

- *The guardianship of the law has finished*

The law was needed by the people of God at an early stage of their story. It preserved Israel until the coming of Christ. But now the Christian no longer needs it. Christ, not the Mosaic law, is the object of our faith, more clearly than ever before.

The Christian is no longer under the Mosaic law or anything like it. Paul says, *'But now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian'*¹, *for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through this faith'*.² The guardianship of the law has finished.

¹ 3:25
² 3:26

Sonship for all

The Christian has reached full sonship. 'You are all sons of God' says Paul. The emphasis is on the word 'all'. Every Christian is a full adult son of God. We are not infants under the domination of the law of Moses. We have access into the presence of our Father. He protects us, provides for us. Because we are sons He gives us the Holy Spirit. We are His representatives in this world.

- *Clothed with the righteousness of Christ*

Christ has become our clothing. We have put on Christ. Christ is our covering righteousness. Christ is our uniform. *'For every single one of you who has been immersed into Christ has put on Christ'*.¹ It is commonly thought this is a reference to water-baptism. If this is correct then it refers to water-baptism as an expression of faith. When we come to faith in Christ we immediately express our faith by being baptized. To say that we have been water-baptized into Christ and to say we have believed in Christ are two ways of saying the same thing.

¹ 3:27

- *Into Christ by the Holy Spirit*

But actually I doubt whether Galatians 3:27 refers to water-baptism at all. There are five places in Paul's writings¹ ² ³ ⁴ ⁵ where 'baptize' seems to refer to the work of the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 12:13 it is quite explicit. Paul speaks of being 'immersed' or placed *'by the Holy Spirit'* into the body of Christ. The thought is similar here. When the Holy Spirit puts us into Christ, we put on Christ. Christ is our clothing, our covering righteousness, our protecting armour.

¹ Rom. 6:3
² 1 Cor. 12:13

³ Gal. 3:27
⁴ Ephes. 4:5
⁵ Col. 2:13

- *Discriminations of the law abolished*

The discriminations of the law have been abolished. *'There is no Jew or Greek, there is no slave or free person, there is no male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus'*.¹ The reason why Paul says this is that the equality of the gospel contrasts sharply with the Mosaic law. Under the law there was a sharp difference between Jew and Greek. The Jew could be in covenant with God. The Greek was a stranger to God. Slaves were treated differently from the people who were free. Men were circumcised. Women were not. The law was full of tribalism and discrimination of various kinds. But all of that is abolished in the gospel. Christians are one in Christ Jesus. What kind of oneness is this? It is not that Christians are all 100% identical to each other. We are not all totally equal and identical to each other at every point. The nations retain their special character. Men and women do not cease to be men and women. But all Christians are one in spiritual status. They

¹ 3:28

Heirs of God's Promises to Abraham

• 'Seed' – Jesus and his people

• Personal blessing

• Believe and Enjoy the fullness of the Spirit and your Sonship!!

have an equal sonship. They equally have access to God. They all equally are able to receive the Holy Spirit.

We are all heirs of the promises of God to Abraham. 'And if you are Christ's, then you are the seed of Abraham, heirs according to promise'.¹ Abraham was given rich promises. The people of God were to become a great multitude. Territory would be given to him. Abraham himself was to be personally blessed and many others were to be blessed through him. God would relate to other people according to the way in which they related to Abraham. There was one special promise: Abraham would have a 'seed'. Paul's point here is that if we have the same kind of faith that Abraham had, we are heirs of all of these promises given to Abraham. Abraham's seed is actually Jesus. When we trust Jesus we are trusting the same promise that Abraham trusted. Abraham receives the fulfilment to all of the promises as and when Jesus brings them to pass. When we trust in Jesus we become 'in Christ'. Abraham's seed is Jesus. Abraham's seed is also all of Jesus' people. We become heirs of all the promises to Abraham by sharing the same faith in Jesus that Abraham had.

When we believe in Jesus we shall be personally blessed – as Abraham was. We shall inherit territory – the new heaven and new earth in which righteousness dwells. Our numbers will increase as we fulfil the calling God puts upon our lives. We shall get a name. Jesus will say to us 'Well done!' There can be no greater fame than that!

Some Christians live as if they are still in the Old Testament period. They act as if they are still under guardians, still being restrained, still being held back from the full enjoyment of the promise. The Galatians had lost some of the blessedness they had had in earlier days. Paul has something to say to them – and to us. 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Realize that you are clothed with His righteousness. You are full adult sons of God. You should be enjoying the fullness of the Spirit. It does not matter what your past is. Everything promised to the people of God is promised to you. You are on your way to a new heavens and new earth. Accept the full sonship you have in the Lord Jesus Christ.'

1 3:29



Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His *Preaching Through The Bible* (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.



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