

## #8 Galatians

Tom Tillman

During our last time together Paul ended with these words: **Verse 19**: "What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator"

The Law did not add anything to God's promises to Abraham and to Israel and the Law did not take anything away from God's promises, so what was its purpose. Why did God give Israel the Law? And, that's a very important distinction: God gave the Law to Israel... not to the Gentile nations and especially not to us, the Church, the Body and Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ; the Law was never given to us. The Law was a Covenant between God and Israel. There was no covenant between God and Abraham; God's promises to Abraham were completely one sided; God promised Abraham and the fulfillment of His promises rested solely with God, based on His reliability, His dependability, on His righteousness alone.

430 years later, God initiated His Covenant with Israel. This was a true covenant, ***an agreement between two people***, the definition of covenant; God said, if you do this, I will do that which will be a blessing for you but if you fail to do this, then I will do that which will be a curse to you. Of course, God knew that no one would ever completely fulfill the human side of the covenant, not until God sent His Son.

What does Paul mean, that the Law was added because of transgressions?

The Law was given for two purposes: first, to demonstrate the Holiness and Righteousness of God: '...our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God...' Rom 3:5 Also, that man's complete sinfulness and unrighteousness would be manifest.

The Law was 'added because of transgressions!'

Remember, we said that God gave the Law as a fence around His people. This fence, made up of the Ten Commandments along with all the 613 laws given to Moses, illustrated God's Holiness and Righteousness but it also gave proof of the absolute unrighteousness and unholiness of every human until God sent His Son. As an Israelite '*looked around himself*' at the 'fence' God had created, God's intent was that he would, first, see, in wonder, the awesome Holiness of God. As he did so, he would also see his own unrighteousness nailed, as an indictment, to each 'fencepost.' Those indictments were what Paul meant back in Colossians 2: 'And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, <sup>14</sup>having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.'

Remember, also, in Romans 5, he said, 'Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned — <sup>13</sup>(For until the law sin was in the world, but ***sin is not imputed when there is no law.*** <sup>14</sup> Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses...'

Before God created the fence around His people, sin was not imputed, they had no responsibility to the Law before it was given. But then, they became responsible for all the Law, every jot and tittle; they could, then, recognize themselves as ***very*** guilty. Then, they were not only sinners, they had become law breakers ***and*** transgressors. Every time they stepped outside the fence line, they were transgressing over the line.

This is what Jesus was referring to when He said, 'For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.' Matt 5:18

He knew that He was keeping and fulfilling all the Law perfectly, for us, and doing it in our place. Then, afterward, He also died in our place, the Law was ready to pass away as He inaugurated the New Covenant in His blood. He was the promised Seed Who was to come, the One to Whom the promise had been made through Abraham. When the Law came, Moses was the mediator between God and man and, later, the Levitical Priesthood became the mediators.

Now, there is no need for any priesthood: 'For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave Himself a ransom for all...' 1Tim 2:5 Also, we are His priesthood: 'But you

are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;’ 1 Pet 2:9

**Verse 20:** ‘Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one.’

When God gave His promise to Abraham, there was no mediator because only One Person was involved: it was only God Who promised and He would be faithful to fulfill all His promises. After, with the Law, Moses became the mediator, followed by the Levitical priesthood and now, there is, again, only One Mediator and once again, it is God. Now, with us, it is again like it was with Abraham. God made the promises, God did the work of keeping the Law for us and taking our punishment on Himself for our sin and transgressions and He is the One Who will fulfill all His promises; we have no laws or requirements to fulfill; our only command is to “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved...” Acts 16:31

God made the requirements of us and then He, Himself fulfilled all the requirements on our behalf: Keep the Law perfectly or you will die. He kept the Law perfectly for us, so we live because He died for us.

**Verse 21:** ‘Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.’

God gave the promises; God gave the Law but then, in spite of the Law, or, rather, in fulfillment of the Law, He gave His life **for us** so that He could then give His Life **to us**. He has given us real life, eternal, everlasting Life... the kind of Life that, previously, only God had. We don’t just have life that will never end, He has given us life like His Own: royal life, glorified life, the life of princes and princesses, ruling and reigning with Him forever; now we are children of God.

See that again: God gave the promises; God gave the Law but then, in fulfillment of the Law, He gave His life **for us** so that He could then give His Life **to us**. He has given us real life, eternal, everlasting Life... the kind of Life that, previously, only God had. We don’t just have life that will never end, He has given us real life, life that is like His Own: royal life, glorified life, the life of princes and princesses, ruling and reigning with Him forever; now we are children of God. **‘Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.’** <sup>3</sup> And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.’ 1 John 3

How can that not be the most exciting thing we could ever read or understand! He loves us; He wants us; He did all that was necessary to come down into the World, as one of us, in order to gather us to Himself and soon, once again He will come down, into the clouds and gather us up to Himself: ‘For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Therefore comfort one another with these words.’ 1 Thes 4

He has made the promises to us and He is the One Who has done, and is doing, all the work necessary for our complete salvation.

**Versed 22:** ‘But the Scripture has confined all under sin that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.’

Everyone is condemned by their own sin; each one will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. ‘The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ (through our faith **of** Jesus Christ which is **in** the risen Lord Jesus Christ)

We, who are children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, are the recipients of all... ALL His promises. We are fellow heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ; we are fellow heirs of all that is. Because of His faithfulness, God the Father has given the Lord Jesus Christ ownership and Lordship over all that exists, the entire Universe and

because we are one with Him, His Bride and His Body, we will share with Him in all that He has. Just imagine!! Incredible, unimaginable and yet, believable and true!

**Verse 23:** 'But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.'

Here, Paul is writing as a Jew, as a Hebrew. Israel was kept under guard by the Law. God placed that fence around the people whom He chose and created, in fulfillment of part of His promises to Abraham. He gave that Law in order to keep them in check that they would not surrender themselves to all of the unimaginable evil of the peoples around them, especially the Canaanites. Certainly, they were always guilty of sin and they did follow some of the ways of those around them but through it all, through all their sinful journey of 40 years in the wilderness after coming out of Egypt through the 400 years of back and forth during the times of the Judges, through the several hundred years of the Kings, through the years of captivity in Babylon and finally through the 400 years of God's silence leading to the coming of their Messiah... God kept them together and relatively in check, He kept them for the faith which would eventually come, the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ which was given, as a gift, finally, to Jews and Gentiles alike. That faith was finally revealed after they had so viciously crucified the Lord God Who came to live among them.

They hated Him because He was perfect; He, alone, did keep the Law, perfectly, what none of them, not the Scribes, not the Pharisees and not even the High Priest had ever been able to do. They hated Him because His absolute righteousness shown forth, fully illuminating their sinful, complete unrighteousness. And make no mistake; they knew Who He was and they hated Him enough to crucify Him. The same is true today; they hate Him because apart from His free gift of faith to salvation, He demands absolute perfection which they refuse to give Him; they refuse to be accountable to Him and they refuse to come to Him in repentance and faith. They hate us for the very same reason. We are the light of the World; the light of our lives shines upon and illuminates their sin and even though our lives are imperfect, we are forgiven and His absolute righteousness has been imputed to us so they hate us with the same hatred with which they hate him.

We are seeing, today, that hatred revealed; the masks are coming off; their vicious, unconstrained deadly hatred for righteousness, for truth, for anything having to do with the True God is on display for us to see. Again, make no mistake: they hate us with the same hatred that led to the Crucifixion. Christians are being persecuted and murdered around the World and it won't be long before it comes here with abandon. If one of us waded into the darkness of the riots here, and elsewhere, with the goal of preaching the Gospel, it wouldn't be long before some, or all, of us were shot. We are in the last days of the last days and anyone who refuses to see it is a sadly mistaken.

**Verse 24:** 'Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.'

The Greek word, here, for tutor is: paidagogos: the concordance says of this word: 'a tutor i.e. a guardian and guide of boys. Among the Greeks and the Romans the name was applied to trustworthy slaves who were charged with the duty of supervising the life and morals of boys belonging to the better class. The boys were not allowed so much as to step out of the house, without them, before arriving at the age of manhood.'

Rather than being their actual teacher, the slave was charged with bringing them safely to the school, the place of learning. The idea Paul is illustrating is that the Law, as a fence, surrounded the flock of Israel in order to bring them safely to the point of faith in the Messiah and that faith happened all along the way for individual Jews. Those individuals whom God had chosen, beyond His having chosen Israel as a whole, those individuals did receive God's gift of faith to see and understand the truths which were illustrated by the righteous standard of the Law against their own sinfulness and the substitutionary sacrifice of the animals and their shed blood; God was never without a witness to Himself and He was never been without those whom He had chosen to be a light in the darkness of the World.

Now, as then, we, like them, are justified and made righteous, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone. They may not have known His Name, **the Lord Jesus Christ**, but (His Name means, **Lord: God is Salvation: Messiah**) they understood and were also made righteous in the very same way... their faith was in **the Salvation of God:**

from Abel through Enoch and Noah, from Abraham to Moses, through the Prophets to those who crucified Him and finally to us... righteousness has always been freely given by God through belief and faith in Him and His promises.

**Verse 25:** 'But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.' They, and we, are no longer kept under guard for the faith to be revealed because the faith has now been revealed and it is ours. Now, rather than being guilty under the Law, ***we have become the righteousness of God***, in Him, and we live in the complete liberty and freedom of His Eternal Salvation. 'For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.' 2 Cor 5:21

"And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim **liberty** to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at **liberty** those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.' And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing'" Luke 4:17 He is liberty and freedom to us.

"If you abide in My Word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" John 8:31

"Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" John 8:34

We are the sons and daughters who will remain forever and we are free indeed.

Verse 26: 'For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.'

Here, Paul is referring to two different, but related, things: at the moment of salvation, the moment we first believed, we were baptized, indwelt and sealed with God's Holy Spirit. He is the surety, the down payment of our inheritance, the Seal of God's promise and delivery of Eternal Life; it, and He, are ours now and forever.

Then, Paul is also referencing our physical baptism in water and make no mistake, God's intent is that our baptism be a full immersion in water; it's what Jesus Christ did, which we are commanded to follow; it represents our having been fully immersed and filled with God's Holy Spirit. That is what He intended our baptism to be: an illustration and reminder to us that we are fully 'in Christ,' now and forever; also, it serves as a public display of the fact that we have broken with our old life of rebellion and have fully embraced our new life in Christ.

**Verse 28:** 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'

By the same token, there is now neither black nor white nor brown in Christ Jesus. We all were born into the exact circumstances which God had planned for us. The first responsibility of every person is to come to God through humble faith in His Son. We are each responsible for ourselves, alone, before God. None of us are expected to fix the World or to fix the circumstances of any race or color of people. If any person refuses to come to God, in faith, no matter his reasoning, he stands before God condemned. Our first responsibility toward any and all people is to take the Gospel to them, not to first fix their lives and then hopefully tell them the Gospel. We are to tell the Gospel. If they receive it, they become part of our family and we have a responsibility, before God, to care for and watch over them; they have become one with Him and with us. If they refuse the Gospel, they are not part of our family. There is no 'family of man;' there is only God's family, whatever our color or circumstance, and those who refuse His invitation, choosing to hate Him and us.

Any Christian who bows down before those who hate God, and himself, as God's child, is a traitor and a fool!

**Verse 29:** 'And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.'

Jesus Christ was the Seed promised first, in the Garden, and then to Abraham. We who are in Christ are also one with the promised Seed, and we are heirs of all that He owns, to rule and reign with Him forever.