



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## Are Laws Necessary?

GALATIANS 3.19-22

2/26/13

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At this point in the legislative session you get a clear sense of the legislative process beginning to pick up steam. This sense can be quantified in the sheer number of bills being heard in committee and prepared for an eventual vote before the House and Senate. The process is, among other things, tedious. As law-makers, in the midst of the tedium you will find yourself questioning the need for all these laws. Some argue the need for more laws and some for less. Some, though not many, argue against the necessity of any laws at all.

Paul's arguments over the past several paragraphs raise an important question. What purpose does the law serve? If it does not have the ability to justify, then what good is it? Why is the law necessary at all? Paul will take up that very question and provide several reasons for the law being an integral part of God's redemptive plan. In this study, we will take up the first two: 1.) To clarify the lines for right and wrong, and 2.) To confine all under sin.

### Galatians 3:19–22 (NKJV)

*<sup>19</sup> What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. <sup>20</sup> Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one.*

*<sup>21</sup> Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.*

*<sup>22</sup> But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.*

### THE LAW OBJECTIFIES TRANSGRESSION (19-20)

Objectification is the process by which an abstract concept is made as objective as possible. It does not make something more real, it only clarifies it. It moves things from generalities to specifics. The old proverb captures the idea here, "Deceit lurks in generalities." The law serves the purpose of taking wrongdoing from generalities to specifics, it clarifies it. It objectifies transgression by taking it from abstract concept to an objective standard. The law cuts through our rationalizing and self-justification and exposes sin for what it is.

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### [the law] was added because of transgressions...

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Sheep look white against the backdrop of a green meadow. But against the backdrop of fresh fallen snow you see that they are actually filthy. Your tendency and mine will always be to put the best possible face upon our wrongdoing, to frame it in the best possible light. There are, seemingly, no limits to our ability to justify our behavior.

But the law was given to show us our sin for what it is—a crossing of the line in our relationship to a holy God. Every one of us must accept the grim reality that the law exposes our guilt before God rather than establishing our righteousness. To the Romans Paul wrote, "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 6.23)"

From the time the law was given, it has served this purpose. Consider how King David despaired of establishing his own righteousness according to the law. In Psalm 143:2 he wrote, "Do not enter into judgment with Your servant, for in Your sight no one living is righteous." Repenting of his sin with Bathsheba and his atrocious actions to cover his sin he wrote in Psalm 50, "against Thee, and Thee only, have I sinned." David had certainly harmed or wronged others. But his sin

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### WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS ONLY: TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY LUNCH AT THE AUSTIN CLUB (11:30AM OR UPON ADJOURNMENT, WHICHEVER IS LATER)

CAPITOL COMMUNITY STUDY: FRIDAY BREAKFAST @ 8AM IN MEMBERS' LOUNGE (E2.1002)

# Texas

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was against God, by virtue of the fact that God is the Lawgiver and the Judge before whom every one of us must give account.

### THE LAW IMPRISONS THE TRANSGRESSOR (21-22)

The law “confines all under sin.” The clear implication here is of judgment and captivity as the certain result of transgressing the laws of God. Every one of us, as a result of crossing God’s line for right and wrong, has been arrested as lawbreakers. We are confined under sin and await judgment.

The natural man chaffs under the idea that he must obey the law. Freedom is mistakenly viewed as doing as one pleases rather than doing what God dictates. Yet transgression, doing what is right in your own eyes, only brings you into bondage. Your own experience demonstrates the folly of thinking that your sin does not enslave you. The inescapable reality is that sin has put its grip upon each one of us.

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### The Scripture has confined all under sin...

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The Scripture is personified here, rather than the law. This choice of words emphasizes what is written and recorded for posterity. Reference to the law might be held to be vague as pointing to the spoken law. Paul uses the word that points to the detailed documentation of the boundaries which were set by God and crossed by men.

God created man with an inherent sense of right and wrong that can be referred to as conscience. Yet, man’s conscience only works with the information given. Though conscience is still active in each one of us, it has been badly damaged by sin. The more sinful we become the more desperately we need the voice of conscience. Unfortunately, the more sinful we become the more muted the voice of conscience becomes.

Our sense of right and wrong is dulled by crossing the boundaries of right and wrong.

### CONCLUSION

As a lawmaker, you have learned that crafting the law is only part of the battle. You must persuade others of the necessity of the law. What purpose does it serve? “What does the law do?” you will be asked. Paul thoroughly unraveled his opponents’ argument that the law is necessary for the Christian to be justified before God. But why is law necessary? What purpose does it serve?

The law has been given that it might clarify right and wrong and confine all under sin. This is essential to God’s redemptive purposes in order that we might ultimately be justified by faith in Christ. Exposing sin for what it is and driving home the reality of an accounting for wrongdoing compels one to look to Christ in faith.

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### ...that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

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Where does your conscience get its information? Do you compare yourself to others? Do you allow the compromises and corrupted values of society to mold your ideas of right and wrong?

Will you purpose today to allow the law to define right and wrong for you?

Will you acknowledge yourself to be found a transgressor of the law?

Will you acknowledge your standing before the Righteous Judge as hopeless, except that God’s promise of justification be given to you by virtue of your faith in Jesus Christ?