

Preached on 2/5/23 at GBC - Ruston

"The Purpose Of THE LAW, Pt.3"

Gal.3:23-29

Starting at Vs.19 and continuing through these verses we'll be looking at today, all of them set forth Paul's teachings or instructions concerning "**The Purpose Of The Law**". These Judaizer's had been encouraging these Gentiles to submit themselves to the Law of Moses, even going so far as to teach that **OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW** was absolutely essential in order for one to be saved – "*Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved.*"(Acts 15:1) In **THREE DIFFERENT PASSAGES** Paul revealed the heresy of such teaching - "*We [who are] Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*"(Gal.2:15,16); "*I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness [come] by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.*"(Gal.2:21); "*But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, [it is] evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.*"(Gal.3:11,12) The "natural man" resents and resists such truth, but their denial does not change the **PURPOSE** or the **PROMISES** of God. Paul has presented argument upon argument to answer the question the unregenerate mind always poses when it hears salvation full and free, based exclusively on Christ's accomplished work of redemption, with absolutely **NO CONDITIONS** on the sinner – "*Wherefore then [serveth] **THE LAW**?*"

Paul answers the question with this glorious truth – "*But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.*"(Vs.23) This opening phrase, "*But before faith came*" is so important to Paul's argument, as well as to you and me as justified saints. The Apostle John wrote – "*For the law was given by Moses, [but] grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*"(Jn.1:17) The original word translated "*was given*" means 'to give over to someone or **TO DELIVER**'. The original word translated "*came*" means 'to come into existence'. Isn't that exactly what Paul is declaring through his arguments in this epistle, i.e., that God delivered the law to Moses, but "**grace and truth came into existence**" when Christ came into the world? Almost all the commentators I have been studying agree that the word "*faith*" here speaks of Christ, **THE OBJECT OF FAITH**. So everything, including the LAW in its entirety, was given to **POINT** God's elect to the same **HOPE**, the God sent Messiah and Savior of His people. **But this is what's so important** – "*But before faith (Christ) came, we (meaning the JEWS) were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.*" I'd have you notice that in this verse Paul compares the "*law*" to a **PRISON**. The word translated by the phrase "*we were kept*" means 'to guard, protect by a military guard, either to prevent hostile invasion, or to keep the inhabitants of a besieged city from flight'. The word translated "*shut up*" means 'to shut up on all sides, shut up completely', **LIKE A PRISON CELL**. How long were they **KEPT** and **SHUT UP**? Pretty simple answer – **UNTIL CHRIST WAS REVEALED**. Do you see the superiority of Christ the object and hope of faith, as opposed to the **LAW** and its temporal position to hold Israel as a nation together, keeping them distinct from all nations until the coming of Christ? These Judaizers were trying to put the Gentiles back "*under the law*" which **NEVER** justified any **JEW**, and cannot justify or set any sinner free, **ONLY IMPRISON THEM** and **CHARGE THEM** as **GUILTY**! The whole book of Hebrews teaches this truth clearly. Even with the cloudy shadows and types set forth by the **LAW OF MOSES**, every sinner has always been saved and

justified by the same **OBJECT OF FAITH** – “**THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**” – “*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of [them], and embraced [them], and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*”(Heb.11:13); “*The **JUST** shall live **BY FAITH**.*”

In vs.24, Paul compared **THE LAW** to a “**SCHOOLMASTER**” – “*Wherefore the law **was** our schoolmaster [to bring us] unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*” The word translated “**schoolmaster**” means ‘a tutor i.e. a guardian and guide of boys’. I find what’s written Strong’s Concordance concerning the history of this word enlightening – “Among the Greeks and the Romans the name was applied to trustworthy slaves who were charged with the duty of supervising the life and morals of boys belonging to the better class. The boys were not allowed so much as to step out of the house without them before arriving at the age of manhood.” Words are so important to the meaning and scope of what is being written. Notice Paul’s words – “*The law **WAS** our schoolmaster unto Christ.*” The word translated “**was**” means ‘to become’. It is a **VERB** that is in what is called the **PERFECT TENSE**, which ‘describes an action which is viewed as having been completed in the past, once and for all, not needing to be repeated.’ So whatever the **LAW WAS BEFORE**, it is **NO LONGER** that to the believing **JEW** or **GENTILE**. The **LAW** served its purpose to keep **ISRAEL (including both the ELECT and NON-ELECT)** distinct from all the other idolatrous nations that existed for the 1500 plus years of the covenant, directing them to the **ONE** the **WHOLE COVENANT** typified and foreshadowed – “*Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is [one] that accuseth you, [even] Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?*”(Jn.5:45-47) Why did the tutor bring the **JEWS** to Christ? “*That we might be **JUSTIFIED BY FAITH***”, and **NOT BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW** – “*Knowing that **a man is not justified by the works of the law**, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, **and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.***”(Gal.2:16); “*Jesus Christ, the same **YESTERDAY, TODAY, and FOREVER.***” There has only been **ONE WAY** that sinners can be **DECLARED RIGHTEOUS** before God, and it is not by “**THE WORKS OF THE LAW.**”

Notice what Paul states next – “*But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*”(Vs.24) Listen to **YLT** of this verse – “and **the faith** having come, no more under a child-conductor are we,” Both these comparisons of the law to a **PRISON** and a “**schoolmaster**” show that the law couldn’t be in force beyond a specified time period. These **JUDAIZERS** were demanding and seeking to place the Gentiles under that which **WAS NO LONGER IN FORCE**. We need to be absolutely, crystal clear on this matter – “*For Christ is the **END** of the law for righteousness to **EVERYONE THAT BELIEVETH.***” Look at Peter’s words in **Acts 15:6-11**.

Next Paul makes it clear that **ALL GOD’S ELECT** are **SAVED** and **KEPT** the same way – “*For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*” It makes no difference your nationality or heritage – “*Be it known unto you therefore, men [and] brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*”(Acts 13:38,39) That’s exactly what Paul had stated concerning the Gentiles when God preached the Gospel to Abraham – “*Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore **that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.*** And the scripture, foreseeing that God

would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, [saying], *In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.*”(Gal.3:6-9)

Vs.27 – **READ IT.** This can't be speaking of something the sinner does, **namely water baptism**, seeing that would violate the entire premise of salvation by grace **ALONE**. As sinners, we can't do anything to put ourselves into Christ – **Tit.3:5**. This statement is speaking about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or the **NEW BIRTH**, which vitally unites the elect sinner to Christ, bringing them to true faith and true repentance – “*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*”(Rom.6:3,4); “*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether [we be] Jews or Gentiles, whether [we be] bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*”(I Cor.12:13); “*In whom ye also [trusted], after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*”(Eph.1:13,14) Every elect, regenerated and converted child of God who have been baptized into Christ by the Holy Spirit have “**PUT ON CHRIST**” by true God-given faith, are clothed in, robed in, and wrapped up in that righteousness which He accomplished by His obedience unto death at Calvary. As one old author put it: “**With His righteous garment on, HOLY AS THE HOLY ONE.**”

Look at **Vss.28** – “*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*” In **this verse** we see there are **NO DISTINCTIONS** among any of God's children based their **person** – **WHY?** Because Christ has made all **HIS PEOPLE ONE** by His accomplished work of redemption – **Turn to Eph.2:11-22**. The elect **GENTILE** and the **ELECT JEW** are both **JUSTIFIED** (DECLARED RIGHTEOUS) and **SAVED** based on the **SAME HOPE IN CHRIST**.

We'll close with **Vs.29**– “*And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abrahams SEED, and heirs according to the promise.*” This is the same thing the apostle wrote to those at Rome – “*For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither [is that] circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he [is] a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision [is that] of the heart, in the spirit, [and] not in the letter; whose praise [is] not of men, but of God.*”(Rom.2:28,29) **One more passage** – “*Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. [Is he] the God of the Jews only? [is he] not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing [it is] one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.*”(Rom.3:28-31)

Here's the **CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER** – The **LAW** given by **MOSES** did everything it was supposed, pointing His people by shadow and type to Christ. Abraham believed the **SAME PROMISE** and relied up on the same God as **MOSES** did while “**under the law**”, and it is the **SAME PROMISE** and **GOD** that all God's redeemed look to for **JUSTIFICATION** and **LIFE** after Christ **FINISHED** the law.