

Galatians

Chapter 4:21-31

February 12, 1995

After demonstrating a deep concern for the Galatians, he uses an allegory to develop his appeal even further. This section of the book stands as a marvelous continuation to a sustained argument.

Basically, there are two types of people in the world; there are those who are the sons of God and those who are not. There are those who are Christians or those who are not. Paul teaches this to the churches at Galatia so that none of them might think that there are others ways to please God or that there are other gospels other than Paul's. This is the way that many of the doctrines of Christianity are segregated: those who believe and those who don't. There are those to whom the gospel is the aroma of death and to other it is the sweet smell of life. People will either gather or they will scatter.

21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, 24 which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar --

- Paul exhorts those who want to be under the law (the Galatians by implication) to understand the law. These people were attempting to be zealous for something they did not understand. As we studied last week, these Judaizers had zeal for something that they had not been fully instructed. Their ignorance proved to be a snare for them and they wanted to entice the Galatians to join them in their ignorance and condemnation. This is an excellent example of the importance of being students of the Word. We study the Word so that we might be able to quickly identify heresy and not be thrown about by every wind of doctrine.
- Both Isaac and Ishmael were the sons of Abraham according to the flesh; but in Isaac there was this peculiarity; that he had the promise of grace. In Ishmael there was nothing besides nature; in Isaac there was the election of God, signified in part by the manner of his birth, which was not in the ordinary course, but miraculous.
- We can learn a very important thing from Paul through his understanding of the stories of Sarah and Hagar. There are multiple levels of prophecy. There are those verses where the Prophets knew that they were speaking things that were yet to be fulfilled. Then there are also those writings that were spoken by Prophets that the New Testament authors reveal to us had more than the surface message. And thirdly, there are those events in history that are more than historical fact, rather they are pictures of some other truth yet to come. We have many of these in scripture and we must be careful that we don't import our own interpretations on the various events of the Bible. We can't know for sure that certain events were prophetic unless we have specific, divinely inspired instruction saying so.

25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children -- 26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. 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's teachings provide the prophetic understanding to the story. In the allegory, Hagar represents the ethnic Israel; those who are the physical descendants of Abraham. Paul says that this is the city of Jerusalem. However, Sarah represents the Jerusalem that is above and is from and is the mother of *Christians*. This Jerusalem is the true bride of Christ.
- Just what is the new Jerusalem? Isn't it the name for the city in heaven? No. We who are the true Seed of Abraham (those who are in Christ by faith) are the new Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem is the Bride, the wife of the Lamb. We are this new Jerusalem. Additionally, Jesus is the true Israel and we are in Him, therefore we are the true Israel. Revelation 21:1-10, Hebrews 12:18-24.
- Paul uses a quote from Isaiah 54 to support the concept that holding true to God's promise, the descendants of Abraham will be numerous. Notice though the language of the whole chapter; this passage describes a conquering expanding and glorious kingdom. We must confess our ungodly view of the kingdom of God consisting of a plan that will go from bad to worse and then need a bailout. God is pruning and primping the Bride for His son and He will ensure that He is glorified and that she is glorious.

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

29 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.

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."

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free. (NKJV)

- In essence, what Paul is saying here is that the Judaizers are really the children of the slave woman not the free woman. And as such, they will be cast out as Hagar was. By implication Paul was calling the Judaizers Arabs and false sons. The purpose of this strong allegory is to drive the Galatians back into a proper understanding of their salvation.