

THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW

Galatians 3:23-25 ... "But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. 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."

The law – otherwise known as the Ten Commandments – is often misunderstood. Some Christian sects, believe that the law is the governing authority of God over us, and they strictly attempt (and fail) to obey every law. Jews who have not accepted Christ as their Messiah, also live under the law. Many Christians ignore the law entirely when they find it too uncomfortable. Prior to the arrival of Christ, man did not live by faith; his only option was to obey the laws of God. And even then, the law did not save man. It only showed us that we need a savior.

Our passage today from Paul's letter to the church in Galatia, explains this. Please allow me to paraphrase it to clarify Paul's instruction: Before Christ came, the Ten Commandments taught man what God expected and man was bound to obey those laws. There was no faith involved, just stubborn obedience. After the arrival of Christ and his death on the cross, the law now reveals our sin and points us to the Savior, who alone is able to save us. Since Christ is now the source of our faith, we have his Holy Spirit living in us and guiding us daily, which enables us to respect the law.

The law can still help us to be better Christians by honoring our parents, avoiding stealing and lying, and more. Jesus said in Matthew 5:17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill." And Paul tells us in Galatians 5:14 "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" Our responsibility today as followers of Christ is to love our neighbors as much as we love ourselves. Is that possible? Under your own power, I doubt that you can love everyone you meet. Some people are cruel or mean, others are dishonest and immoral, while others may steal from us or physically harm us or our loved ones. Only through the power of God's Holy Spirit living in us, can we love the unlovable; love those who despise and hurt us.

God's laws cannot save you. They exist to reveal your need for a Savior. The laws of God exist to send you running to Christ and accepting his sacrifice on your behalf. That is the purpose of the law.

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