

## **Galatians 3:19-25 – The Blessings of the Law**

Expositor, TSK, GreekLexicon, Gaebelein, Rienecker, Geneva, Handfuls, Trapp, PNT, Robertson, Poole, Henry, Clarke, JFB, Calvin?

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: **Apostle Paul proved beyond doubt salvation did not come through law and obedience but by grace through faith in Christ alone.**

This must have angered the Judaizers in Galatia. They must have thought, “How could he say the law has no value?”

Of course, Apostle Paul did not say that, but anticipating their attacks, he explained the vital purpose of the law – both the moral law and the ceremonial law.

This is what you will hear about today.

Our headings are in the form of 3 questions so you could easily understand the purpose of the law:

**The Law: Why was it given?**

**The Law: What was its relationship with grace?**

**The Law: When was it completed?**

Our goals are: **That you will take the time to learn the law with all its purposes, you will thank God Jesus kept the law for you, and you will plead with God for help to obey the law so you could bring glory to the Savior.**

**The Law: Why was it given?**

19 What purpose then does the law serve? It was **added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come** to whom the promise was made; and it was **appointed through angels** by the hand of **a mediator**.

**1. So, if the law did not save, why did God give it altogether?**

**The law (moral and ceremonial) did not oppose salvation, and it was not given because there was some weakness in the promise to Abraham.**

The law was *not a back-up* to God’s promise *in case the promise failed*.

**The law was given to lead men to salvation in Jesus.** Man became aware of his sin and he knew he needed help outside of himself.

**Romans 3: 20** Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, **for by the law is the knowledge of sin.**

Romans 4: 15...for where there is no law there is no transgression.

Romans 7:13 Has then **what is good** become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that **sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.**

**It was not just the moral law and man's failures that pointed man to Christ.**

Even **when a child was circumcised and bled, the Jews would remember the consequences of sin and look to the coming Savior.** (Ceremonial law) Think about the Passover as well.

**(The moral laws (10 commands) were also given to restrain sin among men and to protect the innocent.**

1 Timothy 1:9 knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,

When men knew the consequences of breaking a moral law, which were severe, they **would avoid breaking the law**, or they would **be executed so they couldn't break the law again.** This purpose of the law should continue today in society.

**The moral law (10 commands were also a guide for how Christians live as Christians.** This purpose continues today.)

## **2. This purpose of the law of *pointing men to Christ* continued until Messiah came.**

Messiah would **remove the curse** of the law from man by becoming a curse for his elect. They broke the law; he suffered.

Messiah would complete the pictures of the **ceremonial laws.**

Romans 10:4 For **Christ is the end of the law** for righteousness to everyone who believes.

## **3. Previously, Moses (the mediator who brought the law) communicated with the people for God, but angels (as mediators) also communicated with the people for God.**

**It is easy to prove Moses was a mediator, but what about angels?** How were they mediators? Angels came with Jesus on the mountain to bring the law to Moses. This was confirmed by Stephen in the New Testament.

Deuteronomy 33:2 And he said: "The LORD came from Sinai, And dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, **And He came with ten thousands of saints**; From His right hand came a fiery law for them.

Acts 7: 53 "who have **received the law by the direction of angels** and have not kept it."

(See also the mediatory work of angels in Psalm 68:17 and Hebrews 2:2.)

**But neither Moses nor the angels were able to override the promise God himself made!** He gave that promise of peace between him and *Abraham and his children* that was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The promise stayed intact.

20 Now a **mediator does not mediate for one** only, but **God is one.**

**4. Looking at the previous verse, you will see this mediator was Moses.** (The verse seems hard to interpret.)

But as mediator, Moses communicated between God and his people. He had a double job, speaking for two sides.

Exodus 20:19 Then they said to Moses, "**You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us,** lest we die."

**In contrast, God was one – meaning, he gave the promise unilaterally directly to Abraham. He did not ask for man’s mediation!** So the promise given directly by God could not be set aside by the work of angels or Moses.

Rather, the work of the angels and Moses had to be subservient to what God said promised. The law pointed us to God’s original promise.

**In short: The law required a mediator; the promise of salvation did not!**

## **5. Lessons:**

**a. God is good.** He could have left man in his state of sin and misery and still be just! Man...even saved man...adds nothing to God. But God reached down to man to do good to him.

**b. Let the law God has given show you how bad you were...both the moral laws (which show you what you ought to do and your inability to do it) and the ceremonial laws (which show you only dead victims in pointing you to Christ's death).** The 10 laws still continue today. The ceremonial laws were fulfilled.

**c. Rejoice Jesus came and became a curse for you, taking your punishment on the cross.** You are no longer under the curse of the law.

**The law did its job!**

### **The Law: What was its relationship with grace**

21 Is the law then against the promises of God? **Certainly not!** For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.

**1. While the Judaizers started to argue that the law must be evil if it didn't save, Apostle Paul refuted them and called it an abhorrent idea!**

God's nature wasn't conflicted. God knew what he was talking about. **God gave the law and grace.** Both were good. And in fact, theoretically, if a man could keep the law he could be saved! Leviticus 18:5.

**But if the law could give life, then the law would be against the promises of God – his grace.**

Romans 8:3 For **what the law could not do in that it was weak** through the flesh, **God did by sending His own Son** in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

The law is **like someone with no arms who gets a large cut on his stomach** but it has no way of fixing the wound. The man needs outside help. That is grace.

22 But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

**2. The law wrapped up all people in the cloak of sin so they could find Jesus' righteousness to replace their filthy clothes.**

Romans 8: 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

And yet, in a way, the law flowed from grace because men needed it to find salvation. God was giving grace by giving the law!

### 3. Lessons:

**a. Thank God for his laws that led you to Christ. Let God's law now guide your life.**

**b. How sad for the Jewish people today who still live under the illusion they could please God by their faithfulness rather than by faith in Jesus Christ!** They don't know there are inadequate. Tell them.

Romans 9:31 *but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. 32 Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.*

**c. Pray the state would make God's laws the standard for the nation.** Pray the state will stop stealing money, for instance, \$100,000,000.00 to support those who live perverted lifestyles.

### **The Law: When was it completed?**

23 But **before faith** came, **we were kept under guard by the law**, kept **for the faith which would afterward be revealed.**

**1. After fulfilling its purpose – pointing men to grace in Christ – the law ended.** What does that mean?

**The ceremonial law was completed and ended with all its symbols fulfilled in Christ.** There is only preaching now and non-bloody signs.

**The curse of the moral law (10 commands) ended.**

**The moral law continues to point men to Christ** by showing them their sins so they can look to Christ and pass from bondage of the law to new life in Christ, but the curse is gone.

**But where do we see “Christ” in the text?**

**“Faith” was referring to Christ – the object of our faith.** Faith by itself did not come with Christ. Faith always existed. Believers were kept locked up by the law until Christ, the object of your faith came.

24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But **after faith has come**, we are no longer under a tutor.

**2. Apostle Paul then illustrated the end of the law using a contemporary illustration.**

**The law was a “child custodian” until the child (faith) came – the full justification in Christ.**

**This “child custodian” – was a glorified baby sitter or servant – the proper term was a *pedagogue*.** He was popular among rich Greeks who would hire a pedagogue for their child from age 6 to 16. **The pedagogue did not actually do much teaching but watched the child’s general welfare.** But when that child was old enough, the custodian was let go.

So when Christ came, it was the church “coming of age.”

**Verse 25 simply repeats the main point of Verse 24.** When the Gospel (faith) came, there was no need for the “child custodian” – law - anymore.

### **3. Lessons:**

**a. You are free!** You are not a child under the control of a pedagogue – the law! Celebrate. Someone liberated you! Jesus, the object of your faith did!

**b. Still, love the 10 laws. Keep the 10 laws. Teach the 10 laws.** You are freed from the curse of the law, but you are not freed from the law. The law is still a guide of how you should live.

**c. The ceremonial laws have passed. Don’t go back to them and hope they will bring righteousness.** Not church membership, not baptism, not being in a Christian family, not eating of the Lord’s Supper... nothing will save you.

### **Conclusion:**

**The law was given to restrain sin on the earth** and to **show men how wretched they were.** God’s law, like the pedagogue, then led man to the source of grace, the Lord Jesus.

With Christ taking man’s curse on his head, man was freed from God’s eternal judgment. There was no other way to remove that curse.

Brothers and sisters in the Lord:

**1. Be thankful for the laws (both the moral and the ceremonial) which pointed men to Christ.**

**2. Know, believe, and live God’s moral law. To do this, ask God for strength, patience, and wisdom.**

**3. Teach God's law so others will be more aware of their sin and be drawn to grace through faith in Jesus.**

**4. Share the law of God so sin might be restrained on earth and there could be greater peace in the world.**

Finally, if you are not a Christian, when you stand next to God's law only your guilt is evident. The curse is on your head. There is no escaping God's judgment. But Jesus became a curse, taking man's curse on his head. If you want freedom from sin's curse, ask God to count Christ's punishment as yours. He will give you new life.