

## Read with Understanding: Galatians 3:19-29

### Instructions

Carefully read through Galatians 3:19-29 and then attempt to answer the questions which follow.

### Commentary: The purpose of the Law 3:19-22

In the previous 18 verses Paul has built a logical argument to rebuke the false teachings of the Judaizers, supporting justification through the Promise given to Abraham. In view of the foregoing argument, Paul enters a new phase of this argument answering the question, “did the Law have any value?” The answer being an emphatic yes! Paul expands on God’s purpose, not cause, for the Law.

1. What is the difference between transgression and sin?

**Hint:** we need to understand the meaning of these words in Greek. The word “sin” in Greek is *hamartia* which means to “miss the mark”, implying a deviation off the correct course of action. “Transgression” in Greek is *parabasis* which means “to step beyond”, implying stepping beyond an established, fixed limit.

In v19 Paul speaks of angels ordaining (handing down) the Law to Moses. This belief is held in Jewish tradition, even though it is not explicitly mentioned in the narrative account in Exodus 20.

Read Acts 7:53, Hebrews 2:2 and Deuteronomy 33:2

2. Do the above verses support this claim?

In v19 the word “seed” in Greek can be both plural (for descendants) or singular (for an individual descendant).

3. In the context of v19, is the word “seed” plural or singular?

4. What is the purpose of a “mediator” spoken in v20?

**Hint:** In Greek this word means “middle” or “in the midst”.

5. What is it that the Law cannot give us in v21?

In verse 22 Paul tells us that the “promise by faith in Jesus Christ” can only be given to those “that believe”. This word “that believe” in Greek is in the perfect tense, expressing a continuous or repeated action.

6. What does the perfect tense therefore indicate about a saving belief in Jesus?
7. How does the answer to question 6 rebuke the belief of modern day Judaizer’s that claim you can lose your salvation?

### **Commentary: The conditions of people under Law vs faith 3:23-29**

In this section Paul gives further consideration to the place of the law in the divine economy by showing the relation between law and faith as two distinct dispensations. Paul contrasts the age of the Law and the age of Grace by picturing Israel before the advent of Christ as a child and the Church as an adult child. The coming of faith (v. 23) is synonymous with the coming of Christ in Paul's view of salvation history.

In v23 Paul makes the statement “But before faith came”. In Greek the word “faith” is preceded by the definite article. A better English translation would read “But before the faith came”.

8. Who is “the faith” that Paul is speaking about?

**Hint:** The answer is in v22

9. What imagery in v23 does the word “kept” give us about being under the Law?

**Hint:** The word “kept” in Greek means to be “under lock and key”

Read v24 and fill in the blanks.

10. The ..... has become a tutor (schoolmaster) to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by .....

In v26 Greek word translated "sons of God" refers to adult children.

11. What does this imply about the expectations of the child of God under the promise?

Read I Corinthians 12:13 and answer the following question.

12. Is v27 talking about water baptism or baptism of the Holy Spirit?

13. What is Paul's summary in v28 about membership into the body of Christ?

Read Genesis 15:3 & 22:18

14. What is the promised inheritance for the Gentiles under the promise?