

## GALATIANS 4.21-5.1

### Freedom

#### 1. Introduction:

1.1. Gal. 4.21: “Tell me, those desiring to be under the Law, do you hear the law?” Do you really see the Law clearly and understand what you want to do? Do you understand that the Law, in principle, is “Do this and live?” And, the Law says, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.” Do you really want to have this demand as your principle of acceptance, of justification before God?

a.) Luther said, “To be short, man’s reason would like to bring and present to God a counterfeit sinner, which is not afraid or has any feeling of sin. It would bring him that is whole, and not him that has need of a physician; and when it feels no sin, then would it believe that Christ was given for our sins” (Luther, 1988, 37).

b.) Calvin said, “Those who live to the law, therefore, have never felt the power of the law” (Calvin, 2003, 73).

1.2. To drive home one more time the difference between law and Gospel, and at the same time, turn on its head the arguments of the Judaizers, Paul puts together a little allegory. Remember, the Judaizers were boasting in their descent from Abraham and the mark of their inclusion in him, circumcision. They were teaching to really be a Christian, the Galatians had to become Jews by being circumcised. Faith was not enough; Faith plus circumcision and living like a Jew was also necessary.

#### 2. Facts:

	Abraham (Two Sons)	
(Sarah)	Ishmael <u>Slave</u> woman (Hagar)	Isaac <u>Free</u> woman
<u>promise</u>	According to <u>flesh</u> (natural)	According to

#### 3. Significance: (Women are two covenants)

Hagar (slave woman) Ishmael (according to flesh) Mount Sinai Covenant (Law)	Sarah (free woman) Isaac (according to promise) Covenant of Promise
Slavery Earthly Jerusalem (Judaism)	Free Heavenly Jerusalem (Church)

Children of earthly Jerusalem (Judaizers)  
(Church)

Children of heavenly Jerusalem

3.1. The point of comparison is that Hagar was a slave woman, who had a son (Ishmael) according to the flesh. She corresponds to those who want to keep the Law promulgated at Sinai, because they, like her are in slavery. They are still slaves to the Law. These people are the Judaizers of Jerusalem. So, instead of being able to boast of being children of Abraham through Isaac, they, by their rejection of promise, have aligned themselves with Ishmael. Interestingly enough, the Ishmaelites at this time were in bondage in Arabia.

3.2. Sarah was a free woman, who had a son (Isaac) not in the normal way, but according to promise. She corresponds to those who maintain the primacy of the promise given to Abraham, which is received freely by faith. These people have been released from the curse of the Law and the bondage of the sin-wielded Law. They, therefore, are free. These people are really children of the true Jerusalem, that one above, who is our mother.

3.3. Vs. 27 cites Isa 54.1 which alludes to Sarah. The Isaianic passage sees greater prosperity in the restored Jerusalem as compared to the Jerusalem before the exile. "The barren woman," the one "who never suffered labor pains," and "the desolate woman" all refer to Jerusalem in exile. The one "who has a husband" refers to Jerusalem before the exile. Isaiah says that that Jerusalem after the exile will have more children than the Jerusalem before the exile. We see Sarah in Gen. 11.30 and 21.6f. first desolate then crying out in joy.

#### 4. Application:

4.1. The Galatians are children of promise for they have accepted the Gospel by faith. They have sought righteousness by faith instead of by law.

4.2. Even as Ishmael mocked Isaac (Gen. 21.9), even so the Judaizers are persecuting and bullying the Galatians. Just as the fleshly, slave son mocked the spiritual, free son, so the Judaizers are mocking the Galatians. Isaac is said to have been born according to the Spirit, which shows that now Paul is shifting his focus to the reception of the Spirit by the Galatians through the promise.

4.3. The Galatians need to get rid of the Judaizers, just as God separated Ishmael from Isaac (Gen. 21.10-12). The idea is that "the religion of promise and the religion of works cannot co-exist" (Fung, 1988, 214). The religion of works and slavery must be "cast out."

4.4. The indicative is that we are free; the imperative is that we must maintain and continue that freedom.