

Sunday, January 31, 2010—Grace Life School of Theology—Understanding Galatians and the Law—Galatians 3:22-25

Galatians 3:22

- *“But the scripture hath concluded all under sin,”*
- This phrase is similar to what we saw in verse eight. Again God attributes his own attributes to his word. Things God is able to do are spoken of as being accomplished by the scriptures. God has design is for the living and written word to be equal.
- The specific portion of scripture that Paul is speaking about here is the law.
 - Romans 3:19-20, 23
- The word “concluded” here means to shut together.
 - Luke 5:6
 - Galatians 3:23
- The idea here is that the Mosaic Law completely enclosed all those who were under it in a sphere of guilt. The purpose of this in the context was to force recognition of the fact that they were disobedient sinners before God.
- *“that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.”*
- Once again in verse twenty two we see the subjective and objective forms of faith. The faith which belongs to Jesus Christ and our faith in him.
- Since Jesus Christ is the seed to whom the promise was made in (verse 16) and the law was temporary until the seed should come (verse 19) the spiritual blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant come to us through both the faithfulness of Christ and our faith in him.
- The ability of anyone to inherit salvation in any age depends upon the cross work of Christ. Not only is Paul explain how we get saved he is also explain how the saints from time past will receive their justification.
- Read pages 83-84 in Campbell’s commentary. See attached copies.

Galatians 3:23

- *“But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.”*
- Paul in including himself with his Jewish readership once again with his use of the word “we.”
- In the context, “faith” in this verse is referring the Jesus Christ.

- The law held Israel in solitary confinement, “shut up” until Christ the seed came.
- This verse declares that before the principle of faith for salvation was made known, Israel was kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed.
- Paul was the first to say that faith provide escape from the law.
 - Acts 16:31
 - Romans 3:28
- Paul says that because now that Christ has been made manifest the righteousness without the law is manifested.
 - Romans 3:21
- “Thus, before this faith in Christ actually came, Paul says we were shut up in prison, locked up until the time of the faith which should afterward be revealed. It is important to that “faith” is used with the definite article. People exercised faith in the Old Testament times and before, but they did not exercise faith in Jesus Christ. The law held sway until the faith in Christ had come. The Person of the crucified and resurrected Christ was not the object of faith until after Christ actually came and performed His work.” (Baker, 48)
- Read pages 84-85 in Campbell’s commentary. See attached copies.

Galatians 3:24

- *“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”*
- The law was a teacher, and everyday it taught the same lesson: “you are a sinner.” It kept the curriculum the same for 1400 years of history and absolutely prevented any man from justifying himself.
- Historically the schoolmaster was the one responsible for supervising the conduct and morals of Greek and Roman boys up the age of manhood. The schoolmaster had to enforce obedience to the moral codes. Therefore, the schoolmaster had to be strict, stern, and severe.
- For Israel the law served as her schoolmaster. It kept Israel under the stern and strict requirements of the law.
- Again we see that the law was only supposed to be a temporary thing. We saw this last week in verse nineteen.
- Notice how this ties the phrase “before faith came” from verse 23 with Jesus Christ.

Galatians 3:25

- *“But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”*

- Has Christ come? Yes. Therefore, the believer is no longer under the law (Romans 6:14), for we are dead to the law by our unity with Christ (Romans 6:8-16). Believers have no relation with the law and consequently, any attempt to use it in our justification or sanctification is worthless (Galatians 5:4).
- When people go back and try to follow the law they are functioning like children.

The Law is good when it is "properly used" (*πομπικως χρησται*), i.e., lawfully used according to its *intended purpose* (1 Tim. 1:8; Rom. 7:12, 16). Paul never takes an antinomian attitude toward the Law of Moses; however, he does strongly condemn the *misuse* and *misapplication* of the *Mosaic Law*.

If the Law of Moses had the "power" (*δυναμειος*), *dynamic*, and *ability* to make men spiritually *alive*; then the source of righteousness would be the Law. According to this verse *righteousness* and *Divine life* are inseparable; the presence of righteousness would indicate the presence of life.

In the Book of Romans Paul says: "For Moses writes of the righteousness that is out of the law, that the man who has done it shall live by it" (Rom. 10:5). The problem is that due to the weakness of the flesh (Rom. 8:3) *no man has gained righteousness and life through the Law of Moses*, for no one has perfectly kept the Law, but all men have fallen under the curse of the Law (Rom. 3:10).

Paul's argument is that if the Law had been able to make men spiritually alive; then the Law would be the source of righteousness. Paul and Peter both recognized that the Law of Moses never justified nor made any man righteous (cf. 2:16); therefore it never imparted life to any man. In other words, since the Law was not able to identify men with the life and righteousness of God, and this was *never the purpose for which it was given*, there had to be *another source of life and righteousness*, namely, *the faithful Person of Jesus Christ who died on Calvary's Cross* as our sin-substitute (cf. 2:16).

22. "But the Scripture shut up all things under sin, in order that the promise out of the faithfulness of Jesus Christ might be given to those believing."

The word "Scripture" (*γραφή*) is used here with reference to the Mosaic Law. Paul says that the Scripture (Law) "shut up" (*συκελευσεν*), *locked up completely*, and *enclosed all things* "under" (*υπο*), under the umbrella, and *subject to the covering* of sin.

Instead of the Mosaic Law giving life and righteousness, it made the Jews under it *aware* of their sin (cf. Rom. 7:10). Paul says, "But I did not know sin except through the law, for I did not know just except the law said, you shall not lust" (Rom. 7:7).

The Law served as a Divine Standard declaring what men should do and should not do. Failure to meet this standard, to carry out the commandments contained in the Law, was disobedience to the Word of God given to Israel for that time and produced a *sin-consciousness*.

The Law made the fact obvious that men are sinners by nature. Its purpose was to make sin appear as sin and to impress upon the minds of men the *exceeding sinfulness of sin* (Rom. 7:13; cf. Rom. 3:19-20).

Thus we see that the basic purpose of the Mosaic Law was *not* to produce life and righteousness in those under it, but to shut them up unto a consciousness of sin, in order that the *faithfulness of Jesus Christ might be the basis* for giving the Abrahamic promise. The promises made to Abraham involved counting faith for righteousness (3:6); the fact that the Gentiles would be blessed with him on a *faith basis* (3:8-9); and this was to be accomplished through his faithful seed, Jesus Christ (3:16, 19).

The Mosaic Law completely enclosed all those under it in a sphere of *guilt*, in a sphere in which they were forced to recognize that they were *disobedient sinners* before God. The purpose of the Law in this was that the promise might be given to those believing.

In literally following what the Scripture says here we have two distinct thoughts: (1) that the source (*ek*), the basis for giving the promise was the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, the summation of which is His *obedience until death* on the cross (cf. Phil. 2:8; Rom. 5:10), and (2) the promise is given to a specific group of people, namely, "those believing" (*τοῖς πιστευουσιν*), *those trusting*, i.e., to those identified with the Seed, Jesus Christ, through faith (cf. Acts 16:31).

The *substitutionary death* of the faithful Person of Jesus Christ is the source of our justification (cf. Rom. 3:24-25; 5:9). Exercising our God-given faith in Jesus Christ is the means by which we are justified and made partakers of the Abrahamic promise (cf. John 6:44; Eph. 2:8; 1 Tim. 1:14).

23. "But before faith came we were being guarded under the law, being shut up unto the faith about to be revealed."

The statement *before faith came* indicates that there was a definite time when God began dealing with men in a different way. There was a *change* in His method of relating to men, for *faith is now* the key to a right relationship to God (cf. Rom. 1:17; 5:2; 2 Cor. 1:24; 5:7).

We have already observed that Abraham believed what God said, and it was counted unto him for righteousness (3:6). Furthermore, the Scripture foresaw that at a given time God would begin justifying the Gentiles by faith; therefore extending the Abrahamic faith-blessing to believers in this present Church age (3:8-9).

We also have other predictive statements in the Old Testament that imply or set forth the principle of justifica-

tion by faith. David spoke of the "blessedness of the man to whom God counts righteousness apart from works" (Ps. 32:1-2; Rom. 4:6). Habakkuk also declared that "the just (righteous) shall live by faith" (Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17). The Apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, uses this Old Testament evidence to support the fact that today, during this present Church age, God is justifying sinners by faith in Jesus Christ!

Prior to this age, in which God is pouring out "the exceeding riches of his grace upon us in Christ Jesus," (Eph. 2:7) the Jews were "guarded" (*εφρουρουμεθα*), *protected*, and *confined* under the Mosaic Law. This being locked up under the Law was *preparing* them for the faith that was "about" (*μελλοντων*), *at the point of*, and *on the brink of* being revealed. The present participle (*συνκλειμενοι*) suggests that this was a continuous confinement under the law, which was for a *limited duration*, i.e., only up to the point of time when faith would be "revealed" (*αποκαλυφθηται*), *uncovered*, and would become God's governing principle.

The Greek word "*εφρουρουμεθα*" implies that the Mosaic Law was keeping watch over, preserving, and restraining the Jewish nation until the era of faith came. Paul uses this same word in Philipians 4:7 in explaining the guarding, preserving, and stabilizing effect that the peace of God has on the hearts and minds of believers, for he says, "the peace of God, which is beyond all understanding shall *guard* (*φρουρησει*) your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Peter likewise uses this same word (*φρουρουμενους*) in speaking of how God's power *preserves* believers, for he says, "those being guarded by the power of God through faith unto a salvation prepared to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5). Thus we see that according to the