

“Who is Your Mother?”

Christian Liberty
Galatians 4:21-31
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“The Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.” Gal 4:26

Paul is in personal, heart wrenching distress over his Galatian Children in the Faith:

- ✓ *“I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.” Gal. 4:11*
- ✓ *“What has become of the blessing you felt ...” 4:15*
- ✓ *“Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?” 4:16*
- ✓ *“My little children ... I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!” 4:19*

Paul is coming from every angle so that the Galatians understand the depth of the danger.

Paul’s Bible study: *“Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law?” 4:21*

- ✓ **In the OT, 613 commandments. In the NT, ca 1050 commandments.**

“For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. ²³ But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise.” 4:22-23

Genesis background to Galatians 4:21-31:

- ✓ **Genesis 15:1f.** *“The word of the LORD came to Abram ... ‘Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.’² But Abram said ... ‘You have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.’⁴ And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.” ... ⁶ And (Abram) believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.”*
- ✓ **Genesis 16:1f.** *“Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no children ... Sarai said to Abram, ‘Behold now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her.’ ... ³ So ... Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram ... ¹⁵ And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son ... Ishmael. ¹⁶ Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.”*
- ✓ **Genesis 17:15f.** *(Fourteen years later) ... “God said to Abraham ...¹⁶ I will bless Sarah, and moreover, I will give you a son by her ... ¹⁷ Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, ‘Shall a child be born to a man who is a 100 years old? Shall Sarah, who is 99 years old, bear a child?’ ... ¹⁹ God said, ‘Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him.’”*
- ✓ **Genesis 21:1.** *“The LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did ... as He had promised.”*

***“Now this may be interpreted allegorically:* these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar.” 4:24**

Two relationships (covenants) with God and two experiences of God

Hagar	Sarah
A slave woman	A free woman
Wife-for-a-day	Wife, “from this day forth, forever more”
Ishmael, according to the flesh	Isaac, according to the Spirit
No inheritance in Abraham’s possesses	The inheritor of all Abraham possesses
Mt. Sinai, Jerusalem below (fleshly)	Jerusalem that is above (heavenly & spiritual)
Bearing children for slavery	Bearing children of promise

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The **“flesh”** (first-birth intelligence, strengths, spirituality, education, power, prestige, etc.) says, **“Give me the assignment. I can do it (... somehow)!”**

At Sinai, “Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, ‘All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do.’” Exodus 24:3

At the Promised Land, “the people answered (Joshua), ‘Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods ... Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God.’ ... ¹⁹ But Joshua said to the people, ‘You are not able to serve the LORD, for he is a holy God’ ... ²¹ And the people said to Joshua, ‘No, we will serve the LORD.’ ²² Then Joshua said to the people, ‘You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve him.’ And they said, ‘We are witnesses.’”

The Judaizers are lying when they say “you can do it, so just do it.”

John Piper talks about “four stages of freedom”.

- ✓ “Full freedom is what you have when no lack of opportunity, no lack of ability, and no lack of desire prevents you from doing what will make you happiest in 1,000 years.”
- ✓ 1) The freedom of opportunity; 2) the freedom of ability; 3) the freedom of desire; 4) the freedom of an eternal perspective.

The Spirit says, “With man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

- ✓ **You must be born again** which includes includes **being in Christ**; being crucified, buried, raised and seated with Him.
- ✓ **“Jerusalem that is above” is described:** in **Colossians 3:1-3**. *“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”* **And in Ephesians 2:5, 6**. *“Even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus ...”*

The Judaizers say it’s all about self-improvement and getting better. You never get free; you’re always in bondage to debt. “I owe my soul to the company store.”

The Gospel says it’s all about being in Christ: salvation, sanctification & glorification. The new creation: His life in you, and you in Him.

- ✓ *“The flesh is **no help at all.**” (Jn 6:63) Literally, “not useful nothing”*
- ✓ *“The LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did ... **as He had promised.**” Gen 21:1*
- ✓ *“Let us therefore strive to **enter that rest.**” (Heb 4:11) Literally: “move speedily w/ diligence”*