

I FOUGHT THE LAW... AND THE LAW WON

Galatians 3:1-25

Why is the Law not an option for Christians? What makes the Law a dead-end street? How does Abraham, the father of the Jews, fit into all this? If, as Christians, we're not under the Law, then why did God give the Law in the first place? Some of these questions may be floating around in your mind as you've been studying Galatians, and Paul deals with each of them in this section.

"The office of the Law is to show us the disease in such a way that it shows us no hope of cure; whereas the office of the gospel is to bring a remedy to those who are past hope. For the Law, since it leaves man to himself, necessarily condemns him to death; whereas the gospel, by bringing him to Christ, opens the gate of life."
- John Calvin

¹ You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. ² I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? ³ Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? ⁴ Have you suffered so much for nothing--if it really was for nothing? ⁵ Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?

⁶ Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." ⁷ Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. ⁸ The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." ⁹ So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

¹⁰ All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." ¹¹ Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." ¹² The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them." ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." ¹⁴ He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

¹⁵ Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. ¹⁶ The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ. ¹⁷ What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.

¹⁹ What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator. ²⁰ A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God is one.

²¹ Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. ²² But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

²³ Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. ²⁴ So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

In light of verse 1, evaluate the following quote:

"Final deliverance from error, whereby we rejoice in immortality, boundless freedom and a sinless sense, is not reached thorough the path of flowers nor by pinning one's faith without works to another's vicarious effort or performance by one person substituting for another." (Mary Baker Eddy, founder of Christian Science)

See verse **3:6** - What does God promise Abraham on Genesis 15? Did Abraham get God's blessing the "old-fashioned way", by earning it?

See verses **3:10-13**. How many OT verses does he quote here, and where do they come from?

	OT Reference	What Does It Mean?
<i>verse 10</i>		
<i>verse 11</i>		
<i>verse 12</i>		
<i>verse 13</i>		

How many times does the word "*curse*" occur in this section? (Why is this significant?)

Look up James **2:10**. How does it fit into this discussion?

Look closely at verse **3:11**. This famous verse was the foundation for the Protestant Reformation. It occurs 4 times in the Bible - can you find the other 3? (Use a concordance.)

References	Context: What Is The Meaning Here?
<i>Galatians 3:11</i>	

THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW (19-25)
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Since Paul seems so "down" on the Law, does he therefore think it is evil?

What was / is the Law incapable of doing (verse 21)?

In verses 23-25 Paul employs a number of metaphors for the Law: a prison warden, a schoolteacher, a chaperone. In your own words, describe why God gave the Law:

LIFE RESPONSE

How does the Law surface our sin? How did it expose the inner workings of Paul's heart? (See Romans 7:7-8) How does it expose you? (If the 10 commandments don't seem to nail you, see how Jesus interprets them in Matthew 5:21-22 and 27-28.)

Reflecting on verses 1-5 in this section, why is the Christian life supposed to be lived in faith and not under the Law?

If you are struggling with the Law, think back to your first days as a Christian. Did God decide to bless you because you were such a wonderful human being, or because He simply loved you in spite of yourself? Has that attitude changed on His part?

"Not until the Law has bruised and smitten us will we admit our need of the gospel to bind up our wounds. Not until the Law has arrested us and imprisoned us will we cry for Christ to set us free. Not until the Law has condemned and killed us will we call upon Christ for justification and life. Not until the Law has driven us to despair of ourselves will we ever believe in Jesus. Not until the Law has humbled us even to hell will we turn to the gospel to raise us to heaven."

- John Stott