

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Six arguments in chapters 3 and 4:
1. The Personal Argument (3:1-5).
 2. The Scriptural Argument (3:6-14).
 3. The Logical Argument (3:15-29).
 4. The Historical Argument (4:1-11).
 5. The Sentimental Argument (4:12-18).
 6. The Allegorical Argument (4:19-31);
which is based on the life of Abraham and his relationships with Sarah and Hagar. [WWW]
- B. There are different genres (types) of language used in the Bible.
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|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. The OT Law of Moses. | 6. The NT Gospels. |
| 2. The OT Narratives. | 7. The Parables of Jesus. |
| 3. The OT Psalms. | 8. Acts & the Historical Precedent. |
| 4. OT Wisdom Literature. | 9. The NT Epistles. |
| 5. OT Prophecy & the Prophets. | 10. The Revelation. [gls] |
- C. Different tropes (figures of speech) in the Bible:
1. Parable (Mt. 13).
A parable is a simple, normal, real life story or illustration used to present some moral truth.
 2. Fable (Jud. 9:6-21).
A fable is like a parable but it is truly a fictitious or imaginary story that teaches a moral lesson.
 3. Simile (Mt. 3:16; Isa. 1:18; 53:6).
A direct comparison of two things using the word "like" or "as."
 4. Metaphor (Lk. 13:31-32; Mt. 26:26; Jn. 6:48).
A metaphor is a word or phrase which is said to be something else because of a likeness involved.
 5. Allegory (Gal. 4:24-31; Eph. 6:11-17).
An allegory is a metaphor extended into a full story to help illustrate some truth.
 6. Proverb.
A proverb is a profound, short statement or truth, commonly held and valuable to those who will heed its message.
 7. Hyperbole (Num. 13:33).
A hyperbole is an exaggeration of some statement for the purpose of emphasis.
 8. Irony (2Kgs. 18:27).
Irony, or sarcasm, is a sharp remark uttered in contempt or ridicule. To say one thing but mean something else.
 9. Interrogation (Isa. 40:12-14).
A question not asked to seek an answer, but rather by the way it is stated, it answers itself and makes the point intended.
 10. Metonymy (Ac. 15:21).
Metonymy is to substitute one word for another because they are related.
 11. Personification (Psa. 114:3; Isa. 55:12). Anthropomorphism is personification applied to God.
Personification is a trope used to give inanimate objects some personal or human attributes.
 12. Synecdoche (Lk. 2:1; Ac. 24:5; Mt. 13:24-30).
A synecdoche is to speak of the whole of something by referring to only a part. One might also refer to the part of something by referring to the whole. [gls]
- D. Since the Judaizers appealed to the Law, Paul accepts their challenge and uses the Law to prove that Christians are not under the Law. He takes the familiar story of Ishmael and Isaac (Gen. 16-21) and draws

from its basic truths about the Christian's relationship to the Law of Moses. [WWW]

- E. The events described actually happened, but Paul uses them as an allegory, which is a narrative that has a deeper meaning. [WWW]
- F. A summary of the contrasts of the allegory:

| JUDAISM | CHRISTIANITY |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| The bondwoman, Hagar | The freewoman, Sarah |
| Son of the bondwoman, Ishmael | Son of the freewoman, Isaac |
| Natural birth | Supernatural birth by promise |
| Mount Sinai, the Law Mount Zion, | the Law of Christ |
| The earthly Jerusalem | The heavenly Jerusalem |
| Enslaved | Free |
| Fruitful | Barren (at first) |
| Small offspring | Large offspring |
| Persecuting | Persecuted |
| Expulsion | Inheritance |
| Judaism a bondage | Christians free [JBC] |

A. **THE HISTORICAL FACTS (4:21-23).**

Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law? **22** For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. **23** But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise.

In brief, the story of Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac.

1. Abraham is called by God to go to Canaan; and God promises him many descendents (Gen. 12:1-9). Both Abraham and his wife Sarah, wanted children, but Sarah was barren.
2. The promised son has not yet arrived, and Sarah becomes impatient. She suggests marry Hagar, her maid, and try to have a son by her. This act was legal in that society, but was not in the will of God. Abraham followed her suggestion and married Hagar (Gen. 16:1-3).
3. Hagar gets pregnant and Sarah gets jealous! Things are so difficult in the home that Sarah throws Hagar out. But the Lord intervenes, and sends Hagar back, and promises to take care of her and her son. Ishmael is born (Gen. 16:4-16).
4. God speaks to Abraham and promises him again that he will have a son by Sarah and says to call his name Isaac. Later, God appears again and reaffirms the promise to Sarah as well (Gen. 17-18).
5. The promised son is born (Gen. 21:1-7). They name him Isaac ("laughter") as commanded by God.
6. In time, Ishmael starts to mock Isaac (Gen. 21:8ff) and creates trouble in the home. There is only one solution to the problem, and a costly one at that: Hagar and her son have to go. With a broken heart, Abraham sends Hagar and Ishmael away, because this is what the Lord tells him to do (Gen. 21:9-14). [WWW]

B. **THE SPIRITUAL TRUTHS (4:24-29).**

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. **25** Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. **26** But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. **27** 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.”

28 And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. **29** 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.

1. Paul begins with the two sons, Ishmael and Isaac (Gal. 4:22-23). Note the following chart comparisons and contrasts:

| <i>The Old Covenant</i> | <i>The New Covenant</i> |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Law | Grace |
| Hagar the slave | Sarah, the freewoman |
| Ishmael, conceived after the flesh | Isaac, conceived miraculously |
| Earthly Jerusalem in bondage | Heavenly Jerusalem, which is free [WWW] |

2. Isaac illustrates the believer in several particulars:
 - a. **He was born by Gods power.**
God deliberately waited 25 years before He granted Abraham and Sarah their son.
 - b. **He brought joy.**
His name means "laughter," and certainly he brought joy to his aged parents.
 - c. **He grew and was weaned** (Gen. 21:8).
Isaac is growing up, and Abraham shows his approval with a great feast.
 - d. **He was persecuted** (Gen. 21:9).
Ishmael caused problems for Isaac. It is not a happy home. [WWW]
3. The facts about Hagar prove that the Law no longer has power over the Christian:
 - a. **Hagar was Abraham's second wife.**
God did not begin with Hagar, He began with Sarah.
 - b. **Hagar was a slave.**
Five times in this section Hagar is called a "bondmaid" or "bondwoman" (Gal. 4:22-23, 30-31). Sarah was a freewoman, and therefore her position was one of liberty; but Hagar, even though married to Abraham, was still a servant.
 - c. **Hagar was not meant to bear a child.**
Abraham's marriage to Hagar was out of the will of God; it was the result of Sarah's and Abraham's unbelief and impatience. Hagar was trying to do what only Sarah could do, and it failed. Isaac was born as Abraham's heir (Gen. 21:10), but Ishmael could not share in this inheritance.
 - d. **Hagar gave birth to a slave.**
Ishmael was a "wild man" (Gen. 16:12), and even though he was a slave, nobody could control him, including his mother.
 - e. **Hagar was cast out.**
It was Sarah who gave the order: "Cast out this bondwoman and her son" (Gen. 21:9-10), and God subsequently approved it (Gen. 21:12). Ishmael had been in the home for at least 17 years, but his stay was not to be permanent; eventually he had to be cast out. There was not room in the household for Hagar and Ishmael with Sarah and Isaac; one pair had to go.
 - f. **Hagar was not married again.**
God never gave the Law to any other nation or people, including His church. The Judaizers wanted to "wed" Mt. Sinai and the heavenly Mt. Zion (Heb. 12:22), but to do this would be to deny what Jesus did at Calvary (Gal. 2:21). Hagar is not to be married again. [WWW]

C. THE PRACTICAL BLESSINGS (4:30-31).

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.”

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

The Law and the old nature persecute Christians and want to bring them into bondage again. What is the proper response?

1. ***We can try to change them.***

But we cannot change either the Law or the old nature. God did not try to change Ishmael and Hagar, either by force or education; neither can you and I change the old nature and the Law.

2. ***We can try to compromise with them.***

This did not work in Abraham's home and neither will it work in our lives. The Galatians were trying to effect such a compromise, but it was only leading them gradually into bondage. False teachers today tell us, "Don't abandon Christ; simply move into a deeper Christian life by practicing the Law along with your faith in Christ." Invite Hagar and Ishmael back home again! But this is only a path back to spiritual slavery.

3. ***We can cast them out.***

Paul quotes Isa. 54:1, applying his word to Sarah who was barren before the birth of Isaac; but also applying it to the church (Gal. 4:27). Notice the contrasts:

| <i>Israel</i> | <i>The Church</i> |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| earthly Jerusalem | heavenly Jerusalem |
| bondage | freedom |
| barren legalism | fruitful grace [WWW] |

4. Sarah had been barren, and she tried to become fruitful by having Abraham marry Hagar. This failed and brought only trouble. The Law cannot give life or fruitfulness; legalism is barren. For the early church to go back into bondage would mean barrenness and disobedience to the Word of God. [WWW]

5. No doubt the Judaizers were attractive people. They had rules and standards to cover every area of life, making it easy for their followers to know who was "spiritual" and who was not. But the Judaizers were leading the people into bondage and defeat, not liberty and victory. The Galatians were having great difficulty in knowing the difference. [WWW]

6. Thank God, the Christian is set free from the curse of the Law and the control of the Law. "Cast out the bondswoman and her son." It may pain us deeply, as it did Abraham,; but it must be done. To attempt to mix Law and grace is to attempt the impossible. It makes for a frustrated, barren Christian life. But to live by grace, through faith, gives one a free and fulfilling Christian life. [WWW]

NEXT LESSON.

The next lesson in our study of the epistle to the Galatians will be on Nov. 07, and will cover Gal. 5:1-15. The lesson is entitled, "Freedom in Christ."

III. Practical: Grace and the Christian Life (Chapters 5-6).

- A. Liberty, not bondage (5:1-12).
- B. The Spirit, not the flesh (5:13-26).
- C. Others, not self (6:1-10).
- D. God's glory, not man's praise (6:11-18).