

# The Purpose of the Law: Part 1

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[ 0 : 00 ] So if you would turn your Bibles to Galatians chapter 3. This morning our attention is going to be directed to verses 15 through 22.!

Read Galatians 3.15 through 22. I thought it would be helpful for us to, at this point in the letter, briefly review the letter up to this point.

We've been in this series since the earlier part of this year. We've taken some breaks and now we're at chapter 3. And I think it would be helpful just to review up to the point where we are this morning.

The Apostle Paul wrote the letter of Galatians to a group of churches which he founded. He had preached the gospel to these churches and he had established them.

And not too long after he had left these churches, we learned that some false teachers had come in and they began to teach contrary to what Paul had taught.

[ 1 : 26 ] We see this in verses 6 and 7 where Paul writes to them and he says, I'm astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you into the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel.

Not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. And then Paul goes on and he argues for the truthfulness of the gospel that he had preached to them, opposed to the one that they were turning to.

But up to this point, the Apostle Paul, he does that from up to verse 14 of chapter 2. He argues for the gospel he had preached to them.

Up to chapter 2, verse 14. But Paul does not specifically state what the false gospel was they were turning to.

Up to this point, in chapter 2, verse 14, he has merely said it's a false gospel. It is not the true gospel. But he doesn't say what it is they were turning to.

[ 2 : 35 ] It's not until we come to verses 15 and 16 of chapter 2 that the Apostle Paul lays out specifically what the false gospel was that the Galatians were turning to.

It was the belief that in keeping the law, they could be justified before God. It was the belief that a person could be justified through his own efforts of keeping the law.

Notice what he says in verses 15 and 16. Paul is addressing that false view. He says, We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ.

So we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law. Notice, because by works of the law, no one will be justified.

That's the argument that he makes. And he helps us to see now what the issue is for the Galatians. Now, though Paul tells us that no one will be justified by the law up to this point in the letter, he doesn't tell us why.

[ 3 : 59 ] He doesn't begin to explain why until he comes to chapter 3. And in chapter 3, he begins chapter 3, verses 1 through 6, by reminding the Galatians that their salvation experience actually showed how God saved people, that he saved them through faith.

And then he also reminded them that the way God planned to save people, going back to Abraham, was through faith.

The experience proved it, and God's Old Testament plan proved it. So, in a nutshell, he says to them, it is not through the works of the law, but it is through faith in Jesus Christ, the one who is crucified for sinners, that you are actually saved.

Now, in verses 7 through 9 of chapter 3, the Apostle Paul makes a very important point to the Galatians. And it's an important point for anyone who is looking to try to be accepted by God by

what they do, keeping the law or doing good or whatever else you try to do in and of yourself. It's an important point to grasp what the Apostle Paul makes in verses 7 through 9 of chapter 3. And the point is this, that it was always God's plan to justify people through faith and not by works of the law.

[ 5 : 38 ] And this is why the gospel was preached to Abraham. And God said to him, I'm going to bless all the nations through you. And really, we see in that passage there that the blessing really is justification.

The blessing is salvation that God promised by faith. Now, this is a very important point that's being made in verses 7 through 9.

It's an important reference point to help us to see that the good news, when we talk about the gospel, the gospel is not just a New Testament truth. It is an Old Testament truth.

As old as Abraham, God had always determined that he was going to save people in a gracious way, through faith, not any effort of their own, but he was going to save them through faith and not by works.

Now, when we come to Galatians 3, 10 through 14, this is the first point at which the Apostle Paul gives the reason why no one will be justified in God's sight.

[ 6 : 52 ] I want you to see the progression in the letter. First, he just addresses the false teaching that they had succumbed to, but he doesn't tell us what. Then he tells us what the false teaching is, and he states, you can't be justified that way.

You will not be justified by keeping the law. And then he now goes on to tell us why.

We considered this last week. This is what we looked at last week. The first reason that Paul gives why we cannot be justified by keeping the law.

He tells us that no one will be justified by keeping the law because no one can keep the law. And the reason no one can keep the law is that Paul shows in verses 10 through 14 that the law must be kept completely and perfectly.

And no person who is sane and honest will say, I have kept God's demands fully and completely. No one has ever done that.

[ 8 : 03 ] No one who has walked the face of this earth has ever done that. Except one person. And that's the Lord Jesus Christ. He, in his living and in his dying and in his rising and in his ascension, he kept and fulfilled every single aspect of the law completely and perfectly.

For the rest of us, what Paul tells us is instead of the law actually justifying us, the law condemns us. And the law brings us under a curse because it is written, cursed is everyone who does not do everything that is written in the law.

And so that's what Paul lays out as the very first reason that you cannot be justified by the law. You can't be justified by the law because you cannot keep the law.

The law works against us, not for us. The law condemns us. The law curses us because we can't fulfill it. And again, 99.999% is not good enough with God.

It is only 100%. And as I said earlier, only one person satisfied that. And that is the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, in verse 11, when the Apostle Paul says, righteous shall live by faith or the just shall live by faith, he's referring to how eternal life will come.

[ 9 : 40 ] It's not going to come through what we do. It's going to come through faith and God accounting that faith in Jesus Christ as righteousness bringing us to salvation.

In verses 13 and 14, Paul addresses the only way to come from underneath the curse of the law where every single human being finds him or herself. the two places.

You're going to be under the law or in Christ. And if you're under the law, you're under a curse. And the only way to remove from under the law is to be in Christ. And so, the most important thing that Paul now is, he's concluding in verse 14.

We're going to pick up now in 15, but look at what he says in verse 14. Here's why Christ redeems us from the curse of the law. So that in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the promised spirit through faith.

The reason this is so important this morning is that for so many people, when they think of their salvation, they want to confine it to the New Testament. They only want to think of the New Testament. Paul says no.

[ 10 : 57 ] Paul says the salvation that we have that comes to us through Jesus Christ is the promised blessing that God gave to Abraham way back in Genesis.

And we need to remember that point. So, here's the summary of all of that. We can summarize Paul's argument, the first reason he gives, in verses 10 through 14, in this way. It is impossible for us to be saved by keeping the law because it is impossible to keep the law. Now, there's another problem that Paul highlights for the Galatians who are turning away from the gospel to this other gospel trying to be justified by keeping the law. and he addresses that in verses 15 through 22, the verses we have come to this morning. Paul addresses a very fundamental problem with what they were thinking, what they were believing. So, please follow along as I read Galatians 3, 15 through 22 and then we'll consider what that other problem is. Galatians 3, starting in verse 15.

[ 12 : 24 ] To give a human example, brothers, even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified.

Now, the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say and to offsprings, referring to many, but referring to one and to your offspring who is Christ.

This is what I mean. This is what I mean.

The law, which came 430 years afterwards, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God so as to make the promise void.

For if the inheritance comes by the law, it is no longer, it no longer comes by promise. God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

[ 13 : 37 ] 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.

Now, an intermediary implies more than one. But God is one. Is the law then contrary to the promises of God?

Certainly not. For if the law, for if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law.

But the scripture imprisoned everything under sin. so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

Well, we normally would pause to pray before we open God's word after having read it. And sometimes it is easy to think we just do that out of rote.

[ 14 : 46 ] But we do that because we really want and need God's help. And I say to you this morning as I studied and wrestled with this passage, I was acutely aware how much I need God's help, how much we all need God's help to hear what he would say to us this morning.

So let us pray. Father, we are so grateful this morning for your word. Thank you for the privilege of having it, the privilege of being able to read it.

And Lord, thank you for the Holy Spirit who is the one who illuminates, the one who leads and guides us into truth.

And oh Lord, how much we need the illuminating light of the Spirit to open this text to us this morning and to speak your eternal truths to our hearts.

Father, we ask that you would grant us a gift this morning. I ask for myself, Lord, that you would grant me unction, you'd grant me the ability to proclaim the truth contained in this passage.

[ 15 : 55 ] And Lord, grant us all the ability to hear. Lord, clear our hearts from whatever may distract, whatever may confuse and cause us to receive the engrafted word of God whereby we might grow.

Lord, do all things as we hear your word this morning to your glory, we pray. In Christ's name.

Amen. Now, before we consider in detail what the Apostle Paul has written in these eight verses, I think it's important for us to see the overarching point that he makes.

to the Galatians. And really it's a point that he makes to everyone who seeks to be accepted as righteous in God's sight by what they do.

Keeping the law, doing good deeds. Here's the point he makes. The giving of the law through Moses did not replace God's promise of salvation through Abraham.

The giving of the law through Moses did not replace God's promise of salvation through Abraham. It sounds very simple, but it's a very important point that Paul makes to the Galatians to help them to see further why it is impossible for the law to bring salvation.

[ 17 : 32 ] Again, he had already argued in verses 10 through 14 that the law can't save us because we can't keep it. And now in verses 15 through 22, he makes another argument where he says that

God's promised salvation through Abraham long before the law was given.

And when the law was given, it didn't change that promise. Very important for us to see it was important for them to see it, it was important for us to see it this morning.

Now Paul sets out to prove this point to the Galatians by considering two particular issues, and they are number one, the place of the law, and number two, the purpose of the law.

And now remaining time, I want to consider each of these. So first, let's consider the place of the law. What is the place of the law in God's plan of salvation?

Or to put it another way, what is the place of the law in redemption history? The history of redemption that we see revealed in the pages of the Bible.

[18:43] What is the place of the law in the full scheme of things? Well, Paul explains in verses 15 through 18. He explains the place of the law in salvation history, starting with a human example, an everyday example that the Galatians would have understood.

He says to them, take for example, a man-made covenant. No one annuls it or adds to it once it's been ratified. And here the covenant that Paul is referring to was certainly more serious than the legal agreements that we make today.

Today we have all kinds of legal agreements, people sign them, and many times they sign them with no intention of keeping them. And the legal system is such that there are no consequences many times when a person would enter into an agreement and break that agreement, and there's very little that can be done in many cases.

But in ancient times, covenants were not that way. Covenants were taken very seriously. And when the covenant was made, and certainly the covenant that Paul was putting before the Galatians that they would have understood, he says when a man-made covenant is made, when it is ratified, or when it's put into effect, it becomes unbreakable.

You couldn't cancel it, and you couldn't change it. Now Paul makes this point to the Galatians.

There's a lot of debate about what kind of covenant he's referring to, and really it doesn't matter.

[20:18] What matters is that the covenant that he was using as an example to the Galatians, that he said to them, they understood that that kind of covenant couldn't be canceled, couldn't be broken once it was put into effect.

And Paul is using that to argue for something more important. And what he's saying is, he goes on to make the point that if a man-made covenant couldn't be canceled or changed once it's been put into effect, even more so a covenant that God had put into effect, the divine one had put into effect, couldn't be canceled or couldn't be changed once it's been put into effect.

That's the point that he makes in verses 16 and 17. Notice that although in verse 16, Paul refers to promises that were made to Abraham and his offspring, these are not ordinary promises like we'll say, you know, I promised to bring you some kong salad from fish fry today.

It's not an ordinary kind of promise like that. These are covenant promises. These are serious promises. And Paul helps us to see that in verse 17 where he refers to the same promises as a covenant.

important to see that. So we're not just talking about some loose words that were given to Abraham. No, this was a covenant that God entered into with Abraham and it had promises attached to it.

[21:52] So these are covenant promises that God gave to Abraham. And we find these promises in Genesis 15. They want to read to see the covenant that God made with Abraham.

And one of the interesting things about that covenant is you would notice that God himself made the covenant by himself. Abraham was asleep when God made the covenant with him.

This was God's covenant. And this is the point that Paul is making. Paul is making this point that if your man-made covenants cannot be changed willy-nilly once it's been in effect, well, same with God's covenant promises.

More so with God's covenant promises. Notice in verse 16 that we have a very important revelation from God through the apostle Paul who is writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

This is not Paul speculating and deciding that he is going to identify something in the Old Testament that really is not identified.

[23:06] And here Paul is interacting with Genesis 15, this covenant that God made with Abraham. Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, tells us that when we look at Genesis 15, for example, in Genesis 15, God makes this promise, this covenant promise to Abraham of blessing and justification to him and to his offspring.

Now, a natural reading of Genesis 15 would cause us to conclude that the offspring was Isaac and the descendants of Isaac. But the apostle Paul says no.

The apostle Paul tells us in verse 16 again, not his own speculation, but under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he says the offspring referred to in Genesis 15 is Christ. The offspring referred to in Genesis 15 is Christ.

This is a very important point of revelation that the apostle Paul makes for us in verse 16 of Galatians 3.

And so now, when we interact with Genesis 15, we need to read it through the lens of this revelation that the apostle Paul has given to us, where he says, when it refers to offspring, and he makes the point, it's not offsprings, which would be many, it is offspring.

[ 24 : 44 ] He says, and that offspring is Christ. No speculation on that. The offspring is Christ. So the way the blessing of salvation which God promised to Abraham would come to the nations was through Christ and to those who belong to Christ.

Not through Isaac and those who belong to him. And in verse 17, Paul now makes the point, that he was setting up in verses 15 and 16.

Paul's point is that God gave Moses the law many centuries after he had given the covenant or he made the covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15.

And he's making the point that the giving of the law does not cancel the covenant that God made with Abraham. So the promise that salvation would come through Abraham and his offspring, which is Christ, was in change.

The point that Paul is making to the Galatians. He's saying this later covenant, this Mosaic covenant that God made with Moses where he gave the law, that does not annul or change or cancel the Abrahamic covenant that he made with Abraham and Christ.

[ 26 : 17 ] That that's the way he's going to save all the nations. And there are no Jews at this point. God is going to save all people through this gracious way of making a promise.

I'm going to do it. God is do it. Now, some of you may have seen this before. Some of you may be thinking about it right now.

This reference period to 430 years in verse 17. This is what I mean. The law which came 430 years afterwards is not another covenant previously ratified.

there's debate about this, exactly what does Paul mean. And part of the reason is that the time that elapsed between when God gave Abraham the promise of salvation through faith, Abraham and Christ, and the time of the giving of the law was more than 430 years.

And so some say, what Paul is referring to here is he's referring to the time of exile in Egypt, which was formed in 30 years. And then others have different methods of coming up with what Paul may have had in mind.

[ 27 : 33 ] And we don't need to get lost in that puzzle this morning. We don't need to get lost in that puzzle. Paul is making a very simple point. He's making this simple point. A long time elapsed between when God gave Abraham the promise that salvation was going to come through faith, and when he brought the law.

And the point is, the giving of the law to Moses did not in any way change the way God said he was going to save people when he made the promise to Abraham.

And this is the problem. This is the error that the Galatians were making. The Galatians thought that somehow what God originally promised had changed, and now they would be saved through the law.

Now some people actually think that the reason God saves us by grace is that we can't keep the law. That's not why God saves us by grace.

The reason God saves us by grace is he always planned to save us by grace. And that's what he revealed to Abraham in Genesis 15.

[ 28 : 51 ] Now Paul, being a wise pastor and theologian, no doubt anticipated what the response from the Galatians would be.

They would ask a logical question. If the law that came after the promise of salvation through faith to Abraham did not change anything, Paul, what's the purpose of it?

Why did God give it? Why did God give the law? What is the purpose of the law? And this brings me to my second and final point.

The purpose of the law. What is the purpose of the law? Paul introduces this in verse 19 by asking why then the law?

And he answers this question by stating a reason in two parts. First, he says the law was added because of transgression.

[ 29 : 53 ] And second, it was added until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made. I've already been told that offspring is Christ.

No speculation there. So Paul says the law was added because of transgression and it was added until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made.

Now, first, what does Paul mean by the statement that the law was added because of transgression? Now, there are as many views as you have theologians, I imagine, on this particular point and many views of what Paul had in mind.

So I want to see if we can massage our way into what Paul is referring to by thinking about some things in broad categories.

First of all, let's remember that Paul is arguing against the Galatians view that salvation can come through the law. So however we understand it was added because of transgression, however we understand that whatever we understand that to mean, I think it's safe to say it cannot mean in any way, shape, or form that the law was added to bring salvation.

[ 31 : 28 ] Paul is arguing against that, so he's not going to be saying that's why the law was added. The law was not added to bring salvation. And the second part, like a bookend, that we need to remember is that whatever was meant by it was added because of transgression, it had an expiry date when Christ came.

Law was added until the offspring to whom the promise was made should come. And he's identified that offspring is Christ, so it's safe to understand what Paul is saying to mean that when Christ comes, the law would have fulfilled its function.

The adding of the law in God's plan of redemption and redemption history, the law would have fulfilled its function when Christ comes.

In other words, the giving of the law, the adding of the law had an expiry date attached to it. The implication clearly is that the Galatians were trying to use something beyond its expiry date because there was no dispute Christ had come.

False point God instituted the entire system of the law.

[ 33 : 01 ] When he refers to the law, it's not just the Ten Commandments. Not just the Ten Commandments. That's not all that God required to be kept. The Ten Commandments were certainly the apex of the law, but the law was broader than that.

As a matter of fact, when we think of the law, we think of the first five books of the Old Testament. We think of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. So this, the entire sacrificial system, all of the ceremonial law, all of the moral law, all of that was given, was added in God's plan of redemption until Christ came, the one to whom the promises had been made.

And the reason is it all pointed to Christ and was all fulfilled in Christ through his life and his death and his resurrection.

So it was intended to be temporary, temporary. But the false teachers and the Galatians were trying to make it permanent and they were looking to the law to do what only Christ could do and that is to bring salvation.

Now when the law was given, we have to think about this, when the law was given, the law was given to the nation of Israel, to God's covenant people, they were the ones at Mount Sinai.

[ 34 : 34 ] They left people in Egypt, they were not at the mountain. They were going into Canaan, people were in Canaan, but they were not at the mountain. God specifically gave the law to his covenant people.

They had God's revelation in terms of what God was requiring of them, but even though the law was not given to the Gentiles or to the other nations, it didn't mean that, for example, when God gave the law to the children of Israel, if they murdered, for example, that it was a sin and they'd broken God's law.

But if the Gentiles murdered, that it wasn't a sin or didn't break God's law because they didn't have the law, it didn't mean that. It was given to one, but it applied to all.

But as you can imagine, what the effect of this will be, think of it this way. You know that when we read in our Bibles, we see the law being given in Exodus 20.

That's where the start of it is actually happening. But murder is taking place. We see all kinds of sins happening.

[ 35 : 58 ] The first murder takes place in Genesis 4. In Genesis 6, there's so much wickedness, so much wickedness, that God decides to destroy everyone and everything except Noah and his family.

So even without the law, there was sin that was taking place. But when God brought the law, as you could imagine, the law would have a gripping effect because now you know what is required of you, and it's not the same as, let's say, for the Gentiles who were not told directly, you're not to murder, you're not to steal.

If you see your neighbor's animal going astray, you're not to lead it into your yard, you're to return it to somebody else. They didn't have that clear revelation of what God required of them.

But when you have that, the impact of that, the compulsion of that, the burden of that is far greater, and you actually see your sin in clearer ways, and you would not have seen it if you did not have the law.

And one of the interesting things that happens with the giving of the law is the giving of the law increases accountability and awareness of sin. And one interesting thing that the apostle Paul pointed in Romans 7 in particular, he says one of the effects of having the law is it actually arouses sin.

[ 37 : 37 ] And it increases sin because of who we are. Not because the law is bad, but because we are fallen people. when we are given law, when we are told a specific requirement of God, sin in us is aroused even more.

The rebellion in us is aroused even more to seek to come against what God has actually laid down. So, this was the effect of God actually giving the law to the nation of Israel.

And again, he didn't specifically give it to the whole world, but this was his redemptive plan, giving it to his covenant people at that time to serve a function of holding them accountable and to magnify their sin in terms of when they would commit sin.

Listen to what deceased British pastor and theologian John Stott said. he describes this effect of the law in us as sinners this way.

He says it this way. He says, the purpose of the law was, as it were, to lift the lid of man's respectability and disclose what he is really like underneath.

[ 39 : 06 ] Sinful, rebellious, guilty, under the judgment of God, and helpless to save himself. We'll read that again.

The purpose of the law was, as it were, to lift the lid of man's respectability, disclose what he is really like underneath. Sinful, rebellious, guilty, under the judgment of God, and helpless to save himself.

That would have been the effect of the law to those who had the law. That would not have been the effect of the law to those to whom the law was not given.

So prior to coming to Christ, the only way to relate to God was through the law, and he had given it to his covenant people, and it was like Gentiles, for example, who wanted to relate to God, they became proselytes, they joined the community, they joined the covenant community, and then they became subject to those laws.

And if you were a man, the outward sign that he did that was you were circumcised. God instituted the law as part of his plan of redemption.

[ 40 : 28 ] Not to save people, but to point them to the one who would save people, Jesus Christ. the law had a function, and that was its function. In the law, God foreshadowed the complete plan of redemption that Christ would come and fulfill through his living and through his dying, and his rising, and his ascending back to heaven.

And after Christ came, the law had served its purpose in redemption history, and Christ was now the one to whom all people would look and through whom salvation would come when Christ came. So once Jesus came and he completed his earthly ministry, the purpose of the law in redemption history was fulfilled and it expired. And when we think about it, interestingly, remember the Sermon on the Mount when Jesus began to interact with the law and he would say, you've heard it said, you shouldn't commit murder, but I say to you, if you're angry in your heart with your brother, you've committed murder.

Or you've heard it said, you shouldn't commit adultery, but I say to you, if you look at a woman with lustful intent, you've already committed adultery in your heart. So Jesus now is the one who is the magnified law.

He is the one who is revealing to us aspects of the law that we never would have even found. We would have thought, you know what, if I keep my hands off other people's property, I've fulfilled the law not to steal.

[ 42 : 10 ] But no one goes further than that. And Jesus magnified the law beyond just the outward conformity to it.

this was God's plan that now the Christ had come. The law would cease to have that effect, that purpose, that place that it had prior to his coming.

Let me see if I can explain it. I thought about this and maybe this would be helpful for you. You know, when movies are being produced, they tend to make trailers.

They make a trailer of the movie that gives you a preview of what the movie is about. And the trailers are out well before the movie comes out and it spread around to encourage people to watch the movie when it comes.

When the movie comes, you don't keep insisting to watch the trailer. You want to watch the movie. And it doesn't mean that the trailer still can't be used, but the trailer no longer has the same function as it did when the movie was being produced.

[ 43 : 28 ] When the movie was being produced, the trailer was very important to keep people interested and to keep them waiting, looking for the movie. But once the movie comes, then you now need to move beyond the trailer and watch the movie.

Now again, the trailers stay out there and sometimes people come across the trailers and they didn't hear about the movie and maybe years afterwards they see a trailer and it can point them to the movie.

The law still has that same kind of effect. The law still has that same kind of trailer effect, but Christ, the movie, as it were, has come. He is what the law pointed!

to. And when he has come, then there is a cessation of that. This aspect of thinking through the difference that Christ made pertaining to the law when he came is really dense.

sometimes can cause us to delve into territories that we sometimes find very difficult to work through. But I trust that it's helpful in a broad way to see that the law, the purpose of the law had been fulfilled when Christ came.

[ 44 : 53 ] When Christ came, that was his expiry date, and it no longer had that same function as it had when God put it into effect.

In verse 20, the apostle Paul makes reference to the law being put in place through angels by an intermediary.

And here Paul is making a contrast. Evidently, the Galatians made much of the fact that the law was put in place and there were angels attending to that moment when God was giving the law to Moses.

you see that in Deuteronomy 33 and two of the houses a whole host of angels were present in that particular moment. But Paul is making a point that the Mosaic law was not directly instituted by God himself.

It was given to Moses through the people. but the Abrahamic covenant was given from God to Abraham.

[ 46 : 13 ] And that's what he is referring to when he talks about now an intermediary implies more than one but God is one.

So he's saying to them the law that you're trying to be justified by that was given to you by an intermediary Moses was that intermediary in between you and God he says but God is one and obviously referencing back to the Abrahamic covenant where God himself without an intermediary instituted the Abrahamic covenant in verse 21 and further addressing the purpose of the Lord the apostle Paul asks another question is the law then contrary to the promises of God his answer certainly not the law gains the promises of God no because if a law had been given that could give life then righteousness would be by the law the implication here is again the law is not replacing the

Abrahamic covenant which promised life which promised salvation through faith saying the law if it could do that then a law would have been given to do that righteousness would come through the

law but it can't come through the law because the law is unable to do that and then finally in verse 22 Paul says that the scripture imprisoned everything and this sin and I believe this is just a reference to the fall and its far reaching effect on creation he says so that the promise by faith in Jesus might be given to those who believe in my preparation for this series but in particular for this message I found John Stott's commentary on Galatians to be very very helpful and I actually selected just a number of quotes from him that

I wanted to read they were far more than I could try to fit in this morning but I want to just conclude with a couple of them on the point about harmonizing the law and the promise how they work together he writes this how then is it possible to create a harmony between the law and the promise only by seeing that men inherit the promise because they cannot keep the law and that their inability to keep the law makes the promise all the more desirable indeed indispensable in addition he also insightfully summarizes the theology that we find in these eight verses because it encapsulates a large part of Old Testament theology of salvation and here's what he writes talking about these eight verses here's the apostle

Paul with a breath of vision which leaves us far behind brings together Abraham Moses and Jesus Christ in eight short verses he spans about 2,000 years he surveys practically the whole Old Testament landscape he presents it like a mountain range whose highest peaks are Abraham and Moses and whose Everest is Jesus Christ he shows how God's promise to Abraham was confirmed by Moses and fulfilled in Christ he teaches the unity of the Bible especially the Old and New Testament that is a beautiful quote and summary of what the Apostle Paul does in these eight verses brothers and sisters the point of the passage this morning is that the law is secondary and the purpose of the law is temporary the place of the law is secondary in salvation history and the purpose of the law is temporary it cannot give life it didn't give the

[ 51 : 08 ] Galatians life it will not give us life but it points us to the one who can give life and I said it before and I want to say it again if we made the best attempt we can possible to keep all of the law of God!

we fall short and we won't be justified but the trouble is today people don't even attempt to do that they don't even attempt to fulfill God's requirements largely what we do is we tend to do what most people consider to be good we tend to do good deeds and the general view is that if you do good you will make it into heaven I always reference it recently we've had three very prominent people to die in in our country Dr.

Nottage Dr. Baldwin and Cleopas Adderley and one of the things that sideburns always does! sideburns for those who don't know this is one of the newspapers there's a comic political social commentary caricature that's in there and he would normally like a cartoon like and he would depict different things that we understand in our society and one of the things he always does when a prominent person dies if he puts wings on them and a halo on them and he shows them in heaven every time and the general idea is if you are a good person if you are a respectful person you will make it to heaven and I think if you were to ask any of those persons have you tried to fulfill everything that God requires of you they would honestly say no I haven't tried God

God tells us that if you try to fulfill every single thing in this book everything he requires you will not succeed not because there's some defect in here but the defect is in us because we're sinful and we are incapable of pleasing God in what he requires but the scary thing is that people don't even attempt that and they have their own standard of doing good which is lower than God and they believe in a misguided way that if they live up to what society calls good they're going to make it into heaven brothers and sisters that is deception that is absolute deception to believe that we can make it into heaven by doing good it was never God's plan not even to use the law to bring us to salvation there's always this plan to bring us to salvation through

Christ he made the promise to Abraham and his offspring and Paul tells us in this passage that offspring is Jesus Christ and so to those of us this morning who are just so aware that we cannot keep God's requirement that we have made commitments to the Lord many times we fall short of those commitments if you have trusted in Jesus Christ as your Lord and your personal Savior may your confidence be that wherever you fail he has succeeded may your confidence be that it is only through your faith in him and being in him that salvation comes to you not to the Lord but only through Christ and if you're here this morning and you have not trusted in Jesus Christ this is the only way Jesus says I'm the only way I'm the way the truth the life no one comes to the Father except for me and so I would say to you turn from sin turn to

[ 55 : 11 ] Christ he promises if you come to me I will not turn anyone away let's pray so