

Why Then the Law?

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Last week, in Galatians three, Scott discussed the ‘inheritance’ promised through Abraham, and how it comes by listening to God to keep the law. During Paul’s presentation in Galatians three, he asks this question: **Gal 3:19:** *Why, then, the law? on account of the transgressions⁽³⁸⁴⁷⁾ it was added...* (Young’s Literal Bible) If the law is the written word, which came 430 years after the promise, and the transgressions were before the law, to what ‘transgressions’ is Paul referring?

The root of the Greek word for transgressions is Strong’s number 3845, which means: *to go aside, to neglect, to disregard*. So, the noun (3847) would be ‘a turning aside, a neglecting or a disregarding,’ which in this context is called ‘transgression.’ Here is a use of this word in the Septuagint (the Greek version of the O.T.): **Ex 32:8:** *They have turned aside⁽⁵⁴⁹³⁾ quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshiped it, and have sacrificed there unto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.* God had just commanded Israel to not make and bow down to any images - gods of their making. This is the spoken command from which they ‘turned aside, or disregarded.’ Israel made an image of a calf, and covered it with gold, which is a spiritual picture. This beast of the earth covered with gold are symbols their own thoughts based on their own faith - i.e. they are taking credit for their deliverance.

Here is another example from the Septuagint: **Num 14:41-43:** *41. And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress⁽⁵⁶⁷⁴⁾ the commandment of the Lord? but it shall not prosper. 42. Go not up, for the Lord is not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies. 43. For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword: because ye are turned away from the Lord, therefore the Lord will not be with you.* The Hebrew word translated ‘transgress’ is different from the one in Exodus 32:8, but carries a similar meaning to the Greek word under consideration - i.e. *to pass over, to depart*. Moses had just told Israel that God said they would stay in the wilderness 40 years because they refused to go into Canaan. They decided to go in anyway, and thus ‘depart from’ or, ‘pass over’ God’s command.

The concept for transgress in verse 41 is expressed again by two words in verse 43 (turned away), which also mentions what will be the result of not listening to God’s commands. *The Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword.* Again, this is a spiritual picture of how, as spiritual babies we did not know to listen, or wouldn’t listen to the voice of God in our conscience. This same idea is conveyed in the New Testament: **Luke: 21:23-24:** *23. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.* Someone with child spiritually is in the early stages of birthing a correct understanding of Christ, they are milk drinkers and they are still in the wilderness of confusion. Here, Luke is writing of those who have not developed a ‘hearing ear’, and the sword by which they are falling is their’s or another man’s view of God, and they become spiritual captives of various religious organizations around the world. The city being trodden down is the one Paul mentions in Galatians chapter four as the heavenly Jerusalem - it is the mind-set of Christ.

Now, Luke says this ‘treading down’ will go on until the times of the Gentiles (or, nations) are fulfilled. This time is given in Revelation: **Rev 11:1-2:** *1. And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. 2. But the court*

which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles (or, nations): and the holy city (heavenly Jerusalem) shall they tread under foot forty and two months. The court is not measured with the 'rod' of truth, because the nations, those with corrupt thoughts, are treading under their feet new Jerusalem, i.e. those that will not hear are treading the Son's understanding, by their way of thinking. Forty-two = seven sixes - 6666666, or a time when those not listening become full of self to the point they cannot be changed. So, this spiritual captivity is happening right now, all around us, to those not listening to God's voice. There will come a time when the filthy remain filthy, and the righteous remain righteous (Rev 22:11).

Look at some other scriptures that use the same Greek word as Galatians 3:19: **Rom 2:23:** *You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by [disregarding (the voice that interprets)] the law?* **Rom 5:14:** *Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like Adam's [turning aside (from God's voice);], who was a type of the one who was to come.* **Heb 2:1-3:** *1. On account of this, it behooves us to give a more earnest heed to the things heard, lest at any time we should slip away. 2. For if the word having been spoken by messengers was steadfast, and every [disregarding (of the word spoken)] and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; 3. How shall we escape neglecting so great a salvation; which, having received a commencement to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those having heard him.* (Greek Interlinear)

Summary: Coming back to the question in Galatians 3:19, *Why then the law?* It was given until the seed should come to whom the promise was made. The law was given because Israel would not listen to God speak (Ex 20:19) The literal fulfillment of this was at the cross. However, just as God put Israel under the law, today He has put us under the law as a school master, or tutor: **Gal 3:24-25:** *24 So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by [his understanding]. 25 And when faith is come, we are no longer under [the law].* When we learn to listen to the Spirit of Christ in our hearts, then are we governed by his voice and not by the letter of the law - i.e. reading and doing what we think it says.

Rom 10:4: *For Christ is an end of law (objective) for righteousness to every one who is believing.* (Young's) The objective of the law is to bring us to the Son, and he will teach us to listen to the Father the same way he does, and thereby we will obtain the Father's character by means of His understanding of how we should live our lives. Amen!