

**I. Introduction.**

**II. Abraham had two sons by two women. 4:21-23**

- A. Do those of you who want to be under the Law understand the Law? v. 21 2 Co. 3:14**
- 1. Paul has already shown that the Law rightly understood shows us the impossibility of being saved by works. 2:16 3:21-24**
  - 2. Listen to what the history recorded in the Law says about living under the Law!**
- B. Abraham had two sons by two women in two different ways.**
- 1. God had promised that Abraham would be the father of a great multitude. Gen. 12:2 15:2-6**
  - 2. Abraham became impatient and had a child (Ishmael) through the flesh with Sarah's maid, Hagar. Gen. 16:1-4**
  - 3. God miraculously enabled Abraham and Sarah to have Isaac who was to be the true heir. Gen. 17:15-21 18:10 21:1-7**
- C. These two sons represent two entirely different approaches to religion.**
- 1. Ishmael was born according to the flesh -- sin-tainted human effort.**
  - 2. Isaac was miraculously born through faith in God's promise. Rom. 4:16-22**
- D. Paul's shocking conclusion is that many of the physical children of Sarah (like Isaac) are spiritual children of Hagar (like Ishmael).**
- 1. The Judaizers took pride in their physical descent from Abraham and Isaac.**
  - 2. Paul shows that those who are under the Law are like Ishmael because they seek to gain God's promise through fleshly effort.**
  - 3. The true sons of Abraham are not those who are physical descendants, but those who are of faith. 3:6,9,14,29 Rom. 9:6-8 2:28-29 Mt. 3:9 John 8:37-44**
  - 4. The new birth, like the birth of Isaac, is not of the flesh but is a supernatural work of God. 4:6 John 1:12-13 3:6-8 1 Jo. 5:1 Ro. 4:18-21**

**III. Two mothers, two covenants, and two Jerusalems. 4:24-27**

- A. In what sense is Paul speaking allegorically? v. 24a**
- 1. Paul is using Old Testament history to illustrate the contrast between those who seek salvation by fleshly effort and those who are saved by God's grace.**
  - 2. This is very different from the allegorizing practiced by many false teachers in church history.**
- B. Hagar represents the Old Covenant of the present Jerusalem which is enslaved under the Law. v. 24b-25 Acts 15:10 2 Co. 3:6**
- 1. The slave woman can only give birth to children who are slaves like her.**
  - 2. Those who rely upon the law are Hagar's spiritual children. 4:8-9**
- C. Sarah represents the New Covenant of the heavenly Jerusalem which is free. v. 26-27**
- 1. The true Jerusalem is spiritual. 6:16 Heb. 11:10,14-16 12:22-24 Col. 3:1-4 Phi. 3:20 Rev. 3:12 21:2,10 Ps. 2:6 122:3 78:68-69 132:13-14 48:1-3 Isa. 62:1ff**
  - 2. The children of the heavenly Jerusalem are born from above and enter through faith. 4:29 John 3:3 1 Pe. 1:23**
  - 3. Those who dwell in the heavenly Zion are truly free. 4:7**
  - 4. The Jerusalem above is both already present and not yet completely fulfilled.**

- D. Isaiah's prophecy speaks of New Covenant blessings on the barren. Isa. 54:1 51:2**
1. God promised the exiles that the barrenness of Jerusalem would end. Isa. 54:4-8
  2. That which was partially fulfilled in the return from exile comes fully to pass with the coming of Christ. Isa. 54:9-10 40:3 52:13-53:12
  3. As barren Sarah was given a multitude of descendants, the new Jerusalem will have many children. 3:16 Gen. 11:30 17:16 1 Sa. 2:1-10
  4. These numerous children include Gentile believers who are born of the Spirit and will fill the new Jerusalem. Isa. 54:9-17 49:11-12 Hos. 1:6-9 Ro. 9:25ff 1 Pe. 2:10

#### **IV. Live as children of promise. 4:28-31**

- A. Remember who you are! v. 28 4:7**
1. You are like Isaac -- children of faith born from above. v. 28
  2. You are heirs of God's promises. 3:29
- B. You who are born of the Spirit will be persecuted by those who are of the flesh. v. 29**
1. Ishmael persecuted Isaac. Gen. 21:8-9
  2. So it has been throughout history. Ge. 3:15 4:8 1 Jo. 3:12 Lu 11:47-51
  3. Christ was persecuted by the children of the flesh. Mt. 23:37 27:22-25
  4. We should not be surprised when we are persecuted by fleshly religious legalists. Jo. 16:2,33 15:20 Acts 13:45,50 14:2,5,19 1 Tim. 3:12 Mt. 5:11 Rev. 12:13
- C. Those who are of the flesh are shut out from the inheritance. v. 30 3:29 Gen. 21:10-13**
- D. Remember who you are and stand firm. 4:31-5:1**
1. You are blessed to be children of the free woman. 4:7
  2. Christ died so that you might be set free. 3:13 4:5 Mt. 11:30
  3. Stand firm against those who would enslave you again. 5:1 1 Thess. 3:8 Phil. 1:27

#### **V. Conclusion: Who is your mother?**

##### **Contrasts in Paul's allegory**

##### **Righteousness by the law = slavery**

The slave woman (Hagar)  
 Abraham's son of the slave woman (Ishmael)  
 Born of the flesh  
 Mount Sinai = Hagar = slavery 4:24  
 Present Jerusalem (Judaism) = slavery 4:25  
 Children of the present Jerusalem (legalists)  
 Children of the flesh = persecutor  
 Son of slave cast out  
 We are not children of slave woman

##### **Righteousness by faith = freedom**

The free woman (Sarah) 4:22  
 Abraham's son of the free woman (Isaac) 4:22  
 Born of the promise 4:23  
 New Covenant = Sarah = freedom  
 Jerusalem above = free = our mother 4:26  
 Children of the Jerusalem above 4:27  
 Children of promise = persecuted 4:28-29  
 Son of free woman will inherit 4:30  
 But children of free woman 4:31

##### **Discussion questions**

1. What is an allegory? How can allegories be properly or improperly used?
2. Why does Paul use this allegorical argument?
3. Whom does Ishmael represent?
4. Whom does Isaac represent?
5. What are the differences between the present Jerusalem and the Jerusalem above?
6. Explain the use Paul makes of Isaiah 54.
7. Why does the one born of the flesh persecute the one born of the Spirit?
8. What does Paul want his hearers to do as a result of reading this section?
9. How does this passage apply to us?