

Some commentators believe that Paul is referring to the ceremonial aspects of the Law which prepared the way for the fulfillment of the Promise in Christ. It would seem that we could also apply this practically in our own lives, remembering how the knowledge of sin through the Law brought us to Christ.

- verse 25. After the boy came to sonship the slave no longer attended him. Just so, when we come to Christ we are no longer under the condemnation of the Law.
- the word translated "children" in verse 26 is the word which means mature "sons." Thus the Christian is a son and heir immediately upon receiving Christ as Saviour. Thus in this illustration the complementary purpose of the Law can be seen. It can also be seen that the Law is part of God's plan to bring us to faith in Christ.

c. the promise results in blessing upon all who believe

(1) believers are clothed with the righteousness of Christ

- (a) "baptized" here does not simply mean the ceremony of baptism. Paul refers to the baptism of the Holy Spirit or regeneration. (Titus 3:5) When an individual turns from sin and receives Christ the Holy Spirit regenerates the individual, making him a "new creature" in Christ.
- (b) Paul is saying here that all those who have experienced this "new birth" have been clothed in the perfect righteousness of Christ. Thus "what the Law could not do (that is, make us righteous) in that it was weak through (because of) the flesh, God (did by) sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us ..."
(Romans 8:3,4a) Christ fulfilled the Law by keeping it and satisfying its demands. The Promise is fulfilled as the benefits of His work are imputed to those who believe.

(2) all barriers are swept away

"The conventional distinctions of religious caste or of social rank, even the natural distinction of sex, are banished here. One heart beats in all: one life is lived by all. Ye are all one man, for ye are members of Christ." (Lightfoot, Commentary on Galatians) This is not to say that these barriers have been removed from among men. This is referring to the relationship these groups have before God and in Christ. During the Old Testament era not only were the Gentiles restricted from worship and sacrifice, but also women and slaves were withheld certain privileges in the ceremonial law. In Christ there is no such distinction. Compare Ephesians 2:15. "Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make himself of twain one new man, so making peace."

(3) believers are heirs of the promise

- (a) in verse 16 Paul pointed out that there was only one legitimate heir and that was Christ, "to thy seed (singular) which is Christ." Here in verse 29 believers are included. How can this be? In verse 29 when Paul says "And if ye be Christ's" he does not mean simply the property of Christ, but rather part of Christ Himself. The language is figurative, but the truth taught is very real. When we receive Christ we are then "in Christ." Paul uses this figure when he speaks of the church as the Body of Christ. Positionally, then, when God looks at Christ on the cross, we, too, are there dying. In His resurrection, we rise. When Christ receives the kingdom He is heir to, we will also receive it, for we are a part of Christ's Body. Therefore, being a part of Christ we are also part of the "seed" and heirs of the Promise.

Without Christ we are nothing and we have nothing. In Christ we have everything.

"Near to God, nearer I could not be,
For in the Person of His Son
I am as near as He."