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# Galatians

**But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. Galatians 3:22**

Paul just stated that "if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law." However, such is not the case. This is indicated by the word *alla*, or "but." The law cannot grant life (meaning righteousness) which is proved by "the Scripture." Here Paul stands on the absolute authority of Scripture itself. He could not make his arguments concerning the reliability of Scripture, if it wasn't 100% reliable.

However, as if almost personifying it, because it is the expressed word of God, he notes that the Scripture itself "has confined all under sin." The word "confined" is appropriate. It comes from the Greek word *sugkleiό* which gives the sense of "shutting up" something. It is as if a sentence of guilt from the law is passed on to all, imprisoning them through the sin which proceeds from the issuing of the law. In other words, it is the same argument that he made in Romans 7:9-12. There he said -

"But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin *was* dead. <sup>9</sup> I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." Romans 7:8, 9

The law can only bring death, and the law can only bring a sentence of guilt. This is true for "all," meaning every person without exception. The word in Greek is in the neuter gender signifying that it is all-encompassing. Male and female, Jew and Gentile, young and old, etc. are included. The intent then is that "all humanity" is confined under sin.

Thus, another purpose for the law is revealed. It is so "that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe." This brings us back the promise of the Seed mentioned in verse 19. Jesus Christ is that Seed. Now, by faith in Him, and in Him alone, the confining restraint of sin is removed.

The contrasts are clear - where there was confinement in the law, there is freedom in Christ. Where the law brought bondage, faith brings freedom. In the law there is death, but in Christ there is life. The two wholly contrast one another. Only in Christ are the promises realized. In the law, there can never be relief from the chains of sin which bind our souls.

Life application: Even those who have received Christ can be duped into believing that doing the things of the law can make one "more pleasing" to God. "Yes, I trust in Christ, but I have given up pork because it will make God happy." This is a trap. If one gives up pork because it makes them break out in hives, that makes sense; but if one gives up pork because it will "make God happy," then it is implying that God is "happier" with what you are doing than what His Son did. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. One cannot make God more pleased than to accept what Jesus did - in its entirety.

**But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Galatians 3:23**

To ensure context, the previous verse needs to be included as a point of reference

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"But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. <sup>23</sup> But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed."

Paul's beginning word of verse 23, translated as "but," is not the same as verse 22. It is probably better to say something like "and," "now," or "moreover" in order to show the original is a continuation and expansion on the thought, not merely another contrast. The word "faith" here relates to the dispensation of grace through faith. In other words, it is speaking of the new aspect of God's progressive revelation of how He deals with, and reveals Himself to, mankind.

The law was given, and it "confined all under sin." Using another term to indicate this same idea, he now says that "we were kept under guard by the law." It is as if those under the law were continuously monitored in the prison of sin. The verb for "kept under guard" is in the imperfect tense. The law held, and continuously held, those under its domain, just as a jailer would do for any prisoner under his control.

The law was given as a means of preventing escape, not as a means of protecting the people. As it says in 1 Corinthians 15:56 -

"The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law."

The law then is what bound those under its constraints, holding them fast. It was the guard "by whom those who belong to sin are kept under lock and key - under moral captivity, without possibility of liberation except through faith" (Vincent's Word Studies). However, the law was not intended as a permanent dispensation, or outcropping, of how God would deal with man. It was intended to last only until a certain point and then end. It was meant that those under it would be "kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed."

Paul's words may seem distant to us now that we have been in the church age for 2000 years, but they are actually as relevant today as they were when written to

the Galatians. Those in Galatia were being told they needed to adhere to the law in order to be pleasing to God. People are still told this today, and the heresy continues on as if Paul's words have no meaning at all. And even if the entire law isn't demanded, people are told that if they simply followed certain precepts of the law they would be "more pleasing to God." This sounds appealing, but it is untrue. The way to be pleasing to the Father is to trust in the work of the Son.

Life application: Why would anyone want to go back to the bondage of the law when we have been freed from it by faith in Christ? Can we please God more than Jesus did? Stand fast on Christ's finished work and remember the words of the Bible - "Salvation is of the Lord." Trust in Him and Him alone for your righteousness.

**Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.* Galatians 3:24**

Paul now gives us another explicit purpose for the law; it "was our tutor *to bring us to Christ.*" The word translated as "tutor" is *paidagógos*, a word meaning a "pedagogue." In the New Testament, it is only used in 1 Corinthians 4:15 and then again here and in the next verse. Some older translations use the word "schoolmaster." This is incorrect. The word was originally used when speaking of a slave that had been placed in charge of a child.

It was his responsibility take the child to school. He was responsible for the care and moral discipline of the child, not as one who provides the intellectual discipline which school provides. Albert Barnes notes that, "It is true, that when the "paedagogus" was properly qualified, he assisted the children committed to his care in preparing their lessons. But still his main duty was not instruction, but it was to watch over the boys; to restrain them from evil and temptation; and to conduct them to the schools, where they might receive instruction."

For this reason, the word "tutor" is preferable simply because of its etymology. It comes from the word *tueri*, which means "to look upon, to guard." Some

translations use the word "guardian," and Young's ingeniously translates this as "child conductor." This "child conductor" then is used metaphorically for the law which was given to lead us to Christ.

The moral upbringing of the law showed that no one is justified by the law. Its demands were too heavy, and it led to bondage, not to freedom. The giving of the law was intended to show this. Abraham was justified by faith, but man is inwardly inclined to want to "do" something in order to be pleasing to God. And so the law was given to show what man must "do" in order to be found perfect in His sight. Only in perfectly fulfilling every precept of the law could one be considered fully pleasing to Him in regards to "doing."

In the giving of the law, and its high expectations, the history of the Jews showed a continuous failure to meet the law's demands. We were being given our moral instruction by our pedagogue. When enough time under the law had been spent to show how utterly impossible it was for fallen man to meet its demands, Christ came. He was able to fulfill its demands, and He did fulfill them - on our behalf. Now by faith in His work, we are "justified by faith." The law had met its purpose; it had led us to understand that it is not by our works, but by the work of the Lord, that we can be saved.

Life application: We can only have it one way. Either we will work our way to heaven by deeds of the law - an impossible mountain to climb; or we will trust in Christ to reconcile us to God through His finished work - a difficult path because it is contrary to our nature to set self aside and trust in another's "doing" for us. In the end, we must come to the end of ourselves and simply trust Christ alone for our salvation.

**But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.** Galatians 3:25

In the previous verse, Paul explained the purpose of the pedagogue, or "child conductor." That individual's duties did not carry on forever. Instead, they were set up with a particular timeframe in mind, after which he would no longer be

needed. The person's duties would end, and a new part of the individual's life would come about.

So it is true with the Law of Moses. It was never intended to be a permanent part of the God's plans in redemptive history. Instead, it would serve its purpose and then be set aside. That pre-determined point was after the work of Jesus Christ. In His death, the law was fulfilled, and in His resurrection comes a new covenant. It also initiated a new dispensation - that of faith. The promised Seed has come and through Him we are granted full rights as children of God.

In other words, the Law of Moses was the pedagogue for the people of God. It has shown us our need for Christ, and led us directly to Him. How people can't see this is simply amazing. Even after being shown the explicit words of the New Testament concerning the fulfillment and ending of the law, people perversely turn from Christ's work and back to the law! They would rather be under the strict, and even harsh, hand of a pedagogue than be considered sons of God with the full rights that come along with that honorable position.

The law was a tutor; faith has come; therefore, "we are no longer under a tutor." In other words, "we are no longer under the law." Be done with it in its entirety. Now, live by faith in Christ Jesus, remembering Paul's words from Chapter 2 -

"For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. <sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. <sup>21</sup> I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness *comes* through the law, then Christ died in vain." Galatians 2:19-21

Life application: Do you consider yourself a child of God with full rights as a son? If you are still attempting to please Him through works of the law, then you are mistaken. Trust in Christ's fulfillment of the law, and live by faith in the Son of God.