



HIGHER GROUND
CALVARY CHAPEL

SCHOOL OF MINISTRY

GALATIANS: FAITH VERSUS WORKS

Class 04

Birth; Under The Law or Free

In this 4th chapter of Galatians we have 3 Sections:

- Heirs By Adoption (verses 1-11)
- Paul's Relationship with the Galatians (verses 12-20)
- Ishmael vs. Isaac; the Law vs. Grace (verses 21-31)

In Chapters 1-3 we saw Paul as an apostle, leaving his readers an impression that he is a scholar with incredible intellect and a man that seems to be all head a no heart.

He writes with commanding authority and we get the sense that he is prepared to battle with the Judaizers.

He was then Paul the theologian and defender of *the* faith;

4

Now we see him as Paul the man, Paul the pastor and Paul the passionate lover of the soul. But now his demeanor changes. He begins writing to the Galatians with deep, sincere feelings and tenderness.

5

Instead of “foolish Galatians,” he calls them brothers and sisters, and “*dear children.*”

We will see that he even goes as far as to view himself as their mother, who is experiencing the *pains of childbirth* in them until Christ is formed in them.

6

Verses 1-7 are really a continuation from Chapter 3. There are a few commentators who question why those who canonized the scriptures made the division at this point. What we have as the “Book of Galatians” was a letter.

7

Paul didn't stop writing in the middle of what we have as chapter 3 and chapter 4. This is only important because of the content that carries from 3:26 through 4:7.

8

Paul begins talking about “sons” and “heirs” in 3:26 and then goes into detail about conditions that are naturally placed on an heir and the relation of a child to that of a slave.

So we begin with first section

9

Heirs By Adoption

Galatians 3:26-4:7

10

Imagine a child who is an heir to a large estate.

One day this child will own it all.

Although it has been promised to him, he has yet to *experience* it.

11

He's still a child and yet he is "lord" of everything.

In this capacity he is considered the same as a slave.

He remains under the authority of guardians and stewards who act under the direction of the father as the "controllers of his person and property." ¹

12

They tell him what to do, when and how to do it.

They direct him and discipline him.

He has little to no liberty and remains under restraint.

13

The fact remains that he is lord because he is the heir; yet while he is still a child he is equal to a slave.

His status will remain this way until *“the appointed time set by his father (v. 2).*

14

In those days, and in some countries even today, the father determines when his son reaches the age of maturity.

In the U.S. and other countries the age of adulthood has been determined by the governments.

15

Whether a person is actually mature enough to be an “adult” or not, the government says when a person becomes the age of 18 he/she is an adult and has the freedom of adulthood.

16

They also have the responsibility of being an adult, which can be very challenging for many. Those who lived in the Greek and Roman culture during the 1st century A.D. would have a celebratory ceremony for a boy turning 14 years old.

17

This ceremony was called a *toga virilis*. “The 14-year-old boy went through an inauguration ceremony with the adult male members of his family.

18

At this ceremony, speeches of challenge to the youth would be made, and offerings would be made to the gods.

Then, the boy would stand in the center of the group and take off the child's garment that he wore.

19

A new adult man's robe, or toga, would be placed on him.

This was the *toga virilis*, the 'robe of a man'.

At this time of the ceremony, the 14-year-old was given adult privileges and responsibilities.

20

He could conduct business in his own name, could buy and sell property, could marry, could vote in the Assembly, and in many other ways could carry on as an adult citizen.

21

Of course, he was not mature enough or wise enough to exercise all of the privileges he had and he was not experienced enough to live up to all of the responsibilities.

22

But the seriousness of his position as a citizen was impressed on him and, if he was intelligent and hard working, he would grow up to be an adult having integrity and character.”²

23

Even with the traditional age of 14, it was still the father who determined if a boy was old enough.

Maybe, like children are kept back a grade, some boys just weren't mature enough to accept the responsibilities and the father would postpone the ceremony for a year.

24

Now in verse three Paul is relating how even the Jewish children were in bondage.

He says they “were in bondage *under the elements of the world.*”

To this he is referring to the Law.

25

In 3:24 he said the law was their guardian so therefore, those who are not believers of the gospel remain in bondage to the law.

In addition to the law, the word, *elements*, has two meanings:

26

The first is that of learning, such as learning the alphabet, the ABCs that we learn in school.

We see it used as principles in Hebrews 5:12: “For though by this time you ought to be teachers,

27

you need *someone* to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.”

If this is the meaning that Paul is intending,

28

then he is relating the time of the Old Testament to the elementary (basic) education of the people of God.

This elementary education then was completed when Christ came.

J.B. Phillips calls it “basic moral principles.”

29

The second meaning is that of “elemental spirits of the world.”

In the ancient world these spirits were usually linked with the physical elements (earth, fire, air and water), or the heavenly bodies (sun, moon, stars, and planets) that earthly seasonal festivals are dictated by.

30

This then would fit in with verse 8, where Paul says that we “served (were slaves to -KJV) those which by nature are not gods.”

John Stott states, “What Paul means is that the devil took this good thing (the law) and twisted it to his own evil purpose, in order to enslave men and women.”

31

⁴ But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

32

Notice Paul says “when the fullness of time **had** come.”

This means that it has already come, it has taken place and is now a historical event.

What was the *fullness of time*?

The time that the Father set even before creation.

33

He's God. He knew that was going to happen.

He already planned for His one and only Son to come to the earth to pay the ransom for mankind's sin.

Human bondage under the law continued for about 1300 years.

34

Even though the ransom was paid and redemption was provided, people remain in bondage to the law today.

But they do so by choice.

As I said last week, millions of people have chosen to refuse the redemption that God provided through His Son, the Kinsman-Redeemer.

35

The good news is that this redemption is still available to any who will believe.

The bad news is that there is a time limit.

This is not an eternal offer, but the acceptance or refusal of the offer will determine eternity for every single human being.

36

The fullness of time began therefore when Jesus came to the earth as a human being.

It was completed when He died on the cross.

But His fullness wasn't seen or recognized until He began His ministry and the only one who truly recognized it at first was John the Baptist.

37

First in Elizabeth's womb (Luke 1:41);

Then when John saw Jesus coming toward him, he said, "*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*" (John 1:29)

38

Mark 1:14-15 tells us this:

¹⁴ Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, ¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

39

The Father had set the date when children are eligible to receive their majority (their spiritual *toga virilis*) and be freed from their guardians and inherit the promise.

40

“Under the Law, the Jews were mere children, but under grace, the believer is a son of God with an adult standing in God’s family.” (Warren Weirsbe)³

41

Our adoption to “sons” is positional.
We obviously can’t be physical sons or daughters, but through the redemption of Jesus Christ we are spiritual sons and daughters.

42

The adoption is complete and we are now heirs to our heavenly Father.

God did two things when the “fullness” took place:

- 1) God sent His Son – verses 4-5:

43

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.

44

The purpose for Jesus coming was to “redeem” and to “adopt.” (NIV)

This is much more than rescuing from slavery; it was to make slaves into sons!

45

“This metaphor comes from the Graeco-Roman (but not Jewish) legal device whereby a wealthy childless man might take into his family a slave youth who thus, by a great stroke of fortune, ceased to be a slave and became a son and heir (A.M. Hunter, p.33).”¹

46

What needs to be emphasized here is that God’s Son was the only one who could be sent because He is the only one who was perfectly qualified to complete our redemption.

47

John Stott states, “So the divinity of Christ, the humanity of Christ and the righteousness of Christ uniquely qualified him to be our redeemer.”¹
He had to be human in order to redeem humanity.

48

He had to be a righteous man in order to redeem unrighteous men and women.

Had had to be God's son in order to redeem human beings for God and make them God's children.

49

2) God sent His Spirit –
verse 6: *Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."*
(NIV)

50

The adoption process began when Jesus died on the cross and resurrected from the dead. The promise of the Holy Spirit came to the apostles 9 or 10 days after His resurrection and He has come to all who believe, all who are the sons of God, and He dwells in our hearts.

51

What Paul means by “the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father’” is that the moment the Holy Spirit took up residence within us He, through our own spirit, called out, “Abba Father.”

‘Abba’ is an Aramaic way of saying “Father.”

52

Jesus used the word several times when He prayed.

It may also be a more intimate word as a child calls his father ‘daddy’ or ‘papa.’

53

The Holy Spirit brings us to our heavenly, or spiritual, Father.

Before we believed in Jesus the Son, we were not really aware of the Father.

54

We had heard about God, but never considered that God could also be a 'Father.'

It is the Spirit that reveals the Father to us and cries, "Abba, Father" when we don't, or didn't know to.

55

I find it reassuring that God's purpose for sending His Son was so that we would have the status (position) of sonship, and we would have this experience of sonship.

Paul says that our status has changed from slave to sons (and daughters).

56

Sons and daughters by adoption and heirs of God because of and through Christ (verse 7).

It has been completed.

Jesus said, "It is finished."

The judge has declared the adoption legal and approved.

57

He has accepted the payment for ransom.

We are heirs and no one can take that away from us.

Verses 8-11

Paul now switches gears a little bit.

58

He has just told them who they are in Christ and now he reminds them of where they came from before their adoption as sons.

He also reminds us of where we were before coming to Christ.

59

Everyone is controlled by one of two spirits: The Spirit of God or the spirit of Satan.

Before believing in Christ and obtaining salvation by grace through faith, everyone is under the control of the spirit of Satan.

60

Though it may not have seemed like we were in bondage to evil spirits, we were and we were ignorant of God.
We did not know God and yet He knew us.

61

That alone is remarkable, that God would know us in our wicked and rebellious state. But He told Jeremiah and He tells us, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you" (Jer 1:5).

62

In their sonship, they knew God, the full knowledge of God and they were known by Him. Knowing God and knowing who God is are very different. Many people may know who God is and many people believe that God exists.

63

But only those who are in Christ know God fully.
We don't fully understand Him or the 'Triune' Godhead, but we know Him fully.
That is to say that we know Him by name, by attributes, and by His character.

64

We know His promises and know that He keeps His promises.
We know He does not lie.
We know He is the Creator of all things
We know God.

65

And then because He initiated this relationship, we are known by Him.
He not only knows every facet of our lives, but He knows us as His sons and daughters.
There is a personal intimacy and communion between the true believer and God the Father.

66

Jesus prayed these words in the Garden of Gethsemane, *“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent”* (John 17:3).

67

But more than God knowing everything about His children, the phrase *“known by”* means “approved, or to be approved.” Paul is telling the Galatians that they had come to know God in the sense of gaining knowledge about Him through their experience.

68

They didn’t know Him through the Mosaic law, but by their faith in Jesus Christ. But God had approved (known) them to become sons and heirs. “You have had this intimate relationship with Him and now you are giving that up to return to slavery?”

69

“How can you do this?”

Instead of progressing in their faith they were regressing.

“*weak and beggarly elements*” tell us the degree of their regression.

70

They were willing to give up their relationship by the power of the gospel and take up the weakness of the law.

They were willing to give up the riches of the gospel and accept the poverty of the law.

71

Is it really so surprising that anyone would want to give up their freedom and return to slavery?

The Israelites wanted to do this. It only took them 1 ½ months to complain about the lack of food in the desert.

72

Exodus 16:2-3 Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. ³ And the children of Israel said to them, “Oh, that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt,

73

when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

74

Essentially, they were saying they wanted to go back to Egypt where food was plentiful. They would rather be in bondage and have food to make them fat than be free and dependent upon God to supply their every need.

75

So God gave them food from heaven, which they called, "manna."

Then they complained about that so God gave them quail. So much quail they got sick of it.

76

They eventually arrived in the land that was "flowing with milk and honey."

The Galatians are practically doing the same thing.

They were leaving the complete covering and freedom found in the gospel and going into bondage by the laws of the Jews.

77

They weren't even returning to what they once knew and had, they were going to something completely new to them.

In verse 10 Paul is saying the Galatian Christians have taken up the religion of the Jews celebrating their festivals and observances.

78

R.C. Sproul explains the laws of God.⁴

There are essentially two types of laws: God's natural law and God's purposive law.

When we talk about the law of nature we mean that which consist of things that are revealed by nature and conscience.

79

We also talk about the law of nations – those laws that universally agree that specific things are right and specific things are wrong.

These laws – nature and nations – can be changed and do change.

80

God's law of nature consists of those laws that God reveals and legislates based on His own nature and His own character, which never change.

God's purposive law is legislation that He made for a specific, defined, historical purpose.

81

When the purpose is finished and fulfilled, that law is revoked.

When Jesus came He fulfilled the law and therefore God has abolished the law.

82

Paul is saying that the Judaizers have persuaded the Christians to not only add the law of circumcision to their salvation, but also the law pertaining to feasts and offerings.

83

These were the historical, purposive laws of the Old Testament which administered the days and the times and the seasons.

These are no longer necessary.

84

Today the Jews are still trapped in the slavery of the law and continue to “observe days and months and seasons and years.”

Paul finishes this section by saying, ¹¹ *I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.*

85

He was afraid that they were going in a backward direction spiritually.

He wasn't afraid that they would lose their salvation, but that they were giving up their freedom for slavery.

86

He was saying, in a nice way, that he feels he has wasted his time and energy with them.

I believe he was truly sorrowful for these believers.

87

Paul's Relationship with the Galatians

Galatians 4:12-20

88

In the previous chapter Paul called the Galatian Christians fools; "You foolish Galatians!" Now, as the pastor and one who is deeply concerned for their spiritual state, he calls them brothers and sisters (brethren).

89

He is pleading with them, who had before welcomed him and came to love him. Now they were treating him like an enemy. But he comes back to their relationship together in Christ.

90

They are brothers and sisters in the Christian faith.

Is this how brothers and sisters treat each other?

In our humanity growing up with siblings always included fighting and quarrels with one another.

91

They had allowed the real enemy to influence them and create this conflict with Paul, their brother and pastor in Christ.

He goes on to implore (beg, desire, long for; KJV beseech) them to be like him.

92

This is in no way an egotistical comment.

He is not saying that he is the greatest Christian to ever live.

We know Paul said that he was the “chief of sinners” toward the end of his life (1 Timothy 1:15).

93

Paul struggled with sin just like everyone else (Romans 7).

To “be” like him meant to “become, to be made, finished.”

He longs for them to be made complete, finished, in Christ; in their Christian faith just as he was.

94

He then says he became like them.

Later, in his letter to the Corinthians, Paul expounds on what he says to the Galatians:

1 Cor 9:19-23 *For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;*

95

²⁰ *and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; ;²¹ to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God,*

96

but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; ;²² to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

97

²³ *Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.*

So, though Paul, by birth, was a Jew, grew up as a Jew and was well educated in the Tanakh (Old Testament), he did not come to the Galatians (Gentiles) as a Jew.

98

He came to them as a servant of Christ and to become “like them” was to be as they were in their culture, except for the idol worship.

He did not lord Jewish heritage or Christian faith over them.

99

He says in 1 Corinthians that he did this “for the gospel’s sake.”

He had no other motives.

He identified with them as they were in their sinful, worldly state because he had been there.

100

Stott states, “In seeking to win other people for Christ, our end is to make them like us, while the means to that end is to make ourselves like them.”

If they are to become one with us in Christian conviction and experience, we must first become one with them in Christian compassion.”¹

101

The word, “*injure*”, is the Greek word *adikeō* and means “to act unjustly or wickedly; to wrong someone, act wickedly towards him.”

So, basically, when he came to them the first time they accepted him and treated him fairly even though he was a foreigner.

102

In verses 13-14 he speaks of an illness that he had and they had accepted him in spite of this illness and his appearance.

We are not told anywhere in his letters what specific illness he had.

103

He only says that it was “a thorn in his side.”

Not a literal “thorn” or location on or in his body.

It is believed by his references to his eyes that he had a vision impairment.

104

At this time (his first missionary journey) he had not been beaten or imprisoned.

He had escaped Jerusalem and headed north into the region of Galatia.

Whatever he had, it appears to have been unpleasant to see.

105

Maybe he had developed a rash or got into some poison ivy.

The Galatians were not affected by his appearance and they welcomed him as they would an angel of God, and even as Christ Jesus Himself.

106

This was a period of time that people in ancient Greece and Rome were searching for something new to believe in and follow, so when Paul came preaching the gospel it piqued the interest of many and they welcomed it.

107

This reminds me of the story of Jonah, after he was heaved up from being in the belly of a great fish for three days, we can imagine what he not only looked like, but what he smelled like.

108

It took him a couple of days to get to Nineveh, but his appearance probably didn't change that much. He walked through Nineveh for three days preaching God's wrath, and not only did the people not kill him, they turned from their wicked ways and believed God.

109

Paul looked terrible and the people he preached the gospel to did not turn away from him, but they believed Christ crucified and received His grace by faith. Verse 15 tells us more about the condition of his eyesight.

110

Even in the early years of his mission to spread the gospel he was having vision problems. It was bad enough that had it been possible, he believed these new Christian brothers and sisters would have remove their own eyes and given them to him.

111

Verses 17-20

Now he is speaking of their acceptance of the Judaizers.

He compares their attitude toward the Galatians to his.

They zealously court you;
I became like you

112

They want to exclude you;
I accepted you.

They want you to be zealous for them; I want you to be zealous for Christ.

To be zealously courting them meant that these false teachers were insincerely flattering the Galatians.

113

They were feeding them lies about Paul and the Christian faith in order to win them over to their distorted gospel.

These false teachers groveled and fussed over the Galatians.

The Judaizer's whole purpose was to alienate the Galatians from Paul and the true Christian faith.

114

“One of the marks of a false teacher is that he tries to attract other men’s converts to himself, and not simply to the truth of the Word or to the person of Jesus Christ”
(Warren Wiersbe) ³

115

False teachers don’t seek the lost, they steal those who are converts, preferably new converts.
They woo them with their sweet words and smiles and convince them they are chasing after something that can’t possibly exist the way they were told.

116

What if you went to a See’s candy store and one of the employees told you how the raspberry filled dark chocolate candies were made.

117

Then you go outside with your purchased raspberry filled dark chocolate candy and someone meets you in the parking lot proceeding to tell you that what you heard was all a lie.

They pull out a “document” that reveals the “truth” about See’s candies and how they are made.

118

They seem to have “evidence” that proves that See’s candy is lying.

Who do you believe?

The employee or this enemy of See’s candy?

The evidence seems very clear. So much so that you tend to believe it.

119

What are you going to do with your new purchase?

Will you give it away or take a chance and eat it?

This is the scenario with the Galatians and the Judaizers.

The Galatians are believing the Judaizers.

120

They seem to have some kind of proof.

Paul says it is good to be zealous in some things, the best things.

To be zealous is to seek, so seek those things that are the very best.

121

Don't settle for anything but the best and the life in Christ Jesus is the best. It doesn't get any better than this.

¹⁹ My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you, ²⁰ I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.

122

In verse 12, Paul calls the Galatians his brothers and sisters.

Now he is saying they are his "little children."

The Greek word for children is *teknion* and means "a little child, an infant."

123

Vine's Expository Dictionary defines it as, "a term of affection by a teacher to his disciples under circumstances requiring a tender appeal."
He likens himself to their mother.

124

As a mother suffers for her children, at childbirth and in rearing, so Paul suffers for them.
His suffering for them is spiritual anguish and will continue until "Christ is formed in them."

125

He has a longing desire to see them transformed in Christ, into His image.
He also longed to be with them, probably for several reasons, but primarily to be able to verbally express to them his concerns.

126

Writing a letter is not the same as being present.

In this technological age, we can get an idea of what feelings a person may have by the text of their words.

127

If they are all “Caps” we take that as “yelling” or “speaking loudly” because they are upset or just angry.

But we don’t see facial expressions and we can’t see their eyes or body language.

128

In texts and emails, once you hit that “send” button you can’t usually retrieve it before the recipient receives it and opens it.

And we sometimes have regrets about the words we wrote.

129

Whereas, speaking to someone in person give us the ability to see their “mood” and also gives us an idea of how they will receive words that we give.

This was Paul’s situation.

130

He wanted to be there so he could speak to them and so his words may not be as harsh.

He admits he is having doubts about them; about their sincerity to the gospel, their commitment to Jesus Christ and about their trust in him to be the person he had claimed to be – an Apostle of Jesus Christ.

131

Ishmael vs. Isaac;
the Law vs. Grace

Galatians 4:21-31

132

Paul is asking these Christians who are being persuaded to be under the law, “Do you even know what the law actually says?”

The Judaizers were only presenting a portion of the law.

133

It’s like when Mormons or Jehovah’s Witnesses come knocking on the door and they present to people only a few verses of their bible, which are always taken completely out of context.

134

They try to persuade people to believe that what they are saying and quoting is what the entire bible is saying.

They are deceiving with false teaching and have replaced God’s Word with man’s words.

135

The Judaizers were twisting God's Word to fit with the Mosaic Law.

The Galatians were not reading the Mosaic Law, they were just believing what was being told to them.

136

If they had read the entire law, they probably would have told these false teachers to get lost.

J. Vernon McGee says that "these are the people who talk about the Ten Commandments or some legal system, but they don't talk about the penalty imposed by the law."

137

Then Paul gives these Galatian Christians a history lesson dating back nearly 2,000 years, and reminds the Judaizers the reality of their bondage under the law.

Here we have two women, two sons and one husband and father, Abram.

138

This is from Genesis, chapters 16; 17; 18; 20 and 21.

Paul is making a contrast between two sons; Ishmael, born to Hagar, and Isaac, born to Sarai.

One boy was the son of a slave, or “bondwoman.”

139

The other born of a “freewoman.”

Grace is represented by the freewoman; the Mosaic Law represented by the bondwoman.

140

We have already talked about the promise to Abraham and that he believed God and it was accounted to him as righteousness.

The problem was impatience, mostly on Sarah’s side

141

She wasn't getting any younger so she told Abraham to take (marry) her servant, Hagar and have a child with her.

Hagar bore him a son and his name was Ishmael.

142

But God said that this son, Ishmael, was not the promised son.

Sarah finally became pregnant, in God's time.

She gave birth to a son and his name was Isaac.

143

He was the promised son, born of a free woman.

We see here a "double descent" from Abraham, presented as the false and the true.

144

False being the literal and the physical – Abraham literally and physically had a son born in slavery.

True being the symbolic and spiritual – Abraham’s true son was born as a symbol of the promise and his conception was a miracle.

145

Though both had the same father, they were very different from one another.

First, and most obvious; they had different mothers (verse 22).

146

Hagar, as we have noted, was Ishmael’s mother, an Egyptian and a slave woman; Sarah’s maidservant.

Sarah (Sarai), also as we have noted, was Isaac’s mother, a freewoman and Abraham’s true wife.

147

Each boy inherited his mother's status: Ishmael born into slavery; Isaac born into freedom.

Another difference is that they were born in different ways; not in the physical sense, but in circumstances (verse 23).

148

Ishmael was born according to nature; the natural sense being that both Abraham and Hagar were physically able to produce an offspring.

Isaac was not born according to nature: Sarah was barren, unable to produce offspring with her husband, Abraham.

149

He was born "against nature."

By the time she became pregnant she was 90 years old and Abraham was 100.

It was physically, by nature, impossible at this time in their years to produce children.

150

Hebrews 11:11 *And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. (NIV)*

God made it possible.
He made an exceptional promise.

151

Paul now presents an allegory of this story.

There is more to it than just the historical facts.

In verse 24a he says, *“which things are symbolic.”*

Everyone, since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, is born into slavery.

152

First to sin and then to the law.

We are all slaves by nature and remain in this status until we receive the fulfillment of God’s promise to be set free.

As John Stott says, “everyone is either an Ishmael or an Isaac, either what he or she is by nature, or by the grace of God set free.” ¹

153

The allegory is this: the women represent two covenants (verses 24-27). Hagar is Mount Sinai. Mount Sinai is in Arabia and it corresponds with Jerusalem.

154

Jerusalem then gives birth to bondage making both Jerusalem and her children slaves. Sarah is the “Jerusalem above” and is free, making all who believe Christ are free.

155

Hagar and Sarah represent the two covenants; the old and the new; the Mosaic covenant and the covenant of Jesus Christ. They also represent two Jerusalems; the one on earth and the one in heaven (Revelation 21).

156

Because the law was given to Moses on Mount Sinai and Hagar is the mother who bore children into slavery, she, therefore, stands for that covenant.

Mount Sinai is in Arabia and the Arabians were known as the 'sons of Hagar.'

157

The more I read the books of the Law and the more I study this book of Galatians, I can't help but wonder why the Jews today are still tied to the law and don't believe Messiah has already come.

158

They continue to be in slavery to the law when there is freedom from the law in Christ Jesus.

Hagar represents the earthly city of Jerusalem because of this bondage to the law.

159

But Sarah was different.
She was a freewoman and represents the heavenly Jerusalem, which is also considered to be the Christian church.
And Paul adds that she is the mother to all true believers.

160

We are sealed by the Holy Spirit in the new covenant and we are free citizens of heavenly Jerusalem.
Paul continues with a quote from Isaiah 54:1

161

*27 For it is written:
"Rejoice, O barren,
You who do not bear!
Break forth and shout,
You who are not in labor!
For the desolate has many more children
Than she who has a husband."*

162

This is not a reference to Hagar and Sarah, but to two ordinary women; one barren and the other with children. Isaiah is speaking of the Jews and is addressing the exiles in Babylon captivity.

163

He associates their condition in exile, being under God's judgement, to that of a barren woman whose husband has deserted her. He also associates their future condition upon restoration to that of a mother of abundant children, more than can be counted.

164

What God is saying and promising through Isaiah is that the number of His people will by far be more numerous after their return from captivity than they were before it.

165

Though this promise was partially fulfilled when the Israelites entered the Promised Land, the true spiritual fulfillment is taking place in the Christian church.

166

The true Christian people are the seed of Abraham and therefore are the true fulfillment of that promise.

Verses 28-31

167

Every true believer is a child of the promise.
We are “born again,” born of the Spirit.
Peter says that we have “been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever” (1 Peter 1:23).

168

The corruptible seed being the law and the incorruptible being God's grace in Jesus Christ. But our life in Christ isn't going to be a big bowl of delicious fruit. Paul tells us that we can expect persecution.

169

As I have said before and the Bible teaches, the flesh and the spirit are at war within us. But here, the flesh represents Ishmael and the spirit represents Isaac, who have been at war with each other since Hagar and Ishmael were sent away.

170

Genesis 21 tells us that Isaac was weaned, which would put him at about 3 years old. Sarah saw Ishmael "scoffing" at her or most likely at Isaac, which means he was laughing or mocking him.

171

As children of the promise,
Abraham's true descendants,
we must expect persecution
from the world.
The true Christian church will
be persecuted.

172

Today, Christians and the
church are being heavily
persecuted throughout various
parts of the world.
Christians are being murdered
and mutilated.

173

Church buildings are being
destroyed and Christians are
scattering, but they remain
part of the body of Christ.
I believe persecution for us is
coming soon.

174

We are of Isaac and Isaac is and will always be persecuted by Ishmael until the return of Jesus Christ for His church.

What does verse 30 say?

175

Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."

Paul is quoting Genesis 21:10

176

Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac."

177

Isaac had to endure this hardship from his half-brother, Ishmael, but his reward was to be the heir to Abraham and receive the inheritance.

There was a point where Abraham wanted Ishmael to receive the inheritance (Genesis 17:18), but God said, "No! your wife will bear you a son."

178

Sarah didn't politely ask Abraham to throw Hagar and Ishmael out, she demanded it, and God told Abraham to do what Sarah had told him to do.

Back in those days, the wife usually remained silent and the culture didn't really allow the women to speak much.

179

But Sarah said, "I don't care what the culture or traditions say, I'm telling you now to get that woman and her son out of here now!"

God told Abraham that "it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned" (Genesis 21:10-13).

180

John Stott states, “that since it is *Scripture* that said *get rid of the slave woman and her son*, we find the law itself rejecting the law.” ¹

As “Isaacs” we have received a ‘double lot:’

181

on one hand we have persecution and the pain that comes with it; on the other hand the rights and privileges of the inheritance.

Paul is showing the Galatians that there is no inheritance in the law and being under the law is being enslaved to it.

182

Like Hagar, who represents the Mosaic Law covenant, they need to throw the law out.

Their only spiritual inheritance comes through believing Christ crucified and salvation by grace alone.

183

Resources

- ¹ *"The Message of Galatians"*, John R.W. Stott, 1968, Inter-Varsity Press, 1988, pp. 78-80, 86, 95, 99
- ² *"The Spirit of Adoption"*, <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/4589-the-spirit-of-adoption/day/6#!>
- ³ *"The Bible Exposition Commentary"*, New Testament Volume 1, Warren W. Wiersbe, 2001, pp. 706, 708
- ⁴ *"For Freedom Christ Has Set Us Free, Galatians"* *Galatians: An Expository Commentary*, R.C. Sproul, 2022 by R.C. Sproul Trust, pp.94

184

- ⁵ *"Galatians"* by J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible Commentary Series: The Epistles, 1991 Thru The Bible*, p. 80

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QUESTIONS



186
