

Title: The Law's Expiration Date: Paul's Fifth Defense of Justification by Faith (Part 2)

Text: Galatians 3:23-25

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.

[ii] Expiration dates are usually associated with food

We've all taken a drink of milk only to find out that it's rancid. First thing we do (after spitting it out): check t/E.D.

I came across some humorous comics in that regard.

Pict. a vulture shopping at a grocery store.

He asks t/manager, "Got anything *past* its expiration date?"

Or an old man at t/same grocery store asking,

"Do you have anything that will expire before I do?"

How about a Dr. standing over a personified carton of milk w/a worried look on his face. T/Dr. reassures him,

"I've got good news! Your expiration date is a typo."

Things do expire. Their purpose is limited.

True of t/Mosaic Law.

[iii] Title / Main Idea

Part 2 ==>

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

[iv] Today we finish up a challenging section of Galatians

We noted that vv. 10-25 form a long parenthesis in t/overall structure of Paul's argu. concerning t/true children of Abrah.

You can go back to 3:9 ==>

3:9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

That's bookended w/3:26 ==>

3:26 For you are all sons of God thru faith in Christ Jesus.

Everything in between (vv.10-25) is a parenthesis on t/Law.

Sev. weeks ago when we began this section, I read you a quote from Timothy George where he said ==>

“From a strictly logical point of view, it would have made good sense for Paul to move directly from 3:9 to 3:26 . . . Paul deliberately did not do this but rather indulged in an intricate digression on the law, a passage that . . . must surely rank high on any list of ‘the most complicated and controverted passages in Paul.’”

Today we hope to wrap up this “complicated & controverted passage”

Our main heading ==>

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

Paul is answering his question that heads up v. 19 ==>

19a Why the Law then?...

He had just finished a section addressing t/superiority of G’s covt. w/Abr. & how t/promised seed is none other than JC.

T/Law of works given to Isr. was added 430 yrs. later & could never invalidate t/promise received by faith.

If that’s true, why did G. bother giving t/Law in t/1st place?

That’s t/question Paul answers in these 7 vv.

We began this section last wk. & we covered t/first 4 vv. which encompassed 6 points in our o/l.

We noted 1st that ==>

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

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

1. We summed up that “because of” by contending that the Law was given to prevent sin & to reveal it

a. The Law was preventative

In addition to t/Law given to Israel on Mt. Sinai — laws were added subsequent to Israel’s disobeyed.

(1) For example

Following t/Exodus, while M. was on t/Mt. t/ppl. of Israel committed idolatry by making / worshipping a golden calf. Afterward, God renewed t/covenant & gave additional laws concerning idolatry.

In Lev. 10, t/sons of Aaron Nadab & Abihu were judged for “offering strange fire” upon t/altar. After their sin (nature of which is debated), G. gave further laws related to t/priesthood, namely that t/priests were to abstain from alcohol (which has led some to think that part of their sin involved drunkenness).

After t/rebellion of Korah in Num. 16, t/utensils used by t/rebels were to be hammered out to be made a reminder for t/rest of Israel so that they not be judged.

Following t/failure of Israel at Kadesh Barnea, t/men were to wear tassels on their garments as a reminder that G. is holy.

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

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

(1) A story in the news last week me reminded of this

TSA who oversees airport security changed their policy on removing one's shoes at airport checkpoints.

Now you don't have to remove your shoes. T/law changed.

Why t/policy in t/first place? Can thank Richard Reid who in Dec. 2001, on a flight from Paris to Miami, attempted to detonate explosives hidden in his shoes. In response to that "transgression" millions of travelers were required to have their shoes examined before boarding their flights.

As of this month that law is no longer in effect.

Point is: laws are added because of sin. T/more novel acts of disobedience, t/more laws. Preventative use.

b. The Law also demonstrates our inability to keep it
G's laws reveal sin. They demonstrate our inability to perfectly keep them. T/law leads us to X who is t/only remedy for sin. Law works w/grace to bring about repentance.

Luther called this: "the chief and proper use of the law" as the revelation of "sin, blindness, misery, wickedness, ignorance, hate and contempt of God, death, hell, judgment, and the well-deserved wrath of God.... The law is a hammer that crushes rocks, a fire, a wind, and a great and mighty earthquake that overturns mountains."

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 . . .

We learned in v. 16 that t/“seed to whom t/promise had been made” is X.

a. The word “until” in v. 19 speaks of time

T/Law given thru M. was added BC of transgr. UNTIL X came to inaugurate a N.C. that did away with t/old.

We also saw that in our 3d point ==>

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

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

1. The “mediator” (μεσίτης) Paul refers to was “Moses”

Verse 20 Paul adds ==>

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.

So when Paul reflects on t/Shema of Deut. 6:4 in v. 20 ==>
20b ...but God is one.

He's referring to t/A.C. that he spoke about in vv. 15-18. That covt., which centered on X, was unilateral / unconditional. All Abraham had to do was believe.

T/covt. w/Isr. was about doing. It was broken by Isr. & temp.
T/covt. w/Abr. was about believing. It was ful. in JC & t/N.C.

Why ==>

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

T/Law was temporarily given until t/promise, JC, came.
The Law expired in Christ.

However (4th point) ==>

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

21a Now is the Law against the promises of God? 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]

One thing t/Law could not do (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 (spiritual life)

That's t/realm of promise.

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

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

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

We have t/Law that imprisons “everything” under sin contrasted w/the “promise” received by faith in JC.

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

2. That’s the purpose of the imprisoning Law (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.

b. Present active participle — continue in faith

The Law expired in Christ.

We see this in our last point (where we left off) ==>

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

T/Law was temp., but it had a purpose, to train us up into X.

1st, we go back to that idea that ==>

a. In verse 22 ==>

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

b. Here ==>

23 But before the faith came we were confined under law, having been imprisoned until the coming faith was later to be revealed.

c. This is the same word we saw in v. 22 (συγκλείω)

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.

We've been contending that: *The Law expired in Christ.*

We see that again here ==>

c. Note the time markers (“before” / “until”)

We/Jews were confined under law, **“BEFORE the faith came,” “imprisoned UNTIL the coming faith was later to be revealed.”**

(1) These time markers are tied to “the faith” which goes back to v. 22 ==>

22b . . . the promise by faith in Jesus Christ . . .

Back to t/promised blessing of Abraham. All that is t/Xn's salvation.

d. Something interesting that's going on here: Paul switches to the 1st person “we”

23a But before the faith came WE were confined under law...

He does that to I.D. himself w/the Jews to whom both t/Abrahamic & Mosaic covenants were given. (T/Gentiles, never under t/Law in t/first place, were tempted to place themselves under it.) But Paul is thinking 1st of Jew here. He continues to do that t/o much of t/book.

A few different sources I read bring this out. In one of them: “Careful attention must be paid to the use of pronouns throughout Paul's arguments in Gal. 3–4, and this subdivision of Paul's second argument is no different. In vss. 23–25 we have the first person plural ‘we’ which is

distinguished from ‘you all’ in vss. 26–29. . . . In the ‘we’ passages Paul is describing the situation of those under the Law, namely Jews, which of course included Paul before his conversion to Christ. In the ‘you’ passages Paul is directly addressing the Galatians, who were apparently overwhelmingly Gentile . . .” [Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St. Paul’s Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 267]

1. The Law Imprisons

John Bunyan, in his classic, “The Pilgrim’s Progress” tells t/story of a man named Faithful who is roundly knocked down & beaten on his journey.

Christian, t/main character, tells faithful: “That man that overtook you was Moses. He spares none, neither does he know how to show mercy to those that transgress his law.”

2. The Law was a temporary παιδαγωγός
24 Therefore, the Law has become our guardian until Christ, so that we might be justified by faith.

I deliberately transliterated t/word παιδαγωγός (“guardian, tutor, schoolmaster”).

a. What was this “guardian” — παιδαγωγός?

(1) To answer that we have to go back to the 1st c.
In ancient Greece & Rome, parents who could afford it placed their children under t/care of a παιδαγωγός.

This guardian was sort of like a nanny. This was a household servant who took supervision of t/child from around age 6 into t/teenage years.

One of the functions of the παιδαγωγὸς was to offer instruction in the basics of manners.

Gk. philosopher Plutarch writes in this regard ==>

“And yet what do tutors [παιδαγωγὸι] teach? To walk in the public streets with lowered head; to touch salt-fish but with one finger, but fresh fish, bread, and meat with two; to sit in such and such a posture; in such and such a way to wear their cloaks.”

They weren't formal teachers (contra KJV), but offered guidance & supervision.

They were to lead a child to maturity.

(2) Catch the analogy

24 Therefore, the Law has become our guardian (παιδαγωγὸς) until Christ,

(a) There's that time maker again: “until”

For t/Jews specifically, t/Law was a guardian until Jesus came.

The Law expired in Christ.

Ben Witherington ==>

“Paul's metaphor here suggests that the pedagogue was for Jews before the time of Christ, and now that Christ has come no one needs or is required to submit to it for getting in, staying in, or going on in the Christian life. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts in the new era, what

counts is the new creation.” [Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary*

on St. Paul’s Letter to the Galatians (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 267]

(b) There’s an interesting parallel in 5:18

There, Paul writes ==>

5:18 But if you are led by t/Spirit, you are not under t/Law.

T/verb ‘led’ is related to t/word παιδαγωγός. We who have t/faith of Abraham are not under t/Law:

We have t/H.S. as our guardian leading us to greater maturity

b. Take a look at Romans 7

Rom. 7:1–6 1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives?

IOW - laws are for those who are alive to obey them.

Paul gives an analogy==>

2 For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. 3 So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man.

4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. 5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we have been released from the Law,

having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

Rom 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Word τέλος (“end”) is emphatic. That “Christ is the end of the Law” means that t/Law terminates in Him.

Back to Gal. 5:18 ==>

5:18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

The Law expired in Christ.

c. The writer to the Hebrews reflects on this — notably in chapter 7

After speaking of t/imperfection of t/Levitical priesthood, t/author proclaims t/perfection of X’s priesthood which was in keeping w/that of Melchizedek.

Heb. 7:12 For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.

T/Law can be changed. As MacArthur observes ==>

“[the word] changed . . . means to put one thing in the place of another. Christianity, in a sense, comes from Judaism. But Christianity is not merely enhanced Judaism; it replaces [it]. For a Jewish convert, his faith is changed from Judaism to Christianity. The new priesthood, after the order of

Melchizedek, was not added to Aaron's, but replaced it. Aaron's priesthood now has no validity at all. . . . It is defunct, totally abrogated. Because the Aaronic priesthood and the Mosaic law were so closely tied to one another, a changed (replaced) priesthood also meant a changed law."

[John F. MacArthur Jr., *Hebrews*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983),

188]

Another commentator chimes in ==>

"Since there was a change of the priesthood, it follows that the whole legal system on which the Levitical institutions were predicated also had to be changed. Here the writer virtually affirmed the Pauline truth that "you are not under Law" (Rom. 6:14), though he approached it from a different angle." [Zane C. Hodges, "Hebrews," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the*

Scriptures, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 798]

It was believed by t/Jews that for t/Torah to be changed would require a new Moses. That new Moses, a much better Moses has come. [Cf. W.D. Davies, *Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the Age to Come*, 52]

Deut. 18:15 "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.

If we go on in that passage in Hebrews ==>

Heb. 7:18–19 18 For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness 19 (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

That "better hope" is JC, t/promise received by faith.

Heb. 8:13 When He said, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

One scholar reflecting on t/teaching of orthodox Jews ==>

“‘[I]f the “Days of the Messiah’ have commenced, those of the Torah came to their close. On the other hand, if the Law, the Torah, still retained its validity, it was proclaimed thereby that the Messiah had not yet arrived”” (L. Baeck, ‘The Faith of Paul’, JJS 3 [1952], 106; cf. H.-J. Schoeps, Paul, 171ff.). For a comprehensive discussion see W. D. Davies, Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the Age to Come (Philadelphia, 1952). [F. F. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982), 176]

d. To go back to Galatians—Note the purpose in v. 24
24 Therefore, the Law has become our guardian until Christ, so that we might be justified by faith.

The Law's Expiration Date: Paul's Fifth Defense of Justification by Faith

(1) We’re back to that great doctrine we saw in 2:16 (justification through faith alone)

“The language . . . is forensic, that is, the language of a law court. In that court God is the Judge, and we are on trial for our sins—both the sin of Adam and the sins that we have committed in this life. The wages of sin is death, so clearly we deserve to die. But Jesus has taken that death penalty in our place. So the divine Judge turns to us and pronounces us not guilty. Indeed, he even goes beyond that, as a secular judge would never do, and says that we are positively

righteous because of Christ. That is our justification.” [John Frame, Systematic Theology, 966]

Martin Luther: “that I know that by the Law I am being brought to an acknowledgment of sin and am being humbled, so that I may come to Christ and be justified by faith.” [cited in Ryken, 141]

1. The Law Imprisons

2. The Law was a temporary παιδαγωγός

3. We are no longer under a παιδαγωγός (guardian)

The Law expired in Christ.

25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

a. The Law has served its intended purpose

We have come to maturity now that faith in X has come.

Longenecker ==>

“Here Paul delivers the coup de grâce to the Judaizers’ argument for Gentile Christians to live a lifestyle governed by the Mosaic law. For with the coming of the Christian gospel (τῆς πίστεως) as effected by Christ, the law no longer has validity as a παιδαγωγός regulating the life of faith. One may, of course, as a Jew continue to live a Jewish nomistic lifestyle for cultural, national, or pragmatic reasons. To be a Jewish believer in Jesus did not mean turning one’s back on

one's own culture or nation. Yet no longer could it be argued that circumcision, Jewish dietary laws, following distinctly Jewish ethical precepts, or any other matter having to do with a Jewish lifestyle were requisite for the life of faith."

[Richard N. Longenecker, Galatians, vol. 41, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1990), 149]

b. This expected future change to the Law by the Jews is reflected in their own writings

(1) Bear with me — I have several long quotes coming up

1st is from t/old scholar on all things Jewish, Alfred Edersheim, in his "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah" => "The Midrash on Song 2:13, applying the passage in conjunction with Jer. 31:31, expressly states that the Messiah would give Israel a new law, and the Targum, on Is. 12:3, although perhaps not quite so clearly, also speaks of a 'new instruction.' It is needless to multiply proofs (such as Vayyikra R. 13). But the Talmud goes even further, and lays down the two principles, that in the 'age to come' the whole ceremonial Law and all the feasts were to cease. And although this may be regarded as merely a general statement, it is definitely applied to the effect, that all sacrifices except the thank-offering, and all fasts and feasts except the Day of Atonement, or else the Feast of Esther, were to come to an end—nay (in the Midr. on the words 'the Lord looseth the bound,' Ps. 146:7), that what had formerly been 'bound' or forbidden would be 'loosed' or allowed, notably that the distinctions between clean and unclean animals would be removed." [Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, vol. 2 (New York:

Longmans, Green, and Co., 1896), 765. See text for footnotes]

Midrash Tehillim commenting on Psa. 146:7 ==>

“The Lord permits the forbidden. . . . What does this mean? Some say that in the time to come all the animals which are unclean in this world God will declare to be clean as they were in the days of Noah.” [Midrash Tehillim on Psalm 146:7, cited by W.D. Davies,

Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the Age to Come, 58]

W.D. Davies ==>

“It is surely a striking and significant fact that the New Testament presents Christianity, among other things, as a movement which not only denies the old Torah on one level, and affirms and fulfills it on another, but also introduces a new Torah.”

He goes on to say ==>

“The words of Jesus fulfilled the Law and the Prophets, they were the Torah of the Messiah.” [W.D. Davies, Torah in the Messianic Age and/or

the Age to Come, 90-92]

That New Torah is a Person, the Promised Seed, J.C.

c. The Jews are by no means a monolithic people in this regard

There were those, who believed that t/Law was eternal—that it was even given before Moses.

What do we do with those O.T. passages seem to say such?

For example: In addressing t/feasts, Lev. 23:14 refers to these as statutes which are to be observed “forever.”

Here we have t/Heb. word “olam”. This word does not always mean eternal. Depends on t/context. T/semantic range

of t/word includes a long duration of undisclosed time (not necess. “forever” as in “eternity.”

Why some transl. like t/NAS transl. t/word “perpetual.”

1 Sam. 28:2 . . . Achish [says] to David, “Very well, I will make you my bodyguard for life.” [*Olam* - forever]

Psalms 73:12 Behold, these are the wicked; And always [*Olam*] at ease, they have increased in wealth.

Was t/Mosaic Law eternal, never to be changed or abrogated. Can’t determine that on t/basis of t/word *Olam*.

Many Jews understood that & were looking for a new Moses who could change t/Law.

Rom 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

The Law expired in Christ.

d. Over the past year or two I’ve been reading the apostolic fathers along with the earlier church fathers

As I read I’m struck by how they are mindful of t/theology of Galatians as it relates to t/Law.

I came across these quotes last week.

Tertullian who lived from around 155 to 220 AD ==>

“It follows, accordingly, that, in so far as the abolition of carnal circumcision and of the old law is demonstrated as having been consummated at its specific times, so also the

observance of the Sabbath is demonstrated to have been temporary.” [An Answer to the Jews 4 ANF3]

Justin Martyr who lived even earlier: “What you [as a Jew] really need is another circumcision, though you prize that of the flesh. The New Law demands that you observe a perpetual Sabbath.” [Dialogue with Trypho 12]

“We have been led to God through this crucified Christ, and we are the true spiritual Israel, and the descendants of Judah, Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham, who, though uncircumcised, was approved and blessed by God because of his faith and was called the father of many nations.” [Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho 11]

“The law promulgated at Horeb is already obsolete, and was intended for you Jews only, whereas the law of which I speak is simply for all men. Now a later law in opposition to an older law abrogates the older; so, too, does a later covenant void an earlier one. An everlasting and final law, Christ himself.” [Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho 11]

The Law expired in Christ.

Acts 13:39 and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.

That brings us back to the Promised Seed.

T/“side road” of t/Law leads to t/gallows. T/Promise, JC, leads us to t/royal road of salvation. But to get there He had to travel t/road of t/Via Dolorosa & another set of gallows where He was made a curse for us.

That was for our salvation. Hope.

*Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling:
Naked, come to thee for dress;
Helpless, look to thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly:
Wash me, Savior, or I die!*
[Rock of Ages, Augustus Toplady]