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A1024 – June 13, 2010 – Galatians 4:24-31 – Children Of Slavery
Vs. Children Of Freedom

We're studying Galatians 4. Last time we worked with Gal 4:21-24, the son of the flesh vs the son of the promise. Remember, Paul in v 21 is using a technique of argument where you take what someone is hanging their position on and use it to show their position is self-defeating. As an example, this is what you can do with Jehovah's Witnesses when they come to your doorstep. Jehovah's Witnesses believe all kinds of strange things but one of their central things is to say that Jesus isn't Jehovah, Jesus isn't God and when they do that you can take their own New World Translation, done by their scholars and you can turn in their translation and show there are passages that teach that Jesus is Jehovah. Or you can do this with someone who claims all truth is relative, a popular claim, all you have to do is take the statement "all truth is relative" and turn it on itself and say, "then the truth that all truth is relative must also be relative." But that's not what they want to say. They want at least the statement all truth is relative to be an absolute statement. So it's a self-defeating argument. Or if someone says "everything is evolving" then just turn it around and say, "well then the statement everything is evolving must also be evolving." But they don't want to say that, there's got to be at least one thing that's not evolving, namely the statement that everything is evolving. So that's how you show these positions are foolish. You're just taking someone's position and turning it on itself. And this is the way Paul is showing the Galatians their position is foolish.

He takes the law in v 21, the central document the Galatians are now putting themselves under so they can grow spiritually, and says have you listened to your own law? Your own law shows you're position is wrong. Haven't you read about the great patriarch Abraham and his two sons? Abraham had two sons from two different women. One son came from Hagar; she was a slave

woman in Abraham's house and that son was named Ishmael. And the way this son came about was by a failure on Abraham and Sarah's part to trust the Lord. So he's the son of the flesh, he's a son of works and this brought a lot of turmoil in that family, it did not bring blessing. No fruit is coming to the world through this fleshly gimmick, none whatsoever, and that's the point that Paul desperately wants to make to believers - if you function by the flesh like Abraham and Sarah did there can be no spiritual blessing, there can only be slavery, bondage, that's what legalism does. Legalism isn't just wrong; people who are into legalistic systems are in total bondage. And these people, when they're Christians and have been in a system of legalism for years and they come out, they'll tell you how their hearts struggled with questions like am I really saved? Was I committed enough to Christ? Did I have the right kind of faith? If you're having those kinds of questions then you're in bondage. You haven't understood what it means to be free. You haven't understood grace. The whole time you've been focusing on what you've been doing and not what Christ did. You've been looking inward rather than outward and that's bondage, and in that kind of a situation you can't grow spiritually. Legalism totally destroys spirituality.

Then you have Abraham's second son come forth from Sarah. She was the free woman in Abraham's house and that son was named Isaac. And the way this son came about was by God's promise. This is not a gimmick of the flesh. This is the promise of God, he's born miraculously. Sarah was 91 years old and Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born. So Isaac is the son of the promise, he's the son of grace and this brings a lot of blessing to the family, tremendous blessing, blessing so great that we still in the 21st century have yet to see all the fruit that will come forth from this miraculous son.

So now we turn to Gal 4:24-31 with that same story in mind. Paul is going to take that historical event and he's going to interpret it allegorically. It's strange what he's doing to us but the Galatians were familiar with this technique so we'll explain it. Before we do, this passage is easy and it's hard. It's easy in its basic message but it's hard in the way Paul teaches it. To make it easier let's break it down into four parts. Gal 4:24-25 he's teaching that legalism is slavery. Hagar is the picture of slavery and her son is the fruit of legalism. Then a strong contrast in Gal 4:26-27 where he's teaching that grace is freedom. Sarah is the picture of freedom and her son is the fruit of grace. In Gal 4:28-31 he applies this to the Galatians and says they are

sons of Isaac, they are the fruit of grace. And finally, in Gal 4:30-31 he exhorts the Galatians to separate themselves from legalism because legalism slavery, it's destructive of spiritual growth.

Now verse 24, **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, etc...etc...** Alright, the method of interpretation called here is allegory. Paul is using the OT and we've said before there are four ways NT author's use the OT. So let's review these. This was the common Jewish practice of the day and the authors of the NT were Jews so they used this Jewish practice. The first is straightforward; you have a *literal prophecy + literal fulfillment*. The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem and the Messiah was born in Bethlehem. The second way is called *literal + application*. In this case the author looks back at a historic event in the OT and notices one point of similarity in a NT event so he quotes the OT event. He just wants to pick up the one point of similarity and apply it to the situation at hand. He's not trying to say every event is the same. For example, when Judas Iscariot hangs himself his apostolic office was left vacant. And so in light of the situation Peter quoted portions of two Psalms, one that said, "Let his homestead be made desolate" and another that said, "let another man take his office." Those didn't refer to Judas in the OT, but because of the one point of similarity, Peter applied them to Judas. The third way NT authors quote the OT is called *summary* and this is when you're reading along and the NT author seems to quote the OT but you can't find what he says anywhere in the OT. It's just very similar to what the OT says; it's an allusion to an OT passage, not a quote. That's what we call summary, so you can look and look and look and you may find some similar passages but never a direct quote and that's because he's just summarizing what the OT taught. So you want to be aware of this as you see it on occasion. The fourth and last method is called *literal + typological*. That's the method Paul is using in his speech. It's translated, "This is allegorically speaking", but the word allegorical has two senses today. The sense most people think of is the Philonic sense. Philo was a Jew who engineered allegory as a system of interpretation. It's just fanciful interpretation, it emphasizes the freedom of the mind to come up with whatever you want and read that into the text. It doesn't matter whether the person was real or the event really happened. That's not the issue. The issue in Philo's allegorism is what can I make up and read into the text. It's not drawing out what the text says, it's reading

into the text what I want to see. The first Christian who used this method of interpretation was Origen. He was an early church father. And, for example, when Origen read about Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem riding a donkey he said the donkey represented the OT and its colt depicted the NT and the two apostles pictured the moral and mystic senses of Scripture. That's how wild Origen gets. That's not in the text, that's just his imagination. That's the Philonic sense of allegorism.

That's not what Paul is doing, that's not what Paul means by "This is allegorically speaking." Paul is using the pre-Philonic sense of allegorism which is simply the idea of analogy or typology. What do we mean by this? What this is saying is that Paul takes a literal historical event from the OT, which is vv 21, 22 and 23, we looked at the historicity of Hagar and Sarah last week, we'll call that historic event A. A is the type, and Paul recognizes a set of analogies with the Galatians' situation with the Judaizers, we'll call this event B. B is the antitype. So you have two historical events, A, your type and B, your antitype. And the author is saying, "The A event, Hagar and Sarah, has a set of characteristics and the B event, the Judaizers and the Galatians, has an analogous set of characteristics, and even though the two events are separated by thousands of years they have a similarity that is God wrought." It's critical to see that the analogies are there by divine purpose. And all Paul is saying is I see a recurring pattern in God's plan for history, I recognize God's fingerprints here.

Take, for example, the life of Joseph, we'll call that A. First of all, Joseph was rejected by his own family, he was sent away, he died so to speak and then years later Joseph was accepted by his own family and he saved them from the famine. Then look at the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was rejected by His own people, He was sent away and He died and years later Jesus will be accepted by His own people and He will save them. So there's an analogy, there is a set of analogous characteristics between Joseph and Christ. That's what we mean when we say typology: Joseph was the type, Christ was the antitype - B corresponds to A. Now obviously to see new patterns like this, new patterns that have never been seen before you have to be a very keen Bible student, and that's what Paul is bringing to the table. Paul is seeing a set of analogous events between the Sarah/Hagar events and the Galatian/Judaizer events. And he's saying if you think about this believer, you will see the same thing I'm seeing. He's not saying any believer can do

this today to any portion of Scripture; he's not telling us how to interpret Scripture. He's just saying if I take a thousand believers and they look closely at the events of Sarah and Hagar they will see that they are analogous to the Galatian/Judaizer events. So this isn't just up in the air or Paul's imagination. But if you took a thousand believers and read to them Jesus' triumphal entry they wouldn't all see how the donkey is the OT and the colt is the NT and the two apostles stand for moral and mystical sense of Scripture, that is someone's imagination. So there's a control on typology but there are no controls on Philonic allegory, no checks and balances. It's just someone's opinion and it's not obvious to everyone even if it's pointed out.

So verses 24-25 we have the picture of slavery. Paul is going to contrast slavery in vv 24-25 with freedom in vv 26-27, and this is a radical contrast. Paul reaches into the law to show that the historic Sarah/Hagar set of contrasts has analogies with the present Galatian/Judaizer set of contrasts. Let's start with verses 24-25, the picture of legalism and the slavery it produces.

He says, verse 24, **for these *women* are two covenants: one *proceeding* from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar.**

Now here's Hagar, the other woman is Sarah. These two women who signify these two covenants bear children. On one hand you have the children that are born of Sarah. They're the children of promise. It was Isaac, the child we saw last week, born to Sarah when she was 91 years old. So Isaac is the child of promise, the child given a miraculous birth to show that God can do all things, God can do things we could never do, God is the one who supplies all our needs, God is faithful, God sets us free from the operation of the flesh. On the other hand Hagar had a child who was born a slave. He was Ishmael, we saw him last week too, born to the slave Hagar and since Hagar was a slave, her son Ishmael was also a slave. Ishmael is the child of the flesh, the child born of natural means due to failure to trust God's promises, failure to believe that God will do what He says He will do, trusting in our own gimmicks, that we're going to help God out, that we will supply all our needs, that man's works will solve man's problems.

So we have Hagar in v 24, she's the first woman; she stands for one of the two great covenants in the OT. Now remember, when you read that word covenant it's just like the modern word contract. Don't get religious on me; one of the great fights a pastor teaching of the word has to keep fighting is people going into religious mode. For some reason people get close to a church and they slide into their little religious compartment. And no matter what you say they interpret everything as religious. It's not religious, it's reality, and when the Bible speaks of a covenant it means a contract has been cut, a deal has been made.

Now there are two great deals made in the OT. The first great deal is the Abrahamic Covenant, we'll come back to that. Paul has in view the second great deal in the OT, the Sinaitic Covenant. It's not really a great deal because it guarantees blessing or cursing depending on behavior. It was given to the nation Israel at Mt Sinai. But the reason it was given to the nation Israel was before she got to Mt Sinai the nation had been enslaved in Egypt and God set them free at the Exodus in a tremendous act of grace. And God continued to show them grace during the 50 days they wandered in the desert as He supplied them with water and food and so forth. God showed them all this grace and He did that so they would learn to trust Him, learn to walk by faith. But they didn't learn to trust Him and they kept walking by the flesh and God said, that's it, you keep walking by the flesh and so I'm going to give you the Sinaitic Covenant and the Sinaitic Covenant will show you how sinful your flesh is. So the Sinaitic Covenant was given as a response to the nation's fleshly walk. And Paul says this covenant is Hagar the maid. So what's the connection between the Sinaitic Covenant and Hagar? The Sinaitic Covenant was given because of the flesh; the nation kept walking by the flesh. And Hagar, who was she? What's her story? She was the maid of Abraham and Sarah. She was the one who after ten years of enjoying God's grace Sarah said, Abraham, go into the maid. That was a fleshly decision. Sarah and Abraham failed to trust and so just as the Sinaitic Covenant was a given because of a walk by the flesh so Hagar was given to Abraham because of a walk by the flesh.

Verse 25, Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.ⁱ Now don't worry yourself with the location of Mt Sinai. The point is that now Paul is showing the correspondence between Hagar and the present Judaizers;

that they're in bondage. The Judaizers, remember, they're the group that are teaching the Galatian believers that they have to follow the Law to be sanctified: they have to be circumcised, they have to follow the strict ritual system of 1st century Judaism. Now, you have to get the picture. These are very powerful teachers. Imagine someone coming in here and teaching and they are articulate, they are very intelligent, they know the word of God and they are very convincing. That's the kind of people the Galatians were facing. These Judaizers were heavyweights and they were extremely convincing in their arguments. And Paul is trying to shut this down. So he says this **Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, she is in slavery with her children.** The **present Jerusalem**, what's that? Well, it is the literal city of Jerusalem. But more importantly it's the center of Judaism. The importance of Jerusalem to Judaism is something like Vatican City to Roman Catholicism. It's the Mecca. Jerusalem housed the Temple, Jerusalem housed the priests, Jerusalem hosted the annual feasts, Jerusalem had the top rabbinic schools, Jerusalem was the center of religious thought and life of Judaism. And he says this Judaistic system of religion in the 1st century **is in slavery**. She's enslaved to the flesh, to works based legalism. That's the whole point of this verse. Remember, Hagar had a child with Abraham but that was a work of the flesh, they didn't trust God, they tried to solve their problems their own way, by the flesh. The child that came forth from that fleshly union was Ishmael, the child of slavery. And so Paul says the present system of Judaism, centralized in Jerusalem is in slavery and the children of this religious system, the Judaizers are also in slavery. And now these Judaizers; probably Jewish believers who were spread out throughout the Roman Empire, were enslaving the Galatians. Enslaving them to what? Remember Gal 4:3, remember the *stoicheia*, the elemental things of this world, which are defined for us in Gal 4:8. The *stoicheia* are the demonic powers that control all legalistic systems of religion. And Paul is saying 1st century Judaism is a legalistic system, a system of do's and don'ts that can't do anything but activate the flesh and it is in bondage. These Christians are in bondage. You have to understand that believers that are caught in legalism are trapped in a dead system, a system of works based on the flesh and it can never provide freedom, it can never provide spiritual growth, it can only enslave. The message of verse 24-25 is that legalism puts Christians in bondage. And if you know Christians that are legalistic, you may love them, you may pray for them, but they are in bondage and they cannot grow spiritually.

Now the contrast, verse 26, notice the strong contrast, the contrastive *Alla*, **But**, begins the sentence. **But**, verse 26, **the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother**. Now don't get carried away with the Jerusalem above. The point is not to have a treatise on whether there's a Jerusalem above.ⁱⁱ The point is that whereas Hagar was a fleshly gimmick, Sarah was a grace solution. Sarah corresponds to the Jerusalem above and she is the Abrahamic Covenant.

This is the first great deal in the OT and it's a really good deal for Abraham and his descendants through Isaac, Jacob and the twelve tribes of Israel. This great deal is called the Abrahamic Covenant. The reason it's such a good deal is because it's solely a promise of what God will do for Israel. It's none of this, if...then business...if you do this then I will do that. No, it's simply God has promised I will do this for you, I don't care what you do, come hell or high water I will do this. That's Gen 12. Then in Gen 15 it gets a little more serious because those promises are put down in a contract. The word for contract is the word *berith*. It means to cut, and you know when a deal is being cut in the Bible when animals are taken and cut up because that's the founding sacrifice. There are no covenants in the Scripture apart from a founding sacrifice and that founding sacrifice means serious business. Here's what it means. In Gen 15 you have this very thing occur; animals are brought, they're cut in half and blood is all over the place and then a smoking oven passes between the pieces. That's God in the form of the Shekinah Glory. So God passes between the pieces. And it's a very terrifying moment in the original text. What this strange passage is describing is what was called in the ancient world a maledictory oath. It was the most serious kind of oath you could make. And what it communicated was that whoever passed between those pieces was saying let what has happened to these animals happen to me if I don't do what I said I will do. So this is very serious. God is saying, Abraham, if I don't do this for you then let me be cut in half like these animals. That's a heavy promise. Now question: did Abraham pass between those animal pieces? Did Abraham promise to do anything for God? Answer, no. Abraham was half-conked out on a rock. Only God passed through the pieces and therefore in the Abrahamic Covenant God alone is obligating Himself to fulfill the promises made to Abraham. So that is a one way contract or oath. Only God promised Abraham certain things. And therefore the Abrahamic Covenant is a covenant of grace. Now this great deal

is signified by Sarah. Why? What's the linkage between Sarah and the Abrahamic Covenant? They're both linked to promises. The Abrahamic Covenant is a great promise. It's God saying I'm going to do this, I'm going to do this while you do nothing. And what did God promise Sarah? I'm going to give you a son, I'm going to do it while you, Sarah, do nothing. You may laugh at Me but I am going to do it. So both Sarah and the Abrahamic Covenant are great promises. They are sourced solely in the promises of God.

So Sarah is a great contrast with Hagar. Hagar signifies the flesh, works without God's grace. It says I am sufficient to solve my problems and that's what Sarah and Abraham decided when Abraham went into the maid, we can solve this problem of an heir. Well, they didn't solve their problem, they created more problems. That was an earthly solution. Now the heavenly solution is God's grace; God making Sarah's womb fruitful. Grace comes down from above and that's why it says, v 26, **the Jerusalem above**. The point is that God's solution is grace and it comes down from Him. Who solved Sarah's infertility problem? God did. God did it in such a way that no one could argue that Abraham and Sarah solved their problem. Only God could give them a child at age 91 and 100 respectively. And only God can sanctify you, only God can set you free from the bondage of the sinful flesh and help you grow spiritually. That is the only way and that is Paul's point by saying **the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother**. God's grace is sufficient to solve all our problems and supply all our needs. So Sarah, though not stated, corresponds to the **Jerusalem above** and is the mother of those who are walking by faith, those who have freedom.

Now verse 27 gives explanation. It begins with the explanatory **For** which is an explanatory *gar*. And Paul is quoting from the OT. Where is the quote from? Those of you who have a study Bible, check the margin. Where is verse 27 a quotation from? Isa 54:1. This is the most highly quoted section of the entire OT. Isa 40-66 is quoted more than any other portion of the OT. And here's a quote from Isa 54:1 from the LXX. The LXX was the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT. The Jews wanted an OT they could read and many of them didn't read Hebrew so they had a Greek translation of the OT made called the LXX. And Paul was obviously conversant with the LXX text as was Jesus and other NT authors. This was a common translation floating around. Jesus and the apostles didn't have a problem quoting a translation

and saying this is the word of God, so we shouldn't have a problem saying a good word-for-word translation that we have today is the word of God.

And here's what Paul quotes to explain the point of contrast in vv 25-26. V 25 we have Hagar, she is Mt Sinai and corresponds to the present system of Judaism, centered in Jerusalem and all the Judaizers who are her children, they are all in slavery. But verse 26, Sarah corresponds to the Jerusalem above who is the mother of the Galatians who have believed in Christ, they are free. Explanation, verse 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."** Now this is a millennial prophecy, it's a prophecy about the fruitfulness of Israel in the millennial kingdom. The nation Israel is a nation that has produced no fruit, she's like a barren woman and she's been barren for 2500 years. 2500 years and no fruit but finally in the millennial kingdom she is going to finally break forth and shout for joy because of the tremendous blessing and fruit that she will enjoy. And Paul's point is here he's using the literal + application method of quoting the OT. Paul sees one similarity between this OT millennial prophecy and the Galatians situation: Fruit. Bearing fruit. Great amounts of fruit will be born if they walk by grace, if they walk by the Spirit, if they walk in freedom. The fruit is untold countless blessings that will flow forth if they trust God's promises, if they walk by faith. So vv 26-27 are all about freedom in Christ and form a strong contrast with vv 24-25, the bondage of legalism.

So Sarah signifies the Abrahamic Covenant, the promise of God and Hagar signifies the Sinaitic Covenant, the results of the flesh.

Now in vv 28-31 Paul applies this to the Galatians and gives them some exhortation. Gal 4:28, **And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.** So he identifies them as having a miraculous birth. They were not born spiritually through the works of the flesh, through legalistic practices, through promising God they would be good little boys, through committing their life to Jesus or any of the 101 other things people try to do for God so He'll save them. Baloney, you can only be born spiritually by the miraculous work of God like Isaac. Isaac was a miracle, he was the child of promise and they, like Isaac, are children of promise and not of the flesh.

Verse 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.** ³⁰**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.”** Now, in verse 29 there is no record in the Scriptures that Ishmael persecuted Isaac. So hold your place here and turn to the closest thing in Gen 21:9. This has been a debate among rabbis over what Ishmael did to Isaac. And so this is not just a Christian debate over this verse, this is a debate that precedes Christianity. So we're fully licensed to interpret this to mean a little more than having a good laugh. This is the great feast day, verse 8, for Isaac was being weaned, he was something like 3 years old. And we read in verse 9, “Now Sarah saw the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking.” That word “mocking” is the debate. Sometimes translated “playing.” What is this? Simply playing around? The context indicates otherwise. This caused a firestorm in the house. Many rabbis have said this indicated an evil intent and Josephus went as far as to say that Sarah thought Isaac's life was in jeopardy, that Ishmael was a threat to Isaac's life. Now we don't know for sure from the OT text, but Paul picks this up in Gal 4:29 and says that Ishmael in some way persecuted Isaac. Notice also in verse 29, the end of the verse, **so it is now also.** In other words the Judaizers were persecuting the Galatians and yet they are the ones according to the flesh while the Galatians are the ones according to the Spirit. Gal 4:30, and here's another quote from Gen 21, so hold your place, **But what does the Scripture say?** Here's the application, **“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.”** Now let's look at the original context, Gen 21:9-10. We have somewhat of a picture, something bad happened between big brother Ishmael and little brother Isaac. It was bad enough to cause verse 10, “Therefore she [Sarah] said to Abraham, “Drive out this maid and her son, for the son of this maid shall not be an heir with my son Isaac.” Now that's the verse Paul quotes in Gal 4:30. That's the verse he uses to exhort the Galatians in applying what he's taught by this allegory. And his whole point is separate from legalism. Separate completely from legalism. Do not compromise with legalism. Legalism has no place in the life of a Christian. One of the interesting things, if you think about the Genesis text and Sarah telling Abraham get'em out of here, is it sounds a little harsh. Even Abraham is having a tough time with it. But look at verse 12, “But God said to Abraham,

“Do not be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you listen to her, for through Isaac your descendants shall be named.” Let me explain the point of this. God agrees with Sarah, get her out of there. That sounds harsh but it’s not and here’s why and here’s what Paul observed from the text to apply to the Galatian situation.

Ishmael was a son of the flesh, he was a son of works. Sarah and Abraham bypassed the promises of God and went with their fleshly solution. And when the fleshly boy grew up he became a threat to the son of promise, Isaac, the son of God’s grace and so God says, kick out the fleshly maid and her son. Go ahead, cast them out. As one author said, “The religion of promise and the religion of works cannot co-exist. God will not divide His blessing between them.”ⁱⁱⁱ Now when we come to the Galatian situation, in Gal 4:30 Paul quotes this as God’s commandment of what to do with the Judaizers, cast them out. It sounds harsh again, but the whole point is that they’re a threat to the Galatians spiritual life. Legalism is one of the number one threats to the spiritual life. People think they are growing spiritually by following the expected regimen at their local church, by not going to movies, by not saying a cuss word, by doing all the right motions, by singing hymns, by coming to church, by signing commitment cards, by having a devotion, all of that put in a list form - I do that and that means I’ll grow spiritually. No, no, no, wrong. That will kill you spiritually. Only God the Holy Spirit can give spiritual growth. So we learn the word and as we learn the word our faith grows, we’re more and more convinced the word of God is true and we’re able to relax even when the pressure is on in life and the Holy Spirit works in us both to will and to do His good pleasure, to advance us spiritually as we trust the promises of God.

As Paul said, the life I live in the flesh I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me. Finally Paul reminds us, Gal 4:31, **So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.** We are the true sons of Isaac since we are free from the cords of legalism. And we should separate ourselves from those who teach legalism as the way to true spirituality and bearing much fruit.

In conclusion, Paul has taken their argument that the law can make us grow spiritually and turned it on itself by taking an example from the law and showing that’s impossible. The flesh profits nothing, no good fruit and the

Judaizers are enslaved to legalism which profits nothing, no good fruit. The Galatians should cast out the Judaizers and walk by the Spirit so that His fruit is produced through us.

ⁱ Mt Sinai is here geographically located in Arabia. It depends on where Arabia was in the 1st century as to where Paul thought Mt Sinai was. The traditional sight is Jebel Musa in the Sinai Peninsula although the earliest identification of Mount Sinai with Jebel Musa is in Egeria's *Peregrinatio* [AD 383/4]; she was assured of the identification by local monks. Another suggestion is that it is Jebel al Lawz in the Arabian Peninsula. LXX translation of the Hebrew OT reflects that the translators thought Midian was on the east side of Aqaba. Philo said Midian was east of Sinai Peninsula and south of Mt Sinai in Arabia. Josephus said Mt Sinai was the highest mountain near the city of Madian. Ptolemy discovered the city of Madian. The city was excavated outside the modern city of Al-Bad. 15 miles east of Al-Bad stands the tallest mountain at over 8,000 feet called Jabal al Lawz. A strong local tradition calls the mountain range Jabal Musa.

ⁱⁱ Now there is a Jerusalem above, so far as we can tell from Scripture, there is the heavenly Jerusalem and the earthly Jerusalem. The idea of two Jerusalems, the heavenly and the earthly, is not peculiar to Paul. Two other NT writers make use of it, the author of Hebrews and the author of Revelation (cf. Heb. 12:22, with 11:10, 16; Rev. 3:12; 21:2, 9ff.). Just as there was a heavenly Temple so there was a heavenly Jerusalem and the earthly Temple and earthly Jerusalem were regarded as material copies of the heavenly realities (Ps 122:3 with vocalization *ḥ^aḥērāh* for MT *ḥubb^erāh*; cf. Tg. and Midr. *Tehillim*, ad. loc.). Now the Jerusalem above was known by Abraham, Abraham looked for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. This heavenly Jerusalem is prepared for those who believe and it will come down and rest upon the new earth after the millennial kingdom.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, Includes the Text of Galatians from the New English Bible., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 214.

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