



Jesus fulfilled the task His Father had given Him for this world, through His life on earth and His death on Golgotha's cross.

Thereby, in the history of the world, He opened the door to a new life, a life in relationship with the Triune God: the heavenly Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

That is a life in dependency upon the grace, the kindness of God:<sup>1</sup>

- forgiveness of sins, through faith and trust in Jesus Christ,<sup>2</sup>
- free from the curse of inability to fulfil the law
- free from the dominion of Satan, in a life under the authority of Jesus<sup>3</sup>
- full of power through the Holy Spirit<sup>4</sup>

This is the life Jesus meant when He said:

- *I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (John 10:10)*

Attention is given to this in this study because this "life to the full" is determined by the law of God, and the curse weighing upon non-observance thereof.

## The law:

After God had delivered His people, the descendants of Abraham, from the slavery of Egypt, He first brought them to Sinai, where He gave them the law:

- rules for a life in relationship with Him
- and rules of life for a healthy society.

Moses was to tell the people about the whole of this legislation:

- *These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you ... so that you, your children and their children after them may fear (respect) the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life.*
- *Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you*
- *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.*
- *Love the LORD your God **with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.***
- *These commandments that I give you today are **to be on your hearts.** Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*
- *Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:1-9)*

This legislation was to influence the thought, the actions and the whole of life.

God gave the law in the first place so that the people would live in a good relationship with Him, as His later groaning shows:

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1 Study: Grace - definition.

2 Study: Believing in Jesus Christ.

3 Study: Discipleship (2).

4 Study: The baptism in the Holy Spirit.



- ***I thought** you would call me **'Father'** (literally: would call out: **Daddy**) and not turn away from following me. (Jeremiah 3:19)*

God expected from the guidelines for society that man's love for Him would radiate upon a loving relationship with his fellow human beings.

He commanded:

- *Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, **but love your neighbour as yourself**. I am the LORD. (Leviticus 19:18)*
- *The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. **Love them as yourself**, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God. (Leviticus 19:34)*

With these words from the Old Testament Jesus summarized the whole of the law as:

- ***'Love the Lord your God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'* This is the first and greatest commandment.
- *And the second is like it: **'Love your neighbour as yourself'**. (Matthew 22:37-39)*

God expects His laws to be experienced inwardly, from the heart, and not to be kept as outward show, but as a consequence of love for Him and for fellow men, as He said:

- *Do not hate a fellow Israelite **in your heart**. (Leviticus 19:17)*

## The curse.

God created a perfect world and universe.

In Genesis 1, the account of creation, the refrain is repeated: and God saw that it was good. And on the last day:

- *God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. (Genesis 1:31)*

God gave Adam and Eve dominion over the earth, with the commandment:

- *"Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and **subdue it**. **Rule** over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (Genesis 1:28)*

The perfect creation was disturbed, however, by Satan's managing to seduce Eve, and Adam followed his wife by also eating of the forbidden fruit.<sup>5</sup>

By listening to the serpent and thus going against the will of God, Adam and Eve transferred the dominion over the earth, which they had received from God, to Satan, thus bringing a curse upon the world.

God said:

- *To the **serpent**: "Because you have done this, **"Cursed are you** above all livestock and all wild animals! (Genesis 3:14)*
- *To the **woman**: "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labour you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." (Genesis 3:16)*

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<sup>5</sup> Study: The first sin - disobedience.



- To **Adam**: “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’ **“Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. ... By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”** (Genesis 3:17-19)

### **Notice that God cursed the earth and not Adam and Eve.**

For in His great love God hastened to the Garden of Eden to cover (image of forgiveness) the nakedness (image of sin) of Adam and Eve.<sup>6</sup>

God **cursed the face of the earth**, which means that this curse also affects the **human body**, for, at creation:

- *Then the LORD God formed a **man from the dust of the ground** and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.* (Genesis 2:7)

The **human body**, formed from the dust of the earth, is struck by the curse and **will die**, as God had said to Adam:

- *“You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it **you will certainly die.**”* (Genesis 2:16)

### **The law and the curse.**

As is written in Deuteronomy 27, Moses, who was not allowed to enter the promised land himself, when taking leave of the people commanded that, in the promised land, representatives of six tribes:

- Were to pronounce **a blessing** upon the people, on Mount Gerizim
- and **a curse**, on Mount Ebal.

After listing a whole series of reasons why someone is cursed, all this was summarized with the words:

- **Cursed is anyone who *does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out.* Then all the people shall say, “**Amen!**”** (Deuteronomy 27:26)

### **Distinction from the curse from paradise:**

The **curse** that God pronounced upon the **face of the earth** in **paradise**, was a **consequence** of the fact that Adam and Eve had transferred **the dominion over the earth to Satan**.

This curse affects **every human body**, as Paul also writes:

- *Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned ...* (Romans 5:12)

The **curse** that was pronounced when **entering the promised land**, rests upon the **soul of every person who does not completely fulfil**, who, as a result, will spend eternity far removed from of God.

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<sup>6</sup> Study: God did not leave His creation in the lurch.



As Jesus warned:

- *Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy **both soul and body** in hell. (Matthew 10:28)*

## **Jesus and the curse:**

The **redemption** that Jesus brought about through His life on earth and His death on the cross, consists of three parts:

### **1. Forgiveness of sins:**

- *... for **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through **the redemption that came by Christ Jesus**. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood - to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished ... (Romans 3:23-25)*
- *All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives **forgiveness of sins** through his name.” (Acts 10:43)*
- *In him we have **redemption through his blood**, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s Grace. (Ephesians 1:7)*
- *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father - Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the **atoning sacrifice** for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:1-2)*

### **2. Jesus acquired dominion over the world:**

Jesus never fell for the temptations of Satan.

He remained obedient to His Father right up to the very last moment of His life, as a result of which He stood above Satan in authority.

Therefore Jesus, after His resurrection, just before He returned to His Father, was able to affirm:

- **All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.** (Matthew 28:18)

### **3. Jesus has become the curse for us:**

Because He had never sinned, Jesus was free from the curse that rests upon everyone who does not completely fulfil the law.

However, by **dying on a cross**, He **has become a curse for us**, as Paul writes:

- *Christ **redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us**, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole”. (Galatians 3:13)  
(according to the words from Deuteronomy 21:23)*

## **What does this mean in practice?**

### **1. Whoever lives in Jesus is free from the curse on the law.**

The little word ‘**in**’ that is used in the following texts is very important.

It is the translation of the Greek ‘**en**’, which indicates the place where the act takes place.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Study: Word study of the little Greek words epi, en, eis.



Paul writes:

- *Therefore, if anyone is **in** Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! (2 Corinthians 5:17)*

As Jesus said:

- *You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain **in** me, as I also remain **in** you.*
- *No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain **in** the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain **in** me.*
- *I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain **in** me and I **in** you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*
- ***If you do not remain **in** me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.***
- *If you remain **in** me and my words remain **in** you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*
- *This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*
- *As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain **in** my love.*
- *If you keep my commands, you will remain **in** my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain **in** his love.*
- *I have told you this so that my joy may be **in** you and that your joy may be complete.*
- *My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. (John 15:3-12)*

Jesus longs for us to not only believe in Him after conversion therefore, but to live **in** Him.

The apostle John writes how we can live **in** Jesus:

- *We know that we have come to know him **if we keep his commands.***
- *Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not **in** that person. But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete **in** them. **This is how we know we are **in** him:***
- ***Whoever claims to live **in** him must live as Jesus did. (1 John 2:3-6)***

This means that when a believer becomes a disciple of Jesus, he relinquishes all authority over his life to Him and lives thereafter under the authority of Jesus the Messiah, the King of kings, the Lord of heaven and earth, God's Son.

Nevertheless, a disciple will not be perfect and he will stumble regularly:

- *Indeed, there is no one on earth who is righteous, no one who does what is right **and never sins.** (Ecclesiastes 7:20)*

Nevertheless, a disciple:

- who seeks power for his life **in** Jesus, is rooted **in** Him, like the branch **in** the vine
- who receives his life's juices from the vine
- who wholeheartedly longs to live **in** accordance with the will of God

will be **protected by Jesus**, if he stumbles in life.

For those who live **in** Him, the curse for stumbling will **come upon Jesus**.



## **2. The curse upon the transgression of the law has not been done away with.**

The curse remains upon everyone who transgresses the law of God.

Upon a disciple of Jesus Christ as well, when he chooses to go his own way at some point, or thinks that he is able to gain his redemption through strict observance of the law:

- *For all who rely on **the works of the law** are **under a curse**, as it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” (Galatians 3:10 - according to Deuteronomy 27:26)*
- *You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you **have fallen away from grace**. (Galatians 5:4)*

## **3. The way back, for whoever has gone his own way.**

A disciple of Jesus Christ who decides to go his own way, without Jesus, runs the risk of returning under the curse, because he has left the protection of Jesus.

**There is always a way back, however.**

John writes:

- ***But if anybody does sin**, we have an advocate with the Father - Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins ... (1 John 2:1,2)*
- ***If we confess our sins**, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)*

## **The struggle in the life of the Christian.**

The life of a Christian is not without obligations.

Even Paul is conscious of the fact that he needs to take care, when he writes:

- *Therefore I do **not** run like someone **running aimlessly**; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air.*
- ***No, I strike a blow to my body** and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, **I myself will not be disqualified for the prize**. (1 Corinthians 9:26-27)*

Therefore

- *... continue to work out (to cause to come to pass, to achieve) your salvation (deliverance, safety) **with fear and trembling**, ... (Philippians 2:12)*

### **With fear and trembling:**

According to the OLB, this is an expression describing the anxiety of someone who realises that he is unable to completely fulfil all the obligations, **but does his utter best devotedly** to execute his task.

This is expounded further in the study: *Flesh and Spirit, curse and grace*.<sup>8</sup>

See also the study: *The spiritual weaponry*.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Study: *Flesh and Spirit, curse and grace*.

<sup>9</sup> Study: *The spiritual weaponry*.