

# HIS SIDE VERSUS OUR SIDE - OVERVIEW OF GALATIANS

Or, What is a TRUE Christian?

by Norman Harrison

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## CHAPTER 11

### NEW COVENANT VERSUS OLD COVENANT - GALATIANS 4:22-24

#### An Inspired Allegory

**"Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these (women) are two covenants."** -- Galatians 4:22-24

An allegory is defined as "figurative treatment of one subject under the guise of another."

It contains no convincing argument; rather, it pictures truth. So the allegory before us adds nothing to the doctrinal antithesis Paul has now concluded in Galatians 1-3; rather, it illustrates and illuminates it. It sharpens the antithesis. One is made to see that he must choose His Side and stay on it; there can be no playing around from one side to the other.

The Genesis account of Abraham and his two sons is familiar to all. GOD had promised him: **"In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed"** (Genesis 12:3). Yet Sarah had no son; so she proposed giving Abraham her servant, Hagar, to wife. It was an earthly, fleshly expedient -- just to help GOD out. But GOD refused to accept the son, Ishmael; and Sarah herself repudiated both mother and boy. They were slaves and could be nothing more. Than GOD intervened and Isaac was born to Sarah, by GOD's power, according to His plan, in fulfillment of His promise. Thus we have the antithesis:

#### **Sarah and Her Son versus Hagar and Her Son**

Now the allegory unfolds: the two mothers are two covenants, known to us as the New Covenant and the Old Covenant, while their sons are the children of these covenants, with their nature and status definitely fixed before GOD.

Hagar symbolizes Mount Sinai **"which gendereth to bondage"** (vs. 24), her children being born under the law there given, powerless to change their status as bondmen. During slavery days in

the United States the law gave a child born to a slave woman the status of his mother; even though his father was a free man, he was a slave, the property of his mother's owner. Now Sinai, says Paul, "answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children" (vs. 25). At the time Paul wrote Jerusalem was still standing and her children were slavishly carrying on all the rites and ceremonies directed by the Sinaitic law.

Sarah stands for "Jerusalem which is above," which is "free" (vs. 26). She is "**the mother of us all**," so we have the status of the free-born. To get the full force of this allegorical antithesis one should take the time to read it in fuller detail as given in Hebrews 12:18-24. Over against the terrifying experience of those who came to Mount Sinai to be put under Law, we read, "**But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem ... and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.**"

The privilege of being on His Side, under the provisions of the New Covenant, free and joyous, destined for our Father's house -- these privileges are so evident, one wonders how any one would willingly revert to Our Side, to the bondage of law-works and self effort. The New Covenant affords:

*Bigger Progeny* (vs. 27).

Sarah was barren, yet GOD made her to rejoice as the mother through whom all the families of the earth are blessed. On the other hand, the Old Covenant has for this present age been left sterile, sadly so. Through the Gospel GOD's life-line is reaching out to the ends of the earth to bring many sons to Himself and to His heavenly abode.

*Better Promises* (vs. 28) "**Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.**" The New Covenant is a covenant of promise: the promise of favor with GOD, of His life and very presence, of the HOLY SPIRIT and power to live the life. The resources of GOD's free-born are inexhaustible. Those resources are Himself given to us.

*Bitter Persecution* (vs. 29). "**As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.**" The antipathy begun in Ishmael toward Isaac is perpetuated in their descendents. The children of the flesh cannot understand or appreciate the children of the Spirit. Their presence is an offense. One may live a merely religious life and avoid persecution, but for those who live the life of GOD upon earth, as CHRIST did and suffered for it, "**All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution**" (II Timothy 3:12).

**"So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free"** (31).

"Therefore"! -- as we pass from doctrine to duty. What is the "therefore"? What is the Christian's supreme obligation? Not to law, but to live out his freedom.

~ end of chapter 11 ~

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