

# Galatians 3:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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:

## Analysis

**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.** This is the gospel climax. 'Redeemed' (exēgorasen, ἐξηγόρασεν) is a commercial term: 'bought out of the marketplace'—Christ purchased us from the curse's slave-market. The aorist tense indicates a definitive, completed act. 'The curse of the law' refers back to verse 10: the Law's curse on all who fail perfect obedience. Christ redeemed 'us'—Jewish believers primarily, but extending to all (v. 14).

The phrase 'being made a curse for us' (genomenos hyper hēmōn katara, γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα) is staggering—Christ became curse itself, not just cursed. The preposition hyper (ὑπέρ) means 'on behalf of, as substitute for'—Christ bore our curse as our substitute. The quote from Deuteronomy 21:23—'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree' (epikataratos pas ho kremamenos epi xylou, ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὁ κρεμáμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου)—proves that crucifixion incurred the Law's curse. Christ's cross-death placed Him under the curse meant for us.

This is penal substitutionary atonement: Christ bore the penalty (curse) we deserved, satisfying the Law's demands. The Law cursed us (v. 10); Christ became that curse (v. 13), exhausting God's wrath so we receive blessing instead. The irony: the cross, symbol of shame and curse, becomes the instrument of redemption. No wonder Paul glories in the cross (6:14).

## Historical Context

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Deuteronomy 21:22-23 required that executed criminals displayed on trees (impaled) be buried the same day, because 'he that is hanged is accursed of God.' Jewish interpretation saw crucifixion victims as under God's curse. Paul turns this against the Judaizers: the Messiah's crucifixion proves He bore the curse for us—if He were merely a cursed false prophet, Christianity collapses; but if He bore our curse as substitute, the cross becomes the hinge of redemption. Peter quotes Deuteronomy 21:23 similarly in Acts 5:30, 10:39. The 'tree' (ξύλον) in Greek can mean wooden cross.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. What does it mean that Christ 'became a curse' for us, not just 'bore a curse'? How does this intensify your understanding of His sacrifice?
2. How does Christ's redemption from the Law's curse (v. 13) provide the only escape from the curse of verse 10?
3. In what ways does penal substitutionary atonement (Christ bearing your curse) transform your gratitude, worship, and daily obedience?

## Interlinear Text

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Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρρα τοῦ νόμου  
**Christ** **us** **hath redeemed** **from** G3588 **a curse** G3588 **of the law**  
G5547 G2248 G1805 G1537 G2671 G3551

γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρρα γέγραπται γὰρ,  
**being made** **for** **us** **a curse** **it is written** **for**  
G1096 G5228 G2257 G2671 G1125 G1063

Ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὁ κρεμάμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου  
**Cursed** **is every one** G3588 **that hangeth** **on** **a tree**  
G1944 G3956 G2910 G1909 G3586

## Additional Cross-References

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**1 Peter 2:24** (Parallel theme): Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

**Deuteronomy 21:23** (Curse): His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

**Hebrews 9:15** (Redemption): And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

**Hebrews 9:12** (Redemption): Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

**Revelation 5:9** (Redemption): And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

**Matthew 26:28** (Parallel theme): For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

**Galatians 4:5** (Redemption): To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

**Revelation 1:5** (References Christ): And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

**1 John 4:10** (Parallel theme): Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

**1 Peter 3:18** (References Christ): For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: