

Message #11**Galatians 3:19-24**

Did you know that you can purchase a used, refurbished CT scanner for a price range of \$65,000 to \$300,000? Now a CT scanner takes pictures of your brain, organs, fat and muscles. It is 3D dimensional and it shows much more than an x-ray can show. It takes a picture of what is going on inside your body. It can show tumors, infections, internal bleeding, bone fractures, kidney stones, blocked arteries and even heart disease. But the one thing a CT scanner cannot do is heal or fix your problem. It can show you what the problem is, but it cannot treat it.

That is exactly the way the Law of God works. The purpose of the Law is to reveal sin, not remove sin. The purpose of the Law is to show sin, not save from sin. But there is a fountain that can remove that sin. As William Cowper so eloquently put it, "There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins; and sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains."

If ever there were a text of Scripture that graphically describes this principle, it is the one we come to here. Paul is in the doctrinal section of Galatians. He has been driving home the point that one is only right with God by faith in Jesus Christ. His message is faith plus no works and faith plus no law.

Now I know that some argue about this and say, "Well what about the people who say they believe in the Lord and then live like pagans?" Well my advice is that you leave them to God; but however they live does not change or alter the grace message in any way. Grace is apart from law and grace is apart from works.

Now Paul was smart enough to know that someone would say, well then what is the purpose of the O.T. Law? If the O.T. Law cannot save us and if we are not supposed to keep the O.T. Law, then what is its purpose? In this text we learn what it is:

GOD'S LAW WAS GIVEN BY GOD TO REVEAL SIN, NOT REMOVE SIN, AND TO REVEAL TO US THAT THE ONLY WAY SIN MAY BE REMOVED IS BY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

God never intended that His O.T. Law would be a means of gaining eternal life. His O.T. Law continually shows people that they need something else other than their own efforts to gain everlasting life.

Let's illustrate the point. Sometime when you hear people talk about their relationship with God, they take the approach that "I always try to do the best I can." This is really nothing more than a trust in yourself to save yourself philosophy. But even at that, is that statement really true? Have people always tried to do the best they can in every decision they have ever made? If that were true, then whenever you have had to make a choice, you have always made the right choice. H. A. Ironside said any man or woman who is honest before God will admit he has not always tried to do what is best in every decision of life.

Sometimes we have just plain chosen to do what is wrong and foolish. We all have a problem in that we are all sinners and the Law clearly reveals that point.

Now there are two key theological subjects that Paul brings up in this text:

THEOLOGICAL SUBJECT #1 – The Law was added for the purpose of revealing our transgressions. **3:19-20**

The Law was not added to our lives to justify us, which is the opinion of most people and most religions. Most people and most religions believe the O.T. Law can justify them and most think they can be right with God by keeping the Law. **Paul says that was never God's purpose for giving the O.T. Law.**

The Greek word “transgressions” is one that means to deviate, or overstep or to step aside from something (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 337). We may observe that the noun is plural. Now the preposition “because of” means for the sake or the purpose of something (*Ibid.*, p. 476). Now the verb “added” is one that means to give a mathematical addition to something (*Ibid.*, p. 387). **Now very carefully observe what is stated here; the O.T. Law was not given as an addition to grace, but as an addition to transgressions .**

This is a very critical theological point. Men had a sin problem long before the Law was given. The Law was given to add to their sin problem and to reveal more of their sin.

There are many people who believe that they are not a sinner until they recognize their sin. This is not true at all. The fact is all sin because they are sinners. Why do children sin? Why do teenagers sin? Why do men and women sin? Because they are all sinners.

You do not need the O.T. Law to see that you have a sin problem; you need the O.T. Law to add to your sin problem by showing you just how sinful you really are.

While Mary was on vacation she stocked-piled me with food to eat. This food was good and fast to make. One night I decided to eat a can of Beefaroni. Now let's not be making fun of Beefaroni. It was invented by an actual chef (Chef Boyardee) back in 1924. He came up with the idea for canned pasta and it has been a great food staple since about 1928. So I was enjoying a can of delicious pasta that had been originally made by Chef Boyardee. I was sitting in my Lazy Boy eating this, watching a program called Dual Survival. They were surviving in a blizzard in a wilderness of Wyoming, so I was enjoying the program. All of a sudden I dropped some meat sauce on my nice white tee shirt. Well I looked down at the little spot; it didn't look like much so I just kept right on eating and watching. Later I got up to look in our mirror and what initially looked to me to be some little spot was several spots and they were not spots; they were a bunch of stains. That mirror showed me the damage I had done to my white shirt with my Beefaroni.

That is what the O.T. Law does. It magnifies and multiplies the sin. No matter what the sin, the O.T. Law will magnify it and multiply it. The O.T. Law will show you just how sinful you really are. As Paul said in Romans 5:20 “The Law came in so that the transgression would increase.” That Law was given to drive man to total despair about his sin problem so that he would be driven to faith in Jesus Christ.

Now Paul wants to make certain that we know the truth about the Law so there are four interesting and quite unusual facts that Paul brings out about the Law. The question of Bible teachers is why does he bring out these facts? We think the Reformer Martin Luther figured it out when he said Paul’s purpose for this digression about the Law is to show that the Gospel of grace came directly from and was delivered by Jesus Christ Himself. Whereas the O.T. Law, although filled with heavenly purpose, came via mediatorial means (Martin Luther, *Galatians*, p. 197). The Law and grace are contrary and opposite systems.

(O.T. Law Fact #1) - The Law was ordained through angels. 3:19a

The word “ordained” means that the angels were appointed and used to give orders and arrangement to the Law of God (*Ibid.*, p. 112). The fact that angels were used in actually ordaining the O.T. Law is something stressed multiple times in Scripture:

Acts 7:53 “you who received the law as ordained by angels.”

Hebrews 2:2 “for if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable...”.

We know that when God gave the Law on Mt. Sinai, God Himself was present and we know from Deuteronomy 33:2 “He came from the midst of 10,000 Holy Ones,” that when God gave that Law at Mt. Sinai, He was surrounded by 10,000 angels. Furthermore, we know that angels watch people, which is critical because angels are in a position to testify concerning the multiple times we have broken the Law. Angels could be called before God as eyewitnesses and could prove every one of us to be sinners. If angels, who know every O.T. Law, were asked to point out every violation of that Law in our individual lives, they could easily do it 10,000 times.

(O.T. Law Fact #2) - The Law was ordained through a mediator. 3:19b

The Law mediator between the God-world, which consisted of God and the angels, and the man-world was Moses. Moses was the go-between between God and the people of Israel. Moses was used to copy the Law that condemns us. God gave the Law directly to Moses, who in turn wrote much of it and presented it to the people. **But the Gospel came directly from the God/man Jesus Christ, who presented Himself.** The Gospel of grace is exalted far above the Law.

(O.T. Law Fact #3) - The Law was ordained temporarily. 3:19c

In John 1:17 we read, “For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.

Now the singular noun “seed” is a reference to Jesus Christ. Once Jesus Christ comes, the Law power is over. Do you see this? The Law was “until” the “seed” would arrive. “The Law rules from Horeb to Calvary.” Jesus Christ was promised by God to come to this world and it was promised by God that through Him would be the promise of life. He would be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, and with His stripes we can be healed. You have never been promised eternal life through the Law; but you have been promised eternal life through Jesus Christ.

The Law says you are dead; Christ says come unto me all that labor and I will give you rest, life, grace, peace, forgiveness of sins and salvation.

(O.T. Law Fact #4) - The Law was ordained plurally. **3:20**

I read a statement of one Biblical scholar who claimed there had been over 300 interpretations of this one verse. It is obvious that it is a discussion of a mediator.

Now a mediator bridges a relationship between two parties: 1) The party that was offended; 2) The party who was the offender. **The point of this verse is to show that when it comes to the Law, there are plural participants in giving the Law; but when it comes to grace there is only One Divine participant.**

When it comes to the O.T. Law, only God can appease God. It is His Law and it has been broken multiple times by all people in many ways. When a person transgresses against the Law, there are many intermediaries who can testify of this reality—God, angels, and the Law of Moses, plus if an individual is honest, the individual.

But when it comes to being in a right relationship with God, there is only One Person who can accomplish it and that one Person is the God/man Person. How can we be reconciled to a Holy God when we know we have broken the Law? That is the big question. The answer is only God can do that. This is why Paul told Timothy: “There is one God and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (I Tim. 2:5).

Jesus Christ is God and God is the only one who can mediate any saving relationship with God. **There are multiple mediatorial agents involved in our law-breaking sin; but only One in our life-giving salvation.**

THEOLOGICAL SUBJECT #2 – The Law is perfectly consistent with its God-ordained purpose. **3:21-24**

There are people who suggest that the Law of God is no good. Quite the contrary. The Law of God is the best law that could ever be written. It contains the highest and holiest morals and ideals.

If ever there would have been a law given that could have produced righteousness, it would have been the Law of God. But you see that was never the intent of the Law of God. **Verse 22 clearly says the intent of the Law of God was to show that all men are sinners.** That O.T. Law was given by God to prove that all people are in the same boat. All people are sinners. If the O.T. Law is viewed properly, it is seen as condemnatory for each one of us. We are all guilty of breaking the Law of God. You and I all smell alike—we all smell like sinners in the nostrils of God. The Law reveals our deep darkness so that we will see the shining brightness of God's grace.

Now there are three clearly stated purposes of the Law:

Purpose #1 - The Law in the Scriptures locks up all men under sin. **3:22**

The O.T. Law locks every one of us up in sin and we are not getting out. That Law shows every one of us that we have missed the mark many times and we have fallen far short of the glory of God. We are all locked up in the prison of sin. You may say well I don't like being a sinner. I don't like being classified as a law-breaking sinner like others. I try my best and I am a cut above most people. I am not like some derelict who lies in some gutter. I don't like being locked up in the same sin cell with hard core sinners.

I heard an illustration that was given years ago that really is powerful on this point. Suppose you and I are walking down a street and we come to a movie that both of us want to see. The sign on the theater says \$1.00. I reach into my pocket and I discover I only have .25 cents. You reach into your pocket and discover you only have .70 cents. Neither of us will get in because we don't have the amount needed to get in. It is true you have more than me. It is true that you are better than me in that regard—but neither of us can get in because we do not have enough.

So it is with God. You may be a lot better than most. You may have 75% worth of holiness in your life and someone else may only have 10%. But here is the problem; to get into heaven you must have 100% and none of us has it. We are all locked up in the same room. We are all under sin.

Purpose #2 - The Law locks us up out of the faith system. **3:23**

Before God authorized His amazing grace package that comes by faith, we were all kept in custody to the Law of God. The Law of God is the jailer of the world. It locks you out of a relationship with God and the only way out of that Law is faith in Jesus Christ.

Purpose #3 - The Law was our tutor to bring us to faith in Jesus Christ. **3:24**

The Law of God was given by God to bring us to the point where we cast all of our faith on Jesus Christ, because we realize we cannot keep the Law. The Law cannot give you the Holy Spirit (3:1-5). The Law cannot give you perfect righteousness (3:6-9). The Law cannot give you justification (3:10-12). The Law cannot wash away your sins.

What the Law can do is show you of your desperate need to cast all of your faith onto Jesus Christ.

That Law is designed to reveal our sin so that we will see we need Jesus Christ to remove our sin. The Law had a “regulatory” purpose and it had a “revelatory” purpose, but it never had a “redemptive” purpose. That O.T. Law will give you a spiritual CT scan and it will show you just how sinful you are. But that Law of God will not ever save you or sanctify you. It will show us our need to totally and only trust in the grace of God found in Jesus Christ. That is its purpose.