

Galatians

Chapter 4

Verse 24

1. Paul will now use this story as an allegory.
 - An allegory simply means a symbolic representation.
 - In other words, the people and actions in this story symbolize a great truth for the body of Christ today.
2. It is important to note that Paul makes allegorical application of this story under inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
 - No person has the right to go to the Bible and try to find "hidden meanings" and develop their own private interpretation of Scripture.
 - When people employ this kind of a reckless approach, they can make the Bible say whatever they want it to say.
 - We must always take the Bible in its literal meaning unless God clearly reveals a hidden meaning in His Word. (Example: a vineyard is used allegorically in **Isaiah 5:1-7**, but God clearly tells us that it represents the nation of Israel.)
 - We would not go **looking** for a hidden meaning to the stories of Sarah and Hagar, but God (through Paul) will reveal one to us.
3. *"For these (the two sons) are the two covenants..."* Paul now gives us the meaning.
 - Ishmael represents God's first covenant - the Law of Moses given on Mount Sinai. Hagar and Ishmael were both slaves and represent the bondage that the Law of Moses gave birth (gendereth) to. **Acts 15:10**
 - Isaac represents God's second covenant which was made possible on Mount Calvary when Christ died for the sins of the world.
4. Both of these covenants are discussed in **Hebrews 8:6-13** and they both have their primary application to the nation of Israel. By grace alone, and because of Christ's death, God will one day fulfill all of the promises of the new covenant to Israel.
5. But this new covenant also has great implications for Gentiles. Because Israel rejected this new covenant, we have been offered grace and peace with God if we will simply place our faith in Jesus Christ, believing that He died for our sins. It is all of grace, not of works.
6. This dispensation of grace was promised in Christ before the world began (**Ephesians 1:4, 3:11**), but was kept secret until God revealed it to Paul (**Ephesians 3:2-3**).
7. Here's the bottom line: The first covenant gave birth to bondage and condemnation. The second covenant gave birth to grace and freedom from sin. Ishmael and Isaac are a picture of these two covenants.

Verse 25

1. Hagar is a picture of Mount Sinai.
 - From Hagar came Ishmael.
 - From Mount Sinai came the law.

2. At the time Paul wrote Galatians, earthly Jerusalem was still under bondage to the law. The temple was still there and the sacrifices of the temple were still operative.
3. They were willingly ignorant of the fact that Christ had offered a final, once for all sacrifice for sin.
4. The law and earthly Jerusalem were still in union (this is the idea of "*answereth to*") and therefore in bondage.

Verse 26

1. But there is a heavenly Jerusalem which is free. **Hebrews 12:22**
2. Why is heavenly Jerusalem said to be free? Free from what? In context, it is free from the law. Why is this?
3. It is free from the law because Jesus Christ ascended into the Holy of Holies in heaven and sprinkled His atoning blood. **Hebrews 9:11-12, 24**
4. This made possible the dissolving of the first covenant (the law) and the beginning of a new covenant. **Hebrews 9:15-23, 12:24**
 - What was given on Mount Sinai (the law) gave birth to bondage and condemnation.
 - What was given in the heavenly Jerusalem (Christ's blood) gave birth to freedom and redemption.
5. This is why heavenly Jerusalem is said to be the mother of believers - because this is where Christ's atoning blood was sprinkled, thereby making possible our forgiveness and entrance into the family of God.
6. Praise God, we have been seated in the heavenlies in Christ (**Ephesians 2:6**). Our life and citizenship is in heaven (**Philippians 3:20**). We aren't tied to earthly Jerusalem, but we are tied to heavenly Jerusalem, which is free from the law!

Verse 27

1. This is a quote from **Isaiah 54:1**, which prophesies of the conversion of the Gentile nations in Israel's future kingdom. This will happen just as the Bible teaches.
 - A small remnant of believing Israel (**Revelation 7:4-8**) will bring a multitude of believing Gentiles into their earthly kingdom (**Revelation 7:9-17**).
2. But Paul now **applies** this to Gentile believers who have been saved in this age of grace.
3. We can rejoice because we (the Gentiles) were once spiritually barren (**Ephesians 2:11-12**), but now we, who were once desolate, have more children than she (Israel) which hath an husband (God - **Jeremiah 31:32**).
4. A small remnant within the nation of Israel have believed upon Christ, but multitudes of Gentiles have believed.
5. Paul takes an Old Testament scripture and makes application to this age of grace. But remember, he does so under inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He never teaches that Israel's kingdom promises are null and void - he simply takes a small part of those promises and makes application for today.

Verse 28

1. Paul continues his analogy by teaching that Isaac stands as a picture of the believer today - we are not born of the flesh or the law.
2. We are children of promise. Just like Abraham and Sarah, we simply believe the promise that God has made to us.
3. God has promised us eternal life (**Titus 1:2, 1 John 2:25**) and His Spirit (**Galatians 3:14**), if we will but believe on Jesus Christ (**1 John 5:11-13**).
4. Just as Isaac was the result of God's promise, we (who are saved by grace) are the result of God's promise of life and righteousness to all who believe (**Galatians 3:26**).

Verse 29

1. Just as Ishmael persecuted Isaac, those who are walking after the flesh persecute those who walk after the Spirit.
2. Flesh and Spirit cannot coincide peacefully with each other (**Galatians 5:17**). The flesh is totally antagonistic towards the Spirit.
3. Jewish legalists couldn't stand that these Gentile converts were saved by grace alone apart from the law. They had to infiltrate these churches and try to bring them back under the bondage of the law.
4. This is exactly what happened when Paul would preach the gospel of grace (Example: **Acts 14:1-6, 19**).
 - This still happens in churches today. When Paul's gospel of pure grace is proclaimed today, there will be opposition from those who are following after the flesh.
 - How should it be dealt with? The next verse has the answer.

Verse 30

1. Just as Hagar and Ishmael could not co-exist with Sarah and Isaac, those who would pervert the gospel of grace cannot be allowed to continue in a local church that is preaching Paul's message of grace.
2. If they will not repent and turn from their false doctrine, they must be cast out. **Titus 3:10; Galatians 5:12; Titus 3:10; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14; 1 Timothy 6:5; 2 Timothy 3:5**
 - In other words, church discipline must be exercised, because a "little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." **1 Corinthians 5:6-7**
3. A church cannot compromise, no more than Abraham could invite Hagar and Ishmael back into the home.
4. Just as they had to be sent away, false teachers have to be sent packing. It cannot be Christ plus the law. It must be Christ alone. If anyone teaches anything other than grace alone, Paul said let them be accursed. **Galatians 1:6-9**

Verse 31

1. Paul says that we are not children of the bondwoman.
 - Remember, the bondwoman represents Mount Sinai and the giving of the law.
2. So Paul is saying that we are not children of the law. We have no relationship with the law whatsoever.
3. We have been set free from the law - we are children of the free!
 - Sarah, the freewoman represents those of us who have been saved by grace.
4. This allegory was given to prepare the Galatians for the wonderful exhortation that will be given in the next verse.
5. We are not children of the law - we have no relationship with the law - the grace of Jesus has set us free - we are born of the Spirit, adopted sons in the family of God.
6. In Chapter 5 Paul will exhort the Galatians to act according to their glorious identity in Christ.