

Israel Coming To Maturity, Part II
Galatians 4:1-7
August 29, 2012

In Galatians chapter three Paul has instructed us that there were two covenants operating simultaneously. There was that unconditional, eternal promise of the gospel that was made to Abraham in about 2000 BC. This was the promise to send a Savior. This promise was meant for the benefit of all mankind without distinction. And that is why he told Abraham,

In thee shall all nations be blessed.

Galatians 3:8

So, that gospel promise to Abraham was for all the nations. It was for Caananites and Edomites and Moabites. And it was for Israelites who would later appear from Abraham's loins. All of God's elect everywhere, including the elect within the nation of Israel, are saved by that same gospel promise given to Abraham.

If I may add to that old children's song:

Red and yellow, black and white;
They are precious in his sight;
Jew and Gentile, it's for them all;
As many as the Lord shall call.

Now we must believe that because we have missionaries in all parts of the world. We believe that the extent of the gospel is universal.

We have missionaries in the following places:

Malawi Africa:	Joe Padilla
Brazil:	Ben Gardner
India:	Bro. Horner
Chile:	Danny Roten
Thailand:	Bro. Anond

Now God could have chosen only to save people from one nation. He could have turned his back on the world and only chosen people from one country. But, he didn't do so. He opened the window of the gospel to all nations and all peoples. And this was seen in the promise to Abraham when God said, *In thee shall all nations be blessed.*"

Men and women, boys and girls from all nations may come for salvation. They must come on the basis of the redemptive work of Christ. They must come with empty hands to the cross of Christ. As the song says,

*In my hand no price I bring;
Only to thy cross I cling.*

That is the one place in all the world where every human being stands on equal footing. That is because we all stand as equal beggars at the foot of the cross, don't we? If we are rich or poor, it makes no difference to Christ. Whether we are famous or infamous, it doesn't matter to him. We may be socially acceptable or social misfits - to Christ it does not matter. We may be a worldly success or a worldly failure, but at the cross we are all equal. It does not matter whether we come from America, or China or Israel, we are all fallen human beings at the foot of the cross; all helpless; all at the mercy of Christ.

And so the promise to Abraham will forever stand as the Covenant of Grace for all mankind.

But then, 430 years later, God entered into another covenant. This covenant was with one people only – Israel. This Covenant is called the Mosaic Covenant. And it is perhaps one of the most misunderstood covenants in the Bible.

Let's take a few minutes and discuss why it is that God made a covenant with one tiny nation. We already know that God had his eyes on the whole world. When he promised a Savior to Abraham, God revealed that his intent was to bless the nations.

Before Jesus ascended he told his disciples, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel."

History has shown that God has a people in virtually all corners of this world. It started out when Paul took the gospel to Asia Minor. Then it went to Greece and to Rome. And after the apostolic age the gospel has gone to each continent. God has extended his saving arm to all parts of the world. He saves people in India and in Iceland. God saves people in China and Japan. God even reaches across the oceans and saves people in America. This is because he promised Abraham, "In thee shall all nations be blessed."

Now let's briefly discuss why God made a separate covenant with Israel.

It was not to create a different way of salvation.

The Mosaic Covenant did not change the way of salvation. God did not all of a sudden make salvation by law keeping. Salvation will always be by the sheer grace of God.

I. The Mosaic Law did not *disannul* the promise to Abraham. (See Gal.3:17) The promise to Abraham was the saving covenant and the Mosaic Covenant did not have any effect on the Abrahamic Covenant.

II. The Mosaic Law could not save.

But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God it is evident.

Galatians 3:8

The Mosaic Law was not to make Israel the exclusive possessors of salvation

It is true that many Jews were saved during the period of the Mosaic Covenant. And it is true that not many Gentiles were saved during this period, although there were a few. But it was a period of human history in which God worked his purposes through this one nation.

But it should be noted that even in Israel not that many were actually saved. It wasn't a period of history in which the grace of God was flowing openly and freely. You wouldn't call this period the age of grace, would you? It was the age of the

Law. It was a time of legal accountability. Paul says the Law was a ministry of death and condemnation. So, the primary purpose of the Law was not to make Israel the exclusive possessors of salvation.

The Mosaic Law was to establish a people through whom the Savior would come.

The Mosaic Law established the nation of Israel. And God promised that the Savior of the world would come through this nation. And therefore, God fashioned Israel to have a certain history and a certain flavor and a certain set of circumstances that would support bringing the Son of God into the world.

The Mosaic Law was to establish a people to be the custodians of the Word of God

God was about to dramatically increase his revelation of himself to man. For two thousand years God had spoken in bits and pieces. But now, he was ready to reveal himself to mankind in a much fuller way. And so, he fashioned a nation for the purpose of revealing his law and his Word.

Now God himself is revealed in his Law. His holy Law teaches us what kind of God he is. The Law is a testament to the attributes of God. And through the Law we see many things about God. We certainly understand that God is the type of God that hates lying and deception. He is a jealous God. He hates it when we worship other gods. He is a God of justice. He is a God of great wisdom. His Law is a great source of instruction both for the Jews and for us.

What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

Romans 3:1

So, God created a nation as a vehicle for the coming Savior and as a custodian of the Law and Word of God. But there were other purposes of the Mosaic Law.

The Mosaic Law was for the purpose of foreshadowing the coming Christ.

We have just finished a study of the book of Hebrews and we saw clearly that the Mosaic Covenant was replete with types and shadows of Christ. A large portion of the Mosaic Law was ceremonial. It was filled with rituals of religion that pictured Christ. Almost every religious service that they performed under this covenant was a picture. The tabernacle itself was a picture of Christ. If you wanted to worship God, you came to the tabernacle. The priests were pictures of Christ who is the true high priest. The animal sacrifices were graphic pictures of that true sacrifice which is Christ. Everything was a picture. So, the Mosaic Law was for the purpose of prefiguring Christ.

The Mosaic Law was for the purpose of demonstrating the sinful condition of mankind.

Even though the Mosaic Law was imposed on Israel only, it had the effect of proving the condition of mankind in general. Israel was a sampling of mankind. And if the sample is shown to be contaminated, then the whole of mankind is shown to be contaminated.

The law proved without a doubt that Israel was a nation full of sinners. We study the history of Israel and we find that Israel trying to obey the law was like a high jumper trying to jump the empire state building. It was impossible. And the conclusion is that if Israel could not obey the law, neither could mankind in general.

But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin.
Galatians 3:22

But in addition to all these general purposes of the Mosaic Law, it had a specific purpose with respect to the nation of Israel itself.

The Mosaic Law was for the purpose of demonstrating the righteousness of Christ

You will notice in Galatians 4:4 that Christ was made under the law.

But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.

Galatians 4:4

Christ was made under the law in order to have a measuring stick of his righteousness. The law of God is the standard of perfection. On a scale of 1 to 100, the law demands a perfect score. There is no room for error at all. And Jesus came into the world, "made under the law." The law measured the righteousness of Christ and the law found him to be perfect in every way. He was perfectly righteous according to the highest standard possible – God's law.

It was necessary for Jesus to be born under the law. For one of his duties was to fulfill the law.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

Matthew 5:17

Christ didn't come to this earth thumbing his nose at the law. Rather, Christ came under it. Christ came to fulfill it. He came to obey it in every way. In short, Christ came to earn salvation, and salvation is earned by obeying the law.

For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

Romans 10:5

Jesus earned salvation for us by being made under the law and by obeying it perfectly.

Now we have been talking about the many general purposes of the Mosaic Law, and now we consider the purpose of the law with respect to the nation of Israel

The Mosaic Law was for the purpose of demonstrating the sins of Israel.

Even though Israel was a sampling of mankind and even though there were many universal purposes of the Mosaic Law, the law had its effect upon Israel as well.

The law served a useful purpose for Israel and that was to completely humble them under an impossible standard. It was to objectify sin so that there could be no dispute that they were sinners. In this way, the Mosaic Law was a ministration of death and a ministration of condemnation. The law pronounced a curse on Israel. But there was a gracious purpose in all of this.

The Mosaic Law was for the purpose of leading Israel to Christ.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ.

Galatians 3:24

In God's gracious dealing with the nation of Israel, he used the law ultimately to bring his elect to Christ. This was the proper use of the law after all. They were not to use the law to prove how wonderful they were. They were to use the law to see how miserable they were.

God was driving the Jews and the Gentiles toward the same destination.

Now here is an interesting paradox. God had the same destination in mind for both the nations of the world and for Israel. God's gracious purpose was to bring all of his elect to Christ. God has a people in every corner of the world. And his master plan is to bring them to salvation through Christ.

God's purpose in the Old Testament always was centered on the cross of Christ. That was the ultimate destination both for the Jews and for the Gentiles. God took them down different roads. But God's purpose was always to unite Jews and Gentiles in one body.

God took the Gentiles down the road of paganism and heathenism and ignorance and hopelessness. And the Gentiles practiced all manner of witchcraft and idolatry and they were free to follow their sinful lusts and being without a schoolmaster, their utter depravity was evident to all.

The Jews were taken down quite another road of a law-centered religion. The Jews had all the advantages of God's laws and they had a schoolmaster and a tutor and a governor.

And the Jews had the advantage of God's Word through the prophets. But in the end, there was not much difference in the two groups. Both Gentiles and Jews learned about their depravity and their absolute need for Christ, but they learned in different ways. The road of the Gentiles was not the road of the Jews. But both roads converged at the cross and both Jews and Gentiles were found guilty and both were welcomed into the church on the basis of faith in Christ.

Now let's get back to our context here in Galatians. Paul is arguing that the Galatian churches should not fall back into Judaism. And here is his main argument: Judaism was an immature state to begin with.

We saw last time that Paul described the nation of Israel, during Old Testament times, by the use of two metaphors.

First, Paul says that,

In the Old Testament Israel was like a child under a schoolmaster. (Gal.3:24, 25)

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ . . .

Galatians 3:24

This word schoolmaster is the word pedagogue in the Greek. It refers more to a chaperone or a disciplinarian than to a teacher. And the idea is that Israel was a child in the matters of religion. Judaism was a religion for children. It was never designed to be the final state of things. It was the religion of their minority. It was the religion that God used to prepare them for grace and liberty in Christ.

So, the first metaphor used to describe Israel is that of a child under a schoolmaster. The second metaphor suggests that,

In the Old Testament Israel was like an heir in his minority.

Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all: But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the

elements of the world.

Galatians 4:1-3

In this passage, again Israel is compared to an heir who is a child. And the point is that while Israel was a child, she was not privilege to the great benefits of being an heir. Just like heirs are under the discipline of tutors and governors when they are minors, Israel was under the discipline of the law during her minority. It was a time of discipline and education for Israel and the nation groaned under the law of God.

So, God led Israel down this hard road of the law in their minority, but then suddenly, at the appointed time in history, they rounded the last curve of that road and the road came to an end at the foot of a hill. And the name of the hill was Mt. Calvary. And when they came to the foot of the hill they looked up and there was Jesus hanging on a tree. And they asked him, "Why are you hanging on this tree?" Jesus looked at his people Israel and he said,

To redeem them that were under the law.

Galatians 4:5

And they said, "What do you mean that you are redeeming us from the law?"

And Jesus said, "The law was given only until the seed should come. And I am the seed that has come. I am redeeming you by paying the price which the law demands for sin."

And they said, "What do you mean you are redeeming us?"

"Why, I am taking you out from under the Law. I have sent a letter to the schoolmaster and I have notified the schoolmaster that his services would not be needed any longer. And furthermore, I have sent a letter to the tutor and the governor and informed them that my people Israel have come of age. And from this day forward, my people Israel are set free from the bondage of the Law."

And as they stood there listening to Jesus, they asked, "What does it mean that we are set free from the bondage of the

law?”

And Jesus said, “Tomorrow morning when you wake up, you will not go to the temple to offer sacrifices, for I am your sacrifice for sins. Tomorrow morning you will not go to visit the priests, for I am your priest. And tomorrow morning when you wake up, you will be children no longer but mature sons in the kingdom.”

This is what it means in Galatians 4:4, 5 when it says,

But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive adoption of sons.
Galatians 4:4, 5

Here you have a statement of the ultimate plan of God for Israel. It was a plan to redeem them from the law and to bring them out of the status of childhood and into religious maturity. This verse is not primarily speaking of Gentiles, but of Jews under the law. And even though the Jews were in bondage under the law for 1500 years, God had a gracious purpose to bring them out into the liberty of Christ. And in Christ they are mature sons entitled to all the benefits of Christ.

I would suggest to you that the grand purpose of God for his elect within Israel was always to lead them down the road to Christ. It was a hard road and it was a road that the Gentiles did not walk. It was the road of Judaism. But it was a road that led to the cross.

Next week we are going to see that the Gentiles also had a road to travel. It was not the road of Judaism but it was the road of paganism and total ignorance. And the Gentile road wound around the other side of the mountain. But it also came out at the cross. And for God’s elect, whether they are Jew or Gentile, the cross was and is the ultimate destination. In God’s gracious plan for Jews and Gentiles, all roads end at the feet of Jesus. See Galatians 3:28

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.