

Galatians 3:23-29

The Law placed the Jews in restrictive custody in a spiritual prison—3:23

- 1) The Law governed the situation of the Jews—3:23
 - a) Ongoing supervision—*We were held in custody* [impf. pass. ind. φρουρέω] *under* [ὑπό] (the watchful eye of) *the law*
 - b) Ongoing restriction—*confined* [pf. pass. ptc. συγκλείω] (cf. 3:22)
- 2) Being under the Law, however, was a temporary situation—3:23
 - a) Prior—²³ *But before* [πρό] *the* (Abraham-like, with Christ as the object) *faith came*,
 - i) cf. 3:22
 - ii) Justifying faith was operative in the Old Testament but faith in the person and work of Christ did not come until He was revealed. (BKC)
 - b) Time limit—*until* [εἰς] *the coming faith would be revealed* [aor. pass. inf. ἀποκαλύπτω].

The Law acted as a temporary guardian for the immature—3:24-25

- 1) God's gracious provision of the Law directed the immature to Christ—3:24 ²⁴ *So then* [ὥστε] *the law had become* [pf. act. ind. γίνομαι] *our guardian* [παιδαγωγός] *until* [εἰς] *Christ*,
 - a) A guardian was a slave employed in Roman families to have charge of a boy from ages 6 to 14-17, watching over his outward behavior and attending him both at home and to school. He supervised and guided his conduct and homework, as a disciplinarian, knowingly hired to do a temporary job until the boy was of age. He was **not** the teacher.
 - b) The Law was inferior and temporary, belonging to a period of immaturity.
 - c) Why? *so that* [ἵνα] *we might be declared righteous/acceptable* [aor. pass. subj. δικαιώω] (by God) *by* [ἐκ] *faith*.
- 2) What has God graciously accomplished for the Jews?—3:25 ²⁵ *But now that the* (Abraham-like, with Christ as the object) *faith has come* [aor. act. ptc. ἔρχομαι], *we are* [pres. act. ind. εἰμί] *no longer* [οὐκέτι] *under* [ὑπό] *a guardian* [παιδαγωγός].
 - a) The Law has done its job. Don't go backwards to immaturity.

Embracing the Gospel is essential for sonship—3:26-27

- 1) What happened at the moment of salvation? *For* [γάρ] *you^{pl}* (Jews and Gentiles) *are* [pres. act. ind. εἰμί] **all** (emphatic) (mature) *sons* [υἱός] *of God*
 - a) How? *through* [διὰ] *faith in* [ἐν] *Christ Jesus*.
- 2) When a Roman boy came of age, a ceremony was held called the *toga virilis*, similar to a Jewish bar-mitzvah, at which he exchanged his toga with an elaborately embroidered purple hem (called a *toga praetexta*) for a pure white toga.
- 3) What else happened at salvation?—3:27 ²⁷ *For you^{pl}* (Jews and Gentiles) *have clothed yourselves* [aor. mid. ind. ἐνδύω] *with Christ*.

- b) Who has done this and how did it happen? **all** (emphatic) *who were immersed* [aor. pass. ind. βαπτίζω] *into* [εἰς] *Christ*
 - i) Not Spirit baptism, but baptism in water

The Gospel removes common human distinctions for salvation—3:28

- 1) What? (cf. 1st Corinthians 12:13; Colossians 3:11)
 - a) No ethnic/religious distinctions—²⁸ *There is neither Jew nor Greek/non-Jew,*
 - b) No social/legal/economic distinctions—*there is neither bondsman* [δοῦλος] *nor freeman* [ἐλεύθερος],
 - c) No gender distinctions—*there is neither male* [ἄρρην] *nor female* [θῆλυς];
 - d) These three distinctions reflect the morning prayers of a free Jewish man:
 - i) “Praised be You, Adonai our God, King of the universe, because you have not made me a Gentile ... note made me a woman ... not made me a slave.”
 - e) They are also similar to what Socrates recorded about the Greek mindset:
 - i) “I thank God that I was born a human being and not a beast, next a man and not a woman, thirdly, a Greek and not a barbarian.”
- 2) Why? *because* [γάρ] *you^{pl} are* **all** (emphatic) *one* (by being) *in* [ἐν] *Christ Jesus*.
 - a) These distinctions are not obliterated in their entirety, but only in the realm of salvation. A Jew does not become a Gentile, or vice versa; a bondsman does not become a freeman, or vice versa; a man does not become a woman or vice versa.
 - b) Spiritual equality does not eliminate differences in function, just like within the Tri-unity of God. See 1st Corinthians 11:3.
- 3) Which is one reason Biblical Christians should not be rioting in Ferguson, MO.

The Gospel accomplishes what self-effort could never accomplish—3:29

- 1) A big if—3:29a ²⁹ *Now if* [εἰ, 1st class condition, assumed true for sake of the argument] **you^{pl}** (emphatic; Gentiles) *belong to Christ,*
- 2) Two overlapping results—3:29b *then* [ἄρα] ...
 - a) *you^{pl}* (Gentiles) *are* [pres. act. ind. εἰμί] *Abraham’s descendants* [σπέρμα],
 - i) Since Christ is the descendant of Abraham (3:16)
 - b) *and heirs* [κληρονόμος] *according to* [κατά] *the promise* [ἐπαγγελία] (not works).
 - i) Believers receive the universal blessing of justification which is through faith, but not the land promise.
- 3) The converse is not necessarily true: If you are Abraham’s seed, then you belong to Christ.” (Wallace)

Take-home truth: believers are the offspring of Abraham by virtue of their being united with Christ by faith alone.