

THE STORY SO FAR...

- Paul is astonished that the Galatians have so quickly accepted a false gospel of faith in Christ plus works of the law that the Judaizers were teaching. They have reversed the gospel.
- The true gospel is about grace alone.
- Paul defends his message of grace by sharing his story of salvation and describing that it is a gospel that was not made up by man, but came from God.
- The Jerusalem leaders agreed in the council that their message was the same—salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.
- Paul is making the case for grace in Chapters 3-4

So, where are we at? (Outline)PERSONAL: GRACE AND THE GOSPEL—chapters 1–2DOCTRINAL: GRACE AND THE LAW—chapters 3–4 PAUL'S CASE FOR GRACE

- A. The personal argument—3:1–5
 - a. They believed by faith, not works
- B. The scriptural argument—3:6–14
 - a. Abraham believed and righteousness was given to him—though Sarah barren
- C. The logical argument—3:15–29
 - a. Law acted as Israel's guardian until Christ came—now its about faith, “for in Christ you are all Sons of God, through faith.” (3:26)
- D. The historical argument—4:1–11
 - a. What God did through history of salvation.
 - b. Christ came to save/redeem those under the law
 - c. All who put faith in Christ are children of God
“When the fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.” (4:4-5)
- E. The sentimental argument—4:12–18—appeals to their close relationship, trust had
- F. **The allegorical argument—4:19–31** ←

PRACTICAL: GRACE AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE—chapters 5-6

For Starters

1. In this passage, we will see that God does the seemingly impossible both in Abraham's life in having a son and in our lives in salvation. When have you seen God do what seems impossible in your own life, or in the lives of those around you?

Search God's Word, Teaching Section

READ

¹⁹ *my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!* ²⁰ *I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.* ²¹ *Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law?* ²² *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.* ²⁴ *Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar.* ²⁵ *Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.* ²⁶ *But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.* ²⁷ *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."* ²⁸ *Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.* ²⁹ *But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now.* ³⁰ *But what does the Scripture say? "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."* ³¹ *So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.* ¹ *For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.*

PAUL'S CASE FOR GRACE. THE ALLEGORICAL ARGUMENT

THE INTRO (Gal. 4:19-21)

Galatians 4:19–21

¹⁹ *my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!* ²⁰ *I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.* ²¹ *Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law?*

- In **anguish** over their spiritual condition. Like a **Father** whose children have wandered somewhere dangerous. He is **perplexed** about their situation. Anguish of **childbirth**.
- **Irony of his question**—saying, “Ok, you want to go back to the Law for salvation, let’s take a look at what the law says and see how you are wrong.” Goes back to the story of Abraham and Sarah. “Let’s see what we learn about their story from the law, and we shall see that it is all about grace, promise, and faith NOT about following rules to gain salvation.”

THE STORY (Gal. 4:22–23)

²² 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.

Perhaps the easiest way to grasp the historical account is to trace briefly Abraham’s experiences as recorded in Genesis 12 through 21. Using his age as our guide, we will trace the events on which Paul is basing his argument for Christian liberty.

75—

Genesis 12:1–4 (ESV)

¹ Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” ⁴ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

Abraham is called by God to go to Canaan; and God promises him many descendants (Gen. 12:1–9). Both Abraham and his wife, Sarah, wanted children, but Sarah was barren. God was waiting until both of them were “as good as dead” before He would perform the miracle of sending them a son (Rom. 4:16–25).

85—

Genesis 16:1–4 (ESV)

¹ Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. ² And 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.” And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. ³ So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram’s wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. ⁴ And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived.

The promised son has not yet arrived, they had been waiting 10 years, and Sarah becomes impatient. She suggests that Abraham marry Hagar, her maid-servant, and try to have a son by her. This act was legal in that society, but it was not in the will of God—“come from Sarah”. Abraham followed her suggestion and married Hagar (Gen. 16:1–3).

86—

And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress...Sarai dealt harshly with Hagar and she fled from Sarai (6)

Hagar gets pregnant and Sarah gets jealous! Things are so difficult in the home that Sarah throws Hagar out. But the Lord intervenes, sends Hagar back, and promises to take care of her and her son. When Abraham is 86, the son is born, and he calls him Ishmael (Gen. 16:4–16).

99—

Genesis 17-18...promise to Abraham confirmed

God speaks to Abraham and promises again that he will have a son by Sarah and says to call his name Isaac. Later, God appears again and reaffirms the promise to Sarah as well (see Gen. 17–18).

100—

Genesis 21:1–7 (ESV)

¹ The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised. ² And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him. ³ Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac. ⁴ And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. ⁵ Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. ⁶ And Sarah said, “God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me.” ⁷ And she said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”

The son is born (Gen. 21:1–7). They name him Isaac (“laughter”) as commanded by God. But the arrival of Isaac creates a new problem in the home: Ishmael has a rival. For fourteen years, Ishmael has been his father’s only son, very dear to his heart. How will Ishmael respond to the presence of a rival?

Genesis 21:9–14 (ESV)

⁹ But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing (mocking tone). ¹⁰ So she said to Abraham, “Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac.” ¹¹ And the thing was very displeasing to Abraham on account of his son. ¹² But God said to Abraham, “Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your offspring be named. ¹³ And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring.” ¹⁴ So Abraham rose early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.

It was customary for the Jews to wean their children at about the age of three, and to make a great occasion of it. At the feast, Ishmael starts to mock Isaac (Gen. 21:8ff) and to create trouble in the home. There is only one solution to the problem, and a costly one at that: Hagar and her son have to go. With a broken heart, Abraham sends his son away, because this is what the Lord tells him to do (Gen. 21:9–14). Why send away? Strife in home and because Isaac is the one of the promise.

...God protects Hagar and Ishmael and they lived in the wilderness and are blessed.

On the surface, this story appears to be nothing more than a tale of a family problem, but beneath the surface are meanings that carry tremendous spiritual power and deep meaning. Abraham, the two wives (Sarah and Hagar), and the two sons (Isaac and Ishmael) represent spiritual realities and teach us about our spiritual condition and identity.

THE ALLEGORY (Gal. 4:24-5:1)

²⁴ Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. ²⁵ Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. ²⁶ But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. ²⁷ 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.” ²⁸ Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. ²⁹ But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now. ³⁰ But what does the Scripture say? “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.” ³¹ So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman. ¹

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

The Allegory

- Verse says, “Now this may be interpreted allegorically (figuratively). Allegory in this sense is an extended story where people, places, events correspond to deeper realities and meanings.
- Verse has sparked some debate in Biblical interpretation
- Since Paul does so, should we use this method and find hidden realities in other parts of Scripture? (Origen, St. Augustine, yes—and sought to find hidden meanings) PROBLEM. This would make Biblical interpretation go all over the place, make any passage mean anything.
- Most scholars agree that better to interpret this as special case—when Scripture explains that it is allegory, then interpret it that way. But most passages we look for the plan sense of the language (context, structure, words/phrases, author and recipients). What it means it what it meant for the original hearers—our job is to find that out as best as we can, bring out universal principles, and apply truths to our lives.
- **Typology—which is a bit more what is going on here (typological allegory)**
- Definition—Parallels are drawn from historical people, places, or events in the OT and their later fulfillment or greater realities in the New Testament.
- God works in history to point to Christ and the gospel. Typology is based on the conviction that God is sharing a story as it unravels where Old Testament concepts appear in the New Testament in amazing ways.

“New Testament persons, events, and institutions will sometimes “fill up” Old Testament persons, event, and institutions by repeating at a deeper or more climactic level than was true in the original situation,” (Moo)

- New Testament writers use words such as, “type” (1 Cor 10:6), “shadow” (Heb. 10:1), “the true” (Jn. 6:32), “copies, patterns” (Heb 9:23). Signs or shadow—representing and pointing to greater truths in the gospel and in Christ.
 - The Exodus—salvation in Christ
 - Melchizedek’s priesthood—Christ’s heavenly priestly role
 - Adam—Christ (anti-type)
 - Priests, sacrifices, blood atonement—Christ’s sacrifice to atone for our sins

The typology in this passage (couple positive):

- **Promise and fulfillment** Promise to Abe/Sarah—son Isaac through **supernatural means, by grace**. Points to the greater spiritual reality. Our spiritual birth is supernatural, by grace—according to the promise of Christ, Messiah
- **Faith.** Faith of Abraham in this promise, “believed God and was counted to him as righteousness” Points to the greater reality in the NT that anyone who has this type of faith in Christ will be saved, given righteous standing in God’s sight.

So, what are the comparisons and contrasts?

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| Abraham’s son of the slave woman (Ishmael) | Abe’s son of the free woman (Isaac) (4:22) |
| Born of flesh | Born of the promise (4:23) |
| Mt. Sinai, Hagar, slavery, present Jeru (4:25) | Jeru. Above, freedom, our mother (4:26) |
| Children of the barren woman (4:27) | Children of Sarah, promise, Isaac (4:28) |
| Born of flesh, persecutor | Born of Spirit, persecuted (4:29) |
| Cast out son of slave | Son of the free woman (4:30) |
| We are not children of the slave woman | But children of free woman (4:31) |

Contrasts:

- The old and the new covenant
- The present Jerusalem versus the Jerusalem above
- The slave woman and the free woman
- Slavery and freedom
- The flesh and the Spirit
- Being cast out versus receiving the inheritance

Two pictures Paul is painting here: FOR SALVATION

- **Life relying on works:** Old covenant (has been replaced), slavery, trusting in earthly things (Jerusalem below), the flesh/sinful nature, being cast out.
- Paul is painting a grim picture of what it looks like to trust the law/works for salvation
- **Life relying on Christ:** Painting a vivid, glorious picture of what it looks like to trust Christ for salvation
- New and better covenant, inherit God’s promises, freedom, receiving an inheritance, heavenly Jerusalem, and gaining God’s Spirit to live inside you!

The BIG Idea: Putting it Together,

We are children of the promise of grace, not children of slavery to the law

APPLICATION: Truths for Life

Spiritual Principles: What does this have to do with us? (3 things)

1. We are children of the promise! (4:28)

- God told Abraham that through Isaac all nations on earth will be blessed, and the descendents will be as numerous as the sand on the seashore and the stars in the sky.
- This was fulfilled through Christ—born in the line of Abraham (Mt. 1). Those who have faith in Christ become children of this promise—extended to the Gentiles through Christ!
- *“If you belong to Christ, you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.” Gal. 3:29*
- *“It is not the children of the flesh who are the Children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.” Rom. 9:8* Quotes OT, *“Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.”*
- **For Life:** with humility, we can be confident and secure in Christ, and look forward to great things to come—inheritance, glory. But persecution may come in this life.

2. We have been born again in the Spirit! (4:29)

- This is a big difference between us now and the people in the OT
- We have spiritual new birth, not physical, b/c we had a sin problem
- We have the Spirit to give assurance—*“There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.” Rom 8:1-2*
- Spirit now gives us power to obey and follow God (much of the rest of the book of Gal. is about this)—*“the Spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline” 2 Tim 1*
- **For Life:** We don’t rely on our strength, but on God’s strength through Spirit.

3. Christ has set us free! (5:1)

“For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

- Hinge verse, bridge verse. Sums up our passage and looks toward the next section.
- Christ came to set us free from having to follow the law to gain favor with God.

- So Paul encourages them to stand firm in their freedom—this means to not go back to following the Judiazers who wanted them to do the law to be saved. This is called slavery and is a yoke—something that ties them down.
- This point was made by Jesus to the Pharisees—

John 8:31–38 (ESV)

³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” ³³ They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free’?” ³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵ The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. ³⁷ I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. ³⁸ I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.”

- Disciples hold to Jesus’ teaching—Truth, that sets free
- Pharisees claimed they had special status because they were Abraham’s direct descendants.
- All are slaves to sin apart from Christ, even direct descendants of Abe.
- Son set us free!
- **For Life:** In Christ we are freed up from slavery to sin, to live for God!

FOR THE GROUP—Put it into Action!

1. What stands out to you from this section of Scripture or from this talk? Why?
2. Abraham and Sarah tried to force God’s promise by having a son through Hagar. What were the negative consequences of this? How did God sustain his promise, though they faltered? Have you ever had a time where you wavered in your faith, yet God sustained you?
3. This passage talks about how Christians will be part of the Jerusalem above. What is this Jerusalem from above? How does looking forward to this impact our lives today? (Read Heb. 12:22; Revelation 21:2-4).
4. Pray for one another.