



# World Christian Fellowship

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## Galatians

### Lesson 43-Faith that saves

**Galatians 4:21-5:1**, *Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? <sup>22</sup> For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. <sup>23</sup> But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, <sup>24</sup> which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— <sup>25</sup> for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children— <sup>26</sup> but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. <sup>27</sup> 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.” <sup>28</sup> Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. <sup>29</sup> But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. <sup>30</sup> 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.” <sup>31</sup> So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.*

*Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.*

Paul writing to these Gentile churches, throws all of these Abrahamic elements at them, including

- Sarah,
- Hagar,
- Ishmael,
- Isaac,
- Arabia,
- Mount Sinai, and
- Jerusalem.

Paul is talking in this language with virtually no explanation, indication to us that they were taught by Paul the Old Testament. These are Gentiles. There would be some Jews there, but these are primarily Gentile believers.

The only Bible Paul ever preached from was the Old Testament. The New Testament was in the process of being written.

So, Paul would preach the gospel from the Old Testament. In chapter 3, he talked about justification by faith he drew the proof from the Old Testament. That was the only Bible available to them.

So, they are Gentile people who have been made literate about the Old Testament and he can then go back to this story and tell

the story again, a familiar story to them, and use it as an illustration.

They don't need to go back under the law.

They don't need to go back under what cursed and condemned them.

**Romans 8:1**, *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

**Galatians 5:1**, *Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.*

Don't go back to the bondage of the law.

Now that you are a believer, we don't describe our Christian life by our relation to the law, but we describe our Christian life by our relation to Christ.

We are Christ's, in Christ, Christ is in us.

### **Do we obey the moral law?**

Of course, because the moral law is a reflection and extension of the nature of the God whom we love.

We obey out of love, not out of fear.

But there's no sense in going back to living the way Old Testament Jews lived.

Paul is illustrating the life of Abraham in a very powerful way.

We can divide them into three parts.

1. Historical
2. Spiritual
3. Personal

## **1. Historical**

### **An illustration**

**V 22-23**, *For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. <sup>23</sup> But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise,*

The Judaizers boasted that they were of Abraham's line. They were the children of Abraham; they were the sons of Abraham. They paraded their Abrahamic descent, that made them the unique people of God.

If you were going to be a part of the people of God, then you had to fall in line with what the descendants of Abraham did dutifully, and that was adhere to the Mosaic ordinances.

Paul has already basically attacked that. Just because you are Jewish, and Abraham is your ancestor doesn't save you.

**Galatians 3:7**, *Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.*

**Galatians 3:14**, *that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*

**Galatians 3:29**, *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

So just being a Jew isn't enough.

**Romans 2:28**, *For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;*

So, Paul goes back to make this illustration.

They would say, "Abraham is our father."

Do you remember what John the Baptist said to them?

**Matthew 3:9**, *and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.*

Do you remember what Jesus told them when they said they were children of Abraham?

**John 8:44**, *You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the*

*beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*

Here Paul illustrates the two covenants that separate works from faith.

Abraham had two sons  
Ishmael first, and Isaac second.

One was by the bondwoman her name was Hagar.  
Another by the free woman, his wife Sarah.

- ✓ The son by the bondwoman Hagar, whose name was Ishmael, was born according to the flesh.
- ✓ The son Isaac by the free woman Sarah whose name was Isaac, was born through the promise.

Just think of it this way:

Two different mothers: a bondwoman – which means a female slave, named Hagar gives birth by Abraham to Ishmael who is a slave, and all his family are slaves.

The other free woman Sarah gives birth by Abraham to Isaac who is free. They are born in different ways, not biologically different ways, but they are circumstantially born in different ways.

## **Genesis 15:**

The word of the Lord comes to Abram in a dream, 'Don't be afraid, I am a shield to you; your reward will be very great.'

Abram says to the Lord, 'O Lord God, what are You going to give me?

I am childless.

You keep telling me I am going to have a people.

I am going to be the father of a great nation, and I don't even have one child at this point in time.

I am 86, Sarah's ten years behind at 76. We have no capacity to produce a child. Her womb is dead, we are barren. The only heir in my house is Eliezer of Damascus, a servant.

Abram said, 'Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir, I am going to make my servant my heir since You haven't given me a son. You promised You would, but You haven't.'

Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 'This man will not be your heir, it's not going to be your servant Eliezer; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.'

God took him outside and said, 'Look to the heavens; count the stars, if you are able to count them. So shall your descendants be.'"

Then Abram believed in the Lord; and He credited it to him as righteousness.”

That is his salvation.

Righteousness was imputed to Abram because he believed God. So, he now has a promise that God is going to give him a son, even though there is no human way that can happen.

### **Genesis 16:**

Sarai, Abram’s wife had borne him no children. She had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar. So, Sarai said to Abram, ‘Now behold, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Please go into my maid.’”

Sarai desperation for a child she pushed her husband into adultery. Because it was such a scandal not only to be a woman without a child, a woman without a son, but to be the object of a divine promise that wasn’t being fulfilled. “Go to my maid perhaps I will obtain children through her.”

Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan. Abram’s wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife.”

That goes against God’s restriction: one man, one woman.

Abram went to Hagar, and she conceived. When she saw that she had conceived, her mistress Sarai was despised in her sight. Sarah said to Abram, 'May the wrong done me be on you. I gave my maid into your arms, but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her sight. May the Lord judge between you and me.'" Hagar, when she was with child, mocked Sarah, and that made Sarah very angry.

### **The illustration.**

Ishmael was born to Hagar.

Ishmael is an illustration of the flesh.

The promise was clear that God is going to give a son. It's going to have to be supernatural. They don't want to wait on God, they did it their way. So, the flesh rejects the promise and tries to take by its own power what God gives.

One child is the child of the flesh, the other child is the child of the promise.

By the time Isaac was born Abraham 100 years old and Sarah 90. God supernaturally creates that child in her womb.

Ishmael was born according to the flesh, they did it on their terms their way.

Isaac is born through the promise of God.

- Ishmael is born naturally.
- Isaac is born supernaturally.

That's why when Isaac was born, they named him "laughter," which is what Isaac means, or "rejoicing," or "gladness."

Two sons then become the patterns for spiritual truth.

Ishmael is a son born in the usual, natural way. But beyond natural way, but in the flesh in a sinful way, as if they could fulfill the will of God on their own sinful terms.

- Ishmael is a representative of all those who try to do it on their own.
- Ishmael is an illustration of those who want salvation by works.
- Ishmael was born to a slave, was a slave, and produced a whole lineage of slaves.
- Ishmael symbolizes accomplishing what God wants by your own flesh and ending up in bondage.

Isaac, on the other side, was born as a result of Abraham's faith in God. God miraculously enabled Abraham, though he was, Hebrews says, as good as dead in terms of childbearing capacity.

He allowed Abraham to deposit his seed in his wife Sarah, and for that to lead to the birth of Isaac.

- ✓ Isaac then was the child of promise.
- ✓ Isaac was the result of the power of God.
- ✓ He was Spirit-born.
- ✓ The Holy Spirit caused Isaac to come forth when it would have been impossible for Abraham and Sarah to have a child.
- ✓ Isaac represents then salvation by faith alone. Abraham believed God and God supernaturally fulfilled His will in Abraham.

Ishmael pictures all those who try to please God and accomplish God's will by the flesh. It's sinful, it's useless, it creates bondage.

Isaac symbolizes all those who do the will of God by faith in His promise.

- ❖ God does the work
- ❖ God brings it to pass
- ❖ God receives the glory.

Why would you who are the children of promise, why would you think to accomplish the purposes of God through the flesh?

## **2. Spiritual**

*V24, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar—*

Hagar and Sarah – “are two covenants” –

The old covenant, the Mosaic covenant and the New Covenant.

You can't understand Scripture unless you understand those two covenants.

The old covenant says that

- you shall,
- you shall,
- you shall,
- you shall,
- you shall or else.

The New Covenant says that

- I will,
- I will,
- I will,
- I will just believe.

Two women had Two sons, and they illustrate Two Covenants.

Hagar/Ishmael is like the covenant from Mount Sinai.

Mount Sinai. The one proceeding from Mount Sinai in Arabia, she is Hagar.

**What happened to Mount Sinai?**

God gave the Law.

Mount Sinai was a terrifying place. God said, “Don’t go near the mountain,” when He gave the Law, “don’t touch the mountain. If you ever touch the mountain, you will die.”

In fact, it was such a terrifying place that Moses was terrified. Moses. “Don’t go near it; it is the Law. You break the Law and you die.”

When Moses came down with the Law and found what he found, smashed the law, there was a massive slaughter.

*V25, for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children—*

Hagar equals Ishmael

Ishmael equals Sinai.

Hagar is a slave, Ishmael is a slave, and the Law given at Sinai was bondage with a death sentence.

Extends to one more step!

“to the present Jerusalem” – not our present Jerusalem today!

It is still the same but the Jerusalem of Paul’s day. The Jerusalem of the New Testament day.

Paul says that the Jerusalem of today from which these Judaizers have come with their legalistic Pharisaic system is

connected to Sinai, which is connected to Ishmael, which is connected to Hagar.

As we aware that the Jews didn't want to hear that. They prided on being the sons of Abraham through Isaac.

Paul says to them that you may be connected genetically, but spiritually you are the children of Hagar. You are the children of Ishmael; the present Jerusalem is connected to Sinai.

Hagar = Ishmael

Ishmael = Sinai

Sinai = Jerusalem

Jerusalem = the flesh

Flesh = the law

Law = bondage

Bondage = condemnation.

The Judaizers were trying to do God's will in the flesh. False religion always tries to do that. Hagar, Sinai, Ishmael, the present Jerusalem just produces more slaves, more slaves in bondage to sin, in bondage to the judgment.

Sinai is in Arabia. That is a desert, not the Promised Land. So, Hagar, Ishmael, Sinai, Jerusalem of today are all in the same line. They all produce slavery and bondage.

A sinner who seeks to be saved by the law is in that line, and he is on a legalistic treadmill. He can be on that treadmill his whole life, and he will get off exactly where he got on.

Ishmael is the child of the flesh, nothing more. The present Jerusalem is fleshly, connected to Ishmael/Hagar.

**V 26**, *but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.*

The Jerusalem that is present is the earthly Jerusalem, and it is still the same way it was during Jesus' time. Modern Judaism is slavery, bondage to the law, bondage to sin and judgment and death and hell. It is Hagar, Ishmael, Sinai, flesh, works, slavery, bondage, death.

Jerusalem above is in complete contrast to the one below. She is our mother.

Paul is telling the Galatians that they are believers and have no connection to the Jerusalem that is here but connected the Jerusalem above.

Remember Jesus said that you should be born from above?

**John 3:3**, *Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

The spiritual Jerusalem is the Jerusalem above.

Hagar symbolizes,

- the slave,
- the old covenant,
- earthly,
- legalistic,
- Judaistic Jerusalem
- Ishmael mentality of law and bondage.

Sarah symbolizes,

- the free woman,
- the new covenant,
- the heavenly Jerusalem,
- Love and grace,
- Isaac of faith and blessings

We belong to the Jerusalem that is above.

The writer of Hebrews is further explaining this same kind of analogy.

**Hebrews 12:18-21**, *For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, <sup>19</sup> and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. <sup>20</sup> (For they could not endure what was commanded: “And if so much as a beast*

*touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.”<sup>21</sup> And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.”)*

You haven't come to Sinai.

You are not Sinai.

You are not Ishmael.

You are not Hagar.

You are not the present form of religion in this world.

**Hebrews 12:22-24**, *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,<sup>23</sup> to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,<sup>24</sup> to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.*

Heavenly Jerusalem is our mother.

We are not under the bondage of Sinai.

We are not part of the slavery of Hagar and Ishmael.

We are not trying to please God in the flesh.

We are connected to a spiritual city.

**Ephesians 1:3**, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,*

The invisible heaven is where we draw our life.

We are in the line of Sarah, Isaac, the Jerusalem that is above, faith, freedom.

**John 8:36**, *Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*

Isaac's birth was miraculous. So is our miracle of the new birth cannot be accomplished by human effort. You must be born from above.

**V 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."*

Paul quotes it from Prophet Isaiah.

Long after Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Sarah, and Sinai. Isaiah's writing to the captives in Babylon. The people of Israel have been taken captive into Babylon. Isaiah writes to cheer them up. This is in the section on salvation.

**Isaiah 54:1-5**, *"Sing, O barren, You who have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, You who have not labored with child! For more are the children of the desolate Than the children of the married woman," says the Lord. <sup>2</sup>"Enlarge the place of your tent, And let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; Do not spare; Lengthen your cords, And strengthen your stakes. <sup>3</sup>For you shall expand to the right and to the left,*

*And your descendants will inherit the nations, And make the desolate cities inhabited. <sup>4</sup> "Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; Neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame; For you will forget the shame of your youth, And will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore. <sup>5</sup> For your Maker is your husband, The Lord of hosts is His name; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth.*

What God is telling them is that,  
You are desolate,  
You are barren,  
You are in exile,  
You have no song to sing,  
You are sad,  
So, cheer up!

God gave them a promise for them to return to their land. You are going to be out of captivity, and you will be going back to the land.

When they return to the land,

- the women began to flourish,
- the nation began to reproduce,
- reproduce and reproduce, and
- the nation of Israel grew and grew.

Apostle Paul is using another scripture to confirm to them that when God says, 'You will flourish,' and it will happen. God said it to the exiles in Babylon, and He fulfilled it. God said it to Sarah, and He fulfilled it by His power.

### **Summary:**

Abraham had **Two sons**.

Ishmael and Isaac.

Born of **Two mothers**:

Hagar and Sarah.

They represent **Two Covenants**:

Old and New.

**Two Jerusalem:**

the Jerusalem that is now on earth and

the Jerusalem that is above.

Hagar is law and bondage and death.

Sarah is grace, faith, freedom.

So, it's not whether you are of Abraham, your father; it is who is your mother! Spiritually!!

### **3. Personal:**

**V 28**, *Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise.*

We are in the line of Isaac, children of promise. We have been born by miracle. We have been saved by grace not by any work

that we did. We didn't work it out our own way like Sarah instructed Abraham to do with Hagar.

But know this, this has consequences.

*V29, But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now.*

Hagar hated Sarah. Hagar hated Isaac. We see that in Genesis 16.

**Genesis 21:8-9**, *So the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned.*

*<sup>9</sup>And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing.*

We see Ishmael hating Isaac. Ishmael thought for years that he was going to be the heir to the fortune. Then comes the true heir, and he was out.

So, there was animosity, and Ishmael was a hater of Isaac, as Hagar was a hater of Sarah. So, persecution came then the sons of Hagar, Sinai, the works, the flesh, false religion are always the persecutors of the truth. They will continue to persecute the children of Isaac and Sarah, the children of promise.

The greatest persecutor of the true church is false religion!

Satan's system of works.

So, the personal exhortation is that you are like Isaac, a child of promise. You will expect to be persecuted.

Paul says "All who live godly in this present age will suffer persecution"

**V 30**, *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."*

This is so amazing.

So, we have got this false church persecuting the true church. We have got a war going on.

Somebody might say, let us just get together? Let us have evangelicals and Catholics together. Let us all join hands and sing Kumbaya.

### **Genesis 21:**

Sarah goes to Abraham, and Abraham goes to God, and God gives him the message:

We must get rid of this Hagar and her kid. This is not possible for them to coexist in our family.

That was the message from Sarah to Abraham.

God weighs in, and says,

**Genesis 21:10**, *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."*

The son of the bondwoman is anybody in a religious legal system. They cannot coexist with the children of promise and grace and faith. They cannot.

There is no agreement with Christ and Satan. This is an unequal yoke that Paul addresses in his letter to the Corinthians. They can't coexist.

**V31**, *So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.*

Ishmael can't inherit along with Isaac.

People under the bondage cannot inherit with those that are free in Christ.

Those who are trying to please God by the flesh and works cannot inherit with those who have come by grace and faith.

**Galatians 5:1**, *Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.*

Don't go back into that system from which you have been set free. This is the good news of salvation.

Anybody who comes along, tries to add any kind of externalism, any kind of ceremonialism to your freedom in Christ, you tell them, "I am in the Sarah, Isaac, promise group, not the Hagar, Christ has set me free"

Hallelujah!!