

CONCLUSION

Up to this point in Paul's letter, no fewer than nine arguments have been presented in defense of justification by faith alone through grace alone. If you have been following Paul's reasoning, you now know exactly what you are getting yourself into if you return to a religion of works and Law. There is only bondage there, but "for freedom Christ has set [us] free"! Indeed, grace and faith are better than works and the Law.



LESSON 10: "A Tale of Two Sons"

Date: November 23, 2014

TEXT: Galatians 4:21-5:1

INTRODUCTION

Having abandoned grace for the Law, the Galatian Christians really didn't know exactly what they had gotten themselves into. This is why Paul asks them in Galatians 4:21, "Tell me, you who desire to be under the Law, do you not listen to the Law [or, hear what the Law says]?" To help educate them, Paul provides a final argument from the Pentateuch itself (i.e., the Law section of the Old Testament) in his defense of the gospel of grace alone through faith alone — an example of two _____ (4:21-31). Paul shares a literal story and uses it as an _____ to climax his gospel guardianship.

THE _____ FACTS (4:22-23)

In this passage, Paul's shares a tale of two sons.

1. _____
 - He was a born to a _____ woman.
 - He was born "according to the _____"—emphasizing both natural conception and human conniving.

2. _____
 - He was born to a _____ woman.
 - He was born "through _____" or "according to the _____"—emphasizing both a supernatural birth and a gracious gift.

THE _____ INTERPRETATION (4:24-27)

There are two obvious and dangerous problems with "allegorizing" or "spiritualizing" in our Bible study. First, it gives man _____ over the Scripture itself. Second, it robs us of any confidence in knowing _____. This method, then, with all its dangers is not what Paul

is employing in this passage. Instead, he is treating the original story with integrity, accepting its literal historical nature, but then using it to illustrate, symbolize, or parallel a point he is making here (the meaning of the Gk. word *allegoreo*).

The point of this illustration is to make a distinction “between natural or _____ and supernatural or _____ religion. The religion of works and law corresponds to the natural birth of Ishmael. The religion of the Spirit, which is Christianity, corresponds to the supernatural birth of Isaac” (Boice, 843).

1. Contrast #1 — Hagar represents the _____ Covenant whereas Sarah represents the _____ Covenant (vv. 24-25a).

This contrast between covenants has already been explored in some depth in Galatians 3:15-29 (Lessons 7-8), but it can be summarized in a statement—the Mosaic Covenant produced spiritual _____ (cf. 3:21-24), whereas the Abrahamic Covenant promised spiritual _____ (cf. 3:15-20, 25-29).

2. Contrast #2 — Hagar represents _____ Jerusalem whereas Sarah represents _____ Jerusalem (vv. 25-27).

In contrast to Arabia, earthly Jerusalem was the very capital of this privileged nation, and yet it was in the same kind of spiritual blindness and slavery. Jesus Christ, the Passover Lamb promised and pictured throughout the Old Testament, had fulfilled the _____ of the Old Covenant in His life and death and had _____ the New Covenant in Jerusalem (cf. Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:18-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25); yet the “weak and worthless” (cf. 4:8-9) activity and ceremony of the Law continued on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem into Paul’s day and beyond.

Opposite those enslaved in Judaism (and any other man-made, Hagar-like religion), are Christians “born from _____” (John 3:3), whose “citizenship is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20) and who are already “seated...with [Christ] in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 2:6). Cf. Hebrews 11:10; 12:18, 22; Revelation 21-22

While initially barren, Sarah or the New Jerusalem would be made fruitful; ironically, then, Hagar is actually the barren one, unable to provide any of her children with spiritual and eternal freedom (v. 27).

Hagar & Ishmael	Sarah & Isaac
Slavery and captivity	Freedom and family
Born “according to the flesh”	Born “through promise” and “according to the Spirit”
Mosaic Covenant	Abrahamic Covenant
Law and works	Grace and faith
Earthly Jerusalem	Heavenly Jerusalem
Man-made religion (Judaism)	God-made religion (Christianity)

Application: Paul wants us to make sure that we are evaluating ourselves on the right basis and that we are asking ourselves the right question.

It is not enough merely to claim Abraham as one’s father. Both Christians [spiritually] and Jews [physically] did that. The question is: Who is our _____ and in what way were we born? If Hagar is our mother, then we were born of purely human means and are still slaves. If our mother is Sarah, then the birth was by promise, and we are free men (Boice, 484).

THE PRACTICAL _____ (4:28-5:1)

- 1. Believers, not Law-observers, are the _____ of God (4:28-31).** Cf. Galatians 3:29; John 8:34-36; Romans 9:7-8
- 2. Believers will be _____ by Law-observers (4:29).**
- 3. Believers should _____ the Law-observers (4:30).**
- 4. Believers should _____ in spiritual freedom (5:1).**