

**COR@9 – March 29, 2015**  
**Galatians 4:21-5:1**

**I. Introduction**

**II. Recap of the Argument So Far in Galatians**

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| 1:10–2:21 | Paul’s defense of his apostolic ministry                                    |
| 3:1–5:12  | Doctrine: Justification by faith alone in light of the Judaizer’s challenge |
| 3:1–29    | Appeal to faith experience of Galatians                                     |
| <b>b</b>  | 1-5    Their own experience   |
| <b>u</b>  | 6–9    Example of Abraham   |
| <b>i</b>  | 10–14 Results from works and faith (curse and blessing)                     |
| <b>l</b>  | 15–29 Promise and law; Abraham 430 years before the law                     |
| <b>d</b>  | 4:1–7    Slaves and sons; perhaps early confession of sonship/adoption      |
| <b>s</b>  | 4:8–11    Why go back?  |
| ↓         | 4:12–20    Urgent appeal  |
|           | <b>4:21–31    Allegorical/typological example: Hagar and Sarah</b>          |
| 5:1–6:10  | Exhortation: New life through the Holy Spirit                               |

**III. Allegory and Typology in Today’s Passage**

- Typology Definition:  
A *type* is an event, person, or institution in the OT that manifests in some way God’s purposes and plans and that points in some way to the full revelation of God’s purposes and plans in the person of Jesus Christ/the Kingdom of God.
- Allegory Definition:  
“Allegory is primarily a method of reading a text by assuming that its literal sense conceals a hidden meaning, to be deciphered by using a particular hermeneutical key” (Gerald Bray, “Allegory,” *DTIB* 34).

This passage contains a combination of both:  
allegory

- Hagar is allegorical for Mount Sinai and present-day Jerusalem
- link between Hagar and Mt. Sinai and Jerusalem is slavery

typology

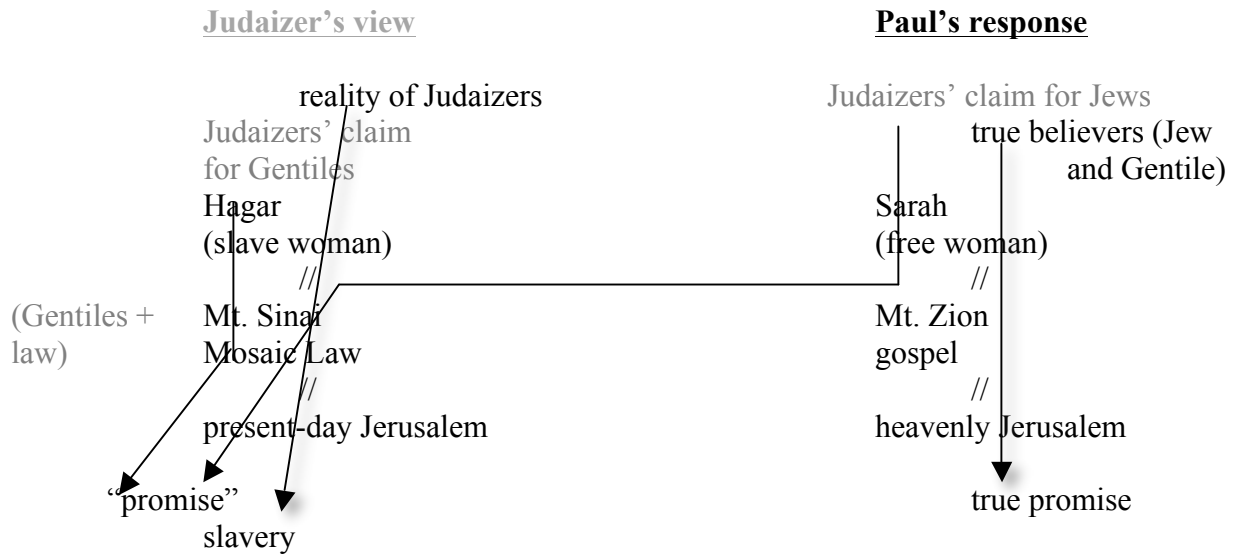
- Ishmael as the type of Judaizers, descendants according to the human effort
- Isaac as the type of true believers

**IV. The Historical Background - Genesis 21:8-13**

## V. Working through Today's Passage – Verse Reference Notes

- 4:21 The Law understood as concentric circles: the Ten Words; the Holiness Code (additional ordinances); the entire Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy)
- 4:22 Key OT passages
- Ishmael: Genesis 16:2–4; 17:17; 18:11–12
  - Isaac: Genesis 17:17; 18:10–15; 21:1–7
  - additional sons: Genesis 25: 1–2
- Related NT passages
- John the Baptist and Abraham's descendants: Matthew 3:9
  - Jesus and Abraham's descendants: John 8:31–44
  - Paul and Abraham's descendants: Galatians 3:29, Romans 4:16
- 4:23 Summary: different mothers, different types of birth, different birth status
- 4:26 Two contrasts: present-future; below-above
- Related NT passages:
- Citizenship in heaven: Philippians 3:20
  - Jerusalem above: Hebrews 12:22 (11:10, 16), Revelation 3:12; 21:1, 9
- Related OT passage:
- Heavenly Jerusalem: Isaiah 2; 54:10–14; 60–62; Ezekiel 40–48; Zechariah 12–14; Psalm 87:1–3
- 4:27 OT background: Isaiah 54:1
- A prophecy about Zion's restoration during barrenness of captivity/Exile
  - The "children" following the captivity will be more numerous than those prior to it; this is the idea of Gentiles streaming into Zion, or restored Israel.
  - This contrasts the natural development of physical descendants of Israel vs. the supernatural development of the remnant, the new community of God, which points forward to believers in Christ.
  - The ingathering of nations and work of Spirit in Isaiah 40-66 are key here.
- 4:28 Logic: both Isaac and believers are born through the life-generating Spirit
- 4:29 OT background: Genesis 21:9
- Jewish tradition understood this in hostile sense.
  - There is some warrant from Genesis 21:10; not a threat to Isaac's life, but to the promised inheritance.
  - This is seen in the persecution followers of Jesus were beginning to experience in by Jews (e.g., Paul persecuted by Judaizers in Acts 23:12-15, before the Sanhedrin).
  - Calvin: "All persecutions arise from this source, that wicked men despise and hate in the elect the grace of God." (*Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*)
  - Consider also Romans 9:7-8:  
<sup>7</sup>Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."<sup>8</sup> In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.
- 4:31 Logic:
- Ishmael – attempt to attain promise through self-effort
  - Isaac – attaining promise through faith

## VI. The Logic of Paul's Argument



## VII. Summary: A Tale of Two Sons (vv. 21–30)

Ishmael: The Son of the Slave Woman (v. 21)

- born by means of human effort; “normal” birth (v. 23)
- enslaved (v. 24)
- his mother, Hagar, bears children of bondage (v. 25)
- he persecutes the children born of promise (v. 29)
- his destiny is apart from the inheritance (v. 30)

Isaac: The Son of the Free Woman (v. 21)

- born only through promise; supernatural birth (v. 23)
- free (vv. 26–27)
- his mother, Sarah, bears children of promise (v. 27, 29)
- he is threatened by the illegitimate son (v. 29)
- his destiny is the promised inheritance (v. 30)

### TABLE DISCUSSION:

1. Why is the appeal legalism so strong? Why do we *want* to be under law?
2. How would you unpack the following: Human religion is always about what humans do for God; but Christianity is about what God does for us.
3. What is your spiritual birthright? who is your mother?

### VIII. Application

What Is Our True Identity? (4:28–29)

- We are children of promise through faith in Jesus Christ (v. 28).
- We are born according to the Spirit (v. 29; John 1:12).
- We share in Isaac's inheritance (vv. 30).

What Response Is Appropriate for That Identity? (4:27–5:1)

Rejoice in the gospel! (v. 27)

- Salvation is only possible because of the completed work of Christ and the indwelling Spirit.
- The *true* gospel is faith in Christ alone; Christ PLUS anything else is legalism.

Reject legalistic threats to the gospel! (v. 30)

- There are many threats to gospel freedom.
- Legalism ultimately denies the finished work of Jesus on the cross and leads to bondage.
- Legalism focuses on what *we* do (or don't do) rather than on what *the Lord* has done for us.

Stand firm in the freedom of the gospel! (v. 5:1)