

Gal. 3:23-4:7, Law and Faith
October 31, November 26, 1988
H. Van Dyke Parunak

A. 3:23-4:7, Alternation

The passage consists of two panels of alternation, followed by the beginning of a third, which is however interrupted for emphasis.

1. ...Previous condition

3.23 PRO TOU DE E)LQEIN THN PISTIN	4.1 LEGW DE, E)F' O(SON XRONON O(KLHRONOMOJ NHPIOJ E)STIN,	4.8)ALLA TOTE MEN OU)K EI)DOTEJ QEON
	4.3 OU(TWJ KAI ...O(TE H)MEN NHPIOI...	

2. ...Result of that condition

U(PO NOMON E)FROUROUMEQA SUGKLEIOMENOI EI)J THN MELLOUSAN PISTIN A)POKALUFQHNAI. 3.24 W(STE O(NOMOJ PAIDAGWGOJ H(MWN GEGONEN EI)J XRISTON, I(NA E)K PISTEWJ DIKAIWQWMEN:	OU)DEN DIAFEREI DOULOU KURIOJ PANTWN W)N, 4.2 A)LLA U(PO E)PITROPOUJ E)STIN KAI OI)KONOMOUJ A)XRI THJ PROQESMIAJ TOU PATROJ. 4.3 ... H(MEIJ, ... U(PO TA STOIXEIA TOU KOSMOU H)MEQA DEDOULWMENOI:	E)DOULEUSATE TOIJ FUSEI MH OU)SIN QEIOIJ:
--	---	---

3. ...Something comes or changes (cf. 1 Cor. 9:20!)

3.25 E)LQOUSHJ DE THJ PISTEWJ	4.4 O(TE DE H)LQEN TO PLHRWMA TOU XRONOU, E)CAPESTEILEN O(QEOJ TON UI(ON AU)TOU, GENOMENON E)K GUNAIKOJ, GENOMENON U(PO NOMON,	4.9 NUN DE GNONTEJ QEON, MALLON DE GNWSQENTEJ U(PO QEOU,
----------------------------------	---	--

4. ...As a result, we are released.

OU)KETI U(PO PAIDAGWGON E)SMEN.	4.5 I(NA TOUJ U(PO NOMON E)CAGORASH,1,	!!!Broken symmetry. PWJ E)PISTREFETE PALIN E)PI TA A)SQENH KAI PTWXA STOIXEIA, OI(J PALIN A)NWQEN DOULEUEIN QELETE;...
------------------------------------	---	---

5. ...We become sons of God.

3.26 PANTEJ GAR UI(OI QEOU E)STE DIA THJ PISTEWJ E)N XRISTW,1)IHSOU.	I(NA THN UI(OQESIAN A)POLABWMEN.
--	-------------------------------------

6. ...Holy Spirit baptism
 3.27 O(SOI GAR EI)J 4.6 (OTI DE E)STE
 XRISTON E)BAPTISQHTE, UI(OI, E)CAPESTEILEN
 XRISTON E)NEDUSASQE: O(QEOJ TO PNEUMA TOU
 UI(OU AU)TOU EI)J TAJ
 KARDIAJ H(MWN,
 KRAZON, ABBA O(
 PATHR.

7. ...Shift to singular: what we are not and are
 3.28 OU)K E)NI 4.7 W(STE OU)KETI EI)
)IOUDAIOJ OU)DE DOULOJ A)LLA UI(OJ:
 (ELLHN, OU)K E)NI
 DOULOJ OU)DE
 E)LEUQEROJ, OU)K E)NI
 A)RSEN KAI QHLU:
 PANTEJ GAR U(MEIJ
 EI(J E)STE E)N
 XRISTW,1)IHSOU.

8. ...If X, then we are heirs.
 3.29 EI) DE U(MEIJ EI) DE UI(OJ, KAI
 XRISTOU, A)RA TOU KLHRONOMOJ DIA QEOU.
)ABRAAM SPERMA E)STE,
 KAT' E)PAGGELIAN
 KLHRONOMOI.

B. First Cycle, 3:23-29

Two major parts: past (23-24) and present (25-29).

1. 23-24 describes our situation in the past, using two metaphors: prisoners in jail and children under a guardian. In both cases, the law is the power that holds us in until the purpose for our restraint arrives.

a) 23a, "before the faith came"

What is "the faith"?

- 1) The body of NT doctrine?
- 2) The event of an individual believing?
- 3) *** The principle of trusting in the finished work of Christ. "The" calls us back to v.22, and the faith there defined. Before the coming of Christ, no one could exercise faith in Jesus the Messiah, only an anticipatory faith in an unknown messiah.

a) 23b, first metaphor, Jail: pictures us as being in captivity. Develops the metaphor of us in prison, with a jailor, awaiting the day of judgment, with no other way out.

1) Our captivity:

- a> *frourew*, to guard, hold in custody: 2 Cor. 11:32, what the governor did to Damascus in order to capture Paul.
- b> *sugkleiw*, cf. Luke 5:6, what the net did to the fishes. Held in.

2) The Place: *upo nomon*, "under (the power of) law."

a> This is the first instance of this expression, which Paul uses most frequently in this book, but also in Rom. 6:14,15; 1 Cor. 9:20. Always anarthrous: emphasizing being under legal control, rather than focusing on the law of Moses (which is, however, clearly in view in the context). Compare the chiasmic parallel between 5:18 and 5:23b, which suggests that it is because we produce the fruit of the Spirit, against which there is no law, that we are not under law. The law is only for an unlawful person. In Christ we are not unlawful, so are not under law.

b> Cf. v.22, "under sin." Once again, the great paradox of Rom. 7, that God's righteous law strengthens the hold of sin on us. Cf. 1 Cor. 15:56, "the strength of sin is the law."

3) The Destination: the faith that was going to be revealed. Unexpected exit!

a> Instead of the day of judgment that those "under law" should expect, we have a day of salvation by faith.

b> "Revealed." Something that we could never find out on our own.

b) 24, second metaphor, Guardian:

1) What is a *paidagwgos*? Slave entrusted with general custody of a boy from age 6 to about 16. Cf. Plato's *Lysis* 208 c: Socrates is talking with a young boy.

Are you your own master, or do they not even allow that? Nay, he said, of course they do not allow it.

Then you have a master?

Yes, my *paidagwgos*, there he is.

And he is a slave?

To be sure; he is our slave, he replied.

Surely, I said, this is a strange thing, that a free man should be governed by a slave. And what does he do with you?

He takes me to my teachers.

(Later in the story, the *paidagwgos* comes back to take the boys home.)

2) Again, the authority that was over us is identified with the law.

3) The objective, corresponding in this metaphor to the day of maturity, is our justification on the ground of faith in Christ.

2. 25ff, Now that the faith has come, the guardian is no longer over us.
 - a) 26, We are now sons of God, no longer just children. We have grown up, and neither jail nor a babysitter is now appropriate. Two important differences from KJV:
 - 1) "Sons," not "children," which is most unfortunate; the entire point is that we have outgrown our minority.
 - 2) "in Christ Jesus" should probably be construed with the entire verse, not just as modifying "faith." It is because we are in Christ Jesus, THE Son of God, that we receive the status of "sons of God."
 - b) 27 explains the mechanism:
 - 1) We were baptized into Christ. He recalls their baptism as believers, symbolizing the HS baptism that all believers experience.
 - 2) ENDUW (middle): to clothe oneself with; with personal object, to take on the character of someone. Describes the effect of HS Baptism. Cf. 1 Cor. 12:13. The baptism of the HS makes us members of Christ, thus we are "in Christ." His sonship is ours; his righteousness is ours. His death and resurrection count for ours.
 - c) 28 sets forth the consequences: this union with Christ is ours regardless of race, social status, or gender.
 - 1) The three categories correspond to a frequent formula in Jewish thought; cf. the morning prayer, in which the male Jew thanks God for not making him either a gentile, a slave, or a woman.
 - 2) Does this contradict restrictions on sister's roles elsewhere in the NT? Keep in mind the context, which is our union with Christ. Paul is not commenting on the practical conduct of church business; elsewhere (1 Cor. 14; 1 Tim. 2) he distinguishes the roles of male and female. We must interpret each passage in the light of the other. This passage means that the restrictions in the other texts are simply operational conventions, not statements of position before God. Those passages mean that this one does not imply equality of function.
 - d) 29 clinches the argument, applying the conclusions reached from our identify with Christ to the argument of v.16.
 - 1) "If you are Christ's," better, "of Christ," that is, a member of Christ, incorporated in him by HS baptism.
 - 2) "Abraham's seed," because Christ is, and we having put on

Christ now partake of all of his characteristics.

- 3) "heirs acc. to promise," the proper recipients of all that God promised Abraham.