

“Before Faith Came ...”

“But before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed. So that the law is our tutor to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor” (Gal. 3:23-25). The noun “*faith*” is found no less than 14 times in the text; the verb “*believe*,” twice. It is evident that “*faith*” is sometimes used to describe “*conviction*.” It is equally true that “*faith*” is used to define the system or doctrine of Christ. The quotation from Habakkuk 2:4, “*The just shall live by faith*,” refers to the conviction created by the doctrine (3:11). However, in both verses two and five allusion is of the doctrine or system of faith preached among the Galatians when the writer speaks of the hearing of faith. In our text for study (“*before faith came*,” “*Now that faith is come*”) “*faith*” is a reference to the system or doctrine of Christ.

When the law was in force, “*faith had not yet come*” but Old Testament worthies, even those under the law, did have conviction. A quick review of Hebrews eleven cites many such men. So when Paul writes, “*Before faith came*,” he does not mean that under the law none had faith in God; he speaks of that period of time before the doctrine of Christ (the New Testament) had been revealed.

The condition of the Jew (for it is of the Jew Paul writes) before faith came was that they were “*kept in ward under the law*.” In chapter four Paul speaks of the fact that the Jew were “*held in bondage under the rudiments of the world*” (Gal. 4:3). The Jew had violated the precepts of the law and was under its condemnation. Being condemned but it, its claims lay upon him and remained there he could be released from the bondage of sin Christ. All the Jew could do, all he could hope for would have to wait until there was the revealing of the faith through which his justification could come.

“*So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith*.” The KJV has “*schoolmaster*” where the ASV has “*tutor*.” Yet neither word gives the exact sense that the Greek word holds. That word is *paidagagos* which literally means “*child conductor*.” The reference was to a slave whose duty it was to conduct safely his master’s children from home to the place of learning. Both schoolmaster and tutor are words which suggest the imparting of knowledge which was not really the work of the *paidagagos*. Protection and care are inherent in *paidagagos* and the law served in just such a role. It stayed off the impulse of idolatry and encouraged right living which should have made it easier that those under it to receive and live the Christian life. But, the law was designed to bring men to

the place where he could be justified, by the faith of Christ and of course one's faith in that Christ.

"But now that faith is come we are no longer under a tutor." Please note that it is the law who was *"our tutor"* and it is the law we are said to be no longer under. An article given to me is titled: "Which Law of Moses Ended At the Cross?"; which intimates that Moses was the *"tutor"* of Galatians 3:25. The article's purpose was to "prove" that Ten Commandments are still binding. The author insists that part of the law was removed but not all. He wants to eliminate Paul's point here about the law by implying that Moses is the tutor; which we are no longer under, that we are under Christ. According to the writer; Christ did not remove the ten commandments, he both kept them and expects us to do the same.

There is a sense in which Moses was a tutor. *"For Moses from generation of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath"* (Acts 15:21). Notice Moses was both read and preached. Moses stands for the Law he gave and when Moses was read and preached, it was the Law which was preached and read. However to say we are no longer under Moses, but still are under the law is to make an unscriptural conclusion. To distinguish between preaching and reading of Moses and preaching and reading of the law is both unreasonable logic and a perversion of scripture. Moses was a tutor only to the extent he gave the law. But, do not forget that it is the law which is called a tutor and the law the Apostle unmistakably means when he says, *"We are no longer under a tutor."*

Jim McDonald