

Summary of Paul's Arguments in Galatians

Paul offers a series of reasons that the Galatian Christians are making a serious mistake in “deserting Him who called you in the grace of Christ and turning to a different gospel” (Galatians 1:6).

- **Credentials:** He had defended his own credentials as an authentic bearer of the true gospel (Galatians 1:1-2:10)
- **Practicality:** He had pointed out the impossibility of keeping the law as a means of being right with God (“justification”) even for the Apostle Peter himself (Galatians 2:11-21).
- **Conversion:** He had appealed to their own conversion, their experience of the work of God’s Holy Spirit, and the suffering they had faced (Galatians 3:1-5).
- **Abraham:** He had reminded them that even Abraham, who first received God’s covenant of circumcision, was justified by faith and not his keeping of rules (Galatians 3:6-14).
- **Covenant:** He resorted to logic and the principles of civil law, that binding covenants (like God established with Abraham) cannot be invalidated (Galatians 3:15-29).
- **Promise:** He reminded them of the difference between a slave living under rules and a son and heir looking forward to a promise (Galatians 4:1-11)
- **Relationship:** He appeals to the relational connection between them, how they had received him and his message in the past (Galatians 4:12-20).
- **Allegory:** He uses an allegory of freedom in God’s promise through Sarah in contrast to the slavery resulting from the human efforts through Hagar (Galatians 4:21-31).
- **Exclusive** Either circumcision and the law, OR faith in the work of Christ, not some combination or compromise (Galatians 5:1-4).

“The climax of Paul’s argument in the letter”¹ –

For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness (Galatians 5:5)

¹ Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2013), 327.