

A Word Study by Pastor Melissa Scott, Ph.D.

Word Study in Galatians 3:24 on “Schoolmaster”

CJV: “Wherefore the law was our **schoolmaster** Note ① to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith”

NKJV: “Therefore the law was our **tutor** Note ① to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith”

New Jerusalem Bible: “So the law was serving as a **slave** to look after us Note ① to lead us to Christ so that we could be justified by faith”

Modern English Bible: “So that the law Note ① became a **leader of our childhood** to Christ, in order that we might be made righteous from faith”

NIV: “So the law was put in **charge to** Note ① lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith”

Amplified Bible: “So the law served [to us Jews] as our **trainer and guardian our guide** to Christ Note ① to lead us until Christ [came] that we might be justified [declared righteous put in right standing with God] by and through faith”

Wycliffe reads: “under-master”

Rheims reads: “pedagogue”

Tyndale and Cranmer reads: “schoolmaster”

Weymouth reads: “tutor”

Greek NT: Therefore/so the law Note ② our has been unto/until Christ that from/out of
ὥστε ὁ νομος παιδαγωγός ἡμῶν *γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν, ἵνα ἐκ

*P⁴⁶: Chester Beatty Papyri reads *ἐγένετο* instead of *γέγονεν*.

faith we might be “justified”
πιστεως δικαιοθώμεν

Note ① “to bring us” etc. imported from the Geneva translation/Bible.

Note ② *παιδαγωγός* Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance #G3807 which is from #G3816 and #G71
#G3816 = *παις* “a boy (as often beaten with impunity) or a girl, child, specifically a slave or a servant”
Also see Strong’s #G3817 “to hit (as if with/by a single blow...) smite.”

#G3807 = G3816 + G71 = G71 → *ἄγω* = to lead, to bring, to drive, also #G72 – *ἄγωγή* mode or manner of living – manner of life. So G3816 + G71 “Boy or child-leader”
(G3816) (G71)

παιδαγωγός occurs only one other time in the New Testament. See 1 Corinthians 4:15 where the same word is translated “instructor.”

Lightfoot says: “His office (ref. the *παιδαγωγός*) was quite distinct from that of a teacher (Greek word → *didaskalos*) –so the very rendering of ‘schoolmaster’ conveys the wrong idea.” (Zondervan 1957)

Godspeed translated this word “attendant,” and Young’s translation “child conductor.” To better understand why “schoolmaster” is not the best interpolation we must look at the word’s historic use.

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Xenophon (430 – 355 B.C.) “When a boy ceases to be a child, and begins to be a lad others release him from his παιδαγωγόν and from his διδασκαλον (teacher); he is then no longer under them, but is allowed to go his own way.”

Plato (427 – 347 B.C.) speaking about παιδαγωγός as a part of the Grecian household—nurses (wet nurses and dry) barbers, and cooks—and says specifically of παιδαγωγός:

“Not those who are good for nothing else, but men by age and experience are qualified to serve as leaders and custodians of children.”

In Plato’s “Laws” he says:

“Just as no sheep or other witless creature ought to exist without a herdsman so children cannot live without παιδαγωγων...and of all wild creatures, the child is most intractable; for in so far as it is, above all others, possesses a fount of reason yet uncurbed – it is a treacherous, sly and most insolent creature...a child must have (when he leaves the care of his nurse and mother) a παιδαγωγοις to guide his childish ignorance and after that with διδασκαλοις (teacher) of all sorts of subjects and lessons...”

Josephus (A.D. 37 – 100?) in his ‘Antiquities’ speaks historically of the παιδαγωγός within the realm of the Greco-Roman world. He even speaks about his son’s παιδαγωγός who is a “slave” and “a eunuch” who was punished by the Emperor Domitian for making accusations against Josephus.

The παιδαγωγός was usually a slave, trustworthy and faithful in character. Normally the παιδαγωγός would supervise the child from age 6 to puberty. The παιδαγωγός would make sure the child went to school (called *gymnasia*) under a *didaskalos* – a teacher – the παιδαγωγός guarded the child, protected the child in and outside of the household. The παιδαγωγός would also be responsible for maintaining discipline. In later (Rome) periods the παιδαγωγός became less useful and eventually was reduced to a mere attendant. The word παιδαγωγός – *pedagogue* became “page” in English.

Page[Ⓞ] boy, lad, youth in training – male person of low condition employed as a servant in a great household – foot boy, errand boy. (Oxford Dictionary/English Etymology 1966)

When we study Galatians 4:22, 4:23, 4:30 and 4:31 we will encounter the root of παιδαγωγός → παις (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance #G3816) in the bondwoman/bondmaid = παιδικης. The essential meaning in the KJV is acceptable. What is important is to see the connection between the use of παιδαγωγός and παιδικης which is not seen in the English!