

## 10. Learning the Purpose of the Law

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn why Christ took our curse. We saw that Christ took our curse so that He can place His righteousness on us at the moment that we accept the payment of Christ for our sin by faith. We saw that no one can pay the penalty for their own sin by their own works or by keeping the law. That raises the question, what is the purpose of the law then? That will be the focus of our topic today.

Since no person can be made righteous by the law, we need to help our children understand the purpose of the law. Galatians 3:19-20 says, “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. Now a mediator does not *mediate* for one *only*, but God is one.” We saw in our last topic that God gave the law to Moses 430 years after He gave the covenant with the promise of Christ to Abraham. Since God did give the law to Moses, that means that God did have a purpose for the law. We want to help our children learn to explain to others that the purpose of the law was to show us that every person is guilty of sin. We want to help them understand that as we help people become aware of their sin, that knowledge is what gives some people a desire to receive forgiveness of sin by faith.

We also want to help our children understand that the law was given until the coming of the Seed. We saw in the last topic that the Seed is Christ. Before the coming of Christ, sin could not be removed. Hebrews 10:4 says, “For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.” In contrast, John 1:29 says, “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’” Sacrifices could never take away sin so that was why it was necessary for Christ to come. Hebrews 9:12 says, “Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” Christ offered Himself to take away sin which the law could never do. That was due to the fact that the purpose of the law was to show that all are guilty so that all will realize that they need to place their faith in Christ for their sin to be forgiven.

God is a holy God and cannot look at sin with favor. As a result, it was necessary for Christ to come as a mediator between God and man. 1 Timothy 2:5-6 says, “For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” Since the law could not bring us back to God but only show that we are guilty of sin, Christ came to be our Mediator to bring us back to God.

That does not mean that the law is against the promises of God. Galatians 3:21-22 says, “*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.” God makes it very clear that the law was not against His promises. We saw that the purpose of the law is to show us that every person is guilty of sin. Then, people will realize they can have their sin forgiven by repentance for the sin of unbelief and faith in the fact that Christ shed His blood to pay the penalty for sin.

When God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden, God told Adam in Genesis 2:16-17, “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’” God told Adam that he was free to do everything except one thing. God said that the one thing would cause him to die the day he did it. Here, we see that man was given great freedom because he was free to do anything that he chose except one thing. Even though Adam and Eve had such great freedom, they chose to do the one thing that God had forbidden.

Romans 5:12 tells us, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.” However, God had warned Adam in advance that the consequence of that one sin was death that very day. We want to help our children learn to explain the difference between physical death and spiritual death. Physical death is the separation of our soul and spirit from our body. Spiritual death is separation of man from God. The law helps people realize that they are separated from God. Adam and Eve experienced spiritual death, separation from God, the moment they committed sin.

In fact, when man sinned, it changed his relationship with God, his relationship within and his relationship with others.

#### **Relationship with God – separation**

Genesis 3:8 – “And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.”

#### **Relationship with himself – fear, guilt and shame**

Genesis 3:10 – “So he said, ‘I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid (fear) because I was naked (shame); and I hid myself’” (guilt).

#### **Relationship with others – blame**

Genesis 3:12 – “Then the man said, ‘The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.’”

Those five things – separation, fear, guilt, shame, and blame – are the five things that have motivated every person since Adam.

Galatians 3:23 says, “But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.” The law is like a person guarding a prisoner. The law shows all people they are guilty of sin and in bondage. Hebrews 2:14-15 says, “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” However, most people do not realize that they have been controlled throughout their lives by that fear of death.

God wanted people to realize that they were in bondage through the law so that people would realize their need to turn to Christ in faith. Galatians 3:24-25 says, “Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.” Here, we see that the law is our tutor to bring us to Christ. The word that

is translated “tutor” is only used three times in the New Testament. Two of those three times are in these two verses. As we help our children to grow in their understanding of how this word is used, it will help them to understand the freedom that they have received in Christ. This will help to prevent them from being deceived by false teachers similar to those who were trying to deceive the new Gentile Christians by telling them that they have to keep the Jewish law in order to be saved and in order to grow spiritually.

The third place that this word is used is in 1 Corinthians 4:15 where we read, “For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you do not have* many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.” In this verse, we see that the word that is translated “tutor” in Galatians 3:24-25 is translated “instructors”. In the Greek culture, an instructor was a slave in a rich family who raised a child for the father. Such an instructor raised a child by severe discipline, instead of love. Paul was pointing out the fact that the law was the severe discipline that God had to use to cause people to realize their need for Christ.

The statement in Galatians 3:24-25 shows that the law has completed its purpose once the law has brought us to Christ. Once we come to Christ, we see that we are justified by faith. The word “justify” means *to declare righteous*. Christ declared us righteous at the moment that we repented of our sin of unbelief and placed our faith in the fact that Christ paid the penalty for our sin by shedding his blood on the cross as a blood covenant. Since a blood covenant is an everlasting covenant, the righteousness that the Father places on us at the moment of repentance and faith is eternal.

One of the things we see, is that we are no longer under the law once we have received forgiveness of sin and eternal life from Christ. As a result, we need to learn how to live a completely new life. In the coming topics, we will see that we cannot live this new life in our own strength just as we cannot be saved by our own works. We will see that the Lord gives us Biblical principles that will transform our lives and fill us with boldness as we learn to yield our lives to the Holy Spirit so that He can work in our lives and through our lives.

The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ and He is the only One that can change and transform our lives and give both we and our children boldness to serve the Lord. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to experience this transformation in their own lives so that they can show others how to be transformed also. As our children learn how Christ transforms their lives, they will see that the Lord has uniquely designed their lives for the service that He has prepared for them. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your physical and spiritual children learn how the Lord has prepared their lives to be led by the purpose that the Lord has for their lives.