

The Law Drives Us to the Promises of God

Galatians 3:19 - 22

Presented by Bob DeWaay
September 1, 2013

The Law's Provisional Function

Galatians 3:19a (NASB)

Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions

Romans 5:20a (NASB)

The Law came in so that the transgression would increase;

- "because of" can be translated "for the sake of"
- Luther sees the Law as invoking terror to drive us to the gospel!

The Law Is Subordinate to God's Promise

Galatians 3:19b (NASB)

until the seed would come to whom **the promise** had been made.

- The Seed is Christ
- "until" shows the timing of termination
- The depth of sin had been revealed by the Law

The Law Had “Mediators” and Messengers Ordained by God

Galatians 3:19c

having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator

- Angels are mentioned in Deuteronomy 33:2
- The Law was inferior to the promise because it required mediation: God – Angels – Moses – the people

A Mediator Implies Multiple Parties

Galatians 3:20

Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one.

- The Abrahamic promise was dependent on God alone
- Jesus as the mediator of the new covenant is both God and man (1 Timothy 2:5 – emphasizes Christ’s humanity)

The Law Did Not Contradict the Promise But Served Its Fulfillment

Galatians 3:21a

Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God?
May it never be!

- *me_ genoito* means “May it never be”
- Paul uses this to express a strong abhorrence to a false inference to one of his teachings
- Because law is not promise does not imply it has no purpose; i.e. drive us to the gospel (Luther)

The Law Could Not Produce Life

Galatians 3:21b

For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.

- This is a 2nd class (contrary to fact) conditional
- The law can show how we ought to live, but does not provide the power to do so and please God
- Since the Law cannot give life, it is not in competition with the gospel

Imprisoned by Scripture!

Galatians 3:22 (HCSB)

But the Scripture has **imprisoned** everything under sin's power

- Scripture here is a metonymy for God
- Romans 11:32 is a very similar verse
- The gospel is the only way out of prison!

Implications and Applications

- We must flee to the gospel!
- The concept of promise has important implications for sanctification

God Promised and God Cannot Lie
Flee to the Gospel

Hebrews 6:17 - 19a (NASB)

In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul. . .

God Uses His Promises for
Our Sanctification

2Peter 1:3 (NASB)

seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

God Uses His Promises for
Our Sanctification

2Peter 1:4 (NASB)

For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.
