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Galatians

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:26

Paul now changes his terminology from "we" in the previous verses to "you" in this verse. The word "you" is plural and is speaking to the Galatians as a gentile group who are now included in the promises of God. The "you" includes all, both Jew and Gentile, but it must be remembered that the main substance of the letter is concerning the Gentiles being duped into believing that they have to adhere to the Law of Moses in order to be pleasing to God. Paul shows here what malarkey that is!

In these words, his emphasis is on "sons of God" rather than "all." The intent is to show that by mere faith in Christ Jesus, we are brought into the family of God as sons of God. What is important to understand is that Paul uses the term *huios* for "sons." According to HELPS Word Studies, the word means "properly, a *son* (by birth or adoption); (figuratively) anyone sharing the *same nature* as their Father. For the believer, becoming a son of God begins with being reborn (*adopted*) by the heavenly Father – through Christ (the work of the *eternal Son*). In the NT, *hyiós* ("son") equally refers to female believers (Gal 3:28)."

Paul could have used another word, *teknon*, or "children," to describe us (which he uses in Romans 8 & 9 and in Philippians 2 under a different context), but he instead chose *huios*. The reason for this is that when one was under the law, they were as an immature child being led by the pedagogue. However, when one comes to God by faith, they are no longer under the care of that guardian.

Instead, they have come to maturity and have the full rights which being a son within the family grants. Although the distinction between these words is slight and should not be pressed too far, the use of "children" by some translations confuses the distinction that Paul is making.

It is through faith, and not deeds of the law, that one comes to this mature position. To insert precepts of the law into one's life in order to stand justified before God demonstrates immaturity and a need to go back to school, study proper theology, and hopefully grow into faith which saves. Anything else disqualifies a person from the right to be called a true son of God.

Life application: Doctrine matters. We should never stop growing in our doctrine and we need to learn to put aside childish things. Let us be fully developed and mature Christians who live by faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Galatians 3:27

Paul just stated, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." This verse now further explains that. He begins with, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ..." Paul is not speaking of water baptism. This is understood from the next words, "...have put on Christ."

If water baptism is what Paul was speaking of, then anyone who got water baptized would be "in Christ" and would have "put on Christ." This is not the case as only those who believe in the work of Christ "put on Christ." It is by an act of faith, not a work, that one unites with Him. The term "put on" gives the idea of being clothed by another. It is what happened to Adam after he exercised faith in the word of the Lord and named his wife Eve. God covered him.

The baptism Paul speaks of is that of a close and intimate relationship which has been established between Christ and the believer. It is what we would call the

"baptism of the Holy Spirit." John the Baptist first alluded to it early in the book of Luke -

"John answered, saying to all, 'I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'" Luke 3:16

What faith in Christ would provide was far more than mere externals. Paul writes about it in 1 Corinthians 12 -

"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." 1 Corinthians 12:13

And in a very similar statement, Paul says this in Romans 6:3 -

"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?"

Paul was speaking not of water baptism, but of the uniting with Christ in His death through faith in His work. In death, our sins are wiped away, and in this act we are sealed with the Holy Spirit which is our baptism of the Holy Spirit. Paul explains this in Ephesians 1 -

"In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." Ephesians 1:13, 14

There is no such thing as a second baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is a one-time deal which occurs by faith in the accomplished work of Christ.

This is the glory of the death and resurrection of Jesus for us. What was dead is made alive by a mere act of faith. In 1 Corinthians 10:1-5 we are shown this was actually pictured in Israel's exodus through the Red Sea. It is quite evident that water baptism is not at all involved in the process. The faith is exercised, the righteousness is granted, the Spirit is given, and then - only then - is the sign received; that of water baptism. This is the exact same pattern as what occurred with Abraham.

Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. The relationship was restored, and only after that did he receive the sign of circumcision. Water baptism has nothing to do with salvation. Instead, it has to do with obedience. When a person is saved, they then make a public demonstration of their new life. They go to the water just as Jesus went to the cross.

They are fully submerged (the Greek word for baptism indicates full submersion and therefore the word was transliterated, not translated, in an attempt to avoid confusion) as a picture of going into the grave, just as Jesus' body was laid in the tomb. And finally, the person is raised out of the water as a picture of being raised to newness of life through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the intent and purpose of water baptism.

Life application: If you have received Jesus, you are saved. Water baptism has nothing to do with your salvation. However, Jesus gave two ordinances to His followers. The first is the Lord's Supper and the second is water baptism. In obedience to His directives, don't you think it's time to be properly baptized as an open profession of your inward change?

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28

These words are so simple and so clear that the obvious nature of them is often overlooked. Paul has just stated that "as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." The words now only apply to those who are "in Christ Jesus."

For those who have put on Christ and are called by His name, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female."

Paul uses the present tense to show that there are absolutely no exceptions. Further, he uses the most extreme categories imaginable to the minds of the people of his time to show this -

Jew nor Greek - this is where the greatest distinction of all lay in the mind of the Jews. They were on one side; the Gentiles were on the other. The term "Greek" here is being applied to any non-Jew. Because of the conquests of Alexander, the Greek culture, influence, and language had permeated the known world. Within that sphere, the Jews remained Jews though. In order to then show that this distinction was now void, he states this first. To the Galatians, it was an admonishment that they were not to look to the Jews for their doctrine, but to God. They were not to insert the false teachings of the Judaizers, but to submerge themselves in the truth of the gospel.

Slave nor free - The free people of the Roman Empire were considered on a completely different level than the slaves. This distinction was so great that Paul's words here could hardly be imagined by either class when considering the other. But once in Christ, the distinctions were removed. The letter of Philemon gives important insights into this.

Male nor female - It is obvious what sex a person is from the moment he or she is born. This never changes and each person's gender remains an identifying part of who they are until the day of their death. The modern perversion of transgenderism doesn't change the fact that males are males and females are females. However, this most basic distinction between the two is no longer considered a limiting or dividing factor when in Christ.

Despite these markedly different categories within the world itself, in Christ they are not considered as affecting one's standing, for "all are one in Christ Jesus."

Having said this, Paul's words here actually imply that these distinctions still exist in the world in which we live. When naming categories, it shows that the categories are there to name. No one reading his words would look around at their fellow Christians and say, "Well, there are no males and females anymore." The same is true with those who are slaves and those who are free. The differences exist in the world to this day. And yet, those who believe the church has replaced Israel ignore the categories that Paul mentions first - Jew and Gentile.

To state the names implies there is a difference. Though there is now no distinction between them "in Christ," there is a difference between them "in the world." The church is not comprised of only Jews. But this is the ludicrous claim of replacement theologians such as RC Sproul. In his monthly magazine, published by Ligonier Ministries, he stated this -

"We're not dispensationalists here....We believe that the church is essentially Israel. We believe that the answer to, "What about the Jews?" is, "Here we are." We deny that the church is God's "plan B." We deny that we are living in God's redemptive parenthesis."

It is absolute malarkey to think this way. He would never claim there are no women because "all are one in Christ," but the differences between Jews and Gentiles are brushed over, or the title of "Jew" is co-opted by those who are not Jews. Let us use common sense when we read passages such as this.

Life application: If you are a Jew in Christ, you remain a Jew. If you are a Gentile in Christ, you remain a Gentile. There is no distinction between the two, but the differences remain. Don't call yourself what you are not!

And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:29

As was noted in the commentary on verse 16, the "seed" mentioned in that verse is speaking of those who are in Christ. Verse 19 mentioned the "Seed" and it was speaking of Christ. Understanding what Paul has been communicating shows us that we are "in Christ" and "heirs according to the promise." This verse then sums up the entire discourse on the issue of Abraham, the promise, and the seed.

For those who have called on Christ, believing in His work and not attempting to be justified by deeds of the law, but by simple faith in what He has done, we are then reckoned as "Abraham's seed." Though the word is singular, it speaks of all that issues from a single seed. One seed can bear a hundred-fold, and those hundred can then bear another hundred-fold, and so on. It is only those who are of the nature of Abraham, and who are contained within the issue of that one seed of promise, who are being spoken of. It is those who are "heirs according to the promise."

Paul speaks in the same manner in Romans 8 with these words -

"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together." Romans 8:16, 17

Turning again to Romans, Paul says this in Chapter 4 -

"Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all." Romans 4:16

Physical descent from Abraham has no bearing at all on whether one is saved or not. Rather, those who believe in God's word and promise, which is realized in Christ, are those who are reckoned as descendants of Abraham and thus adopted sons of God.

Life application: Where in the verses of Galatians 3 is there any hint that we are required to work deeds of the law in order to be pleasing to God? The answer is, "Nowhere." Rather, the law is contrary to the promise. It stands opposed to it. Don't be so foolish as to be duped into believing that you can be "more pleasing" to God by exercising your religious life through keeping precepts of the law. It is utterly contradictory to the very words of the Bible. Have faith in Christ; rest in Christ; be reconciled to God through Christ.