

## THE PEDAGOGICAL NATURE OF THE LAW IN GALATIANS 3:19-4:7

Richard N. Longenecker\*

In the discussion of Christians and the Mosaic Law, the analogy of the pedagogue in Gal 3:24-25 and the illustration of a son in a patrician household in Gal 4:1-7 provide significant though somewhat puzzling points of reference. There is no doubt that the analogy and illustration are meant to be taken together. Our difficulties have to do with (1) what Paul meant by them, (2) what areas in the discussion they apply to, and (3) how seriously they should be taken. So while Gal 3:24-25 and 4:1-7 are important passages for a Christian understanding of the Mosaic Law, the analogy and illustration require careful explication if we are to grasp Paul's point aright.

### I. THE ANALOGY OF THE PEDAGOGUE

We think today of pedagogues as teachers. In antiquity, however, a *paidagōgos* was distinguished from a *didaskalos* and had more custodial and disciplinary functions than educative or instructional. The *paidagōgos* was a well-known figure not only in the Greco-Roman world but also in Judaism, where the term *pedagog* appears as a Greek loan word. He was generally a trusted slave charged by the father of a family to supervise his son's (or sons') activities and conduct—i.e., as the etymology of the word suggests (*pais* plus *agōgos*), a "child-tender."

Plato (427-347 B.C.) in *The Republic* speaks of "pedagogues (*paidagōgōn*), nurses wet and dry, beauticians, barbers, and yet again cooks and chefs" as part of the retinue of Greek patrician households<sup>1</sup> and characterizes pedagogues as "not those who are good for nothing else, but men who by age and experience are qualified to serve as both leaders (*hēgemonas*) and custodians (*paidagōgous*) of children."<sup>2</sup> In chap. 4 of *Lysis* he provides us with a fascinating glimpse into the rearing of a son in a Greek family, from which the following dialogue between the boys Socrates and Lysis is an excerpt:

Do they [i.e. Lysis' father and mother] let you control your own self, or will they not trust you in that either? Of course they do not, he replied. But someone controls you? Yes, he said, my *paidagōgos* here. Is he a slave? Why certainly; he belongs to us, he said. What a strange thing, I exclaimed: a free man controlled by a slave! But how does this *paidagōgos* exert his control over you? By taking me to the teacher (*eis didaskalou*), he replied.<sup>3</sup>

And in *Laws* he writes of children:

Just as no sheep or other witless creature ought to exist without a herdsman, so chil-

\*Richard Longenecker is professor of New Testament at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto.

<sup>1</sup>Rep. 373C.

<sup>2</sup>Rep. 467D.

<sup>3</sup>Lysis 208C.

dren cannot live without *paidagōgōn*, nor slaves without masters. And of all wild creatures, the child is the most intractable; for insofar as it, above all others, possesses a fount of reason that is yet uncurbed, it is a treacherous, sly and most insolent creature. Wherefore the child must be strapped up, as it were, with many bridles—first, when he leaves the care of nurse and mother, with *paidagōgois* to guide his childish ignorance, and after that with *didaskalois* of all sorts of subjects and lessons, treating him as becomes a freeborn child. On the other hand, he must be treated as a slave; and any free man that meets him shall punish both the child himself and his *paidagōgon* or his *didaskalon*, if any of them does wrong.<sup>4</sup>

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) alludes to such a custodial function of a pedagogue when he says that “the appetitive part of us should be ruled by principle, just as a boy should live in obedience to his *paidagōgos*.”<sup>5</sup> And Xenophon (430-355 B.C.) writes: “When a boy ceases to be a child, and begins to be a lad, others release him from his *paidagōgōn* and from his *didaskalōn*; he is then no longer under them, but is allowed to go his own way.”<sup>6</sup>

Reflecting more directly the NT period, Josephus (A.D. 37-100/110) uses *paidagōgos* six times in contexts having to do with Biblical history,<sup>7</sup> with Greco-Roman households,<sup>8</sup> and in speaking about his own son’s pedagogue, whom he describes as “a slave, a eunuch” and who was punished by the emperor Domitian for an accusation made against Josephus.<sup>9</sup> Epictetus (first-second century A.D.) speaks of brothers having not only the same father and mother but also commonly the same *paidagōgos*.<sup>10</sup> He also tells of pedagogues cudgeling the family cooks when their charges would overeat, and exhorts them: “Man, we did not make you the cook’s *paidagōgos*, did we?, but the child’s. Correct *him*; help *him*!”<sup>11</sup> And in a late-second- or early-third-century A.D. letter a mother, on hearing of the departure of her son’s teacher, writes: “So, my son, I urge both you and your *paidagōgon* that you go to a suitable *didaskalon*”—and then closes her letter with the words: “Salute your esteemed *paidagōgos* Cros.”<sup>12</sup>

The pedagogue is frequently encountered in rabbinic writings, where the Hellenistic origin of the concept is shown by the fact that *pedagog* is a Greek loan word. For the most part the term appears in parables that have to do with the household of a king where the prince is under custodial supervision. *Genesis Rab-*  
*bah* 28:6, for example, reads:

<sup>4</sup>Laws VII. 808D-E.

<sup>5</sup>Nic. Eth. 3.12.8.

<sup>6</sup>Laced. 3.1.

<sup>7</sup>Ant. 1.2.1 §56; 9.6.5 §125; 10.10.1 §186.

<sup>8</sup>Ant. 18.6.9 §212; 20.8.10 §183.

<sup>9</sup>Life 76 §429.

<sup>10</sup>Diss. 2.22.26.

<sup>11</sup>Diss. 3.19.5.

<sup>12</sup>P. Oxy. 6.930.

R. Judan said: This may be illustrated by the case of a king who entrusted his son to a pedagogue (*pedagog*) who led him into evil ways, whereat the king became angry with his son and slew him. Said the king, "Did any lead my son into evil ways save this man? My son has perished and this man lives!" Therefore [God destroyed] "both man and beast."

Or again, *Gen Rab* 31:7 reads:

It is as if a royal prince had a pedagogue (*pedagog*), and whenever he did wrong, his pedagogue was punished; or as if a royal prince had a nurse, and whenever he did wrong, his nurse was punished. Similarly, the Holy One, blessed be He, said, "Behold, I will destroy them with the earth!"<sup>13</sup>

There are also several places in the Talmud where Moses is depicted as Israel's pedagogue,<sup>14</sup> or where Moses, Aaron and Miriam are so presented,<sup>15</sup> or Moses, David and Jeremiah.<sup>16</sup> But there is no passage in the extant Jewish literature where the Mosaic Law itself is spoken of as a pedagogue. 4 Maccabees comes close in referring in 1:17 to the Law as bringing *paideia* ("instruction," "discipline") and in speaking in 5:34 of the Law as a *paideutēs* ("teacher," "instructor"), yet without directly calling the Law a *paidagōgos*.

From such a collection of Greek and Jewish references it can be seen that Paul's use of *paidagōgos* in Gal 3:24-25, though creatively applied, is not an isolated phenomenon. The *paidagōgos*, though usually a slave, was an important figure in ancient patrician households, being charged with the supervision and conduct of one or more of the sons in the family. He was distinguished from the *didaskalos*, for he gave no formal instruction but administered the directives of the father in a custodial manner—though of course indirectly he taught by the supervision he gave and the discipline he administered. The characterization of the pedagogue as having "the bad image of being rude, rough, and good for no other business," one for whom "the public did not have much respect," and "a comic type," as Hans Dieter Betz portrays him,<sup>17</sup> arises from caricatures drawn by ancient playwrights. But it is a caricature and entirely ignores passages that speak of him as a trusted figure in antiquity who commanded respect and even affection. Plutarch (A.D. 46-120) in fact considered the term appropriate for a good political leader when he wrote of Aratus: "And all the world thought that Aratus was a good *paidagōgos* for a kingdom no less than for a democracy, for his principles and character were manifest, like color in a fabric, in the actions of the king."<sup>18</sup>

The depiction of the ancient pedagogue as a grim and ugly character is indeed a caricature and must not be imported into Paul's statements in Gal 3:24-25. Yet on the other hand it is not possible to interpret Gal 3:24-25 as assigning a positive

<sup>13</sup>See also *Exod Rab* 37:2; 42:9; *Deut Rab* 2:11; *Lam Rab* 4:12; *Sifre Deut* 19 on Deut 1:20-21.

<sup>14</sup>E.g., *Exod Rab* 21:8; 42:9.

<sup>15</sup>*Num Rab* 1:2.

<sup>16</sup>*Deut Rab* 2:11.

<sup>17</sup>H. D. Betz, *Galatians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 177.

<sup>18</sup>*Aratus* 48.3.

preliminary or preparatory role to the Law. The point of the analogy for Paul is not that the Law was a preparation for Christ. Rather, the focus is on the inferior status of one who is under a pedagogue and the temporary nature of such a situation.

## II. THE ILLUSTRATION OF A SON IN A PATRICIAN HOUSEHOLD

There can be no doubt that the illustration of Gal 4:1-7 of a son in a patrician household is meant to illumine what is said in 3:23-29 and to carry on the analogy of the pedagogue in 3:24-25. The titles *epitropos* and *oikonomos* of 4:2 have given rise to a great deal of discussion as to their precise meaning and the exact law the apostle had in mind. But there can be no doubt that they are meant in some way to be synonymous with *paidagōgos*. This is particularly clear for *epitropos*, which was a frequent term in Greek and became a loan word in Hebrew for the guardian of a minor. And while there is no certain instance of the use of *oikonomos* in the literature of antiquity for one who has charge of the person or estate of a minor, nor any case of the terms *epitropos* and *oikonomos* being used together, *oikonomos* appears frequently in Greek and as a loan word in Hebrew for a slave acting as a household steward or administrator for his master.

Some have argued from the combination of titles that Paul had in mind the Roman law (known to us from a later period) that decreed that a minor was under a *paidagōgos* or *epitropos* until his fourteenth year, and thereafter under a *kouratōr* until his twenty-fifth year. Against this, however, it must be noted (1) that Paul could have said explicitly *epitropos kai kouratōr*, thereby using the precise legal terms, rather than *epitropos kai oikonomos*, if he had this in mind, (2) that Paul adds "until the time set by his father," whereas Roman law itself fixed the time during which a child was under an *epitropos* and then a *kouratōr*, and (3) that among Greeks there seems to have been no such distinction between *epitropos* and *kouratōr*. Thus like Demosthenes (384-322 B.C.), who in his oration *Against Nausimachus* used *epitropos kai kēdemōn* ("guardian and caretaker") as a double title for the one man Aristaechmus,<sup>19</sup> we should probably regard *oikonomos* as roughly synonymous with *epitropos*, with the plural forms being qualitative plurals. Perhaps Paul's joining of these titles came about because of his references to imprisonment in 3:22-23 and to slavery in 4:1, 3, for *oikonomos* was also used in antiquity of a household administrator who supervised slaves.

In the Greco-Roman world the words *klēronomos* ("heir"), *nēpios* ("minor") and *kyrios* ("lord," "owner") were also legal terms, as was, as we noted, *epitropos*—all of which suggests that Paul's illustration was drawn from some legal practice of the day known both to him and to his readers. The precise details of that practice may be unclear to us today, simply because our texts come from various periods and represent various jurisdictions (i.e., Roman, Athenian or provincial). To further complicate matters, being more interested in the application than the details Paul could have made the illustration conform to his desired purpose, for no illustration is required to represent precisely every aspect of a situation in order to be meaningful or telling. But however we identify the source of the illustration and the exact significance of the terms in antiquity, Paul's mean-

<sup>19</sup>*Naus.* 12. (988<sup>2</sup>).

ing is clear: The guardianship of the Mosaic Law was meant to be for a time when God's people were in their spiritual minority, but now with the coming of Christ the time set by the Father has been fulfilled and Christians are to live freely as mature sons apart from the Law's supervision.

All of the nuances in Paul's analogy of the pedagogue in 3:24-25 are picked up in his illustration of 4:1-7: sons of a household, kept under restraint during the period of their minority, but destined to be mature, truly free and heirs of the estate through the father's action and at a time set by the father. The only feature in the illustration that goes beyond the analogy is the idea of *huiiothesia* ("adoption"), which was a legal term for the adoption of children. Here, evidently, Paul's theology of grace has outrun his illustration, yet without setting aside the main point of the illustration: that custodial care under an appointed guardian comes to an end at a time set by the father, resulting in mature freedom and the full possession of all that has been promised by the father.

### III. THE ARGUMENT OF GAL 3:19-4:7

When Paul raises the question "Why then the Law?" (*ti oun ho nomos*) in Gal 3:19, he does so both because his previous argument has brought him to it and because a proper Christian attitude toward the Law is at the heart of the problem he is addressing. Having argued that righteousness comes by faith and not by observing the Law—and in the process seeming to leave no function at all for the Law—Paul turns in 3:19-4:7 to a consideration of the Law's purpose and function. And here, undoubtedly, the Law he has in mind is the Mosaic Law, for it is identified in 3:17 as "the Law that was given 430 years later," is spoken of in 3:19b as having been "ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator," and is equated in 3:22 with "the Scripture" (*hē graphē*).

Of this Mosaic Law Paul makes four opening statements in 3:19 by way of defining its purpose and function: (1) "It was added because of transgressions" (*tōn parabaseōn charin prosetethē*) (2) "until the Seed to whom the promise referred should come" (*achris an elthē to sterma hē epēngeltai*), (3) "and it was ordained through angels" (*diatageis di angelōn*) (4) "by the hand of a mediator" (*en cheiri mesitou*). Now certainly there are a number of matters here that may be taken in any one of several ways, particularly the expression "because of transgressions" (*tōn parabaseōn charin*) and the comment of 3:20 that arises from the word "mediator": "A mediator, however, is not of one; but God is one" (*ho de mesitēs henos ouk estin, ho de theos heis estin*).<sup>20</sup> But our uncertainties regarding some matters must not be allowed to divert attention from Paul's main point. Nor should these statements be considered just four unconnected statements given *seriatim* without any apparent cohesion, as many commentators treat them. Rather, what ties all four of these statements together is the emphasis on the inferior status of the Mosaic Law to the promise given in the Abrahamic covenant—an inferiority expressed in terms of the Law's temporary status, its purpose and function, and the manner in which it was given. In these four statements, in fact, Paul sets the theme for all that follows in 3:19-4:7.

<sup>20</sup>J. B. Lightfoot, somewhat hyperbolically, comments: "The number of interpretations of this passage is said to mount up to 250 or 300" (*Epistle to the Galatians* [London: Macmillan, 1896] 147).

Ernest DeWitt Burton has rightly caught the thrust of Paul's four statements and so says of the first: "*prosetethē* marks the law as supplementary and hence subordinate to the covenant"; in fact, "the law in the apostle's thought forms no part of the covenant, [it] is a thing distinct from it, in no way modifying its provisions."<sup>21</sup> As for the second statement, Burton observes: "The whole clause, *achris*, etc., sets the limit to the period during which the law continues. Thus the covenant of promise is presented to the mind as of permanent validity, both beginning before and continuing through the period of the law and afterwards; the law on the other hand is temporary, added to the permanent covenant for a period limited in both directions."<sup>22</sup> And on the third and fourth statements (which Burton treats together), particularly in commenting on the pejorative references to "angels," "hand" and "mediator," he says: "The intent of the whole phrase is to depreciate the law as not given directly by God."<sup>23</sup>

Having set the theme, Paul goes on in 3:21 to insist that the Law and the promises of God are neither the same, as the Judaizers evidently claimed, nor opposed to one another, as antinomians would hold—i.e., neither complementary nor contradictory, neither in continuum nor in contrast—but that they function on different levels in the economy of God or "operate in different spheres."<sup>24</sup> Then in 3:22-23 Paul sets out a twofold purpose for the Law: (1) to condemn sin and declare all mankind guilty, so that men and women might turn to God by faith and thereby receive what is promised (v 22), and (2) to supervise and have custodial care over the righteous (note the change to the first person plural in the verb *ephrourometha*, "we were held prisoners," and the participle *synkleiomenoi*, "we were locked up") until "the faith" (*tēn pistin*) that came in Jesus Christ should be revealed (v 23). Of both purposes he uses *synkleiō* ("to lock up, hem in, imprison"), first as a finite verb and then as an adverbial participle, to portray the way the Law works, for in both cases the feature of constraint is prominent—viz. in the first, condemning sin; in the second, supervising life. Of the second—i.e. the supervision and custodial care of the righteous—he uses the analogy of the pedagogue in 3:24-25 and the illustration of a son in a patrician household in 4:1-7, for these figures were particularly suggestive (as we have seen) in nuancing what he means by "we were held prisoners by the law" (*hypo nomon ephrourometha synkleiomenoi*).

With regard to the first purpose, God's Law as given at the dawn of human consciousness, as reiterated and clarified in the Law of Moses, and particularly as intensified and heightened in the teachings and example of Jesus—that Law continues to provide the standard necessary for an intelligent and realistic act of repentance. It calls upon us to recognize how far from God's demands even our best thoughts and actions are, thereby providing an objective standard for self-criticism. It brings home God's judgment upon us. To accept this judgment is in fact

<sup>21</sup>E. D. Burton, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921) 188.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 193.

the first step in what the NT calls "repentance."<sup>25</sup> It is, as Lutherans call it, "God's strange work" as compared to "God's proper work," for it brings us down that we might then by faith look up to receive God's gift of righteousness.

With regard, however, to the second purpose for the Law, Paul says quite clearly that it functioned in this manner "until faith (i.e. *tēn pistin*, "the faith" that came with Christ) should be revealed" (3:23; cf. v. 19). This suggests that some difference in the divine economy took place with the coming of Christ, with that difference being that righteousness is now apart from the Law (cf. Rom 3:21)—yet without in any way nullifying the promise. Or, as Burton expresses it:

That the relation of men to God was different after the period of law was ended from what it had been under the law is implied in v. 23. But that the promise with its principle of faith was in no way abrogated or suspended in or after the period of the law is the unequivocal affirmation of vv. 15-18, and clearly implied in the quotation in v. 11 of Hab. 2:4, which the apostle doubtless ascribed to this period.<sup>26</sup>

In the analogy of the pedagogue used to represent this supervisory function of the Law, Paul's emphasis appears in 3:25: "But now with the coming of 'the faith' we are no longer under the pedagogue." And in his illustration of a boy in a patrician household his conclusion in 4:7 highlights his main concern: "So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir."

In light of this we must reject the interpretation of *eis Christon* in 3:24 as suggesting the idea of a positive educational development from the religion of Israel to Christianity. That is what is said elsewhere of the Law in such passages as Rom 3:21b ("being witnessed to by the Law and the Prophets") and Rom 3:31b ("we establish the Law"). But it is not what is being said here. Rather, *eis Christon* must be taken here in the temporal sense of "until Christ." With the coming of Christ the supervisory function of the Law ended, just as the services of a pedagogue end when his charge comes to maturity. Any endeavor on the part of a son who has reached maturity and come into possession of his inheritance to revert back to the supervision of an administrative guardian would be a reversion to childishness—it would in fact be a return to what Paul calls "the elemental teachings/principles of the world" (*ta stoicheia tou kosmou*). For when God moves forward in his redemptive economy, any reversion or standing still becomes a "worldly" act, no matter how good or how appropriate such a stance once was.<sup>27</sup>

#### IV. THE RELEVANCE OF ALL THIS FOR THE QUESTION OF CHRISTIANS AND THE MOSAIC LAW

What then should we say as to the relevance of Paul's pedagogue analogy of Gal 3:24-25, his illustration of a son in a patrician household in Gal 4:1-7, and his

<sup>25</sup>Cf. C. H. Dodd, *Gospel and Law* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951) 61.

<sup>26</sup>Burton, *Galatians* 189.

<sup>27</sup>Cf. the reference to the tabernacle as "a worldly sanctuary" (*to hagion kosmikon*) in Heb 9:1, it being so because God's economy of redemption had moved beyond even what he had graciously provided earlier.

overall argument of Gal 3:19-4:7 for the question of Christians and the Mosaic Law? Some hold that we should say very little, because 3:19-4:7 is only a digression from the main argument in 3:1-18. Others hold that we should say little, because here Paul has gotten carried away in the heat of controversy and has overstated his position. Many ignore Gal 3:19-4:7 almost entirely, evidently believing that all that is necessary for the topic resides in 3:1-18 and in certain statements to be found in the letter to the Romans. Such disparaging attitudes, however, I consider to be wrongheaded, believing that in Gal 3:19-4:7 Paul has given us an important answer to a perennial problem of Christian theology and lifestyle—an answer that needs to be highlighted, particularly in evangelical circles today.

Three points, briefly, need to be made by way of bringing this all together and in conclusion. In the first place, it needs to be stressed that Paul is not denying that God's self-revelation (be it defined as Torah or as Law) stands as the external standard for all human thought and action. He implies as much in 3:19 when he says that the Law "was added because of transgressions," and he says it directly in 3:22 when he declares that "the Scripture consigns/imprisons all things under sin." Yet while Paul holds to the eternal validity of God's Law as the standard of righteousness that condemns sin and thereby brings us to an intelligent and realistic act of repentance, he sees that Law as having reached its zenith in the teachings and example of Jesus Christ. Thus he tells the Corinthians that though he is "free" and "not under the Law," he is "not free from God's Law" because he is "under Christ's Law" (1 Cor 9:19-21, *ennomos Christou*).

Second, it need be insisted that Paul always was against any idea of soteriological legalism—i.e., that false understanding of the Law by which people think they can turn God's self-revelation to their own advantage, thereby gaining divine favor and acceptance. This too the prophets of Israel denounced, for legalism in this sense was never a legitimate part of Israel's religion. But it was, it appears, part of the Judaizers' message—whether overtly or unintentionally. And it is this that Paul opposes when he speaks pejoratively of "the works of the Law" (*ergōn nomou*). Thus in Gal 2:15-21, recalling his words to Peter among Christians at Syrian Antioch, he writes: "We who are Jews by birth and not 'sinners of the Gentiles' know that a man is not justified by observing the Law (*ex ergōn nomou*), . . . because by observing the Law (*ex ergōn nomou*) no one will be justified. . . . I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the Law (*dia nomou*) Christ died for nothing." And so in Gal 3:1-18 he argues from his converts' experience of the Spirit, from God's promise to Abraham, and from the priority of the Abrahamic covenant against the Judaizers' soteriological legalism.

A third point, however, needs also to be emphasized—particularly because it is so often neglected—and that is that Paul not only opposes in Galatians a soteriological legalism but also the necessity for a nomistic lifestyle. The Jewish religion at its best was never (nor is it) legalistic in the sense we have defined that term above. The Decalogue, for example, was not understood as ten prescriptions for attaining God's favor but as a declaration of God's personal relationship with his people and of his salvific action on their behalf (Exod 20:2: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery") and then a list of statements as to how God's people were to live in response to such a relationship and act. Yet while not legalistic the religion of Israel and all forms of an-

cient and modern Judaism are avowedly “nomistic”—i.e., they view the Torah, both Scripture and tradition, as supervising the lives of God’s own, so that all questions of conduct are ultimately measured against the touchstone of the Law and all of life is to be directed in one way or another by the Law. While the prophets denounced legalism, they never sought to set aside the custodial function of the Law for the righteous. The Mosaic Law was for Israel therefore not only the standard by which righteousness was defined and sin denounced. It was also a system by which the lives of God’s people were regulated. The Law did not make people righteous, but it served (1) as the standard for an intelligent and realistic act of repentance and (2) as a system to supervise the lives of God’s people as they responded by faith to divine mercy. In such ways the Law was associated formally with righteousness in Israel’s experience.

The Judaizers at Galatia were evidently urging upon Paul’s converts both a soteriological legalism and a nomistic lifestyle, arguing that both were pragmatically important and theologically necessary. Like the prophets of old, Paul denounces their legalism (Gal 2:16-21; 3:1-18). And like the prophets of old, he affirms that one of the purposes of the Mosaic Law was to set the standard for righteousness and thereby condemn sin (Gal 3:19a, 22)—though he also sees that standard as expressed preeminently in the teachings and example of Jesus, and so appeals to “the Law of Christ” (*ton nomon tou Christou*) in his final exhortation to his Galatian converts “to bear each other’s burdens” (Gal 6:1-2). But unlike the prophets, the Judaizers and all forms of Judaism, Paul’s argument in Gal 3:19-4:7 is against any necessity for a nomistic lifestyle because, as he sees it, such a life controlled by law was instituted by God only for the period of his people’s spiritual minority and until Christ should come.

God’s purpose in redemption has always been to bring his people to a full realization of their personal relationship with him as sons and to a full possession of their promised inheritance. So with the coming of Christ, Paul insists that “we are no longer under the supervision of the Law” (3:25) and “no longer a slave, but a son . . . and also an heir” (4:7). It is for this reason that Judaism speaks of itself as being Torah-centered and Christianity declares that it is Christ-centered, for in Christ the Christian finds not only God’s Law as standard preeminently expressed but also the Law as a system of conduct set aside in favor of guidance by reference to his teachings and example and through the direct action of his Spirit. Thus Paul proclaims that “Christ is the end of the Law in its connection with righteousness to everyone who believes” (Rom 10:4, understanding the much disputed *telos* as properly “termination” and not just “goal”). It is such a concept that Paul has nuanced by his use of the pedagogue analogy of Gal 3:24-25 and by his illustration of a son in a patrician household of Gal 4:1-7, and it is such a concept that Christians need to recapture today. Otherwise we are in danger of being “half-Judaizers”—i.e., of denying the Judaizers’ soteriological legalism but retaining their insistence on the necessity for a nomistic lifestyle. The argument of Gal 3:19-4:7, however, was given as a corrective to such thinking. It sets before us one important feature of the answer to the question concerning Christians and the Mosaic Law.