, thereby negating the promise of the will. No, this addendum, with its instructions and regulations, has nothing to do with the promised inheritance in the will. ¹⁸⁻²⁰What is the point, then, of the law, the attached addendum? It was a thoughtful addition to the original covenant promises made to Abraham. The purpose of the law was to keep a sinful people in the way of salvation until Christ (the descendant) came, inheriting the promises and distributing them to us. Obviously this law was not a firsthand encounter with God. It was arranged by angelic messengers through a middleman, Moses. But if there is a middleman as there was at Sinai, then the people are not dealing directly with God, are they? But the original promise is the direct blessing of God, received by faith. ²¹⁻²²If such is the case, is the law, then, an anti-promise, a negation of God's will for us? Not at all. Its purpose was to make obvious to everyone that we are, in ourselves, out of right relationship with God, and therefore to show us the futility of devising some religious system for getting by our own efforts what we can only get by waiting in faith for God to complete his promise. For if any kind of rule-keeping had power to create life in us, we would certainly have gotten it by this time. ²³⁻²⁴Until the time when we were mature enough to respond freely in faith to the living God, we were carefully surrounded and protected by the Mosaic law. The law was like those Greek tutors, with which you are familiar, who escort children to school and protect them from danger or distraction, making sure the children will really get to the place they set out for. ²⁵⁻²⁷But now you have arrived at your destination: By faith in Christ you are in direct relationship with God. Your baptism in Christ was not just washing you up for a fresh start. It also involved dressing you in an adult faith wardrobe—Christ's life, the fulfilment of God's original promise.

Think:

Do you ever stare at text book at school or college and wonder what the heck any of it means? I used to do that all the time. Sometimes I'm like that with the Bible too. I stare at it and blink and wonder just what the heck the person who wrote it is trying to say. See I said it, sometimes I don't understand the Bible. I bet you thought you were the only one didn't you. Take this passage for instance. I mean that's a heck of a lot of words, just to say the something he has already said before. Jesus loves us; he died for us, so that we can go to Heaven. We don't have to do lots of things in a particular order to go to Heaven, and no one can take that away from us. See how difficult was that. So, is it only me, or do you struggle with the Bible sometimes too? Well the good news is, that's OK, maybe that's why God often says the same thing in a different way. Maybe your mate gets this passage, I figure out another passage and you understand yet another passage. We shouldn't struggle with the Bible, after all God gave it to us as a book to live by. If we struggle with understanding it, no need to feel dumb. I just grab the nearest leader and say things like "hey what the heck does this mean?"

Pray:

Lord thank you for your Bible. Please give me the confidence to ask the leaders you have put in my life, if there are areas I don't understand. Amen.

Action:

OK so what part of the Bible don't you understand? Email us at podcast@aftershock.org.uk and ask us. Well do our best to answer. Bye.