

7 September 2025

9 AM Study

# GALATIANS

3: 19-24

**Why the Law?**  
*Part I*



# Gal. 3: 19-24:

19. Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.
20. Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one.
21. Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.
22. But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.
23. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.
24. Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.





# Mt. Horeb/ Sinai

*Where the Law was Given*



## The Beginning of Israel as a Special, Covenanted Nation, EXODUS 19

1 In the third month after the sons of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. 2 When they set out from Rephidim, they came to the wilderness of Sinai and camped in the wilderness; and there Israel camped in front of the mountain. 3 Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: 4 ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself. 5 **Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.**’ These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.”

7 *So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the LORD had commanded him.* 8 All the people answered together and said, **“All that the LORD has spoken we will do!”** *And Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD.* 9 The LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe in you forever.” Then Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.

## The Beginning of Israel as a Special, Covenanted Nation, EXODUS 19

10 The LORD also said to Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments; 11 and let them be ready for the third day, *for on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.*

12 You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, ‘Beware that you do not go up on the mountain or touch the border of it; whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. 13 No hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot through; whether beast or man, he shall not live.’ When the ram’s horn sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain.”

14 **So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people, and they washed their garments.** 15 He said to the people, “Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman.”

16 So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that *there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.* 17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.



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## 'Why the Law then?'

### 1. Because of transgressions-

(a) 'transgression' is to step over or beyond a limit, 'violate a proscription' willful disobedience is in view *[Merryman]*

NOTE: it wasn't added because of sin (falling short); sin was already there, but sin needs to be revealed to be what it is

The Law provided a relief / backdrop to make sin visibly clear. Merryman says: 'the Promise (to Abraham of blessing does not highlight or address sin

#### ANALOGIES:

- I. Fingerprint powder: reveals that a person has been at the scene
- II. Using UV/ black light to reveal blood; a crime happened here
- III. Your bathroom scale: reveals you have a big problem, but it can't help you do anything about it . . .

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## 'Why the Law then?'

### 1. Because of transgressions-

(b) The Law was **'added'**: placed beside or toward, or the Law has 'come in by the way' that the offence may abound (Rom. 5:20- KJV) in that verse it is: the law 'entered'

### 2. To make sin manifest

(a) To repeat: the Promise of blessing to Abraham ***did not address sin and righteousness.*** Righteousness before God needed to be addressed

(b) Sin was not added, it was there all along but there is a transgressing of God's written standard, so that the consciences of mankind might be reached and the sentence of death and condemnation be felt by their light and careless hearts [J.N. Darby]

(c) It was given so that sin might be known for the ugly, despicable thing it is. Its heinousness and seriousness was not known before the law was given [Lehmann Strauss]

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## 'Why the Law then?'

### 3. To make sin known

(a) *... by the law is the knowledge of sin'* **Rom. 3:20**. full-knowledge is ***epignosis***. A real, personal "I get it" knowledge, a knowledge that is acquired through personal, intense involvement [*Zodhiates*].... Again, stirring the conscience

(b) A word about Rom 5:20: '*The Law came in so that the transgression would increase;*' NOTICE: it's not that SIN might increase, but the transgression might increase. The sin is there, but the law now highlights how sin **oversteps** God's righteous proscriptions; sin not increasing; but infractions.

4. To conclude all members of the Adamic race are under sin, *Gal. 3:22*

5. To stop every mouth, *Rom. 3:19*

6. Establishes accountability before God, *Rom. 3:19*

7. To put Israel under the its custody as a tutor until the Seed of Abraham's promise comes to deliver them from its curse/condemnation. *Gal. 3:19 & 24* [to be seen later in the 3:19-24 series]

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## 'by the agency of a mediator'

### I. Who is the mediator?

- i. MOSES- fits the bill as mediator
- ii. **mesitēs**: one who is 'in the middle' 'in the midst' of two parties, representing each party's claim against the other in order to unite for peace [*Zodhiates*]
- iii. *Example: 'Exo. 19: 8. . . **And Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD.** 9 The LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe in you forever." **Then Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.***
- iv. *More: Exo. 17:4 **So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying,** "What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me." 5. **Then the LORD said to Moses,** "Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go.*
- v. Examples are plentiful, but Moses was certainly a 'go between' running back & forth



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## 'the Law was ordained through angels'

**I. We read the account in Exo. 19 of Israel's consecration, and in Chap. 20, God gives the Ten Commandments but there are no angels to be found . . . How is this ?**

- a) Yet, Stephen testifies angels were involved: *"you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it."* Acts 7:53
- b) Paul confirms it, Heb. 2:2: *For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty . . .*
- c) Deut. 33:2 as well: *He said, "The LORD came from Sinai, And dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, And He came from the midst of ten thousand holy ones; At His right hand there was flashing lightning for them.*

**II. The Answer lies in Psa. 68:17:** *The chariots of God are myriads, thousands upon thousands; The Lord is among them as at Sinai, in holiness.*

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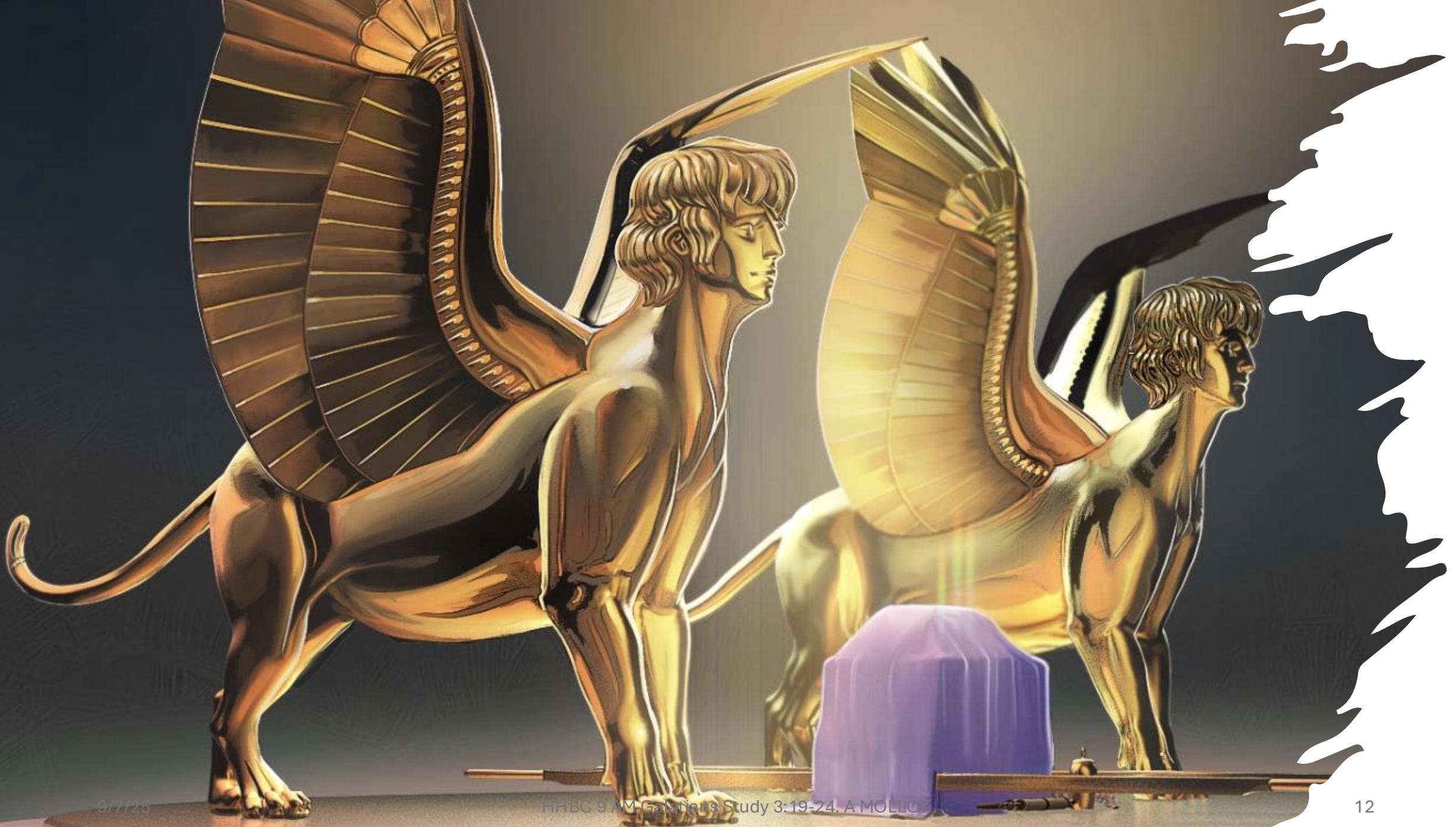
**II. The Answer lies in Psa. 68:17:** *'The chariots of God are myriads, thousands upon thousands; The Lord is among them as at Sinai, in holiness.'*

J.B. Stoney: ...

'For it was angels who shone in the glory of Sinai: invested by the will of God, the proclamation of the law with the splendour of their dignity. But the God of the angels and of Israel stood apart, hidden in His sanctuary of clouds and fire and thick darkness. He was encompassed with glory; He made Himself terrible in His magnificence. But He did not display Himself.'

- a. The Cherubim were present with God on the top of Sinai. They are living creatures, they had four faces [ man-lion-bull-eagle] & four wings, and their ministry is to 'defend God's holiness from the pollution of sinful beings' (perhaps: hermetically sealing God from sin) [L.S. CHAFER, P. 115 SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY]
- b. Eze. 1 and Exe. 10 delineate the glory and role of these cherubim
- c. Note: that they are depicted covering the Ark of the Covenant, and there are 2 of them in the Holy of Holies, 15 ft. tall made of olive wood covered in gold — wings touching above the Ark;

[J.B. STONEY: SYNOPSIS OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE, VOL. 4, BIBLE TRUTH PUBL., ADDISON IL, PG. 354]





‘ . . . . Until the Seed would come to whom the promise was made’

## I. The Seed

- a) Christ is the Seed to whom the Abrahamic promise was made; He is the salvation for the sin issue from Gen. 3:15; *‘between your seed and her seed... and He shall bruise you on the head’*

## II. The Law was ‘added’

- a) The word is to ‘place’ toward, to come alongside the Promise to Abraham (there already)
- b) Therefore: it is **SUBORDINATE** to the Promise and **INFERIOR** to it [Wuest; Merryman]
- c) The Law was temporal: from Mt. Sinai to the Cross: to which God nailed it, and Christ died to it.

20. Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one.

Simply, v. 20 is the exclamation point on the declaration that the Law is subordinate to and inferior to the Promise made to Abraham

- The Law requires the intermediary agency of angels and Moses
- But the Promise is made by only one Party: God Himself; NO MEDIATOR NECESSARY (e.g. Gen. 15:17: *the flaming torch passing between the cut sacrifices of the covenant; God on his own. . .*) ////