

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

Part Eleven  
Doctrinal Section

V. Paul's Vindication of the Gospel  
Galatians 3:1 - 4:31

- A. The Argument from the Experience of the Galatian Christians (3:1-5)
- B. The Argument from Scripture (3:6-29)
- C. The Argument from Analogy (4:1-11)
- D. A Personal Appeal (4:12-20)
- E. The Argument from Allegory (4:21-31)

Introduction

"Allegory means a description of one thing under the figure of another, so that the real or intended meaning differs from the obvious sense of the words." (Philip Schaff) The historical facts are not explained away but rather "these facts are invested with a new meaning as portraying great spiritual truths." (Eadie) There is little difference in Paul's allegory and the frequent use of types in the New Testament. This is not to be confused with the form of allegory used in Pilgrim's Progress where there is no historical significance attributed to the persons and places in the allegory. Paul's use of allegory should also be distinguished from that of Philo, Origen and others who sought to allegorize the whole Bible, reading into it meanings which were never intended by the inspired writers of Scripture.

1. The Allegory (verses 21-23)

- a. The allegory is introduced in verse 21. This verse also seems to make the transition from the personal appeal back to the argument. Paul says simply, "Have you who desire to be under a system of bondage really understood what the Old Testament teaches?" (paraphrase mine)
- b. The allegory is taken from Genesis 16. It was the law of that day that a man could have children by his wife's handmaiden if the wife was barren. Abraham thus had Ishmael by Hagar who was a slave from Egypt. Ishmael was born after the flesh, that is, after the course of nature.

Abraham received a promise from the Lord that Sarah would bear a son. Isaac's birth was miraculous in that both his parents were beyond the age of conceiving children. Isaac's birth was, therefore, a fulfillment of God's promise.

2. The Allegory Explained (verses 24-31)

- a. "These are the two covenants" means that these two women, Hagar and Sarah, represent the two covenants, the Covenant of Law and the Covenant of Promise. Paul makes the following points of contrast:

Hagar and Ishmael = Judaism

Sarah and Isaac = Christianity

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| 1. The Old Covenant   | 1. The New Covenant  |
| 2. The Law<br>("This do and thou shalt live")   | 2. The Gospel (Promise)<br>("By grace are ye saved through faith")   |
| 3. Natural birth<br>(No new birth connected with Law)   | 3. Spiritual birth<br>("Ye must be born again")  |
| 4. Mount Sinai in Arabia<br>(Outside the Promised Land.<br>Hagar was an outsider, an Egyptian slave.)   | 4. Mount Zion in the Land of Promise   |
| 5. Earthly Jerusalem<br>(Spoken of in v. 25 as the<br>'Jerusalem which now is,' mean-<br>ing the Judaism of Paul's day.<br>Paul knew something about the<br>Earthly Jeru, because he was<br>once a Pharisee and went thru<br>ritual and ceremony of that<br>system of bondage.) | 5. Heavenly Jerusalem<br>(Reference to the body of believers.<br>Some commentators feel Paul refers<br>to two sections of the Holy City.<br>The upper part was the area of Mt.<br>Zion and the Temple. More probably<br>he refers here to spiritual Jeru.<br>where the children of Promise will<br>dwell one day. (Rev. 21:10) |