

**Ga 3:19–29 (ESV)** Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. <sup>(20)</sup> Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one. <sup>(21)</sup> 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. <sup>(22)</sup> But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. <sup>(23)</sup> Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. <sup>(24)</sup> So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. <sup>(25)</sup> But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, <sup>(26)</sup> for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. <sup>(27)</sup> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. <sup>(28)</sup> 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. <sup>(29)</sup> And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

## 1. Continuing Paul's argument for salvation by grace alone through faith alone

- A. Remember the Galatians were embracing the law again as a means of salvation
  - 1). Paul has argued that the law cannot make you right with God
  - 2). Law would be any system that depends on your work for God rather than His work for you
- B. He has argued the only way to be right with God is through faith alone in Christ alone
  - 1). Shown through example of Abraham – faith has always been the way to be right with God
  - 2). If you try to earn your salvation by works you only bring yourself under condemnation
    - a). Because you can't keep the law

## 2. In this section Paul anticipates questions that would arise from this teaching

“Paul if its true, try to keep the law and you only bring yourself into a place of condemnation THEN WHY was the law given at all? Doesn't it just confuse the issue?”

- A. Paul is going to answer that in an interesting way
  - 1). Showing that the *law is inferior* to the promise that we receive by faith alone
  - 2). But doesn't mean *law isn't necessary* – it works with the promise in the salvation of a sinner
    - a). So the law is inferior but essential

## 3. Outline

- A. The inferiority of the law in comparison to the promise
- B. The purpose of the law in working with the promise
- C. Very quickly – what it means to be “In Christ” – result of receiving the promise of salvation by faith

# I. THE INFERIORITY OF THE LAW TO THE PROMISE

## 1. First of all – what do we mean by the promise?

In chapter 3 Paul mentions the promise 3 times – two more in Gal 4

- A. It was God's promise to Abraham
  - 1). That he would have descendants
  - 2). That God would give them a land to dwell in
  - 3). Out of those descendants a seed would come – speaking of Christ
  - 4). Through that seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed
    - a). *The primary blessing being justification* – declared to be not guilty by God
    - b). The way to enter into those blessings is by faith alone

**Transition:** To these Galatians drifting away from faith (Promise) into law

- A. Paul is going to show that the law is inferior to the promise in three ways
  - 1). Logic is - Why would you trade something superior for something inferior

**FIRST: The Law Was Inferior to The Promise Because of the Purpose It Was Given**

**Ga 3:19 (ESV)** Why then the law? *It was added because of transgressions...*

**Gal 3:19 (NLT)** Well then, why was the law given? *It was given to show people how guilty they are...*

### 1. The law's purpose was never meant to save a person

A. It was never meant to make them feel right before God – was established to show them their guilt

**Thought:** Before the law came sin was a fuzzy concept – nothing was written down

A. What was right – what was wrong – to one man something may be right to another it may be wrong

B. Ex. Trip to Holland driving our car – didn't see any speed limit signs anywhere – so I guessed

1). Later I found out what the speed limit was – shown in symbols (common in Europe)

a). I had been breaking the law the whole time – I honestly had no idea

2). But driving on Irvine blvd. there are clearly defined speed limit signs everywhere

a). If I drive 75 in a 45 zone – I have no excuse - I know I'm guilty – was clearly defined

If I'm stopped and while the ticket is being written – I know I deserve it

**Point:** Exactly what the law does – takes away fuzziness

A. It clearly defines what is right and what is wrong and convinces us we have sinned - lawbreaker

B. When that happens the law has worked perfectly – awakening sinner to their need of rescue

1). Convincing them - to make it into heaven it will have to come through another way

**Transition:** So the law is inferior to the promise because it was designed to condemn not save

## SECOND: Law is Inferior to the Promise Because of How it was Given

**Ga 3:19 (ESV)** Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, *and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary.*

### 1. God did not give the law to the people directly – but through 2 mediators

A. First through the angels and then through Moses

B. Not exactly sure what role angels played – scripture says they were involved

**Acts 7:53 (NLT)** You deliberately disobeyed God's law, *though you received it from the hands of angels.*

**Transition:** So Paul uses this thought of the law being put into place by mediators (Angels and Moses)

To show the law was inferior to the promise – let's work that out

**Ga 3:19 (ESV)** Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, *and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary.*

**Gal 3:19-20 (NLT)** ... *And there is this further difference. God gave his laws to angels to give to Moses, who was the mediator between God and the people.*

### 1. A ruler has many way to communicate a message to the people

A. Take the president for instance – he allows others he has authorized to represent him – ex. Press secretary

But when it is really important – he speaks to the public directly

**Point:** The promise given by God to Abraham that would give life to sinful man

By grace through faith – at the cost of His dear son on a cross

A. That message was so precious to God He did not use mediators – but communicated that personally

**Transition:** We cannot miss what this is saying – the difference between mediators and God alone

### 2. A mediator is only needed when more than one person is involved

**Ga 3:20 (ESV)** Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.

**Gal 3:20 (NLT)** *Now a mediator is needed if two people enter into an agreement, but God acted on his own when he made his promise to Abraham.*

A. The law needed mediators because it was a two-sided agreement – two parties involved

- 1). It is impossible to mediate when there is only one side
  - a). I've been asked to mediate disputes – in only works if both sides are willing

**Point:** The law is a two-sided contract between God and man

- A. It is valid ONLY if both parties keep their part of the deal – Both God and man are responsible  
But the promise was given to Abraham without a mediator – God was acting upon His own
  - 1). Remember last week – God walked through the animals alone – put Abraham into a deep sleep
  - 2). It was a one-sided contract – God bound Himself to fulfill it
    - a). Only thing He required of man was to believe = FAITH  
**Ga 3:6 (ESV)** just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”
- B. So the law is inferior to the promise because *it can't succeed* in making you right with God
  - 1). Why? Because you're involved! It is a conditional contract  
God says “Keep this law perfectly and *you have earned* life” – problem – you can't
- C. But *the promise can't fail* – because it is based on God's faithfulness not man's - unconditional
  - 1). While the law says “Keep all these commands perfectly and you earn eternal life”  
The promise says “I have done this – trust me – and I will give you eternal life as a gift”
    - a). I will put my Son's righteousness into your account and treat you as if you never sinned

**Summary so far:** Why the law is inferior to the promise

- A. It's purpose was not to make a man right (Like the promise) but to convince the man of his sin
- B. It was given through mediators – it was a two-sided contract – depending upon our faithfulness  
While the promise was given by God Himself – depending upon His faithfulness
  - 1). So Paul cautions – when it comes to salvation  
Don't replace the promise that cannot fail with something inferior that cannot succeed (the law)

**Transition:** Now Paul deals with a natural objection that would arise from this reasoning

This will lead us into our third reason the law is inferior to the promise

**The objection:** **Ga 3:21 (ESV)** Is the law then contrary to the promises of God?

“If the law can't make you right with God isn't it just doing harm? In competition with faith and the promise?”

- A. Paul's answer. *“Certainly not!”* God is the author of both the promise and the law
  - 1). He would never put two competing systems into place
    - a). Therefore He must have designed them to compliment one another
- C. This brings us to the third way the law is inferior to the promise
  - 1). We've already hinted at this – but let's see it from a different angle

The law is inferior to the promise because of why it was given (Not to save but to condemn)

The law is inferior to the promise because of how it was given (Through mediators – not personally)

### **THIRD: The Law Is Inferior to The Promise Because Of What It Can't Do**

**Ga 3:21 (ESV)** 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.

#### **1. The logic: Only if the law COULD impart life would it be contrary to the promise**

- A. THEN you would have two opposing systems – both contending for the same purpose  
**Notice what Paul says: Ga 3:21 (ESV)** ... For if a law had been given *that could give life*, then *righteousness* would indeed be by the law.
  - 1). It takes righteousness to get into heaven – if you could get that by keeping the law
    - a). Then God certainly would have settled for that – keep that law and you're in
    - b). That would have saved His Son from having to go to the cross
  - 2). The fact Christ went to the cross proves there is no other way

Man couldn't be saved by the law – through being good enough, sincere enough, religious enough  
 a). God had to step in – rescue them – by sending His precious son to the cross

**Point:** The law is inferior to the promise because of what it can't do  
 It cannot impart life – it always ends in eternal death – separated from God

### **SUMMARY: Why the law was inferior to the promise**

- A. The law is inferior to the promise because of why it was given (Not to save but to condemn)
- B. The law is inferior to the promise because of how it was given (By mediator – not by God personally)
- C. The law is inferior to the promise because of what it couldn't do – it cannot impart life only death

**Transition:** Well then why have the law at all? Let's just stick with the superior way! Promise and faith

- A. Paul is going to show why the law is necessary – how it complements the promise and grace

## II. THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW

**Ga 3:22–24 (ESV)** But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. <sup>(23)</sup> Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. <sup>(24)</sup> So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.

**Intro:** He's speaking to the Jews here – but it is valid for all of mankind

- A. Paul uses two analogies – the law as a prison and as a guardian
- B. This shows the horrifying condition of a man under a system based on their own performance

### **The Law as a Prison**

**Ga 3:22 (ESV)** But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin...

**Gal 3:22 (NLT)** But the Scriptures have declared that we are all prisoners of sin,...

#### **1. Every man before salvation is a prisoner of sin – Why?**

- A. Because we have no power to break sins chains
  - 1). The fallen nature loves sin – is wired for sin and rebellion against God
  - 2). Look at how helpless somebody with that old nature is when it comes to true godliness

**Ro 7:5 (ESV)** For while we were living in the flesh, *our sinful passions, aroused by the law*, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.

**Thought:** See why the law could never save an unbeliever!

- A. It doesn't inspire us towards holiness – does the opposite – arouses sinful desires to rebel against it
  - 1). The commands of the law is like squirting gasoline on a fire to the unbeliever
    - a). There is an instant flare up of self-will and rebellion – oh yeah – make me!
- B. So the law could never free a person like that from the bondage of sin – it only arouses rebellion
  - 1). The only hope is to have that nature changed – one that is re-wired for obedience

**Transition:** Because of that look at the next verse to see the results flowing out of that

#### **2. Every man before salvation is held prisoner by the law**

**Ga 3:23 (ESV)** Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, *imprisoned* until the coming faith would be revealed.

**Gal 3:23 (NIV)** Before this faith came, we were *held prisoners* by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed.

- A. The law and the commandments we couldn't keep put us into a prison and locked us up there
  - 1). It condemned us – Held us under that sentence of guilt before God
- B. We could say the law keeps us on a *spiritual death row*
  - 1). There is nothing we could do to escape – we are guilty and condemned – hell bound sinners

- 2). Our only hope is a *divine pardon* – not based on our goodness but on His mercy and grace
- C. That's what we need! How do we receive it? Paul tells us  
**Ga 3:23 (ESV)** ... imprisoned until the *coming faith* would be revealed.
- Point:** So the law condemns the sinner – holds them under this sentence of guilt – awaiting wrath
- A. But God has designed the law to do more than that!
- 1). In showing you how guilty you are – the law is designed to awaken you to your need of salvation
- 2). It is designed to convince you that you are in trouble – that you deserve wrath
- Transition:** The law's purpose is to show you how sinful you are – and to lead you to Christ – NEXT POINT

## The Law as a Guardian

**Ga 3:24 (ESV)** So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.

### 1. The guardian in the Greek culture

- A. Was usually a slave whose duties were to teach obedience to young boys and discipline them
- 1). Carried a rod and would use it to whack the child whenever they were disobedient
- B. Child dreamed of day he'd be free from this strict disciplinarian and escape that rod
- Point:** This is a picture of what the law is to us – keeps hitting us when we fail
- A. Keeps condemning us – keeps showing us were not ready for heaven
- B. It is meant to cause us to long to be free – meant to cause us to look for another way to relate to God
- Transition:** So the guardian would discipline the child – but they had another duty

### 2. The guardian would take the children to school – lead them to the teacher

- A. Paul says in the same way the law is designed to lead us to Christ to be justified by faith
- Thought:** Let's put these two responsibilities of the guardian together – relating it to the law as Paul does
- A. The law is designed to condemn us when we fail – that rod strikes our conscience - GUILTY
- 1). So we stare into eternity with fear and not comfort
- B. Why does the law do that? To prepare us for the second part of this verse
- 1). To make us willing to follow it when it leads us to Christ – our only hope
- Ga 3:24 (ESV)** So then, the law was our guardian *until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.*
- Clearer: Gal 3:24 (NASB)** Therefore the Law has become our tutor (**Guardian**) *to lead us to Christ, (Why?) so that we may be justified by faith.*

**Question:** So does the law opposes the Gospel – are they competing with one another? NO!

- A. They work in beautiful harmony – the law preparing the sinner for the reception of the Gospel by faith
- 1). By convincing them of their guilt and horrifying end because of their sin
- 2). Convincing them that the only hope is by divine pardon
- And that pardon will be given to all who put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ

**Thought:** This is why the law is so necessary in Gospel preaching

- A. Not as a means of salvation but as a tool that convinces the sinner they need to be saved
- B. I heard an evangelist say once *“The hardest thing isn't getting people saved. It's getting them lost”*
- 1). It is getting them to a place they know they need to be saved – the law is designed to do that

**Transition:** But what happens when the sinner is convinced – they trust in Christ – NEXT POINT

### 3. Freed from the law through faith

**Ga 3:25 (ESV)** But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,

- A. In Greek culture the time comes when the little boy becomes a man and no longer needs the guardian
- 1). Would be strange if he's 25 and that slave is still hitting him with his stick

**Thought:** But isn't it like this for a lot of us with the law

- A. Still letting the law hit us – making us always feel condemned – like God is mad at us
- B. Listen! After we've gone to Christ by faith – the law no longer has the authority to do that!
  - 1). It no longer has the authority to condemn you!
    - a). Every sin you ever committed or will commit has already been paid for by Christ  
Ro 8:1 (ESV) There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
  - 2). On that day we stand before God there will be nothing on the books to condemn us

**Why Peter tells us: 1 Pe 1:13 (ESV) ... *set your hope fully on the grace* that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

- A. When you look ahead to that day you will stand before God – where is your hope?
  - 1). Are you hoping He will look at you and say – you lived in a way that is good enough – NO!
  - 2). Set your hope on grace – that God will receive you because His Son was good enough!
    - a). That God will look at you through His merit – His perfect obedience

**Transition:** Let's look at one more thing – when we receive Christ by faith – we need to know who we are

- A. Paul gives us four things in v. 26-28

### III. WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST

**Ga 3:26 (ESV)** for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

#### 1. Faith brings us into the family of God as His children!

- A. Under the law God was judge – under grace He is our loving Father!

**Thought:** This is what the Gospel does! It brings us into a loving relationship with Him

- A. It brings us into a place where we can enjoy the greatest thing in the universe. Him!
  - 1). This is the good news! I exchange sin for this! The ugliness of sin for the beauty of Christ!!!
- B. We want to reduce Christianity down to a cold set of do's and don'ts
  - 1). No! Christianity is all about knowing God – experiencing Him – enjoying Him
  - 2). Then out of that relationship we are motivated by love to obey as an act of worship

**Transition:** So Faith brings us into a relationship with God as Father – no longer judge

#### 2. Faith clothes us in Christ's righteousness

**Ga 3:27 (ESV)** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ *have put on Christ.*

**Ga 3:27 (NASB95)** For all of you who were baptized into Christ *have clothed yourselves with Christ.*

- A. Baptized into Christ – NOT water baptism – being placed into Christ – *“Immersed into Him”*

**Thought:** Christianity is incredible isn't it?

- A. I can call God Father – because I am His child  
And I'm so united to Christ the Bible alludes to is as an immersion into Him

#### Clothed in Christ

- A. The Christian has been clothed with a very special – very beautiful garment
  - 1). Under the law we were clothed in the filthy garments of guilt and sin
  - 2). But God has graciously taken that off and has clothed us with something stunning  
**Isa 61:10 (NLT)** I am overwhelmed with joy in the LORD my God! *For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness.*
- B. He has stooped down – lovingly lifted me up – cleansed me – took off my filthy clothing of sin
  - 1). He has graciously put on a beautiful robe – taking away all my shame – giving me a future

#### 3. Faith makes us all one in Christ

**Ga 3:28 (ESV)** 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.*

- A. When the church meets we come together as family
  - 1). I never had a real father or mother – my family has always been shattered and scattered
  - 2). God has become Father I always dreamed of having – Jesus an incredible big brother (Heb 2:11)  
And all of you wonderful siblings with me – what a blessing!
- 4. Faith makes us heirs according to the promise**
- Ga 3:29 (ESV)** And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.
  - A. I love this – all who are in Christ are Abraham's descendants – I am a relative of Abraham
    - 1). And the promise given to him is passed down to me
  - B. Heirs according to the promise – one day I will enjoy all the Father has waiting for me
    - 1). I am a co-heir with Christ – all He gets I get too – I AM VERY RICH you know!
      - a). I have no idea what all that means – the details of being a co-heir with Christ  
I just know it is going to be breath taking
        - 1a). As I will live for all of eternity in a place so glorious  
It makes the most beautiful spot on earth look like a ghetto!
        - 2a). No wonder John said “Even so come quickly Lord Jesus!”
  - C. All of this was earned by Jesus Christ for me – given to me as a gift when I believed

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## CONCLUSION

- 1. How are we connected to the Son? By works? No! By faith**
  - A. This is the only way to enter into these blessings – trusting in Him and His work on our behalf
  - B. Have you done that – have you admitted you have sinned and can't save yourself
    - 1). Have you gone to Christ – humbled yourself before Him – and asked Him to save you?
    - 2). There is no other way – if you're counting on your goodness – YOU'RE LOST!  
If your counting on being nice, religious enough – YOU'RE LOST!
      - a). May God have mercy on you and show you that you've fallen short
  - C. Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone apart from any works of the law