

Don Hargrove
Faith Bible Church
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<http://www.fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

Personal Study of the Bible-78
Galatians 3:19-25 – Two Purposes of the Mosaic Law:

Read Galatians 3:19-26 (and all of the passages listed below). Paul is advancing his argument to the purposes of the Law. Paul begins by saying that the Law was “added because of transgressions” (19). Let’s note two overall purposes of the Law. First, one purpose of the Law was to restrain wickedness by meeting out punishment for crime, just as civil laws have deterring effects on society due to the fear of punishment, like being executed. However, these restraints do not make men righteous. At most, they just keep man from committing certain *crimes*. The death penalty for premeditated murder (Exodus 21:12), rape (Deut. 22:23-27), and human sacrifice (Lev. 20:2) had a restraining influence in society on the wickedness of man. However, just because someone does not commit murder does not mean that he is not guilty before God for mental murder (read Matt. 5:21-22). This same holds true of adultery as well (Deut. 22:22; Matt. 5:27-28); one can be innocent of the *crime* of adultery as far as the Law but still *be guilty of adultery before God* on the basis of mental adultery alone. The Law’s civil punishment was required for the preservation of society. It held in check the growth and spread of hardened criminals. Note the expression “so you shall put away the evil from your midst” (Deuteronomy 13:5; 17:7; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21).

A second purpose of the Law was spiritual. The Law reveals to a person his sinfulness, blindness, and contempt of God. A person might think he is righteous because he had not committed *crimes* like murder or rape. However, the Law also contains commands with respect to God, like not worshipping other gods (first commandment). As long as a person is self-righteous, he does not see his need for God’s grace. It is the hammer of the Law that helps man see his real need for God’s matchless grace. When the conscience has been convicted and frightened by the Law, it is in a better position to welcome the Gospel.

While the Law reveals sin, it cannot remove it. All it can do is demonstrate that every man is a sinner by *nature*, and by doing so drive him to Christ! Only Christ can take care of the problem of our sins; this is what the Gospel offers: justification by faith (Gal. 3:24). In other words, the Law was a “schoolmaster” to shock and teach man about his need for Christ. God did not bring in the Law to be a cruel schoolmaster to torment man just for the sake of torture. The Law was, rather, a good schoolmaster to point out man’s depravity and drive Him to the grace of Christ.

The Law was never given to provide salvation. It cannot give us what grace gives us. It was simply one of the many tools of God to wake us up to the fact that we violate God’s laws and therefore His character. Anyone who attempts to save himself by the Law will spend eternity in Hell for failing to see the point of the Law: drive him to Christ. The Law is all about what man is whereas grace is all about what Christ is. Again, the Law was never given to give life, 3:21.

In 'Ehyeh,

Pastor Don Hargrove