

## **“Ye That Desire To Be Under The Law”**

*“Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?”* (Gal. 4:21). With these words Paul begins an allegory, of which the definition is: “The veiled presentation, in a figurative story, of a meaning metaphorically implied but not expressly stated. Allegory is prolonged metaphor, in which typically a series of actions or symbolic of other actions” (Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 1947 edition). The allegory the apostle used, was taken from the domestic life of Abraham to whom the covenant of circumcision was given, which rite many of the Galatians were strongly inclined to accept (Gen. 17:9f).

*“It is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the handmaid, and the other by the freewoman. Howbeit, the son by the handmaid is born after the flesh; but the son by the freewoman is born through promise”* (Gal. 4:22f). The two sons here referred to are Ishmael and Isaac; Ishmael being of son of Hagar the bondwoman; Isaac being the son of the freewoman, Sarah. The son of the handmaid was born after the flesh; i.e., he was just a physical, fleshly descendant of Abraham, but the son of the freewoman was born through promise: God had promised to make of Abraham a great nation and in his seed all nations of the earth were to be blessed, and he had Isaac in view as the one through whom these promises would find their fulfillment (Gen. 12:1f; 17:15-20).

*“Which things contain an allegory for these woman are two covenants; one from mount Sinai, bearing children unto bondage, which is Hagar. Now this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabian and answereth to the Jerusalem that now is for she is in bondage with her children”* (Gal. 4:24-25). The apostle clearly establishes three points. ONE: He identifies Hagar, the bondwoman as standing for the covenant God gave at mount Sinai; the whole law (including the ten commandments) issued forth from there and Hagar represented that covenant and symbolically what would happen to that covenant. TWO: Jerusalem that then was is identified as the embodiment of that covenant, which is precisely what Jerusalem of Paul’s day was with its temple, priesthood. The whole system recognized and practiced among Jews in that time found its center in physical Jerusalem. THREE: Just as Hagar was a bondswoman bearing children into bondage, so the law which she represented, bore its people into bondage! Earlier verses from this chapter spelled out that Jews under the law *“were held in bondage under the rudiments of the world”* (Gal. 4:3).

*“But the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is our mother”* (Gal. 4:26). Just as the *“Jerusalem that now is”* was identified with Hagar and repre-

sent the covenant given at Sinai, so the Jerusalem which is above was to be identified with Sarah, representing the new covenant predicted by Jeremiah and given by Christ (Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8:6-13; 9:15-20; 10:1-10; 10:14-18). And just as the handmaid bore children unto bondage, so the freewoman bore children unto freedom.

*"Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise" (Gal. 4:28).* God promised Abraham that he would make of him a great nation. It was Isaac God referred to, thus Isaac was a child of promise. God also promised that all nations would be blessed in Abraham's seed, which (as we have seen) was Christ (Gal. 3:16). Christians are the consequences of this promise to Abraham. Peter said, *"Ye are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which he made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Unto you first, God, having raised up his Servant, sent him to bless you, in turning away everyone of you from your iniquities" (Acts 3:25f).*

*"But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, so also it is now" (Gal. 4:29).* Ishmael (born after the flesh) mocked (persecuted) Isaac when Isaac was weaned. Jews hated and despised Christ and persecuted those who were represented in this allegory by Isaac.

*"Howbeit, what saith the scripture? Cast out the handmaid and her son: for the son of the handmaid shall not inherit with the son of the freewoman" (Gal. 4:30).* To cast out the handmaid and her son was to say we must cast out that which they represented: the law given at Sinai and all things attendant to that law. The two women (covenants) cannot abide side by side. One had to go! The one which had to go was the old Covenant. Who could possibly miss the application Paul herein makes? NEXT: "Severed From Christ."

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