

FAQ

FROM THE MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS ARCHIVES (2000-2018)

J.K. McKee

MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS
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Frequently Asked Questions

FROM THE MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS ARCHIVES

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Abbreviations and Special Terms

The following is a list of abbreviations for reference works and special terms which are used in publications by Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as TWOT for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

- ABD: *Anchor Bible Dictionary*
AMG: *Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament*
ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament
Ara: Aramaic
ASV: American Standard Version (1901)
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)
b. Babylonian Talmud (*Talmud Bavli*)
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.
BDAG: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)
BDB: *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.
CGEDNT: *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Barclay M. Newman)
CGL: *Cambridge Greek Lexicon* (2021)
CHALOT: *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Holladay)
CJB: *Complete Jewish Bible* (1998)
CJSB: *Complete Jewish Study Bible* (2016)
DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition
DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls
EDB: *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*
EJ: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*
ESV: *English Standard Version* (2001)
Ger: German
GNT: *Greek New Testament*
Grk: Greek
HALOT: *Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Koehler and Baumgartner)
HCSB: *Holman Christian Standard Bible* (2004)
Heb: Hebrew
HNV: Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible
IDB: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
IDBSup: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement*
ISBE: *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*
IVPBBC: *IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)*
Jastrow: *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* (Marcus Jastrow)
JBK: *New Jerusalem Bible-Koren* (2000)
JETS: *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
KJV: *King James Version*
Lattimore: *The New Testament by Richmond Lattimore* (1996)
LITV: *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* by Jay P. Green (1986)
LES: *Lexham English Septuagint* (2019)
LS: *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott)
LSJM: *Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie)
LXE: *Septuagint with Apocrypha* by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)
LXX: *Septuagint*
m. Mishnah
MT: *Masoretic Text*
NASB: *New American Standard Bible* (1977)
NASU: *New American Standard Update* (1995)
NBCR: *New Bible Commentary: Revised*
NEB: *New English Bible* (1970)
Nelson: *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words*
NETS: *New English Translation of the Septuagint* (2007)
NIB: *New Interpreter's Bible*
NIDB: *New International Dictionary of the Bible*
NIV: *New International Version* (1984)
NJB: *New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic* (1985)
NJSB: *Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (1999)
NKJV: *New King James Version* (1982)
NRSV: *New Revised Standard Version* (1989)
NLT: *New Living Translation* (1996)
NT: *New Testament*
OT: *Old Testament*
REB: *Revised English Bible* (1989)
RSV: *Revised Standard Version* (1952)
t. Tosefta
Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament
Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*
TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TLV: *Messianic Jewish Family Bible—Tree of Life Version* (2014)
TNIV: *Today's New International Version* (2005)
TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*
UBSHNT: *United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New Testament revised edition*
v(s). *verse(s)*
Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*
Vul: *Latin Vulgate*
YLT: *Young's Literal Translation* (1862/1898)
WMB: *World Messianic Bible* (2020)

Galatians 3:24, 25

How can you say that the Law of Moses is still to be followed by Christians today, when it is quite clear that we are no longer under a tutor?

This entry has been reproduced from *The New Testament Validates Torah*

Pastor: Galatians 3:24: The Law is our tutor to lead us to Christ.

“Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Messiah, so that we may be justified by faith” (NASU).

The pastor we are examining is correct when he asserts, “The Law is our tutor to lead us to Christ,” citing Galatians 3:24 as evidence. The challenge with his assertion, though, is not in the need for the Torah’s instruction—and our widespread human inability to keep it—to reveal our sin and point us to the Messiah and the eternal redemption He provides (i.e., Romans 10:4, Grk.). The problem is that (1) when the good news is declared in much of Christianity today, people are only told about the love of God **but are often never told** about the judgment which is pronounced upon them as sinners, precisely because they are condemned as Torah-breakers (cf. Isaiah 24:5-6). And, (2) it has become far more commonplace in examination of Galatians to read Galatians 3:22-25 from the perspective of it *not* speaking of individuals on the road to salvation, but instead of it speaking historically of the Jewish people keeping the Torah prior to the arrival of the Messiah—with the Torah only in temporary effect to be obeyed until His arrival. Scot McKnight summarizes the two interpretive options for Galatians 3:24:

“The first takes it in an educative function: ‘the law was our pedagogue to lead us to Christ.’ This view is a common, traditional view, which sees the law as pointing out our sins so we will cry out for God’s grace in Christ. But besides the fact that Paul is not talking here about ‘individual experience’ but rather about ‘salvation history,’ he does not teach in Galatians that this is the purpose of the law...The second view is therefore to be preferred: ‘the law was our pedagogue *until* Christ.’ This view is not only the majority view today but is also contextually more compatible.”¹

McKnight is correct when he informs us how the majority view held among current Galatians commentators is that Galatians 3:24 is to be read from the temporal perspective of the Torah being valid **“until Christ came”** (RSV/NRSV/ESV).² Only by reviewing Galatians 3:22-25 in total can we really evaluate whether an individual’s common experience in coming to faith in Yeshua or the condition of the Jewish people prior to the arrival of Yeshua is most textually compatible. This section of Paul’s letter to the Galatians began with him informing his audience,

¹ Scot McKnight, *NIV Application Commentary: Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 183.

² Including, but not limited to: F.F. Bruce, *New International Greek Testament Commentary: Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 183; Richard N. Longenecker, *Word Biblical Commentary: Galatians*, Vol. 41 (Nashville: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 1990), pp 148-149; G. Walter Hansen, *IVP New Testament Commentary Series: Galatians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), pp 107-109; Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp 268-269; Richard B. Hays, “The Letter to the Galatians,” in Leander E. Keck, ed. et. al., *New Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol 11 (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 11:269-270.

Galatians 3:24, 25

“But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Yeshua the Messiah [or, the faithfulness of Yeshua the Messiah]³ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed” (Galatians 3:22-23, NASU).

The negative problem which sin has caused has affected “all men” (NASB) or “the whole world” (NIV), *ta panta*. People committing sin, and rejecting the Creator God and His ways, was by no means an exclusive First Century Jewish problem; it is a universal problem to all humanity (Romans 3:23). F.F. Bruce is correct to conclude, “As Gentiles and Jews are ‘confined under sin’ in v. 22, so Gentiles and Jews alike are ‘confined under law’ [in v. 23].”⁴ All people are to be regarded as being “under sin” (*hupo hamartian*) and “under law” (*hupo nomon*). The verb to describe this condition is *sugkleiō*, “**to confine to specific limits, confine, imprison**” (BDAG),⁵ regarding how “we were confined under the law” (RSV) or “imprisoned and guarded under the law” (NRSV). All that Scripture (the Torah and the Prophets) can do for people is lay out God’s standard of holiness, righteousness, and proper conduct—yet because of the common mortal proclivity to disobey Him, the most which Scripture can really do is lock up people as prisoners.

Scripture, to be sure, is not the problem; sin without a definite solution is *the problem*. The only thing to be experienced in a condition where one is “under sin” and “under law” is *to be jailed*, as it were, in condemnation and guilt. Thankfully, Yeshua the Messiah has come on the scene, and via His sacrifice offers everyone freedom from this! But, Yeshua’s work is for “those who believe”; if one does not recognize Him as Lord and Savior, then the redemption He provides is ineffectual and such people remain “under sin” and “under law.”

At this point, though, many interpreters—in spite of how “the scripture has all men ‘imprisoned’ under the power of sin” (Galatians 3:22, Phillips New Testament)—opt for the continuing “we” statement made by Paul to regard only his fellow Jews, and not to all of his audience. So, when Paul says “before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed” (Galatians 3:23, NASU), such confinement was considered only a Jewish issue. The clause *eis tēn mellousan pistin apokaluphthēnai*, “to the faith about to be revealed” (YLT), is thought to be taken with a temporal force, with the proposition *eis* to be viewed “to denote a certain point or limit of time” (LS),⁶ hence the common rendering “until faith should be revealed” (RSV). The faith in view is undoubtedly the belief or trust to be placed in Yeshua and His redemptive work; being “confined under the law” (RSV), though, is thought to only be a Jewish issue, with the Messiah’s arrival now abolishing Moses’ Teaching.

In order to draw the conclusion that the preposition *eis* means “until,” a reader has to separate out “under sin” and “under law” as being two different ideas: “under sin” would mean the negative consequences of sin, *but* “under law” would mean Jews having to be Torah obedient (at least at one prior point in history). However, the symbiotic relationship which being “under sin” and “under law” have together—as being “under sin” results in being “under law” and subjected to the Torah’s penalties—is one which is constant and cannot be so easily separated as some interpreters think. Paul expressed later in Romans 6:14-15, to a largely non-Jewish audience in Rome, “For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!” (NASU). Not only is the antithesis of being “under grace” being “under law,” but the “we” referred to would be **all born again Believers** who have recognized the Messiah Yeshua. **All people are to be redeemed from being “under law.”**

Alternatively, if Galatians 3:23 is approached from an individualistic perspective, the statement “before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed” (NASU), regards the status of all people who were once condemned by God’s Torah as sinners, locked up in some kind of condemnation state before saving faith in the Messiah. Only when people are able to recognize the significance of Yeshua’s work to die as a permanent sacrifice for human sin—this reality of faith having arrived

³ Grk. *ek pisteōs Iēsou Christou*.

⁴ Bruce, *Galatians*, 182.

⁵ Frederick William Danker, ed., et. al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Third Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 952.

⁶ H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 231.

to them—can they then be shown the great revelation of how faith in the Savior is to significantly transform them and allow them to enter into the Father’s destiny for their lives. This is something which the Apostle Paul did not want his Galatian audience to forget: what it took to get them to truly arrive at the significant faith in the Lord which they possessed.

While many would prefer to take the verb *apokaluptō* in Galatians 3:23 as regarding God’s plan in Yeshua “to be revealed” within salvation history, earlier in his letter Paul himself used it to describe how “God, who had set me apart *even* from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal [*apokaluptō*] His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles...” (Galatians 1:15-16a, NASU). To have the importance of faith actually *revealed* to a newly saved person, who has just been freed from the guilt incurred by sin and Torah-breaking, **is entirely consistent with how Paul himself was redeemed**. The initial salvation experience of faith in Yeshua is to be followed with a person being shown even more how significant the Messiah’s work is. It is more appropriate to render the clause *eis tēn mellousan pistin apokaluphthēnai* as something like: “to the faith intending⁷ to be revealed” (my translation), that which is destined to manifest itself in the redeemed. Paul acknowledged the initial entry of Messiah faith in someone’s life, leading to a greater revelation of what faith in Him and who He is encompasses. The preposition *eis* can notably also mean “to express relation, to or towards” (LS).⁸ Paul later specified how the power of the good news was to lead one from *faith to faith*, meaning that the significant revelation of faith in Yeshua naturally gets deeper after one has been forgiven of sin and grows in Him:

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation [to salvation, YLT; *eis sōtērian*] to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it *the* righteousness of God **is revealed from faith to faith** [*apokaluptetai ek pisteōs eis pistin*]...” (Romans 1:16-17a, NASU).

A proper view of Galatians 3:23 recognizes how: (1) saving faith is to manifest itself in the life of a Believer, (2) because of such faith one is freed from the imprisoning condemnation of sin and being “under law,” and (3) this results in being revealed a greater significance of faith as growth in Messiah begins.

Having stated how those who are “under law,” locked up as condemned sinners, must have faith in Yeshua come into their lives—and consequently with the redeemed being shown the magnificent importance of such faith in Yeshua—Paul followed this by explaining a pre-Messiah function of the Torah:

“Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Messiah, so that we may be justified by faith”
(Galatians 3:24, NASU).⁹

A majority of today’s interpreters take Galatians 3:24 as being a temporal function for Paul’s own Jewish people. From this perspective “our” means “Jewish,” and “**the law was our custodian until Christ came**” (RSV) or “**the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came**” (NRSV). The Torah was the Jewish “imprisoner,” so to speak, *eis Christon*. Highly reflective of this view, and one who definitely believes that the Torah is not to be followed in the post-resurrection era, is Ben Witherington III, who concludes that “the Law as the pedagogue of God’s people lasted only until Christ came. Here [*eis Christon*] is surely to be taken in a temporal and not a telic sense.”¹⁰ Such an interpretation of Galatians 3:24 could lead one to conclude that Paul was a turncoat Jew, and he said that with the arrival of the Messiah that his own people do not have to observe the burden of having to keep any of the Law of Moses; it was, after all, only “until Christ.”¹¹

⁷ Grk. *mellousan*.

I have chosen to render the verb *mellō* here along the lines of “**to be inevitable, be destined, inevitable**,” which for Galatians 3:23 is specifically noted for “w. aor. inf. [*apokaluphthēnai*] that is destined (acc. to God’s will) to be revealed” (BDAG, 628).

⁸ LS, 231.

⁹ *New English Bible* (Oxford and Cambridge: Oxford and Cambridge University Presses, 1970), NT p 241 has “the law was a kind of tutor in charge of us until Christ should come,” but notes the alternate rendering “Or a kind of tutor to conduct us to Christ.”

¹⁰ Witherington, *Galatians*, 269.

¹¹ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 149 does notably speak against this, claiming that “One may, of course, as a Jew continue to live a Jewish nomistic lifestyle for cultural, national, or pragmatic reasons. To be a Jewish believer in Jesus did not mean turning one’s back on one’s own culture or nation,” although he unfortunately further argues that things like circumcision or the dietary laws have nothing to do with “the life of faith.”

Much of how readers look at Galatians 3:24 is influenced by how one looks at the role of the *paidagōgos*, which is invariably translated as “tutor” (NASU), “custodian” (RSV/CJB), “child-conductor” (YLT), “guardian” (HCSB), or “schoolmaster” (KJV), comparable to our English word “pedagogue.” Many examiners are in rightful agreement that “tutor” is not the best rendering for *paidagōgos*, as there is something specific to be understood from this term in antiquity. In Galatians 3:24, examiners actually see Paul having used a classical Greek term to express a Jewish concept.¹² The *paidagōgos* was “Orig. ‘boy-leader’, the man, usu. [ally] a slave...whose duty it was to conduct a boy or youth...to and from school and to superintend his conduct gener.; he was not a ‘teacher’...When the young man became of age, the [*paidagōgos*] was no longer needed” (BDAG).¹³ In a classical sense, the *paidagōgos* was a protector who was to guard young boys on their way to school until they reached a certain age. This “disciplinarian” (NRSV) or “guardian” (ESV) would try to instill within them a basic sense of who a responsible citizen was, until they arrived at a point when they were old enough to take care of themselves.

Within much of the ancient period, the *paidagōgos* had a widescale reputation for strictness. Hans Dieter Betz indicates, “The figure of the pedagogue is looked upon as a hard but necessary instrument in bringing a person to achieve and realize virtue.”¹⁴ So here, the Torah is not that much more than a merciless taskmaster which has to beat proper behavior into someone. Witherington is more tempered, remarking that such a point of view “is much too one-sided. There were both bad and good pedagogues and the latter were not rarer exceptions to a rule.”¹⁵ Paul was certainly not expecting his Galatian audience to apply all of the possible negative traits of a classical *paidagōgos* into his usage in Galatians 3:24.

While strict in terms of discipline, and while various interpreters would oppose this conclusion, the *paidagōgos* did have **an important educational function**. As Plato would describe it, “Our sharp-eyed and efficient supervisor of the education of the young must redirect their natural development along the right lines, by always setting them on the paths of goodness as embodied in the legal code” (*Laws* 7.809).¹⁶ James D.G. Dunn argues in favor of the *paidagōgos*, again while being strict, having a “responsibility to instruct in good manners, and to discipline and correct the youth when necessary.”¹⁷ TDNT further remarks that the Torah

“is a *paedagōgós* while we are minors. During our minority we are under it and virtually in the position of slaves. With faith, however, we achieve adult sonship and a new immediacy to the Father which is far better than dependence on even the best ‘pedagogue.’...It is a taskmaster with an educational role” (TDNT).¹⁸

The related verb to *paidagōgos* is *paideuō*, which can mean both “**to provide instruction for informed and responsible living, educate**” and “**to assist in the development of a person’s ability to make appropriate choices, practice discipline**” (BDAG).¹⁹ *Paideuō* is often employed in the Septuagint to render the Hebrew *yasar*, meaning, “**chastise, discipline, rebuke,**” and “**teach, train**” (CHALOT).²⁰ It appears in Proverbs 29:19: “A slave will not be instructed [*yasar*] by words *alone*; for though he understands, there will be no response” (NASU), or “A stubborn servant will not be reproved [*paideuō*] by words: for even if he understands, still he will not obey” (LXE). Yet, even while the verb *paideuō* can relate to negative discipline or chastisement, it is used in the Apocrypha to represent the education of someone in the Tanach Scriptures:

- “Therefore set your desire on my words; long for them, and you will be instructed [*paideuō*]...Therefore be instructed [*paideuō*] by my words, and you will profit” (Wisdom 6:11, 25, RSV).

¹² The term “pedagogue” does appear as a borrowed term in some Jewish literature (Ibid., pp 146-148).

¹³ BDAG, 748.

¹⁴ Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 177.

¹⁵ Witherington, *Galatians*, 263.

¹⁶ Plato: *The Laws*, trans. Trevor J. Saunders (London: Penguin Books, 1970), 253.

¹⁷ James D.G. Dunn, *Black’s New Testament Commentary: The Epistle to the Galatians* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), pp 198-199.

¹⁸ G. Bertram, “education, instruction,” in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, abridged (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 757.

¹⁹ BDAG, 749.

²⁰ William L. Holladay, ed., *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1988), 137.

- “If you are willing, my son, you will be taught [*paideuō*], and if you apply yourself you will become clever” (Sirach 6:32, RSV).

Another related term to *paidagōgos* is *paideia*, regarding “**the state of being brought up properly, training**” (BDAG).²¹ This notably appears in 2 Timothy 3:16, where Paul said “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training [*paideia*] in righteousness” (NASU). Also to be considered could be 4 Maccabees 1:17: “[There] is education [*paideia*] in the law²², by which we learn divine matters reverently and human affairs to our advantage” (RSV).

Whether Galatians 3:24 should be understood in the context of the clause *eis Christon* meaning “**to lead us to Christ**” (NIV) or “**until Christ came**” (TNIV) is determined by the value judgment of a reader concluding whether or not the figure of the *paidagōgos* or pedagogue had any kind of educational role. No one can deny that the *paidagōgos* was a strict disciplinarian. While Witherington argues that “it was not unusual for the pedagogue to chide or even beat a child on occasion to achieve the desired form of behavior,” even he has to recognize “The pedagogue did have a limited educational role...”²³ All are agreed that the Torah function as a pedagogue regards the issuance of condemnation to Torah-breakers, but does this condemnation stir up within condemned persons the need for them to cry out to the Messiah—or did the Torah only have a limited function in protecting the Jewish people *until* the Messiah’s arrival? The combined disciplinarian-educator can actually be seen when we compare Galatians 3:24 to 2 Timothy 3:14-16:

PAUL TO THE GALATIANS	PAUL TO TIMOTHY
<p>“Therefore the Law has become our tutor...to Messiah, so that we may be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24, NASU).</p>	<p>“You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned <i>them</i>, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Messiah Yeshua. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:14-16, NASU).</p>

The Apostle Paul lauded Timothy for how he was raised by his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5) in the Tanach Scriptures, which were Holy Texts to be employed for *paideian tēn en dikaiosunē*, “training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16, NASU). The Torah and Tanach are going to train people in ways of righteousness, whether they are redeemed or unredeemed, and for the latter such training will undeniably involve chastisement. The Torah, Prophets, and Writings are going **to always reveal** a person’s innate need for a Divine Redeemer—One whom the Father has provided in His Son Yeshua (Jesus). Paul quite keenly said of the Tanach Scriptures, that they were “able to make you wise to salvation through belief in Messiah Yeshua” (my translation), *eis sōtērian dia pisteōs tēs en Christō Iēsou*. In 2 Timothy 3:15, the preposition *eis* involves Timothy’s training in the Tanach *leading* to his salvation.

There is no reason at all why the clause *eis Christon* cannot be viewed as “to Christ.” It is true that a version like the NASU has added some words in *italics* with “**the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ**” and the NKJV has the similar “**the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ.**” These words are justifiably added to recognize the appropriate preparatory role of the pedagogue: *eis Christon*, “to Christ”—which is comparable to *eis sōtērian*, “to salvation.” In Galatians 3:24 the perfect verb *gegonen* is used, indicating that the role of the Torah as pedagogue, while something done in the past, still has an ongoing effect for born again Believers. The Torah having

²¹ BDAG, 749.

²² Grk. *estin hē tou nomou paideia*.

²³ Witherington, *Galatians*, 265.

Galatians 3:24, 25

once served a pedagogue for the redeemed—a strict disciplinarian for those who have now arrived at faith in Yeshua—does not allow for people to dispense with its instructions. When Matthew 1:21 informs Bible readers, “Now all this took place to fulfill [gəgonen] what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet” (NASU), are we expected to throw away and ignore the Messianic prophecies now that they have been fulfilled via arrival of Yeshua as Messiah? Or are we to understand them in a new light?

There is every reason to recognize the validity of the Torah serving as the pedagogue leading individuals in need of salvation to the Messiah. Yet, even if we were to view Galatians 3:24 from the perspective of the Torah serving as a strict disciplinarian “until Christ,” meaning “until Christ *came into our lives*,” this should not automatically mean that God’s Law gets cast aside as unimportant. The function of the Torah as a pedagogue is over for those who recognize the Messiah, whether you render the clause *eis Christon* as “until Christ” or “to Christ.” John R.W. Stott’s observations are well taken:

“[T]he oppressive work of the law was temporary, [but]...it was ultimately intended not to hurt but to bless. Its purpose was to shut us up in prison until Christ should set us free, or to put us under tutors until Christ should make us sons....Only Christ can deliver us from the prison to which the curse of the law has brought us, because He was made a curse for us. Only Christ can deliver us from the law’s harsh discipline, because He makes us sons who obey from love for their Father and are no longer naughty children needing tutors to punish them.”²⁴

While some might want to argue against the view that the Torah is to serve as an individual’s pedagogue—concluding that the “we” Paul is speaking of in Galatians 3:24 was just “we Jews”—the Torah did indeed play a role in the non-Jewish Galatians’ own salvation experience. Paul’s visit to Southern Galatia in Acts chs. 13-14 reveals how he certainly taught about Yeshua from the Torah and Prophets to more than just Jews, observing that He provided a forgiveness from sins and freedom which the Torah could not provide (Acts 13:38-39, 43).

In various sectors of today’s Messianic movement, Galatians 3:24 has been viewed from the perspective of a young man or young woman being prepared for *bar/bat mitzvah*.²⁵ In observant Judaism, boys and girls are taught the commandments of the Torah from their infancy. The commandments are rigorously instilled in them so that by the time they reach puberty, usually by the age of 12 or 13, one who goes through his or her *bar/bat mitzvah* recognizes how he or she is accountable for being a member of the Jewish community. While it is now traditional to hold festivities and parties for *bar/bat mitzvah*, the First Century historian Josephus recorded, “when I was a child, and about fourteen years of age, I was commended by all for the love I had to learning; on which account the high priests and principal men of the city came then frequently to me together, in order to know my opinion about the accurate understanding of points of the law” (*Life* 1.9).²⁶ A major role in a *bar/bat mitzvah* ceremony (or even in a Protestant Christian denomination confirming a youth as a church member) is so that young people arrive at the point of being aware of their responsibilities before God, and that they have an understanding of the Scriptures.

The practice of preparing a youth for *bar/bat mitzvah* is to instill in the boy or girl the understanding of how he or she is accountable for living up to the Torah’s standards. The Torah up to this point has served as the person’s tutor or schoolmaster, and hopefully when the youth gets up to the bema to read from the Torah scroll, he or she has an understanding that this is very serious in the eyes of the God of Israel. In a Messianic context, we surely hope that a young person undergoing *bar/bat mitzvah* has truly come to that moment where he or she realizes that the Torah is not enough, and that it is the Lord Yeshua to which its instructions inevitably point.

In the view of Galatians 3:24, God’s Law as pedagogue is to rigorously instill within us a sense of His holiness and righteousness, but our innate inability to ultimately keep its commandments perfectly **should lead us to faith in the Messiah.** When salvation from our sin comes, the key principles of God’s Torah are to certainly remain instilled with us. As we then grow and mature in such salvation, with the New Covenant promise of the Torah being supernaturally transcribed on our hearts now in definite play (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27), we can

²⁴ John R.W. Stott, *The Message of Galatians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986), 98.

²⁵ Cf. Ariel and D’vorah Berkowitz, *Torah Rediscovered* (Lakewood, CO: First Fruits of Zion, 1996), pp 23-24.

²⁶ Flavius Josephus: *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*, trans. William Whiston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), 1.

fulfill the Torah in emulation of Messiah Yeshua (Matthew 5:17-19), *surely demonstrating* it in action via good works of mercy and kindness toward others.

Pastor: Galatians 3:25: Now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

“But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor” (NASU).

While the pastor has chosen to look at the role of the Torah as preparatory for the Messiah, “to lead us to Christ” (Galatians 3:24, NASU), which is quite admirable given the scope of positions against it—he draws the further conclusion from Galatians 3:25, “Now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor” (NASU). Much of how Bible readers approach the meaning of *hupo paidagōgon* or “**under a tutor**” regards how one concludes what a *paidagōgos* actually is. The thought of many is that this means no longer being “**under the supervision of the law**” (NIV), and that God’s people should not be too concerned about keeping God’s Law. Is this a valid approach to Galatians 3:25?

In the previous remarks on Galatians 3:24, we have reviewed how the ancient classical figure of the *paidagōgos* is like a strict disciplinarian. While having an educational role for those on the road to saving faith, the *paidagōgos* is still going to condemn a person more often than not. Paul’s word “**But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a pedagogue**” (Galatians 3:25, my translation), should be understood from the perspective that after a person has arrived at salvation in the Messiah Yeshua, the Torah’s function as a *paidagōgos* is over. Bruce ably comments, “with the coming of faith believers have come of age and no longer require to be under the control of a slave-attendant: [*hupo paidagōgon*] has the same sense as [*hupo nomon*] in v. 23.”²⁷ A fulfillment of the Torah in acts of love, focused around the fruit of the Spirit, is clearly to begin (Galatians 5:14-6:2). **For the redeemed, the function of God’s Torah only condemning people with guilt because of their disobedience has ended.**

In what context are born again Believers no longer “under a tutor”? If we are in the faith and have reached a point of spiritual maturity where we know what the Torah tells us is right and wrong, and we have repented of our sins and been spiritually regenerated, we have no need for the Torah to serve as a *paidagōgos*. We have no need for this kind of rigorous training, because if we have experienced the new birth we naturally want to obey our Heavenly Father *through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit*. The Holy Spirit will convict us and remind us as we study the Scriptures, as we pray, and as we sincerely seek the Lord about what we should and should not be doing. For those truly saved and earnestly seeking the Lord, the Torah no longer serves as a schoolmaster, because we should be naturally following God’s commandments as an outward part of our walk of faith.

The Jewish philosopher Philo also expressed how “there is an undying law set up and established in the nature of the universe...that instruction is a salutary and saving thing, but that ignorance is the cause of disease and destruction” (*On Drunkenness* 141).²⁸ The goal of any kind of instruction given by God is to be salvation, especially as human beings understand their limitations in light of His eternal holiness and perfection. And while it is most imperative for our mortal inability to fully obey the Lord to drive us to Yeshua’s tree of sacrifice, in confession and repentance—*instruction in sanctification* is to truly follow being saved as the Holy Spirit takes up residence within us and transforms us to be more like Him. Some of this involves further discipline (1 Corinthians 11:32; Hebrews 12:6; cf. Proverbs 3:12) when we err, but it also involves opportunities for God’s people to simply demonstrate His good character to others (1 Thessalonians 2:10).

In order for the Law to have actually once functioned as an individual’s tutor or pedagogue: people have to know it. Where in mainstream Christianity today are the commandments of the Torah really taught to even lead people to faith? Are God’s commandments being taught in Sunday school so that the youth can know that they are sinners and that they need a Redeemer? Surely if they were in greater numbers than they currently are, some of

²⁷ Bruce, *Galatians*, 183.

²⁸ Philo Judeaus: *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, trans. C.D. Yonge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 219; cf. *Noah’s Work As a Planter* 144.

Galatians 3:24, 25

the moral dilemmas which the contemporary Church faces would not be present. Unfortunately, the “salvation history” reading of Galatians 3:22-25 has done much of the current generation a serious disservice: **Christian people are really not being instructed in the Law of Moses.** The role which the Torah plays, or has played, in seeing Yeshua arrive onto the scene of history *and* into the lives of the redeemed—**is not that appreciated.**