

Galatians 3:24

“Have you learned your Lesson?”

Introduction:

- Galatians was written by Paul, to a group of Galatian churches; the church of Galatia was not one specific church
- Paul was writing to combat against false teachers called “Judaizers”; they taught that righteousness came by the works of the law. The Apostle Paul taught truth to the Galatians churches, but they were being “bewitched”, deceived!

I. The Basics of the Law (v.24a)

A. The definition of the law (*Wherefore, the law*)

1. “The God-given regulation of the life of the people of God in relationship with him”. (*Dictionary of Bible Themes*. Manser, Martin H.)

2. The Greek word for “law” is *nomos*. *Nomos* occurs 195 times in the New Testament. Of the 195 occurrences, 121 appear in Paul’s letters (i.e. Romans, I & II Corinthians, Galatians, etc.) In other words, Paul felt compelled to teach a proper understanding of the law.

3. The word “law” has multiple, legitimate meanings.

- “Law” can refer to one specific commandment. “But if her husband dies she is free from that law” (Romans 7:3).
- “Law” can also refer to the Pentateuch, which are the first 5 books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). Any use of the word law in the Historical Books (1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, The Psalms, etc.) would be referring to the only existing Scripture at that time period, which would be the Pentateuch.
- “Law” can also refer to the whole of Scripture. “In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people” (I Cor. 14:21a). Paul classifies Isaiah 28:11 as “the law (*nomos*, plural)”.

B. The description of the law (*was our schoolmaster*)

1. Schoolmaster. A schoolmaster is a person that is in charge of educating young students. In most cases, schoolmasters carried a reputation for being harsh, grueling, tough disciplinarians ... they were lesson teachers! The Greek word used is *paidagogos* (pie-duh-go-goss), “a servant whose office it was to take the children to school”. (*A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and the Hebrew Bible*. Strong, James).

Illustration of schoolmaster: Dan Unruh was the schoolmaster for a strong headed 7th grade Benjamin Unruh. Mom resigned from homeschooling him, so the schoolmaster (dad) had to take over! He taught Benjamin that he was NOT perfect!

C. The lesson of the law

1. The law teaches us the lesson of God's Righteous Character

- David meditated on God's law in order to learn God's character (Ps.19:7-14; 119:25-32).
- The law teaches us that God is Holy. "Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:2). God tells the children of Israel that He is Holy before instructing Moses to communicate various commandments.
- The law teaches us that God loves us; he saved us from bondage, just like the children of Israel. "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me ..." (Exodus 20:2-3: The Ten Commandments).

2. The law teaches us the lesson of Man's (our) Sinful Heart

- We cannot know what sin is without the law. "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. *Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law:* for I had not known the lust, *except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet*" (Romans 7:7).
- Disobeying the law is sin. "Whosoever commiteth sin transgresseth also *the law: for sin is the transgression of the law*" (I John 3:4).
- Everyone has disobeyed the law, since everyone has sinned! "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23); "But *the Scripture* hath concluded all under sin" (Galatians 3:22a).
- Every sinner is guilty of disobeying the whole law. "For whosoever shall keep *the whole law*, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10).

II. The Purpose of the Law (v.24b)

A. To Lead People to Christ before His Crucifixion

1. Crucifixion is the focal point since Christ declared "It is finished" (John 19:28-30). This was the point when Christ's blood was spilled. "And without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).

2. The law pointed all people to Christ.

- God pointed Adam and Eve to Christ (Genesis 3:15). The generations that followed anticipated the arrival of Jesus Christ, the one who would bruise Satan's head.
- John the Baptist quoted the law in anticipation of Christ. "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29; a reference to Is. 53:11).

B. To Lead People to Christ after His Crucifixion

1. The law is quoted heavily in the NT!

- There are approximately 250-300 quotations of the Old Testament in the New Testament. 23 out of the 27 New Testament books quote the Old Testament. 94 out of 278 Old Testament verses cited are from the Pentateuch (*Basic Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Bible Truth*. Zuck, Roy B, Chapter 11.)
- This is not considering the allusions to the OT, which range from 442-4,105 (*Zuck, Roy. B*).
- People who claim the OT irrelevance do not know their Bibles or their God; the God of the OT is the God of the NT.

2. Post-Crucifixion example of the law leading someone to Christ: Phillip and the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40). The Ethiopian Eunuch was reading from the book of Isaiah, which Phillip explained to him. He was reading from the law ... about the Lord Jesus Christ!

Question: Why does the law lead us to Christ? Why wouldn't the law lead us to a prophet, or a Godly king? The purpose of the law is to bring us to Christ because he is the only person that has obeyed (fulfilled) the law perfectly!

III. The Perfect Fulfiller of the Law (v.24c)

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill” (Matt. 5:17).

HE FULFILLED THE LAW SO THAT ...

A. We can be justified instead of condemned! (*that we might be justified*)

1. To be justified means “to be declared righteous”; “One who brings others into a right relationship with God is conceptualized as a justifier” (*Lexham Figurative Language of the Bible Glossary*. Westbury, Joshua R.)
2. Justification is associated with the concept of being judged in a court room. Christ stands where we should stand, in the place of the condemned and guilty!

KEY VERSE: “Therefore as by the offence of one judgement came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life” (Romans 5:18)

Illustration of justification: Mr. Eckern's class. A random card was pulled to help out the students on the test. I remember a card being pulled that said, the rest of the class receives the grade of the highest scorer! We all scored poorly, but the book worm of the class earned us all 100%! This illustrates the concept of justification!

B. So that we would rely on faith instead of works! (*by faith*)

1. The works of the law were never a means of salvation; Paul was warning against works of the law as a means of salvation (Gal. 3:1) since false teachers had "bewitched" some believers in the Galatian churches. Further, no one in the OT was saved by works; even Abraham was justified by faith (Gal. 3:6-11).

KEY VERSE: Galatians 2:16a "*Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ*"