

Sunday, July 30, 2023—Galatians 4:21-31 The Allegory of Hagar & Sarah

### Galatians 4:21

- **Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?**
- Paul asks the question do you not hear what the Law has to say? All the Law can say is guilty.
  - I Timothy 1:6-10

### Galatians 4:22

- **For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.**
- Genesis 16:15—Ishmael was born of Hagar the bondwomen.
- Genesis 21:2—Isaac was born of Sarah the freewomen.

### Galatians 4:23

- **But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.**
- Genesis 16—Ishmael was the product of Abraham's flesh.
- Genesis 17:15-19—Isaac was born of the promise that God made with Abraham.

### Galatians 4:24

- **Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.**
- This verse is the key to understanding the last part of chapter 4. An allegory speaks of that which has a meaning other than a literal one, or it is a record of literal events that have spiritual significance. This is the only time the word was used in the New Testament.
- Paul is using an allegory here to illustrate a point. Hagar represents the covenant of the Law that God gave to Moses at Mount Sinai. She bears, gives birth to, and brings forth children whose end is bondage and slavery under the Mosaic Law. Even Hagar was a slave; likewise, her offspring symbolizes those in legal slavery under the Mosaic Law.

### Galatians 5:25

- **For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.**

- The verse identifies Hagar specifically with Mount Sinai.
  - Exodus 19:4-8—Sinai is where Israel chose to subject themselves to the Law.
- Jerusalem was the center where the Law was still being practiced even during Paul's day. This verse identifies Hagar with Jerusalem. Even as Hagar was once in physical slavery; likewise, Jerusalem was in spiritual slavery under the Mosaic Law.

#### **Galatians 4:26-28**

- **26) But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.  
27) For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.  
28) Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.**
- Following the symbolism, Paul is using Jerusalem above to correspond with Sarah, the free women, the mother of all who enjoy spiritual freedom in Christ.
- Verse 27 is a reference to Isaiah 54:1
- Paul is saying that we are free because we are heirs with Isaac.

#### **Galatians 4:29-31**

- **29) But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.  
30) Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.  
31) So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.**
- Ernest R. Campbell states the following about these verses in his commentary *A Verse by Verse Study of Galatians*:
  - “This persecuting attitude goes back to the mother of the one born according to the flesh, namely Hagar (Genesis 16:4). This despicable attitude produced such tension between the two women that Hagar fled into the wilderness. There the angel of the Lord told her to return to her mistress, and to submit herself under Sarah's hands (Genesis 16:9).” (Campbell, 115.)
- The first record we have of the one born according to the flesh, Ishmael, persecuting the one born according to the Spirit, Isaac, goes back to the time when Isaac was weaned (Genesis 21:8-10).
  - Genesis 16:12
  - Psalms 83:2-8—Ishmaelites attitude towards the Lord's people.

- Just as those born of Hagar according to the flesh persecuted Israel; so those in legal slavery in Jerusalem were persecuting those born of the Spirit, those of the church, the Body of Christ. “Not only were the Ishmaelites and their allies still trying to cut off Israel from the land of living; but, also those engulfed in legal bondage and slavery are bent toward persecuting those living for Jesus Christ.” (Campbell, 115.)
- Genesis 21:10-12—Abraham was upset by this.
  - Genesis 17:18, 20
- Campbell concludes his commentary on Chapter 4 by stating the following about verse 31.
  - “In concluding the allegory, Paul affirms that believers today are not children of the slave maid, Hagar. Since Hagar represented the covenant of the Mosaic Law, which corresponded to the earthly Jerusalem of Paul’s day, with its religious legalism, Paul is affirming that believers should have nothing to do with the Law of Moses!

Furthermore, since the Jerusalem of Paul’s day was the center where the Mosaic Law was practiced most meticulously, the place where Hagar was in slavery with the children, Paul affirms that the Galatian believers should have nothing to do with Jerusalem and her legalistic Judaistic teachings!

Having negatively stated that believers should have nothing to do with Hagar and here legalistic slavery to the Law, Paul uses the strong adversative to emphasis contrast, i.e., instead of being children of the slave maid believers are children of the free woman, Sarah. Paul leaves no room for being half-breeds of both Hagar and Sarah. He leave no room for believer to have one foot in the Law and other foot in Grace!

Those who are true believers in Jesus Christ are totally free from the bondage and slavery of the Law! They have been liberated from the cruse of spiritual death by the Blood of Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:23)! Those who are children of the free woman have been saved by Grace through faith apart form the works of the Law (Eph. 2:8-9). In contrast to being in slavery to the Mosaic Law, believers have been freed from the power of sin to walk by the Spirit and to do the will of God (Rom. 8:4).” (Campbell, 117-118)