

How Should We View the Law?

OUTLINE OF GALATIANS 3:19-29

1. **The intent of the law** in God's redemptive plan was to reveal and intensify our consciousness of sin, 3:19-20.
2. **The stewardship of the law** in God's redemptive plan was that the law would serve as a pedagogue of God's people until the time of Christ, 3:21-22
3. **The stewardship and authority of the law** as pedagogue ended when Christ came, 3:23-29.

TRANSGRESSIONS

(Galatians 3:19 ESV) Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary.

Transgressions (παράβασις/parabasis): a going over; a disregarding, violating; the breach of a definite, promulgated, ratified law; to create transgressions, i.e. that sins might take on the character of transgressions, and thereby the consciousness of sin be intensified and the desire for redemption be aroused. [Strong, J.

(1995). Enhanced Strong's Lexicon. Woodside Bible Fellowship.]

PEDAGOGUE

(Galatians 3:24 ESV) So then, the law was our guardian [pedagogue] until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.

Pedagogue... And in Laws Plato writes of children: Just as no sheep or other witless creature ought to exist without a herdsman, so children cannot live without [pedagogue] παιδαγωγῶν, nor slaves without masters. And of all wild creatures, the child is the most intractable; for insofar as it, above all others, possesses a fount of reason that is yet uncurbed, it is a treacherous, sly and most insolent creature. Wherefore the child must be strapped up, as it were, with many bridles—first, when he leaves the care of nurse and mother, with παιδαγωγοῖς to guide his childish ignorance, and after that with διδασκάλους of all sorts of subjects and lessons, treating him as becomes a freeborn child. On the other hand, he must be treated as a slave; and any free man that meets him shall punish both the child himself and his παιδαγωγόν or his διδάσκαλον, if any of them does wrong (VII. 808D–E). [Longenecker, R. N. (1998). Galatians (Vol. 41, pp. 146–147). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.]

Pedagogue ... The Law Disciplines That It Might Set Free. 3:24–25 Paul now shifted his image of the law from that of a surly sergeant keeping watch over prisoners to that of the paidagōgos, a slave charged with the rearing and discipline of children.

What was there about a paidagōgos that led Paul to use it as a metaphor for the law?

In ancient Greece and Rome wealthy parents often placed their newborn babies under the care of a wet-nurse who in turn would pass them on to an older woman, a nanny who would care for their basic needs until about the age of six. At that time they came under the supervision of another household servant, the paidagōgos, who remained in charge of their upbringing until late adolescence. The pedagogue took over where the nanny left off in terms of offering menial care and completing the process of socialization for his charge. ... The pedagogues also offered round-the-clock supervision and protection to those under their care. In this regard Libanius described the pedagogues as guardians of young teenage boys who warded off unsolicited homosexual advances their charges regularly encountered in the public baths, thus becoming “like barking dogs to wolves.” [George, T. (1994). Galatians (Vol. 30, p. 265). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.]

Pedagogue ... No doubt there were many pedagogues who were known for their kindness and held in affection by their wards, but the dominant image was that of a harsh disciplinarian who frequently resorted to physical force and corporal punishment as a way of keeping his children in line. ... The ancient Christian writer Theodoret of Cyrillus observed that “students are scared of their pedagogues.” And well they might have been because pedagogues frequently accomplished their task by tweaking the ear, cuffing the hands, whipping, caning, pinching, and other unpleasant means of applied correction. [Ibid. (Vol. 30, pp. 265–266).]

Pedagogue ... Thus the metaphor of the law as pedagogue is colored by the preceding image of the prison guard. The unfortunate translation of paidagōgos as “schoolmaster” (KJV) has misled many preachers and exegetes to interpret this metaphor in terms of educational advance or moral improvement. As we shall see in Galatians 5–6, the law continues to have a vital role for every believer in the process of sanctification. However, that function is clearly not within the scope of Paul's meaning here. [Ibid. (Vol. 30, p. 266).]

*****Pedagogue ...** No, in Galatians 3 the law is a stern disciplinarian, a harsh taskmaster. Yet in its very harshness there is a note of grace, for the function of discipline, as opposed to mere torture, is always remedial. “With its whippings,” Luther said, “the law draws us to Christ.” [Ibid. (Vol. 30, p. 266).]

- Remedial: affording remedy; tending to remedy something; concerned with the correction of faulty study habits and the raising of a pupil's general competence; intended to correct or improve something.



Friend or Foe?