

Galatians 3:21-29 – Sons of God

By faith in Jesus Christ we are children of Abraham. Faith brings blessings, justification and the Holy Spirit. The law brings a curse to all who rely on it for justification. Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. The Galatian churches had enjoyed the blessings of God through faith in Jesus Christ. The Judaizers wanted to bring the Galatians under the law and therefore bring them under a curse. As Paul said in verse 1, “Oh foolish Galatians”! The question that Paul continued to deal with in 3:21-25 is “why then the law?”

Read Galatians 3:21-25.

The law does not override the promises made to Abraham. The obvious question is “Is the law then against the promises of God?” Paul answers, “No way!” Why isn’t the law opposed to the promises which God gave to Abraham? Ephesians 2:1 says we “were dead through the trespasses and sins”. We are dead and need to be made alive. What did Paul say about the law’s ability to make us alive? (3:21)

In verse 22, what did the Scripture do to “everything”? What does this verse mean?

It was just getting worse for the Galatians. In verse 10, the law put them under a curse. In verse 22, the Scripture imprisoned them under sin. What does the law do in verse 23?

What is the role of the law in verse 24? The word used in this verse has a number of translations: guardian, custodian, schoolmaster, tutor, chaperon, disciplinarian and governess. The original word used is the word from which we get our English word “pedagogue”. We use the word differently. In Paul’s time, the “pedagogue” was usually a slave put in charge to lead a child to and from school. The “pedagogues” were also known to discipline the child assigned to them. Even though the child’s father was a free man, the child took orders and discipline from the “pedagogue”.

John Calvin talked about the three uses of law. First, it is used as a mirror which exposes our sinfulness. Second, it is used to restrain evil. This is the “civil” use of the law. The third use is to reveal the will of God for how we should live. Which of these uses did Paul talk about in chapter 3?

From verse 25, are we now still under the law? Explain.

Read Galatians 3:26-29.

In verse 26, Paul says that “you are all sons of God”. How does someone become a child of God? Does the law make someone a child of God? Does ancestry make someone a child of God? See also John 1:12-13. In John 8, Jesus said that “everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin” (34). The Jews said “Abraham is our father” (39). When pushed they claimed “we have one Father even God” (41) This was the Jews’ identity. Now Paul proclaimed that by faith Gentiles were both children of Abraham and children of God. This happens through faith and not by works.

What does it mean to be baptized into Christ? What does it mean to put on Christ? (3:27)

What is the context of verse 28? What has Paul been focused on for the first three chapters of Galatians? We talk about people using a verse out of context. This verse is one of those verses which certain people love to take out of context. What does verse 28 mean in the context of Galatians? What is the relation between putting on Christ and verse 28?

The abuses of verse 28 are many and varied. What doesn’t verse 28 mean?

How should verse 28 be applied to the church? How should verse 28 be applied to ourselves as individuals?

In verse 29, how are we the seed of Abraham? How do we become heirs? What is our inheritance in Jesus Christ?

Paul’s implied question to the churches of Galatia is, “If, by faith in Christ, you are already children of Abraham, children of God, recipients of the Spirit of God, and heirs of the promises of God what can you possibly gain by being circumcised? The Galatians already had what the Judaizers were trying to sell them without having to go through the obstacle course which the Judaizers had laid out for them.