

Q. Should we preach the law to bring people to Christ?

A. The question is based on a general misunderstanding of Galatians 3. This should really be understood in context, so I will encourage you to read the entire chapter (even better, the entire epistle!), but I will pick it up in verse 22:

But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

Galatians 3:22-25

The word "schoolmaster" here is translated from the Greek word *paidagōgos*. This word has found its way into English as the word "pedagogue." A pedagogue in English is a teacher of children. Therefore, the King James Version translators rendered *paidagōgos* as "schoolmaster." This is a mistake. Another mistaken notion developed among commentators that *paidagōgos* in Galatians refers to a slave who escorted a child to school and acted as his protector. Once he was at school, the child was released into the care of his teacher. This may have been a meaning of *paidagōgos*, but it cannot be what Paul means. This is so because Paul neither presents the law here as a protector nor does he here present Christ as a teacher. In Galatians 3, Christ is presented as a justifier in whom we are to have faith.

The *paidagōgos* Paul had in mind when he wrote Galatians refers to a slave who was assigned to a boy from about the age of six to sixteen. His job was to make sure the boy obeyed his parents' rules. He was an overseer or guardian to make sure the child obeyed until the child came of age. The child was then free of the guardian. This is the picture Paul presents. *The New Testament: An Expanded Translation* by Kenneth S. Wuest says it this way:

But the scripture shut up all under sin in order that the promise on the ground of faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before the aforementioned faith came, under law we were constantly being guarded, being shut up with a view to the faith about to be revealed. So that the law became our guardian until Christ, in order that on the grounds of faith we might be justified; but this faith having come, no longer are we under the guardian.

Galatians 3:22-25

Notice that this translation says absolutely nothing about the supposed function of the "guardian" (the *paidagōgos*) to "to bring us" to Christ. That is because the words "to bring us" in the King James Version have nothing corresponding to them in the Greek. They were added as an interpretation by the King James translators. But it is a wrong interpretation. The law brings no one anywhere. It had the function of overseeing until Christ.

Who Is "We"?

With this in mind, we must determine who Paul means by "we." That is, who was kept guarded by the law until the coming of faith in Christ? Well, to whom was the law given? The law was given to the Jews. I have shown this in other articles; the law was given to no one else but the children of Israel.

Paul actually says this same thing as early as Galatians 3:19: "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." Clearly, the law was only temporary until Christ.

So, We Should Continue to Preach the Law to Bring People to Christ, Right?

Wrong. If you still think this, you didn't get what I just said. Don't feel bad. You have a lot of company. There are a lot of Puritan/Reformed people who keep throwing the law at us. The problem is, they are just not paying attention to the Bible. As I said, the *paidagōgos* that Paul had in mind did not "bring" children; he guarded them to make sure they obeyed. Thus, in this way, the law guarded; it did not and does not bring anyone to Christ. Also, the law was only until Christ came. In

case you haven't noticed, He came 2,000 years ago. And remember, the law was given to no one but the Jews.

If you preach the law, you will get one of three basic reactions. 1) You will make some people happy, and they will content themselves with keeping the law and being very moral. 2) You will make others mad because the law will expose their sins. 3) And, you will put others in greater anguish over the sinfulness they know they already have. The law will bring absolutely no one closer to Christ and is a totally unnecessary message.

If you preach only the Gospel, you will get these basic reactions. 1) The legalists who are happy to hear the law will be mad and call you an antinomian. 2) Those of the second group will divide into two sub-groups. Some will completely ignore the Gospel and go their merry way to hell as atheists, agnostics, or some world religion that will make them feel good about themselves. The rest will "respond" as false converts who will mistake your message for that of another "feel good" religion. Not being really converted, they will ultimately fall away. 3) Those who are already aware of their sinfulness because of the working of the Holy Spirit (remember that the preaching of the Gospel is a joint effort with Him—see, for example, John 16:7-11) will believe and be saved. As Romans 1:16 says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Notice that it is the Gospel, not the law, that is the power of God unto salvation.

The Old Testament Law Has Ended

Since I have covered the fulfilling and ending of the law in other articles (such as the one here: <http://www.wordofhisgrace.org/deadtothelaw.htm>), and, Lord willing, will do so in detail again, I will not say much under this heading. I will just say that when I say that the Old Testament law has ended, I mean that it has truly ended. It has ended not only for believing Jews, but also for all of the Jews, even those who have not become Christians. God as much as told them this when He used the Romans to destroy the temple in A.D. 70. The temple was central to the Jewish system of law and, without it, the law cannot be followed. Jews who think they are still following the law are fooling themselves. Jews who think they are still under the law remind me of Dr. Manette in Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*. He had been a prisoner in the Bastille for so long that after he was released, he still thought he was a prisoner.

Christians who say that we must preach the law to bring people to Christ are like people saying that being prisoners of our own consciences and being convicted by the Holy Spirit is not enough. We must become prisoners in a Jewish prison before Jesus will free us. You might recognize the similarity between this and the Galatian heresy. Jewish Christian legalists were telling the Gentile Galatians that they could not become Christians until they first became Jews by being circumcised and keeping the law. But Paul explains that the law was a guardian of the Jews only until Christ came. When He came, He freed them from it. But only those with faith will believe it.

So, should we preach the law to bring people to Christ? No more than we should preach the Code of Hammurabi or the Egyptian Book of the Dead or the Articles of Confederation or, for that matter, P. G. Wodehouse's *The Code of the Woosters*. It's the Gospel that the Bible tells us to preach: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15—see also Acts 16:10; Romans 1:15; 10:15; 15:20; 1 Corinthians 1:17; 9:16, 18; 2 Corinthians 2:12; 10:16; Galatians 1:8-9 [the law is another gospel which is not really another because it is bad news]; 2:2; Revelation 14:6).

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