

Title: The Law's Expiration Date: Paul's Fifth Defense of Justification by Faith (Part 1)

Text: Galatians 3:19-22

Central Idea: The Law expired in Christ

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### **[i] Scripture Reading and Prayer**

**19 Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, until the seed had come to whom the promise had been made, having been put into place through angels by the agency of a mediator. 20 Now a mediator is not for one [person], but God is one. 21 Now is the Law against the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law was given that was able to give life, righteousness would indeed have been by the Law. 22 But the Scripture has imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. 23 But before the faith came we were confined under law, having been imprisoned until the coming faith was later to be revealed. 24 Therefore, the Law has become our guardian until Christ, so that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.**

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### **[ii] Title / Main Idea**

We're looking at ==>

*The Law's Expiration Date: Paul's Fifth Defense of Justification by Faith / The Law expired in Christ*

### **[iii] Not antinomianism (lawlessness)**

We're talking about t/entire Mosaic syst. given to Israel at Mt. Sinai.

We're still under laws, specifically, "The Law of Christ." Beyond that, t/Bible tells us what things please / displease God. How we are to live our lives in t/pwr of t/HS.

Glimpse of that in chapt. 5 when we're shown what it means to live by t/Spirit vs. living by t/flesh (sin).

5:14ff. 14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." 16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Certainly, G'sW gives us parameters w/i which we operate. Not everything in t/Bible directly applies to us today.

True of t/Mosaic System. It was given to a partic. ppl. (Israel) at a part. time (after t/Exodus) and place (namely, Mt. Sinai). 613 Laws . . .

Mandatory Circumcision

Wearing of phylacteries on t/arm and forehead

Keeping Sabbath & Dietary Laws

Observing Feasts and festivals

Establishing cities of refuge

NOT wearing garments mixed of wool & linen

Death penalty for things like blasphem/adultery/homo/beastialty

SACRIFICES FOR SIN

Most of these things were shadows that were fulfilled in t/reality of X. That Law to a partic. ppl had an expiration date.

*The Law expired in Christ.*

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**[iv] This section connects to what we looked at in vv. 15-18**

There Paul emphasized that JC is t/seed (descendant) who fulfills t/unconditional promise G. made to Abraham.

16 Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but as referring to one, “and to your seed,” who is Christ.

Puritan William Perkins:

“The promises made to Abraham are first made to Christ, and then in Christ to all that believe in him.” [William Perkins, A

Commentary on Galatians, Pilgrim Classic Commentaries, ed. Gerald T. Sheppard (London, 1617; repr.

New York: Pilgrim, 1989), 184]

17 Now this is what I am saying: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise.

T/Law came 100s of years after G's covt. w/Abraham. T/Law given thru Moses didn't nullify t/promise which was fulfilled in X & received by faith.

What did we see earlier in chapt. 3?

6 . . . Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

7 Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.

8 The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU."

T/Law didn't change that.

18 For if the inheritance comes from the Law, it no longer comes from a promise; [mutually exclusive] but God graciously gave it to Abraham by a promise.

Rom. 11:6: "And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace"

**[v] You can hear the Judaizers groaning at this point**

"Paul, you're demeaning t/Law. If it's all about t/promise to A., why did G. bother giving Israel t/Law in t/1st place?"

I like t/way Timothy George frames t/? ==>

“If we are not justified by law, if our receiving the Holy Spirit had nothing to do with the law, if Christ was cursed because of the law, if our very inheritance depends on grace and promise not on works and law, then [“why the Law?”] Has Paul painted himself into a theological corner? Has Paul so totally dismissed the law that it no longer has any place within God’s overall redemptive scheme?” [Timothy George, Galatians,

vol. 30, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 252]

Paul is a step ahead (1st 4 words of v. 19) ==>

**19a Why the Law then?...**

That’s t/? he answers in this section of Galatians.

## **I. The Purpose and Duration of the Law (3:19–25)**

(6 of 7 points)

### **A. The Law was Given on Account of Sin (3:19a)**

**19b ...It was added because of transgressions,...**

#### **1. What’s that about?**

**19b ...It was added because of transgressions,...**

#### **a. There’s debate as to what exactly Paul means**

Rather than lose you in t/weeds, suffice to say that t/Law was given to prevent sin & to reveal sin (not only reasons, others such as t/fact that t/Law demonstrated t/holiness of G. & kept Israel sep. from t/pagan nations around her).

But preventing and revealing sin are 2 big ones.

**(1) Several times we see new laws added subsequent to Israel’s failures**

Our 1st parents had 1 law ... not eat from t/tree of t/KofG&E.

From that point on, other laws were added because of sin.

Turn t/clock forward to Israel, a new nation freshly liberated from t/Exodus from Egypt. This nation needed laws as a theocracy. Moral / civil / ceremonial laws.

Laws were given at Sinai, but then more laws were added—often because of Israel’s repeated failures.

That’s t/way it works: you add rules following misbehavior. You’ve a child who misbehaves, you take away liberties & add rules in attempt to rein in bad behavior. T/worse t/beh.,t/more rules.

As it related to Israel, t/more they sinned & were unfaithful, t/more Laws were added.

As 1 writer observes ==>

“In [this] case the law would have primarily a preventive function: the law was promulgated to curb or hold in check misdeeds that were already being done, in other words, to keep a bad situation from getting even worse.” [Timothy George,

Galatians, vol. 30, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994),

253]

Another chimes in ==>

“Every new addition to the law code follows an event of disobedience in the narrative describing Israel’s history at this point. So ‘transgressions’ led to or caused the addition of the law.” [Murphy, 135]

This is a corrective use of t/Law.  
It was added to correct bad behavior.

Beyond that, we would not know t/specifics of sin if there were no laws.

Rom. 3:20b ....through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

**(2) The Law also demonstrates our inability to keep it**  
Reveals our sin. It leads us to X who is t/only remedy for sin.  
The Law works with grace.

Ryken uses this analogy ==>

“For two glorious summers, the Chicago Cubs taught baseball fans the fundamentals of Reformation theology. First the Cubbies made a trade for Vance Law and started him at third base. Then a few months later, marvelous to say, they brought first baseman Mark Grace up from the minor leagues. There they were, right next to each other in the batting order: Law and Grace. They were in the proper order, too, first Grace, batting in the fifth position, and then Law. For as Paul explained to the Galatians, God gave grace to Abraham before he gave Moses the law. And there they stood on the baseball diamond—Grace and Law—holding down the opposite corners of the infield. ==>

Opposing batters would smash the ball to third, where Law would knock it down and throw it over to first for the out. Reformation theology in action: Law to Grace to retire the side. The apostle Paul never had to suffer through a long

losing season at Wrigley Field, but he would have loved Chicago's theology. Law and grace are not opponents; they are teammates working together for the salvation of God's people. The law leads to grace, which is to be found only in Christ."

[Philip Graham Ryken, *Galatians*, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, *Reformed Expository Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005), 130–

131]

### **(3) The Law also multiplies sin**

Rom. 5:20 The Law came in so that the transgression would increase . . .

More laws means you have more opportunity to break them. T/Law given to Israel had over 600 laws—that's lots of laws to break. Most of those Laws didn't exist before Moses.

"One purpose of the law, then, is not preventive but provocative. Rather than preventing transgression, the law actually provokes people to sin. By doing so, it does not make things better, but makes a bad situation even worse. . . . God did not give the law to reveal the way to be justified; he gave it to disclose the evil power of sin." [Philip Graham Ryken, *Galatians*, 131–132]

"Therefore," wrote Martin Luther, "the true function and the chief and proper use of the Law is to reveal to man his sin, blindness, misery, wickedness, ignorance, hate and contempt of God, death, hell, judgment, and the well-deserved wrath of God." [cited in Ryken]



Paul calls t/Law “a ministry of death” in 2 Cor 3.  
Like t/glory on t/face of Moses, it has “faded away.”

On t/other hand, t/N.C. inaugurated by X is marked by life, justification, & a radiance of “ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” [Timothy George, Galatians, vol.

30, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 257–258]

We don’t need laws written on stone like Israel.  
Thru t/new birth our hearts are receptive to t/Spirit working  
thru t/Word to guide & instruct us.

### ***I. The Purpose and Duration of the Law (3:19–25)***

#### ***A. The Law was Given on Account of Sin (3:19a)***

#### **B. The Law was Given Until Christ (3:19b)**

**1. This speaks to the temporary nature of the Law (“until”)  
19a/b Why the Law then? It was added because of  
transgressions, UNTIL the seed had come to whom the  
promise had been made . . .**

**a. Who is “the seed” to “whom the promise was made?”**  
16 Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and his seed.  
He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but as  
referring to one, “and to your seed,” who is Christ.

**a. The word “until” in v. 19 speaks of time**  
T/Law given thru M. to Israel was added BC of transgr.  
UNTIL X came to whom t/promise to A. had been made.

Just as t/Law had a point of origin on Mt. Sinai, so also it  
had a point of termination—Mt. Calvary.

**C. The Law was Secondary to the Promise (3:19c-20)**  
19c . . . having been put into place through angels by the agency of a mediator.

**1. That the Law was given through angels was common Jewish thought**

There's some bibl. precedent, such as in Dt. 33:2 where we read that G. was accompanied by 10k angels in giving t/Law.

Stephen referred to this tradition in his sermon to t/Jews ==> Acts 7:53 you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it."

**2. The "mediator" (μεσίτης) Paul refers to is "Moses"**  
Lev. 26:46 These are the statutes and ordinances and laws which the LORD established between Himself and the sons of Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai.

19c [the Law was] . . . put into place through angels by the agency of a mediator [Moses].

***C. The Law was Secondary to the Promise (3:19c-20)***

**3. That comes out in verse 20**

20 Now a mediator is not for one [person], but God is one.

**a. This verse has been called one of the most difficult in Scripture**

Lightfoot reports that in his day "the number of interpretations of this passage is said to mount up to 250 or 300." May be hyperbole.

**(1) I don't think it's really that complicated**

**(a) Look at both verses together**

**19 Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, until the seed had come to whom the promise had been made, having been put into place through angels by the agency of a mediator. 20 Now a mediator is not for one [person], but God is one.**

What Paul is saying here is that t/M.C. involved a mediator (Moses). A mediator implies mediation which implies more than 1 person. Moses mediated a cond. covt. between G. on t/one hand, & t/nation of Israel on t/other.

It was a bilateral covt. that could be (and was) broken.

When Paul adds in v. 20 ==>

**20b ...but God is one.** (alluding to Deut. 6:4)

He's referring to t/unmediated A.C. (vv. 15-18). That covt., which centered on X, was unilateral / unconditional. We looked at that last time. All Abraham had to do was believe. T/covt. w/Israel was about doing. It was broken by Israel & temporary. T/covt. w/Abraham was about believing. It was fulfilled in JC & t/N.C. centered on Him.

Douglas Moo: "The very existence of a mediator in the giving of the law implies an involvement on the human side that stands in contrast to the gift-character of the promise, suggested . . . by the confession that God is one."

[Douglas J. Moo, Galatians, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic,

2013), 237]

As Stephen Neill comments, “The promise came to Abraham firsthand from God; and the Law comes to the people third-hand—God—the angels—Moses the mediator—the people.”

[Stephen C. Neill, *Paul to the Galatians* (Lutterworth, UK: World Christian Books, 1958), 44]

Why ==>

***C. The Law was Secondary to the Promise (3:19c-20)***

T/Law was mediated / conditioned on performance.

T/Promise was unconditionally received by faith.

Law was temporarily given until t/promise, JC, came.

*The Law expired in Christ.*

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If t/Law was secondary to t/promise given to A., then t/Law must be CONTRARY to those promises, right?

That’s where Paul goes next. He asks==>

**21a Now is the Law against the promises of God? May it never be!**

4th point ==>

**D. The Law was not Contrary to the Promises (3:21a)**

21b ...May it never be!... (μὴ γένοιτο.)

**a. Distinctly Pauline expression (he uses it 13 of 15 occurrences)**

**(1) We saw it in 2:17**

2:17 . . . is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be!

**(2) Here:**

**21a Now is the Law against the promises of God? . . .**

21b ...**May it never be!**... (μὴ γένοιτο.)

### (3) Why?

BC t/Law had a diff. purpose. 2 diff. things going on.

“It was not opposed to God’s promises, for it operated in the economy of God on a different level or plane than did God’s promises.” [Richard N. Longenecker, Galatians, 145]

The Law/law is good for what the Law/law is good for!

1 Timothy 1:5–10 5 But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. 6 For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, 7 wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions. 8 But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, 9 realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers 10 and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching,

#### **b. Paul drills down on this in Romans 7:7–13**

7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, “YOU SHALL NOT COVET.” 8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the

Law sin is dead. 9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; 10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; 11 for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

**19 Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, until the seed had come to whom the promise had been made, having been put into place through angels by the agency of a mediator.**

12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. 13 Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

Certain tools are for certain purposes. If I want to drive in a nail, I don't use a pair of pliers, I use a hammer. The purpose of the Law was not to bring life. 5th point ==>

### **E. The Law Could not Give Life (3:21b)**

**21b ...For if a law was given that was able to give life, righteousness would indeed have been by the Law.**

#### **1. The Law was not meant for life (eternal life)**

That's t/realm of promise.

**2. Here in v. 21 there's no definite article before the word "law"**

21b ...For if a law was given that was able to give life...

**a. No “law” can produce life — “any God-given law”**

**(1) ‘Life’ in Paul’s thought is ‘spiritual life’**

2 Cor. 3:6 [God] made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Jesus in John 6:63 “It is the Spirit who gives life...”

“Life” stands in antithesis to “death” w/which t/Law is assoc.

“The Torah cannot “make alive” in the sense of opening its adherents up to living a new kind of existence in the here and now and living an eternal life beyond death, beyond God’s judgment. . . This was simply never its purpose. It should be noted that Paul’s claim runs directly against contemporary Jewish views concerning the Torah.” [deSilva in A Handbook on the Greek Text]

As another writer notes ==>

“To find righteousness through the Law is “Like the Israelites in Egypt, we are commanded to make bricks without straw.” We don’t have t/ability to be perfectly holy. But that wasn’t t/Law’s ultimate purpose. [cited by Timothy George,

Galatians, vol. 30, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 261]

In fact, 6th point ==>

**F. The Law Imprisons Everything Under Sin (3:22)**

**22 But the Scripture has imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.**

**1. Again we see the contrast between the Law and the Promise**

**a. Here Paul says:**

**22 ...the Scripture has imprisoned everything under sin...**

**(1) Here Paul refers to “the Scripture”**

Does he have in mind a certain Script? I don't think so.

I think he's referring to t/Script. in general.

We learn from t/Old and New testaments that we are sinners without hope apart from a Redeemer (the “seed”).

Rom 3:23 ...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

“All” — This is true for t/Jews, who have t/law of Moses, & also for Gentiles, who have G's law written on their hearts (Rom. 2:14–15).

True for all of us who have a knowledge of t/Bible.

From Gen. 3 to Rev. 22 we see t/devastating effects of sin & t/ultimate hope we have in t/promised “seed” JC.

**22a But the Scripture has imprisoned everything under sin...**

**2. The word I translated “everything” is a neuter noun**

Not just people but “everything.” When Adam fell he brought all creation crashing down around him.



Romans 8:19–23 19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

Jesus died to redeem everything!

### **3. Paul uses a picturesque word in verse 22 to describe this**

#### **a. συγκλείω**

This verb refers to “catching something by enclosing it.” Used of catching fish in a net. Also used in t/sense of “imprisonment” — confining prisoners in a cell/dungeon.

“Imagine a number of men in chains, all under sentence of death, some of whom are each day butchered in the sight of the others; those remaining see their own condition in that of their fellows, and looking at each other with grief and despair await their turn. This is an image of the human condition.” [Pascal, Blaise. *Pensées* (Penguin Classics) (p. 137). Penguin Books Ltd. Kindle Edition]

**22 ...the Scripture has imprisoned everything under sin...**

#### **4. But there's a purpose for all of this (v. 22b)**

**22b ...so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.**

##### **a. It goes back to the promise given to Abraham**

3:8-9 8 The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU.” 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

13-14 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE”— 14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

**22b ...so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.**

#### **5. The word “believe” is a present active participle**

Present tense: continue in faith (as opposed to forsaking the gospel which Paul feared t/Galatians were doing by going back to the Law of death.

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Calvin (1854: 68) remarks about this verse==>

“This sentence is full of the highest consolation. It tells us that, wherever we hear ourselves condemned in Scripture, there is help provided for us in Christ, if we betake ourselves to him. We are lost, though God were silent: why then does

he so often pronounce that we are lost? It is that we may not perish by everlasting destruction, but, struck and confounded by such a dreadful sentence, may by faith seek Christ, through whom we ‘pass from death unto life.’” [cited in Moo, 240]

Luther said, “God wounds in order to heal; he kills in order to make alive.” [121 LW 26.348]

God wounds thru law; He heals and makes alive thru t/promise: JC / faith in Him.

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***I. The Purpose and Duration of the Law (3:19–25)***

***A. The Law was Given on Account of Sin (3:19a)***

***B. The Law was Given Until Christ (3:19b)***

***C. The Law was Secondary to the Promise (3:19c-20)***

***D. The Law was not Contrary to the Promises (3:21a)***

***E. The Law Could not Give Life (3:21b)***

***F. The Law Imprisons Everything Under Sin (3:22)***

*The Law expired in Christ.*

We’ll see that further in our last point ==>

**G. The Law was a Temporary Guardian (3:23-25)**

Next time.

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Two roads: Law which brings death;  
Promise which brings life. Promise is J & faith in Him.  
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"And Can It Be" is a hymn written by Charles Wesley, reflecting on his recent conversion to X in 1738.

T/following year (1739) it was pub. in John Wesley's hymnal “Hymns & Sacred Poems.”

T/words express Wesley's amazement at G's grace &  
t/transformative power of X's sacrifice.

One of my favs, in spite of t/fact t/lyrics have come under  
some theological scrutiny (I think unfairly).

And can it be that I should gain  
An int'rest in the Savior's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
*Amazing love! how can it be  
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?*

He left His Father's throne above,  
So free, so infinite His grace;  
Emptied Himself of all but love,  
And bled for Adam's helpless race:  
*'Tis mercy all, immense and free;  
For, O my God, it found out me.*  
I love that 4th stanza ==>  
Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
*My chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.*

No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!  
Alive in Him, my living Head,  
And clothed in righteousness Divine,  
*Bold I approach the eternal throne,*

*And claim the crown, through Christ my own.*

*Amazing love! how can it be  
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?*

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What does it mean to be a Xn?

To come to X in salvation & to grow in t/Xn life?

4 "B's" ==>

Believe; Be Baptized; Be in Church; Be in Scripture.

Believe (repentance); Be Baptized (bap. as a conf. of faith);  
Be in Church (part of a good local assembly; Be in Scripture.

Have you [^] ??