

## Answering Christian Apologists: Galatians 3:28 and it's true meaning



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A passage commonly quoted by christian apologists and feminists is Galatians 3:28. They argue that this passage us teaches that men and women are equal to each other. However we know from my other booklets and articles, that the bible views women inferior to men. The question is: “does Galatians 3:28 proof the opposite or not ? “. In order to avoid misconceptions and misunderstandings about the context of Galatians 3:28 i shall quote from verse 26 to verse 29. Let's take a look at the passage:

### **Galatians 3:26-29**

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 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. And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

What do these words mean ? What do they teach us ? To answer these questions i shall quote commentaries of renowned christian scholars, who explain the passage in question. Besides i shall add my comments, to make things even more clear to the reader. Let's take a look at next commentary on Galatians 3:28

Galatians 3:28 falls within Paul's exposition of the purpose of the law, that is, to be a slave-guardian on the path toward maturity and unrestricted enjoyment of sonship (cf. 3:24; 4:1-7).

#### **Source:**

Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), p. 170.

Verse twenty-six, beginning with its explanatory “for” (see nasb; niv leaves this out) justifies the new status. The apostle writes, “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (nasb). The children have attained their majority and are sons, freemen of God, through a faith that has brought them into union with Christ.

#### **Source:**

Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), p. 171-172

In other words, with the sonship has come a glorious freedom before God releasing all the faithful, whether Gentiles, slaves, or women, from life under the Old Covenant's bondage. Nowhere does this refer to equity of men and women to each other. We clearly see that Paul is speaking about union with Christ, not equity of people to each other. Let's take a look at another honest commentary, given by the renowned Christian scholar John Calvin:

The second person plural of the subject, "you are," with the modifying adjective, "all," underlines the participation of the Galatians in the new status. The universal privilege of sonship in the present age through union with Christ is Paul's point, and it sets the tone of the context for interpreting verse twenty-eight. Paul's emphasis is on spiritual status in Christ, "the spiritual privilege of being the sons of God."

**Source:**

John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians*, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance, trans. T. H. L. Parker (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), p. 68.

Here again we see that Paul was speaking about union, not equity of men and women to each other. It's important to know that Jewish men thanked God in their morning prayers that they were not born a Gentile, a slave, or a woman. Why? Because Gentiles, slaves or women as persons in Judaism were disqualified from several religious privileges which were open to free Jewish males. In fact, similar formulas existed among the Gentiles. The three distinctions, important for Jewish life, are declared by Paul to be invalid in Christ.

The first distinction, that between Jew and Greek, should be understood in a religious sense primarily, centering in the Abrahamic Covenant's rite of circumcision. Without circumcision a Gentile could not inherit the promises, being spiritually depraved and lost, without God in the world (cf. Ephesians 2:11-13), but now by the blood of the Messiah the Gentiles according to the Bible have been brought nigh by sovereign pardoning grace and have become heirs of the Abrahamic promises. It is, of course, quite clear from the apostle's literature that the national distinction between Israel and the Gentiles still exists both in the world (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:32) and in the believing community (cf. Romans 9:1-11:36; Galatians 6:16). In Christ, however, both are heirs of the promised blessings, as Paul has indicated already (cf. 3:14) and will underline shortly (verse 29).

The second antithesis touches the inferiority of slaves, so marked in the ancient world and in Israelitish society. For Paul a Christian slave, too, inherits the same promises as a free-man, however a slave is still viewed as inferior to his master in the Bible:

**Matthew 10:24**

A student is not greater than the teacher. A slave is not greater than the master.

So it doesn't matter if the servant has a greater faith than the master, or better manners. The text clearly described the master greater than the slave in general. The commentary on the next page confirms this:

**John Gill's Exposition of the Bible , Matthew 10:24**

***The disciple is not above his master...***

So far from it, that he is *inferior* to him; as in knowledge, so in reputation and character; and cannot expect the same honour to be given him, and the same respect shown to him, as to his master; and therefore if his master is not used with that decency, and in that becoming manner he ought to be, he must not think it any hardship if he is treated in the same way. Our Lord hereby intends to fortify the minds of his disciples against all the reproach and persecution they were to meet with from the world, by observing to them the treatment he himself met with; wherefore, if he who was their master, a teacher that came from God, and taught as never man did, and was worthy of the utmost deference that could be paid, was maligned and evilly treated by men, it became them who were his disciples, to look for, and patiently bear such indignities; since they could expect no better usage than he himself had: the same doctrine is suggested in the next clause,

***nor the servant above his Lord;***

and both seem to be proverbial expressions. The Jews have a saying much like unto them, (*wbrm*) (*hkz dbeh Nya*) , "*no servant is worthier than his master*"; and Christ might make use of such common, well known expressions, that he might be the more easily understood, and in the most familiar manner convey what he intended, into the minds of his disciples; as, that since he was their Lord, and they were his servants, if his superior character and dignity did not secure him from the obloquy and insults of men, it could not be thought by them, who were *inferior* to him, that they should escape them.<sup>1</sup>

The third antithesis, "there is not male and female" (Greek text; see nasb margin) stresses moreover the point that the distinction in sex has also no relevance to the fact that both are heirs of the promised blessings. The reason Paul gives, introduced by the "for" of the last clause, is that Jew and Greek, slave and freedman, male and female are "one person in Christ Jesus" (neb; cf. verse 29). Verse 29, "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," forms a triumphant conclusion to the apostle's argument. Christ's people are God's sons, baptized by the Spirit into spiritual union with Him, the Son, Abraham's Seed.

What Gal 3:28 teaches us, is that all believers have become one in Christ Jesus, sharing equally the redemption that Christ has won by His atoning sacrifice. In other words, the implications of redemption, the joint blessings of covenantal union with our Lord. The phrase, "in Christ," refers to the mystical and universal, the representative and covenantal union of all believers in the Lord. In other words, Paul in the context of Galatians simply affirms that every believer in Christ inherits fully the Abrahamic promises by grace apart from legal works. This is indeed a beautiful passage, but the passage nowhere says or suggest that men and women are equal to each other, that's a distortions of the text. It speaks clearly about unity, not equity ! This is confirmed by the renowned christian scholar Dr. Constable:

Gentiles, slaves, and women did not enjoy the same access to God in Israel's formal worship as did Jews, free men, and males. They could trust God for their personal salvation, however. The priests in Israel had to be Jews, free, and males. Now in the church every Christian is a priest (1 Pet. 2:9-10). Paul's emphasis, however, was on believers' unity in Christ, not their equality with one another.

**Source:**

Dr. Constable's Bible Study Notes and commentary, Notes on Galatians 2005 Edition Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Page 38

The text clearly speaks about unity ! It says you are all one in christ, and not all of you are equal one to another. The next nowhere speaks about equity, this is distortions of the text and Paul's words. The next biblical verse moreover confirms this:

**John 17:20-23**

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee, *that they also may be one in us*: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

What is Jesus trying to say here ? Jesus clearly refers to the unity of the believers, when he speaks about "*that they also may be one in us*", he refers to their belief, that they may all belief in him and God, and form one unity with him in this belief ! in other words he refers to the unity of the believers with him (that they may be united with him, trough their belief), just like jesus forms an unity with God , thats why Jesus says "*That they all may be one; as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee*". So when Paul in Galatians 3:28 says that "*...there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus*", he refers to the fact that every believer forms an unity with jesus, together as an unity they are all "one" and are heirs of the promised blessings. The verse nowhere speaks about equity of men/women, slave / free man. Like Dr. Constable said: "Paul's emphasis, however, was on believers' unity in Christ, not their equality with one another".

**A comparison with islam:**

Many christians desperately use Galatians 3:28 to argue that christianity, is superior to islam, because it teaches that all people form one unity in christ. Like i have shown before, the verse indeed clearly speaks about unity, but not about equity of people toe ach other (like some christians desperate wanne believe, by distorting the clear meaning of the text). Unity and equity are two different things. However let's take a look at islam, what says islam about this issue:

**Sahih Muslim, Book 032, Number 6258:**

Nu'man b. Bashir reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: The similitude of believers in regard to mutual love, affection, fellow-feeling is that of one body; when any limb of it aches, the whole body aches, because of sleeplessness and fever.

The prophet described the believers as one body, which clearly means they form one unity ! Which is the same as what Paul taught, all believers are one in belief, meaning one unity. The Prophet in another hadith makes this even more clear:

**Sahih Muslim, Book 032, Number 6261:**

Nu'man b. Bashir reported that Muslims are like one body of a person; if the eye is sore, the whole body aches, and if the head aches, the whole body aches.

Muslims are all “one body” , meaning one unity. In the qu’ran moreover we read that everyone has the same access to rewards and blessings:

**Aal Imraan 3:195, Al-Nisaa 4:124, Al-Nahl 16:97, Ghaafir 40:40**

All persons - men as well as women - shall be fully rewarded for their deeds and shall not be wronged in the least

**Fussilat 41:31**

They (men, women) shall get all that they may desire and all that they can ask for, as a first gift from God. His blessings would follow subsequently

So christianity doesn't offer anything special to a person in comparison to islam. Both religions teach that all believers are one, and have the same access to blessings and rewards. However in my previous booklets we have seen that christianity views women inferior to men. In "Genesis 3:16" we for example read that woman was cursed, and punished by making men ruler over her. The bible in "1 Corinthians 11:9" tells us that women were created from men, but not the reverse. Paul moreover in "Ephesians 5:23" states that "the man is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church." The comparison of the husband to Christ (God according to the Christians) is clearly an unequal view of men and women, since Christ is superior to the church. However Islam teaches that men and women are equal to each other. The Prophet made this clear in the next authentic hadith:

**Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 113; Ahmad, 25663**

Narrated by Aisha, The Prophet said; "women are the twin halves of men." Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi

So here we clearly see how Islam views men and women as twin halves of each other! Which means they are equal to each other spiritually and as human beings in dignity, respect and honor! So besides the fact that Islam views all believers as one unity/body, it also teaches that both men and women are equal to each other! Something which can't be found in Christianity, not a single verse in the whole described men and women as twin halves of each other, not a single! Moreover the next hadith confirms the equity of all people: men, women, black, white etc.

**Ibn Hajar, Fath al Bari, 1:658-659 & 3:204-205**

The Prophet said: "People are as equal as the teeth of a comb, they are differentiated only by piety"

In other words Islam teaches us that all believers (men and women) are one body/unity, and equal to each other like the teeth of a comb! People in Islam are only differentiated by piety! Not a single verse in the Bible describes people equal to each other as the teeth of a comb, not a single verse in the Bible describes men and women as twin halves of each other!

**Source:**

1:

<http://bible.crosswalk.com/Commentaries/GillsExpositionoftheBible/gil.cgi?book=mt&chapter=010&verse=024&next=025&prev=023>