

The Purpose of the Law

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 08 September 2024

Preacher: Henry Dyck

- [0 : 0 0] Well, good morning, everyone. Are we blessed to know the vast love that God has for us? He has a plan for each one of us, a plan to live a life walking in freedom.
- And so this morning I want to continue in the book of Galatians in chapter 3. Thank you, Eric, for reading that for us and talking about the purpose of the law.
- Abraham was a man who was faithful to God and his faithfulness was rewarded and he was promised an inheritance by God.
- But we all know that not all men were as faithful as Abraham was and so the law was brought in 430 years after the promise.
- [1 : 2 2] The law brings a curse. All who cannot keep the law are cursed. We find that in verse 10. And no one other than Christ has been able to keep the law.
- So we see that the law is not the answer. It did not replace God's promises to Abraham.
- You know, in the Galatian church, they began in faith. They started with faith. But they were considering turning back to the law.
- And so Paul has heard about this and he's written this letter to them to deal with this issue. And so he spent time in chapter 3 proving justification by faith, not by the law.
- that he used Abraham as an example. All throughout chapter 3, he mentions Abraham numerous times. Now it's a common theme in a number of Paul's letters to these different churches dealing with people that wanted to return to the law.
- [2 : 5 2] And so what really is the purpose of the law? This morning in our passage here, I want to look at two questions that come up concerning the law and the purpose of it.
- And then there's two examples of what the law looked like, how it operated. And then lastly, what is our state after the law?
- And so I did title the message this morning, The Purpose of the Law. Let's start by looking at verses 19 and 20.
- We have the two questions concerning the law. The first question, So the question, what purpose then does the law serve?
- If the law doesn't justify, why was it ever given? Well, our text tells us that it was added because of transgression.
- [4 : 2 6] Man's sin problem was growing and growing. Adam sinned first. In Noah's day, God saw that every intent of man's heart was only towards evil.
- And it continued in Moses' day. We have the descendants of Israel mumbling and complaining against God time after time.
- You know, the very people that God had called apart to be His chosen people group. They were rebelling against Him. And so something had to be done and the law was ushered in.
- Not to justify, but to reveal the true nature of sin. To show people the condition that they were in.

The law coming in, it didn't make matters any worse. You know, what the Israelites did with the law they were given was the problem.

[5 : 38] The law and the sacrificial system, that is what they clung to, not faithfulness to God. They completely missed the law's intent.

So what was the law's purpose? We have the word added. It was added because of transgressions.

Faith is the cure of our sin problem. And the law was designed to push us in that direction towards faith.

And so when we can clue in to the fact that we cannot keep the law, we are not able, it causes us to seek, if not the law, what then is the cure?

Faith is that cure. The law was added because of transgressions till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.

[6 : 50] The seed is mentioned in the promise made to Abraham by Christ, or to Abraham by God, that seed is Christ. And so the law was added till Christ should come.

He would fulfill the law, and He did that. So the law was always intended to be temporary.

When Christ came and He did what He must do, the law was fulfilled. Now on the cross, Christ said, it is finished. His work, what He came to do, it was completed.

He conquered sin. And on the resurrection morning, He conquered death as well when He left the grave. So He conquered sin and death.

And it is doable for us too, in Him. Not of ourselves, but in Him. The last part of verse 19, it says, it was appointed through angels by the hand of a meteor.

[8 : 10] So speaking of the law, I was appointed by angels, or through angels, by the hand of a mediator. And so this got me thinking a little bit.

When we read the account of the law being given, we don't hear that it's angels giving the law to Moses.

Moses goes up into Mount Sinai, and he meets with God, and God writes the laws on the tablets of stone and gives them to Moses.

And so, how was the law appointed through angels? But there are a few scriptures that do mention that or kind of point in that direction.

And so, I thought we would look at them this morning. We have Deuteronomy 33. Deuteronomy 33. Deuteronomy 33.

[9 : 34] So, Deuteronomy 33, verse 2. I'll read verse 1 as well.

Now, this is the blessing with which Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel before his death. And he said, the Lord came from Sinai and dawned on them from Seir.

He shone forth from Mount Paran. He came with ten thousands of saints. From his right hand came a fiery law for them. So, it talks about, you know, God coming and giving the law.

And there's this mention of ten thousands of saints that he came with. And so, coming with angels. another reference in Psalm, Psalm 68, Psalm 68, Psalm 68, verse 17.

The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of thousands.

[10 : 55] The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. So, a reference to Mount Sinai, where the law was given. And talking about the chariots of God.

Are twenty thousand, even thousands of thousands. And the Lord is among them, as he was in Sinai, in the holy place. So, there are references well of angels being there.

And so, going back to our text, law was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. A mediator being Moses.

And so, just a question, what comes to mind when we hear the word mediator? What does a mediator do?

Does anyone have an answer to that? Yes? Builds a bridge. Builds a bridge. Alright. He's a go-between, right? Mm-hmm. Alright.

[12 : 09] So, clearly then, if we have need of a mediator, there has to be an issue between two parties. There is disunity, right?

And so, when the law was given, it showed, there was a picture of the distance between the children of Israel and God.

They would not go up into the mountain. They were afraid. And they told Moses, you go and deal with God on our behalf and then you come back to us and you tell us what He said.

So, the distance between the children of Israel and God, you know, they were unfit to access God's presence. And so, a mediator was needed.

And that's where Moses' purpose there. But it was not so, it was not so in the promises that God made to Abraham.

[13 : 24] There was no mediator, there was no go-between. Abraham was faithful, he believed God, took Him for His word, and so he was fit to stand before God.

And God came and gave him those promises. God rewarded that faithfulness with promises and no mediator was needed.

And so, it continues on with the second question, verses 21 and 22.

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.

But the Scripture has confined all under sin that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

[14 : 30] So, is the law then against the promises of God? Does the law go against the promises that God made to Abraham? It says, certainly not. God forbid.

See, the law is not bad in and of itself. It sets the bar. It shows what God's standard is. The law was not added to give life.

It was to show mankind his sinfulness. To reveal the evil darkness that he walked in and to show the need of a Savior.

verse 22 says that, but the Scripture has confined all under sin.

And so, Scripture here is a reference to the whole teaching of the Old Testament concerning human sinfulness. You know, from Adam's sin in Genesis all the way through to Malachi's message of judgment to the Israelites, all of the Old Testament lays bare man's condition, how lost in sin he is.

[16 : 01] So, was the law against the promises of God? No. No. It pointed to the Savior. It pointed to Jesus Christ who is the seed in the promise to Abraham.

So, the law showed us, shows us that we couldn't do anything on our own. We needed help. There was a bar set so high we couldn't reach it.

We needed help. And so, to partake of the promises that were given to Abraham, we also needed to have faith as he did.

We had to put our faith in God. We had to have faith that the seed, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is indeed the Messiah, the promised one.

And if we put our faith in Him, in Christ, and we believe in Him, the promises that God gave to Abraham are given to us as well.

[17 : 14] So, the purpose of the law, it was added because of sin to point us to the Savior. the law. And so, Paul continues on here in our text and he gives two examples of how the law operated, what it looked like, something we could picture, make sense of.

And so, first of all, we have verse 23, but before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.

So, the first example is of the law as a guard. And it describes or paints a picture of our condition under the law.

the world was, everyone was imprisoned in bondage to sin, slaves of sin.

And so, the world is a picture, is pictured as, as a prison. And the law was our guard or jailer, we could say.

[18 : 37] And so, before faith, this was our condition. We were guilty of sin and we were slaves to it. We were imprisoned. We were awaiting death. The law made sure our place that we knew where we were.

And in this prison, we remained until our eyes were opened and we saw the light that there was freedom to be had. We could leave this prison cell behind.

When the gospel of faith was shared with us, a light shone into our otherwise dark prison cell. Jesus was there.

He was reaching out his hand to us, inviting us to step out into the light, to enjoy peace and freedom with him or in him.

[19 : 48] In the moment we surrendered, we stepped out in faith, believing in Christ Jesus, that cell door swung wide open, our chains fell away.

The guard outside of our prison door, gone. There was only Jesus who is the true light, as John talks about in his gospel.

What a freedom we experienced when we received Jesus into our hearts. The Galatians too, that is talking to our text was, this letter was written to, they had also experienced this freedom, as they stepped out in faith, and yet they were tempted to return to that guard, return to the law, to allow themselves to be secured again in those prison cells.

And so, I think there is a warning for us today, as we even, as there is here, to these Galatians.

You know, we share the same enemy as the Galatians did, the devil. We must be careful that we're not pulled into this same trap.

[21 : 18] The law had been added to reveal sin. It served its purpose. Christ came as promised. He was born under the law.

He fulfilled the law in sacrificing himself once for all. And so, if we are born again and we are free in Christ, we are no longer under the law.

we remain in the world, but we are not of the world. We have been set free.

Why would we return back to bondage? Our second example in verse 24, therefore, the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

So, the second example is that of a tutor or a schoolmaster or teacher. And so, in the Greek language, the word we translate into English as tutor, it had the meaning of a boy leader.

[22 : 36] That was the definition of the word in Greek. But in English, English, it is translated to tutor. And so, I think our English definition or English way of thinking of it may be a little bit off as to what was meant.

The Greek word would have more the meaning of someone who is hired. Let me back up a little bit here. And so, for us today, when we hear the word tutor, we could think of something as a piano instructor, right?

We bring our children to someone to teach them how to play the piano, so they spend an hour or two with this person every week or whatever to receive this training, right?

So, a tutor. But it's only occasionally or for a set period of time, right? And so, the Greek word would have more the meaning of someone that would have been hired by a family full-time to look after their child or their children.

And so, this person would go everywhere that the child went and would watch over everything that the child did to make sure it did nothing that it wasn't supposed to do.

[24 : 06] And it could also include either the tutor being the instructor or the teacher of this child or this person be responsible for bringing the child to school and made sure that the child was in school and was learning.

So, essentially raising up the child for the parents. And so, wherever you would see this child, you would see the tutor.

The child was never ever alone. The tutor was always around. And so, it almost sounds similar to a guard or a jailer, right?

There's no freedom. But it paints a good picture of the law, though. And it was always there.

And it also reveals man's condition. If we have a tutor, it means we are a child, childish in our ways and our thinking.

[25 : 18] There is still further development needed. We're not mature yet. and so, the law, it didn't only act as a guard or a jailer to restrain or to condemn us, but it was also put in place to progress us, right?

As I talked about, to point us to Christ. We needed to progress, not to stay right there, but to continue moving forward, to continue growing. we were not intended to stay in this state.

Just like children physically grow up, we are to grow and to mature into adulthood spiritually as well. So, the law, it pointed to Christ and its intent, its purpose was to guide man to him.

And so, if this happens and the tutor accomplishes what he is to do, the child has been taught and raised to maturity, the need for the tutor is no longer there.

And so, spiritually speaking, when a child matures to the point that he or she realizes the need of a savior, and when they put their faith in Christ Jesus, they are justified or declared righteous before God.

[26 : 51] And so, we see that the law does not give life. It is that tutor, that instructor to guide us to Christ, who is life.

And so, a question for us this morning. are we under guard or are we under a tutor? I trust that most of us here this morning are not.

And yet, if anyone is, if that freedom is not there, talk to someone who knows the Lord. Seek out a Christian friend, come talk to or talk to a pastor, there is freedom available.

And it doesn't cost a thing. It is free. And it brings freedom. So, thirdly, what is our state then after the law, after it has served its purpose and we move beyond?

So, what is our state after the law? Verse 25, verse 25, promise.

[28 : 46] So, faith has come. The law, as a guard, has had to free his prisoner. Or as a tutor, he has had to let go of his charge.

The child that he has watched over has matured and has come of age and no longer needs his service. We've come to the point, we have seen our need for the Savior.

We have responded to his call and we have put our faith in him. The guard, the tutor, no longer needed. They're gone.

God, God, we have done. God, we have that need to come. Why do we not have that need any longer? Because we are all sons of God because of our faith in Christ Jesus.

We are no longer children. We are sons of God. We have reached that level of maturity. maturity. There is still further maturing even after we become sons of God, but we have reached that level where the law is not needed any longer.

[30 : 07] So we have matured. And so what a blessing to be called sons of God, to experience this freedom in Christ.

the great God who reigns in heaven, who reigns eternally, He loves us so much as to call all of us who are in the faith, to call us His sons and His daughters.

And we in turn, we call Him Abba, Father. So praise God who is so gracious and so merciful.

faithful. And even here in our text we have the elements of the Great Commission evident.

In Matthew chapter 28 verses 19-20 we have them on the wall. It says, Go therefore and make disciples of all nations. nations. Now the fact that we are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, it means that someone has disciples us, has shared the gospel of faith with us.

[31 : 29] And so that command continues forward. It continues with us as well. There's others out there waiting for us to share the good news with them so that they too can experience this freedom.

Next we have baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Matthew is referring to water baptism and likewise Paul in our text also refers to water baptism when he writes of being baptized into Christ.

Water baptism was a command by Jesus as we see here in the Great Commission. He commanded it to his disciples and that command continues forward to us as well.

It is a step of obedience, publicly identifying with Christ, declaring to the world our allegiance with God or to God.

It continues teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. Our text here speaks of having put on Christ.

[32 : 45] So how do we put on Christ unless we know him and we know his ways? It means that we must be taught proper Christian character by other believers but ultimately through God's word as we ourselves dig into it and we spend more time in it and we read it for ourselves.

So being sons of God no longer under the law means complete freedom.

As our text talks about slave or free, male or female, these things mean nothing. No one is better than the other.

There are no ranks or no classes. There's nothing that you can do to make yourself better than anyone else. To God, the playing field is level.

Every son, every daughter is equally important to him. He has no favorites. He loves us all equally. Further, if we are Christ's, we are Abraham's seed, which makes us heirs according to God's promise to Abraham.

[34 : 13] We too are blessed. We too have an inheritance. So just a closing thought on this portion then, concerning the law, and having moved on from it, let's hold on to our faith.

If we have been born again, we do not need this tutor any longer. We do not need to be under guard. We have Christ.

He is the Word and He is the light. We are no longer under the law, God. And so let's not be tempted as the Galatians were, to allow ourselves to be brought back into bondage from what we have been freed from.

You know, as born-again believers, we are sons and daughters of the living God. We are saved by faith in His Son, Christ Jesus, and His Spirit indwells us.

We are free. Let's close in prayer. Heavenly Father, we bow before You this morning. Lord, thank You for Your grace and for Your mercy towards us.

[35 : 46] Lord, we thank You for the law that it showed us our need of a Savior, that it pointed to Christ Jesus. Lord, we realized that there was no way we could keep the law.

It brought a curse upon us, for we couldn't, we couldn't attain to it. And so we saw our need. And Lord, You were there waiting for us to respond to the gospel message.

Thank You for being there, for being patient with us. and thank You for setting us free. Lord, the chains are gone, the prison bars are gone, the guard is gone, the tutor who brought us up to that level of maturity where we sought You, that tutor too is gone.

We have matured. We have become sons and daughters, Your sons and daughters, by our faith in Your Son. And Lord, we too, we are heirs.

We have the promises that were given to Abraham so long ago. Those promises have not faded. They stand today as well.

[37 : 06] And they have been given to us. We too look forward to our inheritance of a home in heaven and ultimately eternal life with You.

We praise You, and we worship You for all eternity. So Lord, we just, we look forward to that day where we meet You face to face.

And we see You, our Father, in all Your glory. So Lord, just this morning, again, I just thank You for each one here this morning. I thank You for each one who has stepped out in faith, who has experienced this freedom and is walking in it today.

Lord, bless them for that step, for having come to You. And Lord, if there is anyone here present this morning who does not know You, who does not know this freedom, Lord, draw that individual.

Continue knocking on his or her heart. Lord, use the law to point them to Your Son.

[38 : 24] He is there waiting, offering salvation, freedom. Lord, just speak, speak to each one that does not know You.

And Lord, we know there's many who do not know You outside of these doors, out in the world, around us. Lord, You gave the commission to Your disciples to go out and to spread the gospel.

Lord, it still stands for us too. And so, throughout the week, Lord, as we go about things we do each day, the people we meet, Lord, help us to shine forth the light that is within us.

Help us to shine the light forward to the world. Lord, we just thank You for this day. Just ask that You continue going with us as we part from here this morning.

Thank You for all that You do. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.