

## Same Father; Different Mother: Allegory from History.

### **Review:**

Paul wrote to the Galatian churches because they had been led astray from the gospel into legalism - that salvation was by faith and works, by keeping the Jewish laws and traditions.

### **Paul's message:**

Salvation is by grace through faith apart from any works of the Law.

#### **1. Men are justified by faith through Christ alone.**

Gal. 3:6-7

Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.

Gal. 3:29

And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

#### **2. The Law shows men that they are sinners.**

The Law's purpose was to show all men that they were sinners and point them to Christ as their only hope of salvation. The Law could never save, but could only reveal their sinful state and keep them in guilt and condemnation. This is pictured by a term, "shut up" as of the doors of a the 'death-row' prison cell –

- under condemnation awaiting execution on the day of Judgment.

"But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith." (Gal. 3:22-24)

#### **3. Justification is by faith.**

The Law was never intended to save, but only to bring someone to the end of themselves and their own self-righteousness. As they turned to Christ in faith they could then be justified.

“But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. 3:25-26)

Paul has shown that true justification and sonship come from faith in Christ. He builds upon the concept of becoming a child of the promise instead of law.

#### **4. Christian Liberty is also based on the promise instead of Law.**

In chapter four of Galatians Paul takes another step beyond justification and sonship into Christian liberty, based upon the promises of God that come by faith. This is contrasted to the enslavement to religion, to ritual, and to rules.

So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying “Abba! Father!”  
(Gal. 4:3-6)

The question is asked,

“But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? You observe days and months and seasons and years.” (Gal. 4:9-10)

Judaism and the Law were merely steps to Christ and a real relationship with God. Paul asks, *“Why step backwards from freedom back into slavery (religion)?* Going back into Judaism and the Law would be leaving grace and a true relationship with God through faith, and returning to the slavery and powerlessness of religion.

#### **I. Allegory**

At this point in his argument Paul looks back into history and turns the story of Abraham and Hagar. This becomes an allegory that he applies to the Galatians and indeed to all believers.

“Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. For it is written,

“Rejoice, barren woman who does not bear; Break forth and shout, you who are not in labor; For more numerous are the children of the desolate than of the one who has a Husband.”

And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.

But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.

But what does the Scripture say?

“Cast out the bondwoman and her son,  
For the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son  
of the free woman.”

So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free woman.

(Gal. 4:21-31)

**Paul uses the historical event as an allegory.**

Allegory – from ‘allegoreo’ -

Dictionary: “a partial similarity between like features of two things on which a comparison may be made.”

Paul compares the similarities between the story of Abraham and the spiritual truth he is teaching.

<sup>21</sup>“Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law?”

*Since you insist on living under law,  
are you willing to listen to what the Law really says?*

Understanding the allegory: (parallel columns)

Hagar, the bond woman  
Ishmael, a natural birth  
The old covenant  
Earthly Jerusalem  
Judaism

Sarah, the free woman  
Isaac, a supernatural birth  
The new Covenant  
Heavenly Jerusalem  
Christianity

## **A Lesson in History**

Abraham had two Sons: Ishmael and Isaac

### **1. The sons of the same father had different mothers.**

<sup>22</sup>For it is written that Abraham had two sons,  
one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman.

Hagar, the bond woman / Sarah, the free woman.

Ishmael was born from a slave woman.  
Isaac was born from a free woman.

The heritage of the line through one mother is lostness and bondage,  
and the heritage of the line through the other mother is salvation and freedom.

### **2. The sons had different kinds of births – conception.**

“...one who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir...”  
Gen. 15:1-4

(Abraham and Sarah decided to help God out.)

Abraham was about 86 when he had relations with Hagar (Sarah’s idea).

Ismael was the son as a result of a natural means of conception.

Isaac had a supernatural conception – miracle.

Abraham by this time had passed the age at which it was normally possible to engender children. He was 99 years old – and Sarah was long past the age of conceiving them. Notice the word, “through” in v. 23, which describes the way in which the promise of God called life into being.

<sup>23</sup>But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise.

In v. 29 Paul uses the term, “through the Spirit” to describe the means of which Isaac was conceived:

...him who was born according to the Spirit,

Boice writes,

“It is apparent that this contrast lends itself well to the very distinction Paul is trying to make between natural or man-made and supernatural or God-made 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.”<sup>1</sup>

### **3. The women represented different covenants.**

<sup>24</sup>This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants...

Old covenant: Law and Works

Given through Moses on Mount Sinai

Produced religious slaves – spiritually like a child of Hagar.

When Hagar and Ishmael were sent out they settled in Arabia.

4000 years ago marked the beginning of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

*“Hawk and Crow Conflict”*

New Covenant: a covenant based on God’s Promise, God’s grace

### **4. The women represent two Jeruselems**

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<sup>1</sup> James Montgomery Boice and A. Skevington Wood, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Galatians-Ephesians*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), p. 77.

- earthly Jerusalem
- heavenly Jerusalem

Corresponds – V. 25 shows this kind of comparison used by Paul.

“Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.” (v. 25)

In this verse Hagar is compared to current Judaism since both are in slavery.

Judaism because they live in bondage to the Law are slaves like Hagar.

- They are Self-righteous, Christ-rejecting, grace-ignoring Jews.

MacArthur writes,

“...the Jewish inhabitants of geographical Jerusalem in Paul’s day were truly in deep bondage to damning legalism. And the Judaizers in Galatia were trying to subvert believing Jews back into that bondage – to the ritual, ceremony, self-effort and all other works of the flesh that constitute the hopeless slavery of the spiritual children of Hagar.”<sup>2</sup>

Then Sarah who is free is compared to the heavenly Jerusalem.

<sup>26</sup>But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother.

“The inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem are free from law, from works, from bondage, and from the flesh.”<sup>3</sup>

##### **5. The sons represent two groups,**

- **the Jews, who are in bondage**
- **and Christians who are free in Christ.**

<sup>25</sup>Now this Hagar ... corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.

<sup>28</sup>And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.

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<sup>2</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Galatians*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1987), p. 126.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free woman.

## II. Application of the Allegory

<sup>29</sup>But as at that time  
 he who was born according to the flesh  
 persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit,  
 so it is now also.

### **The First application for the Galatians is the reject the Judaizers**

– the false teachers that persecute real believers in Christ.

### **<sup>30</sup>“But what does the Scripture say?”**

Cast out the bondwoman and her son,  
 For the son of the bondwoman  
 shall not be an heir  
 with the son of the free woman.”

### **Second Paul admonishes the Galatians and all believers to stand in freedom:**

So then, brethren,  
 we are not children of a bondwoman,  
 but of the free woman.  
 It was for freedom that Christ set us free;  
 therefore keep standing firm  
 and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. (Gal. 4:31-5:1)

The Law shows us our sin.

Christ set us free from our guilt and condemnation.

Therefore having been justified by faith,  
 we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.  
 (Rom. 5:1)