The Book of Galatians
"Why the Law?"
Gal. 3:19-23

Introduction

1. If the law is not necessary for personal salvation, then why did God institute it? This is a fair question.

2. That God does not do things without a purpose and some kind of design ought to be certain. But, He has not left Himself without defense. To this matter the Spirit now directs the apostle Paul to write.

3. The contention of these verses is: the law has been given to prepare the way for the Gospel of Christ. If someone asks "how," these verses will tell. The law —

1. PROVOKES SIN. v. 19.
   This is elucidated by these facts:
   a. The law was added. By this it is meant not to the promise, but along side of the promise.
   b. The law was purposed. By this is meant that the law has in view the offences which it specifies. It does not check sin, rather it deepens one's consciousness of it.

2. SPECIFIES TIME. v. 19.
   The interim nature of the law is clearly stated. No sense of protraction in the giving of the law. There is a terminus ad quem, namely, the coming of the Seed, even Christ. Here is an oblique reference to the identity of the Messiah. (John 1:17).

3. DIFFERENTIATES PARTIES. vv. 19, 20.
   The point of the apostle here is very important. The purpose of the law is to show how
intimate was God's contact with Abraham through promise! This is done:

a. By noting mediators with the law. Actually, there are two in this instance: angels and Moses!

b. By noting parties with the law. God and the Jews are the contracting parties with the law. It is a conditional arrangement and is valid only inasmuch as both parties fulfill the terms of the contract!

c. By noting separation with the law. Altho v. 20 has been an enigma to many with some 400 interpretations extant, it appears there is one big truth which merits notice: the promise depends upon one, even God Himself. With God, the Giver is everything, the recipient nothing. God dealt singly with Abraham and without contingent!

4. MAGNIFIES FAITH.

The law really puts the spotlight on the principles of faith. The focus of the Word is not the law, but the law seems to lift faith right up to the prime position. NOTE:

a. The inadequacy of the law, v 21. We do not have two contradictory situations, law and promise. What we do have is two different matters! The promise does give righteousness; the law does not!

b. The testimony of Scripture, v. 22. Law ends with judgment of sin. Promise however, brings in life.

c. The revelation of faith, v. 23. From the situation of being kept inward under the watch of the law, faith rises and provides what the law could not!

CONCLUSION: No one who really wants to know can miss the meaning of this portion of the text. The law has a purpose, but it is entirely distinct from that given by Judaizers. The promise is of faith, and is given onto to those who are believers. Amen.