

RIGHTLY DIVIDING[©]

Title: Exegesis of Romans 3:28

SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 3:28

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all on in Christ Jesus.”

CONTEXT OF GALATIANS:

The Galatian churches had come into existence as a result of the Apostle Paul’s missionary labor. The occasion of writing is based on one fact – the church turning to another gospel. Galatians 1:6 reads, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.” The churches at Galatia had experienced another persuasion that influenced them against the gospel of Christ, which had been preached.

Paul became aware of Jewish Christians (Judaizers) that were among the Gentile Converts seeking to impose circumcision and the Mosaic Law upon the Gentiles as a necessary requirement for salvation (Faith + the Law = Salvation). The beginning chapters are spent developing the nature of Paul’s apostolic authority in Christ (Galatians 1:11-12). This is critical to the Gospel message in Galatia. If Paul’s opponents could establish that he had not been called or commissioned to teach the true Gospel, they could persuade the hearer to question Paul’s message. Therefore, the churches at Galatia could continue in another gospel.

Paul spends the remaining chapters focusing on the Gospel as a message of grace that calls for faith. He suggests that the law does not produce faith but rather offers a curse from which Christ had to redeem mankind.

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*Sermons for Pastors and Leaders of
the Christian faith!*

GALATIANS HISTORICAL FACTS

Date and Place of Writing: Galatians may be assigned to the period of Paul’s third missionary journey either to Ephesus or to Macedonia. This would date the epistle as late as A.D. 56. According to some scholars, it was written in A.D. 48 or A.D. 49 and likely from Antioch. Therefore, an intermediate date of about A.D. 53 early in Paul’s ministry at Ephesus has also been acceptable (ref. KJV 1099).

INTRODUCTION:

The Jewish Christians (Judaizers) at Galatia are teaching a self-prescribed formula as a means of justification for salvation (Faith + the law = Salvation). Therefore, Paul had to deliver a courageous response that did not discount the purpose of God's Law but rather gave sufficiency to faith in Christ alone as the requirement for salvation.

Galatians 3 is Paul's gospel explained to the Galatian Church and it continues through Galatians 4. The development of thought is as follow: (1) the argument from experience [of the Galatians] 3:1-5, (2) the argument from scripture [the case of Abraham] 3:6-9, (3) the argument from the Law 3:10 – 4:11, (4) the argument from personal reception by the Galatians 4:12-20, and (5) the argument from the covenant of promise 4:21-31. However, ***the argument from the Law [3:10 – 4:11]*** is where the exegetical work must render insight to determine if Galatians 3:28 is speaking of motivational or spiritual gifts i.e. can this scripture contextually be used to justify women placed in the ordained office of Apostle and Bishop.

Paul's development of thought continues in ***the argument from the Law*** as follow: (1) the curse of the Law 3:10-14, (2) the inviolability of the covenant of promise and its priority to the Law 3:15-18, (3) the purpose of the Law – temporary in its standing and negative in its operation 3:19-22, (4) sonship – children of God not through the Law but through faith 3:23 – 4:7, and (5) an appeal not to return to bondage 4:8-11. For the basis of this study, our focus must be on ***the argument from the Law*** and how the ***sonship not through the Law but through faith*** is essential to who we are as the converted believer and that there is no separation because we are all in Christ.

SCRIPTURE REVIEWED:

Galatians 3:28 reads, ***“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”*** We can not review this scripture without proper foundational truth which begins in Galatians 3:23. Paul suggests to the Gentile Converts that before faith came (i.e. before Christ had come) all humanity was kept under the Law (i.e. humanity was kept inward) shut up [Gk. *synkleisen* – confine]

unto the faith, which should afterwards be revealed. All humanity was kept confined by the law until the faith – in Jesus Christ – would be revealed. Paul further states that the Law was the schoolmaster responsible for bringing humanity unto Christ (Galatians 3:24) and that the Galatian Church would be justified by faith. We understand from Romans 11:32 that God has concluded [Gk. *synkleisen* – shut them all up together] them all in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all. Therefore, Paul is suggesting that God's Law had fulfilled its purpose until Christ came (verse 25) meaning the Law kept us confined-shut up unto the faith until Christ would be revealed.

At the coming of Christ we are all children of God by faith in Christ (verse 26) and thusly Abraham's seed – heirs according to the promise (verse 29). There is no need for (Faith + the Law = Salvation) only justification by faith. During that time, the rival Judaizers' (Jewish Christian) position that ***Law observance*** was the appropriate completion to faith in Christ. However, Paul's response is very clear – you are no longer under the supervision, guidance, and protection of the Law-schoolmaster because faith has come (verse 25). Paul argued that there is no Law capable of giving life. If such a Law existed, righteousness could have been given to humanity by that particular Law (verse 21). Humanity could have entered into right-standing with God through such a Law. Therefore, the Judaizers' are incorrect for leading the Galatian Gentile Converts to accept Law observance as the completion to faith in Christ.

Paul further argued, “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” For the benefit of both the Gentile Converts and Judaizers (Jewish Christian), Paul declared that ***all*** are the children of God by faith in Christ. Regardless of the Judaizers' belief (Faith + the Law = Salvation), ***all*** are the children of God because of Christ and not the Gentile Converts acceptance to observe the Law along with their faith.

***Please note:** According to scholars the Greek contains two consecutive prepositional phrases *dia tēs pisteōs* and *en Christō Iēsou*, reading literally “through the faith” and “in Christ Jesus.” By means of “the faith” both the action of believing and the faith of Christ all are children of God. For Paul and the early

Christian who proclaimed this confession “the faith” was synonymous with being “in Christ.”

According to research, Galatians 3:27 introduces what many regard as pre-Pauline baptism formula. Paul declares, “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ,” thus suggesting that the Galatian Church is now completely submerged in Christ. Being completely submerged in Christ, the Church is now responsible for having the character of Christ which is righteousness. In many cases, there is a direct connection made between baptism and the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8) and in other cases baptism and repentance (Acts 2:38). In reviewing Galatians 3:27, I will suggest two thoughts: (1) Paul is stating to the Galatian Church that they are now baptized into Christ therefore the Judaizers’ should have some level of repentance for requiring acceptance of their justification for salvation (Faith + the Law = Salvation) or (2) Because of the baptism by which you have received the Holy Ghost the Galatian Church should be unified – accepting *all* because the Holy Ghost now lives in you. If we go with the later thought, it is a precursor to the next scripture by which Paul declares, ***“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all on in Christ Jesus.”***

According to scholars, being baptized into Christ having put on Christ affirms that the Galatian Church was “in Christ” and there was no need for anything to be added to “the faith.” Scholars further suggest that being “in Christ” results in a new self-perception. The statement implies that to regard oneself or others primarily in ethnic (Jews or Greek), social (bond or free), or gender (male and female) terms is to use categories inappropriate to the present (verse 8) – for after the coming of faith (verse 25) – those who believe are no longer under the Law but rather are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (verse 26). For the Galatian’s “in Christ,” the Law, which maintains ethnic boundaries – social and gender distinctions should have no relevance. Paul suggest that there is unity “in Christ” thus making the Church free from what the Law maintained.

Paul makes a similar statement to Galatians 3:28 in I Corinthians 12:13 which reads, “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or

Gentiles, whether we be bond or free: and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” Again, this scripture speaks to Paul’s idea of unity in “the faith.”

Colossians 3:11 suggest the same paradigm and it reads, “Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.” The pattern tends to be Paul expressing unity in “the faith” because believers are “in Christ” regardless of ethnicity, gender, or social class.

Given the exegetical study and scholarly research, I am concluding that Galatians 3:28 neither support nor address the idea of motivational / spiritual gifts as it relates to the ordination of women as Apostles or Bishops. It is my understanding that the Apostle Paul declared this scripture for unity “in faith” for those that were “in Christ.” Paul did not want the Judaizers’ to continue in their doctrine that more is needed beyond the justification by faith.

PERSONAL NOTES:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Concluding Thoughts

Paul set his motivation in the doctrine of justification by faith. Paul knew that the teachings of the Judaizer could not stand against the power of the Spirit if he laid the foundation for the doctrine of justification by faith.

For the churches at Galatia, it was a doctrine of (Faith + the Law = Salvation). For today's Church, what doctrine is being taught? What doctrine is being taught that hinders truth in the Church? We know from the word of God that faith in Christ is all that is required and that many gifts are in the body for the work of the ministry and the edifying of the body of Christ. However, as believers we should stand firm in the doctrine of truth. We need to properly exegete scripture so the body of Christ is taught truth and not the doctrines of men that lead to unfruitfulness and division.

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The scripture and above material has been taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible, Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, and other bible commentary. The opinions of this sermon are from Dr. Evette Hyder-Davis and should be researched further by the recipient. Rightly Dividing sermon series is a copyright of Dr. Evette Hyder-Davis with permission for use but not distribution. For more exegetical work, please visit www.evette.co/rightlydividing.

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