

The Letter of Paul to the Galatians

A Picture of Justification by Faith

Galatians 4:21-5:1

1. **The Illustration** (vs.21-26)

Paul has conclusively argued that the gospel of justification by faith was revealed to him directly by Christ (Gal. 1:11-24), was recognized by the Jerusalem apostles as the same message they had received (Gal. 2:1-10), was the message by which the Galatian churches received the Spirit (Gal. 3:1-5), and that it is the message of the Old Testament (Gal. 3:6-29). Paul now uses an important story from the Old Testament in order to illustrate the point that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham (Gal. 3:7-9; cf Luke 3:8).

2. **The Identification** (vs.24-26, 28, 31)

The Judaizers and those who follow their teachings, along with the Jews who reject Jesus as Messiah and Lord, are enslaved to the Law (Gal. 4:7) and are depicted as being children of Hagar, the slave, who would be slaves. Those who have been justified by faith in Jesus (Gal. 3:26) are pictured here as the children of Sarah, children of promise (v.28).

3. **The Interpretation** (vs.27-28, 31)

Similar to the way that God had rejected Abraham's fleshly attempt to fulfill what He had promised, God will also reject all people who attempt to achieve their justification before Him by the flesh. All of the hopes of Israel were founded upon the truth that God would deliver them. God had established this as the pattern for Israel's hope in countless examples of their deliverance and blessing because of His gracious kindness to them (Gen. 39:2-6, 21-23; Ex. 8-11; 14:21-22, 27-31; 17:35; Josh. 6:2-5; 7:1-5).

4. **The Application** (vs.29-5:1)

- A. As Hagar tormented Sarah and there has been strife between the children of Ishmael and Isaac, so now there is persecution from those who are spiritual slaves to the Law upon those who are saved according to the promise (v.29).
- B. God will expel from His presence those who are trying to be justified by the Law. Except for the matter of evangelism, the church ought to have nothin to do with those seek to enslave you to the law (v.30).
- C. Since you are a child of the promise, stand firm in faith and do not regress to the enslavement of works-righteousness (5:1).