

GALATIANS

4:21-31 | STUDY GUIDE

Hagar & Sarai

GALATIANS 4:21, "Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law." (ESV)

- The legalists opposing Paul claim to be taking their gospel from Scripture
 - Paul challenges them and shows that they are not handling the text properly
- Legalism = trying to make your own way

GALATIANS 4:22, "For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman." (ESV)

- Paul assumes his audience knows the story; likely because the legalists were wielding their status as "sons of Abraham" over the Gentiles
 - Abraham had two sons: one was born through Hagar when Abraham tried to claim God's promise through his own works
 - The second son was a son of promise through his barren wife
- This is symbolic of the promised Messiah, born of a virgin

GALATIANS 4:24, "Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar." (ESV)

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- Mount Sinai is where Moses received the Ten Commandments
 - Exodus 19-20
- “But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.” (Galatians 4:26)
 - Paul refers to a heavenly Jerusalem—a “new” Jerusalem
- **GALATIANS 4:31**, “So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.” (ESV)
- Just as we are not under The Law, but rather the Promise, we are free and not slaves
 - The promise sets free
- Paul grounds in the words of Isaiah:
“For it is written,
“Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear;
break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor!
For the children of the desolate one will be more
than those of the one who has a husband.” (Isaiah 54:1)
- The Law left when the Promise came
 - “Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman.” (Genesis 21:8-14)
 - Paul is using this story as allegory
 - The Law was like training wheels on a bike—though you are no longer reliant on them, they inform your balance and conduct on a bike. Without them you would not have known the freedom of unrestraint.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: N.T. Wright, *The New Testament In its World*, Craig S. Keener, *Galatians: A Commentary*, Archeological Study Bible