

CHILDREN OF GOD BY FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS

TEXT: GALATIANS 3:26-29

INTRODUCTION:

1. In Galatians 3:25, Paul writes: "But after that faith is come, we (referring here to Jews) are no longer under a schoolmaster" (referring here to the law).
2. Now, as we pick up here in verse 26, Paul changes from "we" to "ye." He is saying here, "For ye (Galatians, Gentiles) are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."
3. It does not matter if one is a Jew (like Paul) or a Gentile (like the Galatians), if he has faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, he is a child of God and "Abraham's (spiritual) seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29).

I. A CHRISTIAN IS A CHILD OF GOD THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST (3:26).

1. One of the most damnable heresies around today – and it is the #1 doctrine of the liberal churches – is the so-called "universal Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man."
2. A liberal preacher who is not born again, and does not believe the Bible is the inerrant Word of God is not my brother.
3. According to the words of our Saviour, recorded in John 8:44, the false religionist is a child of the devil. He is not a child of God.
4. I realize it is not "politically correct" to say this but this is what the Bible teaches.
5. In the book of Galatians, Paul has been contrasting true salvation through faith in Christ versus a false hope of salvation through keeping the law.
6. The law could never give a man the nature of a child of God – only faith in Christ can do that. John 1:12 says, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."
7. Our Lord said in John 3:7, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."
8. In the Old Testament, God never calls Israelites His sons. He called them His servants. Joshua 1:2 says, "Moses my servant is dead."
9. In I Kings 11:38, David is called God's servant.
10. It is a great honor and blessing to be a servant of God. However, it is a far greater honor to be a servant and a son.

II. A CHRISTIAN IDENTIFIES WITH CHRIST THROUGH BAPTISM (3:27).

1. Union with Christ takes place immediately at conversion. Baptism is a public testimony to that union. It is a public identification with Christ, which Paul refers to as "putting on Christ" (3:27).
2. One preacher explained it this way: "Just as a soldier proclaims himself a member of the army by 'putting on' his uniform, so a believer identifies himself as one who belongs to Christ by being baptized in water. By this act he publicly expresses submission to Christ's leadership and authority" (William MacDonald).
3. By baptism the Christian signifies also the burial of the flesh, and its efforts to obtain righteousness. Baptism signifies the end of the old way of life and the beginning of the new one.
4. In baptism we confess that we have died with Christ and have been buried with Him. Just as Christ died to the law, so we too are dead to the law, and are not under the law (cf. Gal. 3:13).
5. Concerning baptism, there are two extremes to avoid. On the one hand, there are those who teach that a person cannot be saved without being baptized. Many churches teach this, notably the "Church of Christ" (sometimes referred to as "Campbellites," because the church was started by Alexander Campbell in the 19th century).
6. Their main "proof-text" is Acts 2:38. But this verse does not teach what they say it does. The preposition *eis*, translated "for" could be translated "unto" (Scofield margin) or "because of."
7. The same word is translated "at" in Matthew 12:41 -- "They repented at the preaching of Jonah."
8. We say that a man is doing time in jail for armed robbery. We mean "because of armed robbery," not "in order to commit armed robbery"!
9. But the Campbellites spend a lot of time misinterpreting Acts 2:38. One Baptist preacher said that there are so many Campbellites down in some parts of Texas that if you listen carefully to the bullfrogs in the pond at night you will hear some of them say, "Acts, Acts, Acts," and you will hear other frogs replying, "2:38, 2:38, 2:38."
10. Another extreme to be avoided is the position that since baptism is not necessary for salvation, it is unimportant. Surely, anyone who reads the New Testament with an open mind has to admit that baptism is very important.
11. Mark 16:15, 16 says, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
12. We identify with Christ in submitting to Scriptural baptism (Gal. 3:27).
13. After we are Scripturally baptized, we are to get busy serving in the local church. Someone said a Christian who is not a church member is like a

student who will not go to school, a soldier who will not join the army, and a salesman with no customers. He is like a sailor with no ship and no crew, a tuba player without an orchestra, a parent without children, and a football player without a team.

III. ALL BELIEVERS ARE "ONE IN CHRIST JESUS" (3:28, 29).

1. The law of Moses made distinctions between Jew and Gentile, slave and free man, male and female.
2. In his morning prayers, the Pharisee would pray, "I thank Thee O God that I am a Jew and not a Gentile, that I am a free man and not a slave, and that I am a man and not a woman."
3. But in Christ Jesus these differences disappear as far as acceptance with God is concerned. A Jew is not preferred over a Gentile; a free man is not preferred over a slave; and a man is not preferred over a woman.
4. The ground is level at the cross. Christ died for all, and all are saved the same way – "by faith in Christ Jesus" (3:26b).
5. Having said that, please let me clarify something: Liberals and feminists have twisted Galatians 3:28 to teach that women can serve as pastors and deacons because in Christ "there is neither male nor female" (3:28).
6. Is that what this verse is saying? No.
7. This Scripture is simply saying that "in Christ Jesus" there are no earthly distinctions as far as salvation is concerned. This does not mean that our race, political status, or sex is changed at conversion; but that these things are of no value or handicap when it comes to our spiritual relationship to God through the Lord Jesus Christ.
8. It is fair to say that the law perpetuated these distinctions and divisions, but grace has removed them (cf. Gal. 6:15; John 4:25-30; Philemon 15-18).
9. Unfortunately, the so-called "women's lib" movement has influenced many churches, and now many so-called Christian churches are ordaining women into the ministry. And their favorite proof-text is Gal. 3:28.
10. I used to receive many phone calls from radio listeners, who believed it was Scriptural for women to serve as pastors, and they invariably quoted this verse.
11. Whenever we interpret the Bible, we must look at the context. The context here is about salvation by grace, apart from the law (cf. 3:24-27).
12. This passage is not dealing at all with ministry (cf. I Tim. 2:11, 12; 3:1-13).
13. We must consider the context. Scripture never contradicts Scripture. Since I Timothy 3 teaches that women cannot serve as pastors or deacons, Galatians 3:28 cannot be teaching the very opposite!

14. Let us conclude our study by looking at Gal. 3:29. The Galatians were told that they could become Abraham's seed by keeping the law. That is what the Judaizers were teaching. Paul said the Galatians were being "bewitched" (Gal. 3:1).
15. Paul goes on to explain what it really means to be a child of Abraham.
16. Christ is Abraham's seed (3:16, 19). The inheritance promised to Abraham was fulfilled in Christ (3:6-9).
17. When we received Christ as our Lord and Saviour, we became one with Him (3:28b).
18. Therefore, we have become Abraham's seed, and in Christ we have inherited all of God's blessings (3:29).

CONCLUSION:

1. "For ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (3:28b).
2. Recently, one of the NBT preachers mentioned how he was impressed by the diversity of our congregation. He was unaccustomed to it. But it is Biblical.
3. Furthermore, heaven will be very diverse. Revelation 5:9 says, "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."