

Gal 10 – Two Sons - Two Covenants - Gal 4:21-31

We have a wonderful passage B4 us this morning – illustrating the decision we must make between “Religion” & “Relationship”

Are we clutching our **Religion** – following certain rules & regulations in order to earn some level of “Right Standing” before God . . .

Or have we **cast out** all trust in Religious Exercises - in exchange for a Supernatural Relationship that comes **BY** Grace, & **THRU** Faith?

This passage is **addressed** to those “who desire to be under the law” – Those **who trust** in the their religious life-styles & legalistic view of God

One of the **primary goals** of Galatians – is for us to learn how to exchange legalistic Religion - for a Loving Relationship w/ God – Thru Jesus Christ

& in order to **Dramatically Contrast** – these 2 approaches to God - Paul is going all the way back – to Father Abraham

It was their “**Physical Linage**” to Father Abraham – that made the Jews feel eternally safe with God

Paul is going to shake that **Religious Confidence** to the core – & he’s going to do it using Abraham – & his Two Sons & their mothers –

& **Thru Abraham** & his **Two sons** – Paul’s going to paint a picture for us - of Two Covenants - & Two approaches to God

Let’s Pray

Paul begins by **making it clear** who he is addressing in this passage

Gal 4:21

21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?

There were those – who'd **been Set-Free** by Faith in Christ –
who are being **seduced** into going back into the ways of
the Law & the Traditions of the Judaizers

& to those who are **being drawn back** under the Law – *Paul says;*
“do you not hear what the law says?” –

Do you **not understand** what the legalists are *swaying* you into

He's saying - **are you willing** to listen to what the law *really* says . . .

Now – Paul is **about to paint** a wonderful picture of the *2 Covenants* –
thru the *2 Sons* of Abraham . . .

but **in order to** see that picture –
we need *some knowledge* of Abraham & those Two sons

We've talked many times about **the Promise** God made to Abraham –
that his *descendants* would be *more in #* than the stars in the sky (Gen 15)

But there was **only one problem** – Sarah (Abraham's wife) was *barren* –
& *altho* Abraham believed God – (accounted as Righteousness - **Gen 15:6**)

the **time finally came** when Sarah decided it might be *a good idea*
to try to **help God** accomplish His purpose . . .

& in **Gen 16** – Sarah has Abraham sleep with her *maidservant Hagar*
in order to *bring God's plan* to pass – in the works of *their own flesh*

& **from that plan** – *A son* was born . . . from *the efforts* of their own flesh

But **God didn't need** Sarah or Abraham's *help* in the flesh - to bring
His promise to pass – He *needed their Faith*

& so *finally* (in **Gen 21**) that **Child of Promise** is born
thru the *Supernatural Grace of God* - & thru Abraham's **faith alone**

There is wonderful background in **Gen 12 to 22** – *great devotional reading*

So here in Gal 4 – Paul begins the great analogy of these events –

& he's going to paint a picture of the drastic mistake believers would make
– if they were to go back to living under the law

Gal 4:22

22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman.

Here we see the 2 Sons:

Ishmael - Son of the Bondwoman – born according to the Flesh

Isaac - Son of the Freewoman – born according to the Promise

2 Sons – w/ 2 different mothers (which makes the crucial difference) –

Ishmael was born to Hagar – who was a slave woman, Abraham's servant

Isaac was born to Sarah – a free woman, Abraham's wife

So Ishmael was born into Slavery – Isaac was born into Freedom

& not only were they born to 2 different mothers –

They were born thru 2 different methods (also a crucial difference) . . .

Gal 4:23

23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise.

The birth of Ishmael was “according to the flesh”

because the scheme devised by Sarah - & carried out by Abraham . . .

was born purely out of fleshly means

The birth of Isaac – was “through Promise” – It was supernatural

because of Abraham & Sarah's ages – Abraham was 100, Sarah was 90

& It was not only supernatural – but it was thru Faith that Isaac was born . .

Heb 11:11 says;

11 By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.

So **Ishmael** represents Man's way of trying to accomplish God's purpose –
Ishmael has always represented the way of the Flesh . . .

He represents **Religious Self-effort** – us trying to earn something from God,
but doing it completely in our flesh

Isaac represents God's way – the way of **the Promise** – It is the way **of Faith**
Isaac represents God's Promise granted **BY** God's Grace & **THRU** our Faith

So now – from **V.24 to V.28** – Paul is going to Paint a Picture for us –
of the **Life-Changing** & **Eternal lesson** in these 2 Sons of Abraham . . .

in the 1st half of **Gal 4:24(A)**

24(a) which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants:. . .

The word translated "**symbolic**" means **LIT** –
"to convey a meaning other than the literal (factual) meaning"

& Paul says these 2 sons are "**Symbolic**" –
they are a Symbol of the **Two Covenants** of God –

& those **Two Covenants** – are the ones we use to divide our Bible in Half –
The **Old Covenant** (testament) & the **New Covenant** (testament)

The **Old Covenant** was based on **God's Law** & **Our Efforts** –
The **New Covenant** is based on **God's Promise** & **Our Faith**

The **Old Covenant** put the **responsibility** on Man's Efforts . . .
God Saying "*thou shall . . . & . . . thou shall not*"

The **New Covenant** put the **responsibility** on God's Promise
God Saying "*I will . . . & . . . assuredly I will*"

cont'g in the 2nd half **Gal 4:24(B)-25(A)**

24(b) . . . *the one [covenant] from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar—25(a) for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia*

Paul clearly says – **Hagar** (mother of **Ishmael**) is “**symbolic**” of the Covenant from Mt Sinai – which is “The Law” –

The law was given to the people at **Mt Sinai** – It's *purpose*, (as the N.T. reveals) was to show us **our desperate need** for a Savior –

But for those who were committed to *becoming Righteous* on their own – the law produced *religious slaves* . . .

They were **born into the slavery** of being Self-Righteous – bound to a yoke they could never escape . . .

& so the **law produced** spiritual children like **Ishmael** – trying to accomplish God's purpose by Self-Effort – or – by the Works of their own Flesh

The study of Ishmael & Isaac is fascinating – especially in these days of Middle-East conflict . . .

The **descendants of Ishmael** became known as **Arabs** - & still are today –

They ended up **dwelling** in the area right around **Mt Sinai** – an area that is still called today – **the Arabian Peninsula**

& of course – we hear the term Arab mostly today when we hear or read the words **Arab-Israeli conflict** –

The **Arab-Israeli conflict** we hear about today – **started** between these two sons of Abraham . . .

Ishmael, the son of *the Flesh* - & **Isaac**, the son of *Promise* - - - **this is where** today's Arab-Israeli conflicts really began

& now - to bring **the contrast** of these **“2 symbols”** home even more –
Paul’s going to use *the Two Jerusalems* –

& **as he does** – we are going to **see a graphic illustration**
that is *as true today* – as it was *2,000 yrs ago* . . .

& *that illustration* - is the fact that **present day, earthly Jerusalem** is *just as*
bound up in Legalism & Self-Righteousness - as it was in Paul’s day . . .

Let’s read **Gal 4:25** (again)

25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children—

Paul is speaking of his **“present day”** center - of *bondage to the Law* –
Paul connects **Mt. Sinai** to his present day **Jerusalem** . . .

Because **Jerusalem** had come *to represent* the bondage & slavery
that the **Religious Legalists** put people under

& **the Judaizers** in Galatia were *trying to enslave* the new believers there
with the same **yoke of Religious bondage** represented by Jerusalem

& that is the **same bondage** *“symbolized”* here by the *bondwoman Hagar* –
& by the *works of the flesh* in **Ishmael’s** birth . . .

However - Paul is going to refer to **Two Jerusalems** –
to **further illustrate** the *Contrast* of the *Two Covenants*

He’s addressed the *“Earthly Jerusalem”* - - & now - the *“Spiritual Jerusalem”*

Gal 4:26

26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.

The **“Jerusalem above”** Paul is talking about - is the **“New Jerusalem”** –
The *Heavenly Jerusalem* –

Our Citizenship is in heaven – we are *sojourners / pilgrims* –
our **eternal home** is in the *new Jerusalem* that will come down from God
where **God will dwell** with *His people* as **Rev 21** says

& **the children** of the *new Jerusalem* are free –
We are **free** from the *bondage & slavery* of the law –
We are **adopted** into the *family of God* . . .

& we **now live**, not by bondage to the law, **but by faith** in the Son of God,
who loved us & gave Himself for us . . .

So Paul says - The “**Present Day Jerusalem**” represents
Bondage to the *Law* & to *Self-Righteousness* . . .

But the “**New Jerusalem**” (Heavenly) represents *freedom from that bondage* –
Because we have been *Adopted into the family* of God . . .
V.26 – *Heavenly Jerusalem is the mother of all believers* . . .

& because Paul is *speaking of Jerusalem* as a “**Mother**” –
He’s now *going to quote Isa 54:1* – originally written *for Jerusalem*
in the time of the **Exile**, & the *Babylonian Captivity*

Gal 4:27

*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.”*

These words in Isaiah were *originally written* re: the **Exile** into Babylon –
speaking of **Jerusalem** being like a *barren woman* at that time
because it had **been over thrown**

but here Paul uses these words as **a celebration** for the “*Jerusalem above*” –
the mother (& eternal Dwelling Place) – of all who are
in *the spiritual line* of **Isaac** – the *son of Promise*

The words “**Born-Again**” can also be translated “**Born from above**”
& it is **all those** (& *only those*) who’ve been “**Born from above**”
who are *children of* (& citizens of) the *Heavenly Jerusalem* –

For more on how *wonderful* that really is – read **Rev 21**

So – Paul has been **contrasting** these **Two sons** of Abraham;
Ismael – the Son of *Bondage* – representing **the Law** - &
Isaac – The Son of the *Free Woman* – representing **the Promise** . . .

& remember, the **Jews** were **confident** – they were in the **line of Isaac** –
& *as descendant* . . . they were –
but Paul is talking here about the **Spiritual children** of *Abraham* . . .

& **right now** - Paul is going to *make it clear* - from an *Eternal Perspective*,
Exactly who the **Spiritual Children** of Promise really are . . .

Gal 4:28

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

There is such a **wonderful** & **incredible** truth here –
& we just need to *read it slowly* to take it get it . . .

WE brethren – as Isaac was – ARE CHILDREN OF PROMISE

John MacArthur: “*Every believer, like Isaac, is supernaturally conceived, miraculously born, and the offspring of God’s promise to Abraham fulfilled in Christ*”

Rom 9:8

8 . . . those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.

WE (who have received Christ) ARE CHILDREN OF PROMISE –

We are **NOT** conceived by *man's efforts* to accomplish God's purpose –

We **ARE** conceived by the *miraculous power* of God – just as **Isaac** was !!!

Why would we want to *go back* & be *like the child* of the slave-woman –
who *was conceived* by **man's own efforts** in his flesh . . .

BY God's Grace - & **THRU** our Faith – "*In Christ*" we become
supernaturally conceived – miraculously born
children of God's Promise to Abraham

Read **Rom 8:15-18** – to see more of our *Supernatural Conception*
as Children of God – **BUT** watch closely at the end of that section . . .

because it talks **not only** about the *Glory* which shall be *revealed in us* –
but also the *suffering* that *naturally comes* to us in this present world . . .
& that is where Paul takes his next thought in **Gal 4** . . .

Gal 4:29

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.

In **Gen 21** – Abraham called **a Feast** for the day Isaac was "*weaned*"
(2-3 yrs old) - & there Ishmael (16–17 yrs old) **mocked** Isaac,
& in some way began *mistreating him*

& Paul says simply . . . "**Even so it is now**" – meaning the children of *the Law*
& *Self-effort* are **still mocking** the Children of *Promise* – even to this day

& this would **NOT** be a ref to the *World mocking* the *Children of Promise*
This is a ref. to our *Half-Brothers* mocking us . . .

Our **half brothers** are those *after Ishmael* –

Those who hold to "*Salvation by Works*" -

Those enslaved to *Self-Righteousness* in their own efforts

Legalists will *always persecute* those who Believe **BY** *Grace* & **THRU** *Faith* –

In fact **Believers** in God's Grace have always been **MORE** persecuted by the legalists **in** the church – **than anyone** outside the church

BUT - Paul tells us exactly **what to do** about it anyway . . .

Gal 4:30

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.”

Nevertheless Paul says – Cast Out **Legalism** & **Self-Effort** – (Lstn closely) . .

Because **not one thing** of Self-Earned Salvation . . .
not one thing of Self-Effort . . . shall be **heir** to the Promise

Paul's saying – don't go back there – because **NOTHING** there is going to **share** in the inheritance of the Children of God . . . It will all be cast out

& if **Slavery** to the Law, & **Self-Effort** is all you show up with on the day you **stand before God** –
It (& you) will be cast out from God's presence

Pls hear me – Do not enter eternity as a Child of the Slave-Woman,
following the law & showing self-effort as your **salvation** before God . . .

You will be eternally sorry - if you try to do that . . .

Instead – plan to **stand before God** as a child of the Promise –
clothed in Christ - as an Heir of God . . .

Not because you've **earned** your position by some Self-Effort –
but because God has supernaturally made you an Heir . . .
BY His Grace, and **THRU** your Faith alone . . .

THAT is the only way – that you will be a Child of the Promise

Now - **Paul closes** this section with a **Wonderful** & **Powerful** statement of Who we are “in Christ”

Gal 4:31 →

Gal 4:31

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

Using the *perfect contrast* between **Ishmael** & **Isaac** –

Paul has **taught us** a far more *eternally important* lesson . . .

A lesson in the spiritual contrast of ;

1) the way of the **Law** Vs. the way of **Grace**

2) the way of **Works** Vs. the way of **Faith**

3) the way of **Man** Vs. the way of **God**

An eternal contrast of the **Two Approaches to God** – *Pls hear them;*

1) If you attempt to approach God by;

Law – by **Works** - & by **Man** ways – you will ultimately be *lost* . . .

because the way of the **Law** – the way of **Works** - & the Way of **Man**
will ultimately be *destroyed* . . .

2) If you follow God's Word in the way of

Grace, the way of **Faith**, & the way of **God's Promise** . . .

you **will become** – *Right Now* (as **V.28** says) – a *Child of Promise* –
an **Heir of God** & a **Joint-Heir** with Christ

Pleas - **Give up** the yoke of **Works** - **Legalism** & **Self-Righteousness** - -

& *receive Christ* **BY** God's Grace - & **THRU** faith alone –

& He will *supernaturally* **make you** – a *child of Promise*

Let's Pray