

# The Mt. Zion Church Bible Study

## Freedom Series

### Lesson 4: Freedom and the Law!



Pastor Ken Patterson, Ph. D.

We Have a Vision to Be Intentionally Learning!

**Introduction:** Today's lesson presents an interesting question. "Why did God give us His law, if He intended us to be saved by faith?" This very pressing question encompasses the question Paul answered in Galatians 3. His purpose was to help readers to understand that The Law has and had purpose though its purpose is secondary to God's plan of salvation. In this study, you will hopefully realize the futility of salvation through works. Grace alone gives us the opportunity to be saved because God understood that we would not choose to follow His rules. Thus, all mankind would be condemned to death. But, since we serve a God who knows us, He provided an answer to our problem beginning with the promise He made to Abraham as seen in Genesis 15:6 where Abram was considered righteous because he believed God (had faith). Some 430 years later the Mosaic Law was given. The question still remains, why then the Law?

Galatians is a compact or condensed version of many of the ideas in Romans. Thus, the student would benefit from reading the book of Romans in conjunction with this lesson. Specifically, this lesson points us to some key ideas in Romans 4 and 5.

**This week's key readings:** Galatians 3 and Romans 4 and 5.

**Passage for current lesson:** Galatians 3: 21

### **I. Does the Law Negate God's Promise-Galatians 3:21**

The Mosaic Law must have been a serious matter of contention for the early believers. Are believers controlled by the Law or are believers the recipients of faith? First we must understand the promise Paul identifies in this verse. Simply put, Paul is referencing the promise God made to Abram (See Genesis 12-15). In each passage regarding God and Abraham, one will note there is no mention of The Law. Why? Because the Law was not given to Abraham. It was given to Moses. This is confusing unless we understand the purpose of The Law.

- First, let's recap. In Genesis 15: 1-6 God repeats His promise to Abram (his name was changed by God to Abraham later).

**What do these verses identify as the method for Abraham to be considered righteous? (actions or belief)?**


## **II. What does the Law not do then?**

**Verse 21** teaches, “that if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would have come by the law”. Paul is stating that IF the law, which is behavior based, could be the mechanism to get us to righteousness, we would use it as the way. However, the Law does not do that.



### **WHY?**

Let's review some familiar passages. Romans 3: 20-23. What do these verses remind us about our following of the Law?

Give an example of one of God's rules you have broken consistently

Example: Pastor Ken is often impatient and angry with people when he feels they are not doing what they are supposed to be doing. This is an example of **pride** because it puts someone else's wrong above the wrong he does as if one is worse than the other. Proverbs 16: 5 indicates a punishment for those who have pride issues.


## Do we perfectly follow God's Law?

Since your answer is no (which it should be), you can begin to see a problem we all face regarding the Law. What is the penalty we deserve for breaking God's rules? Romans 6: 23 tells us clearly the penalty for breaking God's rules.

The penalty I deserve for sin (not following God's rules) is....



### BIG QUESTION

➤ Which is the problem: The Law or Mankind?

As you can probably admit, God's rules are not the issue. The real issue is that mankind (you and I) willfully choose to disobey the rules. The Law (the boundary) shows us how much and how often we will not follow. The Law also should remind us that God is so all knowing that He has patience and grace over our lives.

The theologian A.R.Vidler wrote the following about our obedience to The Law:

“It [The Law] rivets upon us the conviction that we cannot be justified by anything we can do. Like the Israelites in Egypt, we are commanded to make bricks without straw, to be perfectly holy when we have none of the makings of holiness—to love God with all our hearts and the neighbor as ourselves when we are without divine charity [love].”

**Conclusion:** We clearly have a problem! See Romans 7: 14-17 which Paul uses to highlight our failure to live up to God's standard. He suggests that even when he wanted to do what is spiritual, there is sin working in his life. As we give into the temptation of sin, due to our desires to please ourselves rather than God, we come under the requirements of the penalty. The penalty is death. HOWEVER, thanks be to God who knew the weakness in our flesh to say no to sin. He provides Jesus as our method of being released from the outcome of our disobedience to the Law.

The Aha Moment: Freedom from the Law, is not you and I having freedom to do what we want. Freedom in this sense is us having freedom to bypass the penalty of the Law and to be considered righteous by faith even though we do not live righteously by practice! When we understand what this means (Jesus taking our penalty on the cross) it should push us to try harder to live within God's boundaries. This means we are not doing works to be saved. We are behaving Godly because of our appreciation for what God has done for us through Jesus Christ!

**Closing Prayer:** Dear Lord, help me to remember each day the sacrifice you made for me. Give me a mind to know that I am living under grace each day and though I deserve punishment, you give me mercy. Thank you, Lord!