

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

GALATIANS LESSON 2 (Chapters 3-4)

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Kevin Pendergrass.

Welcome to the Gospel of Christ. This is the second lesson in our study of the Book of Galatians. In this lesson we will be talking about the purpose of the Old Law. When we look at the Book of Galatians, we see that Paul is trying to tell Christians not to go back under the Old Law. Paul had established the congregations in Galatia, but false teachers had come in to try to bring Christians back under bondage by convincing them to go back to the Mosaic Law. They said that these Christians had to follow the Old Law and Christ. They were to be not only Christians, but Jewish Christians. Paul wanted them to know that this was not correct because the Old Law had been done away with. Thus, people were no longer to follow the Old Law because they were under the New Law, the Law of Christ (the law of faith). In Galatians 3, Paul answers the question, "If we no longer are under the Old Law, then what was the purpose of the Old Law?" Why was there an Old Law to be- ing with? Look at what Paul says in Galatians 3:19-25,

"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. Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one. 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. But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor."

Paul asked, "What purpose does the Old Law serve?" He then answered that question. It was part of God's plan. It showed what sin was, and that man needed a Savior. Before a person can be saved, he first must understand that he is lost. That is what the Old Law did. It showed what sin was and how terrible it was. It showed that man needed a Savior. One problem today is that so many people do not want to become Christians because they think they are already saved. Before a person can be saved, he must realize that he is in sin. Consider this example. If a man is in a burning building, he smells smoke and realizes that the building is burning. What does he know that he needs? He knows that he is in need of someone to save him. He needs someone to enter the building to remove him from the burning building. Why is he in need? It is because the building is burning. He knows what will happen to him if someone does not save him.

Let's look at another example. If a person is in a building in which a poisonous chemical has been introduced, but he cannot smell or taste the chemical (and therefore does not realize that the poison is slowly killing him), will he think that he needs to exit the building? Will he realize that he will die if he continues to stay in the building? Of course not—because he does not know that he needs to be saved. He does not realize that he needs to be taken out of the building. Before a person can be saved, he must realize that he **needs** to be saved. He must realize that he is lost. That is what the Old Law did. It showed what sin was, and showed that man needed a Savior.

Paul went on to say that the Old Law prepared the way for Christ. It was our tutor, and was designed to bring us to Christ. That was the purpose of the Old Law. As a tutor, it was to prepare the way for Christ. The Old Covenant revealed the coming of a new, better way—which is the New Testament. Jeremiah the prophet said, “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah” (Jer. 31:31). We see the fulfillment of this passage in Hebrews 8:8-13 where the writer of the Book of Hebrews points out the faults of the Old Covenant, and contrasts them to a new, living way that provided better hopes and promises (which, of course, was the New Testament). The Old Covenant revealed Who the Lord was. It was a tutor whose purpose was to reveal the coming Lord and Messiah.

We see many prophecies in the Old Covenant that talk about the Lord and the coming Messiah. We find prophecies about His birth. In Isaiah 40:3 the Old Law revealed that there would be a forerunner whose voice would cry in the wilderness to prepare the way. We also see prophecies about the Messiah's zeal. In Isaiah 35:5-6 we find a prophecy about Christ's miracles. In Isaiah 61:1-3 we see His preaching characterized. The Old Covenant even described how a friend would betray Him (Zech. 11:12). The Old Covenant also prophesied the Lord's resurrection and His ascension into Heaven (Ps. 2:7; 68:18; 110:1). When we look at the Old Law, we see that its purpose was to bring us to Christ as a tutor. Its purpose was to teach us Who Christ was so that we could be looking for a Savior.

We know, of course, that Jesus came at the perfect time. In Galatians 4:4-5 Paul wrote, “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” When did Christ come? He came “in the fullness of time.” The Old Law made it possible for Christ to arrive at just the right time, the perfect time. What made it “the perfect time”? First, God determined that it was the fullness of time. God knows everything. In His foreknowledge, He knew when the perfect time would be. Second, everyone was speaking a common language (koine Greek), which made it easy to communicate. Third, it was a time of peace. Fourth, there was an extensive system of Roman roads in existence, which made travel much easier. During that time, communication was easier than it had ever been. God knew that as people set out to spread the Gospel, these things would make it easier to teach the Gospel to the entire world (Mt. 28:19-20).

What was the purpose of the Old Law? Why did there have to be an Old Law? Did God make a mistake? Of course not. There was a purpose. The Old Law served its purpose. It showed what sin was. It showed that man needed a Savior. It provided prophecies to prepare people so that they would know that they needed to be saved, and so they would be looking for the Savior. The Old Law was a tutor whose purpose was to bring us to Christ. It also made it possible for Christ to come “in the fullness of time” (the perfect time). In Galatians 3:19ff. Paul explained the Old Law's purpose.

Now let's continue to ask the question, “What was the purpose of the Old Law?” We just examined the purposes that the Old Law served. But now I would like to ask a question that pertains to you and me. Is the Old Law important for us today? We know why it came into existence. And we know that we no longer are to follow it. So should we simply not study the Old Testament, and study only the New Testament instead? There are some today who suggest that we should not even read or study the Old Testament. It was there for a reason, but it has served its purpose. Thus, there is no reason for us to study the Old Testament any longer. Is this the mindset that we need to have toward the Old Testament just because we no longer are under it? Of course not. We need to understand the importance of the Old Law for us today. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 Paul wrote, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for

instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” God gave us the Old Testament. We no longer are under it as if it were authoritative for us today. But God **has** given us the Old Law, and it **is** Scripture. Therefore, it is very important because it is from God. The Bible says that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” Thus, “all Scripture” is something from which we can learn. Is the Old Testament important? Yes, it is. Should we study the Old Testament? Yes, we should—if we want to be good Bible students.

One of the things we can learn from the Old Testament is God’s unchanging nature. We can see examples of how God dealt with Israel under the Old Law, and we can know that God Himself does not change. His laws may change, but He does not. Even though God’s laws may change, God Himself (i.e., His nature) does not change. Notice what Psalm 102:25-28 says.

“Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; yes, they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will change them, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will have no end. The children of Your servants will continue, and their descendants will be established before You.”

While other things change, God does not. In Hebrews 13:8 we are told that Jesus is “the same yesterday, today, and forever.” We can understand from examples in the Old Testament the unchanging nature of the Godhead. If there is any doubt about whether or not God has ever changed, Malachi 3:6 removes that doubt. “I am the Lord; I do not change.” The Godhead does not change its nature. Yes, today we follow different commands because we no longer are under the Old Law, but are instead under the New Law (the law of faith—Romans 3:27). But even though God gives different commands, He always has demanded perfect obedience to those commands. He always has demanded that we follow His Word exactly as He gave it to us.

Look at the example of Moses striking the rock, which demonstrates this principle. In Exodus 17:2-6 we read,

“Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, ‘Give us water, that we may drink.’ And Moses said to them, ‘Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the Lord?’ And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, ‘Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?’ So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, ‘What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!’ And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.’ And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.”

Just as the Israelites had done so many times before, they began to complain. They said, “You have taken us out of Egypt so that we could die here.” They were complaining to Moses. What did Moses do? He went to the Lord and said, “These people are so thirsty that they are getting ready to stone me. What should I do?” The Lord told him, “Go to Mt. Horeb, strike the rock, and water will come out of it.” When we continue reading we learn that Moses followed the commands of the Lord. Guess what happened? God was pleased. Water came out of the rock. And everyone was happy. God delivered on His promise. What was Moses commanded to do? He was commanded to strike the rock. Now look in Numbers 20:8-12. Once again we see the Israelites murmuring and complaining because they were thirsty.

“Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals.’ So Moses took the rod from before the Lord as He commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, ‘Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?’ Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank. Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, ‘Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.’”

Here we find an important principle. In this instance God had given Moses a new command. Moses was not to strike the rock, but was instead to speak to it. In one instance he was to strike the rock, while in the next he was to speak to the rock. Did Moses follow God’s commands? No, he did not. He struck the rock instead of speaking to it. Water came out of it. But was God pleased? Absolutely not! In fact, because of Moses’ disobedience he could not enter the Promised Land. Even though God may change His laws or commands, His nature is unchanging. At one point Moses was told to strike the rock. But later He was told to speak to it. We must listen to what God is telling us in whatever command He gives us. We cannot simply look back and ask, “Lord, why are you mad at me? At one time you said I could strike the rock. At one point it was OK, so why are you mad at me now?” We must follow God’s commands when He gives them to us, rather than looking back and saying, “Well, at one point this was OK.” Instead, we should ask, “Lord, what do you want me to do now?” We must go to the New Testament to see what commands God wants us to follow today.

In 2 Kings 5 we find the type of obedience that God has always demanded. Naaman had leprosy. He was told to dip himself in the River Jordan seven times. What if he had gone to another river? In fact, he even contemplated that. He felt that the other rivers were better than the River Jordan. What would have happened if he had done that? His leprosy would not have been cured! What if he had gone to the River Jordan, but had dipped only six times? His leprosy would not have been cured. What if he had gone to the River Jordan, but had dipped eight, nine, or ten times? His leprosy would not have been cured. Are we under a law that tells us to go dip in the River Jordan seven times? No. But we are under the New Law, which says that in order to have our sins forgiven we must be baptized in water (Acts 22:16). Even though it is a different law, we understand God’s unchanging nature. God will cleanse today of our sins only if we are obedient to His commands—in the same way that God would cleanse Naaman of his leprosy only if he was obedient to God’s commands.

In Joshua 6 we read that the Israelites were told to march around the walls of Jericho and blow on their trumpets in order for the city to become theirs. They did exactly that—and God delivered on His promise. In 2 Samuel 6:6-7 we read of Uzzah’s disobedience. Verse 6 tells us, “When they came to Nachon’s threshing floor, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled.” The Israelites had been told not to touch the ark of the covenant. They also had been told not to allow the ark to touch the ground. As the oxen stumbled, Uzzah made sure that the ark did not fall on the ground. He put out his hand to grab the ark. Did he disobey God? Yes. Did he have the right intent? Of course he did. But did he disobey God? Yes. We read in verse 7, “Then the anger of the Lord was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for his error; and he died there by the ark of God.” We live under the New Law today, and God will not strike us dead. But there will come a Day of Judgment (Heb. 9:27) in which we all will have to stand before God. If we have been disobedient to God (even though we may have had the right mindset and

attitude or a good conscience), then His anger will come upon us because of His unchanging nature. The Lord will turn against us, and His anger will be upon us. Why? It is because He is unchanging. Every time when a person is disobedient, it causes God to be angry with that person's sin. He will be angry with our sins anytime we do not follow what the Bible says.

The text of 1 Chronicles 15:13 talks about this when it says, "Because you did not do it the first time, the Lord your God broke out against us because we did not consult Him about the proper order." Why were the people wrong? It was because they did not consult God about the proper order. Are we under the Old Law today? No. But does the Lord still command us to consult Him about the proper order. Under the New Law we need to be sure that we are doing what He has commanded us to do. We know from Old Testament passages such as Isaiah 59:1-2 that God hates sin. He always has hated sin. And He always will hate sin. That is His nature. God's people never were allowed to add to or take from His Word (Dt. 4:2). If we want to be pleasing to God, we cannot do those things (Gal. 1: 6-10; 1 Pet. 4:11; Rev. 22:18-19). The unchanging nature of God says that we are not to alter His Word. We are not to add to or take from His Word in any way. A good example of this is found in Leviticus 10:1-2 with Nadab and Abihu.

"Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord."

Nadab and Abihu did not follow God's commands. They did something that was not authorized. They did not have the right to do it because God had not authorized it. Because of that, they were struck dead by the Lord.

I want to stop here and make a practical application of some of the Old Testament passages that we have examined. Just because Moses was given a command to strike the rock at one point in time did not authorize him to strike the rock on the second occasion since the Lord had commanded him to speak to the rock. We must be fully obedient to God's commands. If we are not, it will cause God to be angry. We must consult God about the proper order. If we add to or take away from God's commands, He will be angry because we are in sin, and we will be lost if we do that without repenting. A practical application of these principles today is found in the use of musical instruments when offering psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. When we worship God by singing songs of praise, under the New Covenant we are authorized only to sing. We are commanded to sing. We are to speak to one another. We are to use our hearts. We are to speak with our lips so we can teach one another. Never are mechanical instruments seen or authorized in the New Testament. Therefore, they are condemned. Some people like to be like Moses and suggest that they were allowed under the Old Testament. Yes. But are we today under the Old Law? Was Moses following God's command when he struck the rock? No, because he was told to speak to the rock. Today, can we go to the Old Testament and say, "Look what they did back then; we can do the same"? No. We are under the New Law. Therefore, we must follow it and sing only in an a cappella fashion. We are not to clap with our hands. We are not to hum. We are not to use mechanical instruments. Rather, we are to use our voices (a cappella) to sing to one another. We are to sing songs, hymns, and spiritual songs. What happens if we choose to use mechanical instruments in our worship of God in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs? If we do that, God will be displeased. It will cause the Lord to be angry because He has not authorized us to do such things. That is the command of the Old Testament. It is for us under the New Law today, and we must follow it perfectly. We must always be obedient to God.

Under the Old Testament, we see the loving-yet-righteous nature of God. We read about Noah and the ark. Noah preached for 120 years. In 2 Peter 3:9 we learn that the Lord did not want the people to perish. He gave them time to repent, but only Noah and his household were saved. Yes, the Lord will give us time to repent. But there will come a day after we have died, or when the Lord comes back, that we no longer will have such time. The Lord is a righteous Lord. He must be righteous. He must fulfill all righteousness. He cannot lie and say, "Well, I'll allow you into Heaven anyway, even though in the Bible I said I would not." He cannot do that because He is a righteous God.

It is through the Old Testament that we understand how we got here (Gen. 1 and 2). Much of the New Testament is quotations from the Old Testament. This does not mean that we are under the Old Law. But Paul used principles from the Old Testament—just as we do today. That is what Romans 15:4 says. The Old Testament was given "for our learning." God delivers on His promises—both good and bad. Look at 1 Corinthians 10:11—"Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." What was the purpose of the Old Testament? It was for our learning. It was for our comfort. It was to make sure that we do not fall into the same disobedience that people back then did. It is to make sure that we do not add to or take from God's Word. Rather, we are to follow what God commanded us to do under the New Testament.

Jesus said in Mark 16:16, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." Have you followed God's plan of salvation? We learn from the Old Testament the importance of making certain that we are following the commands under the New Law. One of those commands is that in order to become a Christian we must be baptized in water for the forgiveness of our sins (Acts 2:38). If you have yet to obey the truth, we pray today that you will obey the Gospel of Christ.

Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR GALATIANS LESSON 2 (CHAPTERS 3-4)

1. In Galatians 3:19 the apostle Paul discussed one of the reasons why God had given the Old Covenant. Paul said that that covenant was given “because of _____.” What word goes in the blank?
2. According to 1 John 3:4, what is sin?
3. According to 1 John 2:16, what are three broad categories of sins that people should avoid?
4. What did Jeremiah the prophet prophesy in Jeremiah 31:31?
5. In Isaiah 40:3 we find a prophecy about someone. Who is it?
6. According to Galatians 3:24, what was one purpose of the Old Law?
7. According to Galatians 4:4, at what specific time did God send Christ to Earth?
8. When Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 Paul wrote, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work,” does the phrase “all Scripture” apply to the Old Law as well as the New Law?
9. What important point regarding the nature of God is found in Psalm 102:25-28?
10. In Malachi 3:6, what did God say through the prophet Malachi?
11. According to Paul’s comments in Romans 3:27, what law today saves us?
12. What did Moses do in Numbers 20:8-12 that caused the wrath of God to come down upon him?
13. What was the consequence of Moses’ action in Numbers 20:8-12?
14. In 2 Samuel 6:6, what did Uzzah do that caused the wrath of God to come down upon him?
15. According to 2 Samuel 6:7, what was the consequence of Uzzah’s action?
16. What important lesson is found in 1 Chronicles 15:13 that applies to us today just as much as it did when it was first written?
17. What important lesson is found in Isaiah 59:1-23 that applies to us today just as much as it did when it was first written?
18. What important point is contained in 2 Peter 3:9?
19. According to Romans 15:4, why do we today need to study the Old Testament?