

## Galatians

### Lesson Eight

#### Galatians 3: 21-29

##### The Law – Our Schoolmaster

***Galatians 3: 21-22*** *Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law.*

***22*** *But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.*

Let's take some time to look at the first part of **verse 21a** *Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not!*

The answer to the question posed in this verse is, no.

The Law is not in opposition to the promises, it compliments them.

The purpose of the Abrahamic Covenant was to bring righteousness by faith.

The Law was added to point people to the Covenant.

God would not give us two guides in opposition to each other.

That would just create confusion, and that's not in God's character to treat His children that way.

When people were so blinded by their sin that they couldn't see, they needed the righteousness by faith provided by the Abrahamic Covenant.

The Law was given to turn their eyes towards that Covenant.

***Verse 21b*** *For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law.*

But the Law could only point to righteousness, it could not provide it itself.

If the Law had provided righteousness, then there would have been no need of a Savior.

***Verse 22a*** *But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin,*

This point is emphasized in ***Romans 3: 23*** *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*



Since it is obvious that no one can keep the word of the Law, then everyone is concluded under sin, even under the Old Covenant.

Therefore, no one is justified by keeping the Law.

If a person can keep the Law, then he wouldn't need the Law to keep him perfect, he would already be perfect.

So, again we see that the Law does not make perfect, it only serves to emphasize human imperfection.

Notice in this passage of scripture that it refers to, "*sin*", not sins.

In his letter to the Christians at Rome, Paul deals extensively with this concept of sin verses spirit.

Very little of the book of Romans has to do with personal sin; rather, it deals with the sin nature, or the nature of the flesh.

Sins like stealing and lying and killing are only the symptoms of sin.

Sin itself is not an act, it's not even an attitude.

Sin is a nature that drives a person to think, speak or do things that are contrary to the nature of God.

That's the whole theme of the seventh chapter of Romans.

Paul describes how he came to realize that there was a force which drove him to do what his recreated spirit did not even want to do.

He realized that by looking at his weaknesses, sins and failures he had been focusing his attention on the symptoms instead of the real cause of the problem, which is not the acts of the flesh, but the flesh itself.

***Verse 22b so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.***

This verse answers the question of how we receive the promise of God, by putting our faith in Jesus Christ.

***Verses 23-25 Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed.***



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**24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.**

**25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian**

Let's look at **verses 23a Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law,**

The word captive in this verse may better be represented by the word guarded.

Before faith came, we were guarded by a jailor, the Law.

We were in prison.

**Verse 23b imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed**

The prison we were shut up in was our own sin nature.

The jailor who kept us in that prison of our fleshly nature was the Law.

The big difference between real law breaking prisoners in jails in this world is that they know they are behind bars, and we didn't know we were prisoners of the Law.

Paul was upset with the people of Galatia because they didn't realize that once they were in bondage to sin and heathenism.

Now they were in bondage to the Law.

They had gone from one form of bondage which they were now trading for another form of bondage.

They didn't comprehend that the purpose of the Law was to only expose sin, to reveal to the people that they were in bondage, so they would be set free by faith in Christ Jesus.

**Verse 24a So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came,**

In the KJV, this verse is translated differently.

**Verse 24a KJV Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ,**

Whether you use the words, **So then**, or the word, **Wherefore**, in this case they both mean the same thing, **"in conclusion."**

Here, Paul begins to draw this part to a close.



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The word, “*schoolmaster*”, is understood today, but still gives a wrong impression of what Paul is trying to say.

When we see that word, we instantly think of a schoolteacher.

That’s not what a schoolmaster was in Paul’s day.

In the Greek culture, a schoolmaster was often a slave or servant whose role was as a tutor.

He was charged with the responsibility of watching over, caring for and training the children of a household.

***Verse 24b in order that we might be justified by faith.***

So, what then was the purpose of the Law?

The Law was our schoolmaster.

It was a servant of our Father, employed by Him to lead us to Christ Jesus that we might be justified by faith in Him.

Notice again, that the Law did not bring faith, it led people to the Person of Christ through Whom justification was received by faith.

***Verse 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian***

Since Christ has come to earth, died, been resurrected, and ascended to heaven where He now sits at the right hand of the Father, where does that leave the schoolmaster?

It has accomplished its task, discharged its duties, fulfilled its purpose.

Therefore, it is dismissed.

It no longer has authority over us.

Our justification is by faith.

Once we came to Jesus, that old schoolmaster has become obsolete.

The big question now becomes, why do people try to hang onto to it.

One basic reason is laziness.

Some people believe it’s easier to follow a set of rules than to make the quality decisions that are part and parcel of being a mature grownup Christian.

A second reason is fear.

Many Christians are so insecure that they want someone to tell them exactly what to think and say and do.

This is one of the reasons why cults are so successful today inside and outside the Church.

Christians need to learn to take seriously their responsibility as full-grown sons and daughters.

Part of that responsibility is the duty think for themselves.

***Verses 26-29 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.***

***27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.***

***28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.***

***29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.***

Let's look at ***verse 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.***

The word translated "***sons,***" is the Greek word, "***huios,***" which relates to those who are mature children of God, as opposed to little children under the care of the aforementioned schoolmaster.

You may not feel mature, complete, or righteous.

However, it helps when you realize that God chooses to see you this way in Christ.

If this is true, then if you will fix your eyes, set your affections on things which are above, you will see that anything you striving to become in this life, you have already obtained in Christ.

So now, we need to start living like it.

When did all this good stuff start happening for us?

That question is answered for us in the next verse.

***Verse 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.***

In verse 24 we learned about the schoolmaster.

In verse 26, we learned we are mature sons and daughters in Christ.

In verse 27, we learned that we have “put on,” Christ.

Now, here in verse 28, we learn that we discover that in Christ, there is no distinction made between the Jew and the non-Jew, the bond and the free, the male and the female.

Again, Paul is speaking in spiritual terms.

Obviously, in the natural or physical realm, there will be distinctions made between races, social classes, and the sexes, but not in the spiritual realm.

In Christ, we are all one.

***Verse 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.***

Notice that we are Abraham's *offspring*.

Of course, it's easy to notice that this word is singular.

Do you recall that from verse 16 to whom the promises of God were given in the Abrahamic Covenant?

In that verse, the offspring was the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, in this verse, Paul tells us that we are in Christ, we are the offspring. How can that be?

The answer is simple.

When God made promises to Abraham and his offspring, Christ was there in spirit, though He would not be born for hundreds of years.

Yet, Christ was not actually participating in the Abrahamic Covenant for His own benefit.

Of all the blessings in the Abrahamic Covenant, which ones did Christ need.

He didn't need any of them because He already had them all, but He knew we needed them and had no way of acquiring them except through Him.

So, the promises made by God in the Covenant were made to Abraham and US.

That's where we came into the Abrahamic Covenant.

How did we come into it?

By faith.

Because we are Abraham's offspring, through faith in Jesus Christ., we are heirs according to the promise.



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