

The Epistle to the Galatians
Lesson #17 • Galatians 4:24-31

“An Old Testament Allegory – Part 2”

• Two Women – Two Covenants •

• H A N D O U T •

► In Part 2 of *An Old Testament Allegory – Two Women – Two Covenants*, Paul contrasts Ishmael's mother with Isaac's mother and what these two women spiritually represent. He will end his Allegory by showing, with detailed clarity, how the “principles of Law” and the “principles of Faith” are in radical opposition to each other. This leads to Paul emphasizing this spiritual contrast: life under the Law is a life of bondage; life under faith is a life of freedom. Furthermore, life under Faith is only available by the supernatural working of God through the Holy Spirit.

Once again Paul challenges the Galatians believers: They are the ones who must make a decision regarding what they choose to believe and whom they choose to serve. Will it be the Law and the teaching of the Judaizers? Or will it be the Gospel message which Paul and the Apostles have so ardently preached? The ball is in their court. They must exercise their free-will and choose.

As Paul begins the second part of the Allegory, he chooses figurative and metaphoric language, which is often difficult to understand. It will be our challenge to unravel them.

Galatians 4:24-26 [NLT] • These two women serve as an illustration of God's two covenants.

• The first woman, Hagar, represents Mount Sinai where people received the Law, that enslaved them. And now Jerusalem is just like Mount Sinai in Arabia, because she and her children live in slavery to the Law.

• But the other woman, Sarah, represents the heavenly Jerusalem. She is the free woman, and she is our mother.

Q: What are the two Covenants Paul speaks about in this opening statement?

► The first Covenant:

► The the second Covenant:

Q: What is Paul's purpose for condensing his argument of the Law vs Grace into a discussion of Two Covenants?

Q: In what way does Hagar represent the Law given at Mount Sinai?

Q: Why does Paul say that the Mosaic Law was destined to enslave those to whom it was given?

► Look at what James wrote about keeping the Law:

James 2:10 • For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

Q: Paul says that not only does Hagar represent Mount Sinai, but Paul also says that Jerusalem is just like Mount Sinai. In what way is Jerusalem “just like” Mount Sinai?

Q: In Paul's day, how would a traditional Jew receive Paul's statement that “Hagar represented Mount Sinai and that Jerusalem was “just like Mount Sinai?”

Q: How would traditional Jews regard Hagar and her son, Ishmael?

The following chart shows the dramatic difference between Old Testament Jewish understanding and Paul's New Testament teaching ...	
JEWISH UNDERSTANDING	PAUL'S TEACHING
1 A person who was a Jew had both a physical and religious connection to Abraham thru Isaac and Sarah	1 Paul interpreted everything from the view-point of Christ and the Gospel and <u>not</u> by physical heritage.
2 A person who was a Gentile had both physical & religious connection to Abraham thru Ishmael & Hagar.	2 In Christ there is no Jew or Gentiles, male or female, slave or free. We are all one in Christ.
3 The Law is the pathway to God's acceptance.	3 Faith in Jesus Christ is the <u>only</u> path to God.

**Paul now shifts his focus from Hagar to Sarah and what she represents.
[Verse 26 is repeated here for study ease]:**

Galatians 4:26 [NLT] • But the other woman, Sarah, represents the heavenly Jerusalem. She is the free woman, and she is our mother.

Q: In verse 26, Paul says what four things about Sarah?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Q: What is the “heavenly Jerusalem?”

Q: In what way does Sarah represent this “heavenly Jerusalem?”

Paul continues his metaphor by quoting from Isaiah ...

Galatians 4:27 · For it is written: "Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth and cry aloud, you who have no labor pains; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband."

Q: This prophecy from Isaiah 54 refers to Jerusalem's restoration following the 70 years of captivity and the promise of greater blessings in the later years than the people enjoyed before the Exile. How does this pertain to our Galatians study?

Q: What is the Metaphorical meaning of the “desolate woman” having more children?

The married, barren woman represents:

The desolate woman represents:

Q: In what way are Believers, today, like Sarah?

Paul has completed his Allegory to the Galatians and now prepares to summarize. In doing so he applies his Allegory to all Christians Believers then & now ...

Galatians 4:28-30 · And you, dear brothers and sisters, are children of the promise, just like Isaac.

· But you are now being persecuted by those who want you to keep the law, just as Ishmael, the child born by human effort, persecuted Isaac, the child born by the power of the Spirit.

· But what do the Scriptures say about that? "Get rid of the slave and her son, for the son of the slave woman will not share the inheritance with the free woman's son."

Q: In what way are Believers like Isaac?

► Paul would later write in his letter to the Romans:

Romans 9:8 · “It is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the Promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.

Q: Why does Paul stress the fact that the Galatians believers are the children of the Promise?

Q: Paul speaks about the persecution that the Galatians are experiencing and compares it to the persecution that Ishmael brought against Isaac. What is that all about?

Q: How does Paul apply this incident, from Genesis, in his summary statement?

► Here are two scriptures of warning given to us by Jesus Himself:

Matthew 5:10-12 • Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

John 15:18-20 • "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.

Q: Paul identifies the Judaizers as the persecutors of the Galatian believers. How did the Judaizers accomplish this?

Q: In what two main ways do Believers experience persecution today?

1.

2.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 • For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths

Q: Isn't verse 30 a bit harsh: *"Do what the Scripture say. Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son?"*

Paul sums up his entire doctrinal argument with one last statement ...

Galatians 4:31 • So, dear brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman; we are children of the free woman.

Q: Note the change from “you” or “they” to the first person “we.” What does this shift in pronouns tell us?

Q: What is Paul's expressed desire for every Christian Believer to know?

Paul's desire for Believers to know the freedom we have in Christianity leads us to Chapter 5 and the “Ethical Section” of Paul's epistle



Next Time • Lesson #18

~~ Christian Liberty ~~

Galatians 5:1-12

