

In-Depth Study of Galatians 4:21-31

In the Amillennial world, it is a creed that, when Christ died on the cross, the old covenant world with its rituals and laws also died. Thus, it ceased to be, and after this event, the new covenant that Christ ratified with his blood was thus established and in effect. The majority that holds to this belief has merely been taught this interpretation but has not done their own research to affirm or deny this interpretation to be Scriptural. Frankly, this is how it is with most denominations. Even so, it is the duty of every Bible student to study the Scriptures in light of their own interpretation and others. This Amillennial belief has mostly likely arisen from a couple key passages. In the gospel according to John, before Jesus died upon the cross, he said, "It is finished" (19:30). There are different interpretations as to what was meant by the Christ when these words were spoken, but the Amillennial interpretation teaches that Jesus was referring to the end of the Law. They believe that Jesus was saying that the Law was "finished." Thus, the old covenant world had ended. Another passage that is used as a proof text for this belief is Colossians 2:13-14: "And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross." It is believed this meant that, when the Christ died on the cross, the Law died on the cross as well, implying its final end. The question is whether passages like these actually imply that the old covenant ceased to be and the new covenant began as the only reigning covenant after the time of Christ's death on the cross. This does not seem to be the case.

Although passages such as Colossians 2:14 may seem to imply a sudden change from one covenant to another, it does not mean the Scriptures teach that the old covenant mode of existence had ceased to be nor does it mean that Paul and Jesus were wrong in what they said. When Jesus said, "It is finished," it is possible that he may have been speaking about something else. Taking a deeper look into the context of the record according to John, Christ's last words are fairly vague. "It is finished" could be referring to his suffering. Since Jesus played various roles (rabbi, priest, king, etc.), the phrase could also be referring to one of his roles as the sacrificial lamb. There isn't much within the context itself to declare that Christ was referring to the complete end of the Law, unless, of course, one refers to Colossians 2:14. Even then, the letter of Paul to the Colossians does not necessitate a complete end of the Law at the death of the Christ. When Paul told the Colossians that Christ had set aside the Law by nailing it to the cross, this could simply mean that the power of the Law had died with Christ. The shackles had been removed, and those under the Law had been freed from its power. This does not mean that it was not in existence, for the Law also existed by those who continued to practice and observe it, and as long as the temple still stood so did the Law. Romans 4. Hebrews 9. Colossians 3.

Although the Law had been disarmed and its power dissolved, the old covenant world still existed until the time it would be destroyed through the Christ's finished work, so throughout the first century Scriptures, much language is used and many things are said or implied that the old covenant world was still around at that time. This implies that two covenants were in existence at the same time, and this very idea was written about in the first century. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul deals with the co-existence two covenants (or better yet, two modes of existence), the beginning and end of the first, and the beginning and eternal reign of the second. Paul deals with these issues through the living prophecy of Abraham and his two sons:

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. (4:21-31)

This passage seems to indicate the over-lapping of two modes of existence by the example of the over-lapping of two heirs. not the sudden end of one covenant and the beginning of another. When Paul wrote the letter to those in Galatia, he made a point to make them understand that they (the Christians) were of the "free-woman," and those of the "bond-woman" could not be heir with those of the free. So those of the bond-woman were to be cast out (4:30-31). Paul also makes it clear that this was all foreshadowed long ago through the living example of Abraham and his two sons (4:22-24).

To have a better understanding and grasp on the implications made by Paul to the Galatians, it is important to have an understanding of Israel's history with its spiritual importance, implications, and typology. Therefore, the same common knowledge and understanding that Israel had concerning Abraham and his two sons must be brought to the forefront of thought as this passage in the letter to the Galatians is read so that it may be interpreted and understood correctly. So it is necessary to begin with the account of the covenant made between YHWH and Abram.

The Covenant Made with Abraham & His Two Sons

Abram did not have any children, so he did not have an heir. Because of this, Abram was going to make Eliezer of Damascus his heir, but God came to him in a vision:

"Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." **2** But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" **3** And Abram said, "Behold, 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." **5** And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." **6** And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness. (Genesis 15:1-6)

YHWH said that he would make nations come forth from the offspring of Abram, and Abram believed Him. Abram was most likely around 76 years old during this time (Genesis 16:3 & 16). About a decade passes, and Abram still does not have an heir. Sarai, Abram's wife, decides that she will obtain children by her maidservant, since she could not have her own:

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. **15** And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. (Genesis 16:1-4 & 15).

Sarai just could not stand not having children, so Abram, giving into her wishes, takes her maidservant Hagar and has a boy named Ishmael, his first-born son and heir. But this is not the heir that God spoke of in Genesis 15:4. Ishmael was conceived and born through human desire. It could even be said that he was then born by the flesh. The heir that YHWH spoke of was of a different nature—the spirit, because that heir was God-chosen of promise. This must be kept in mind as this study develops.

About another thirteen years pass, when YHWH appears to Abram once again and says to him:

"I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, **2** that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly." **3** Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, **4** "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. **5** No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. **6** I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. **7** And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. **8** And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." **9** And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. **10** This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. **11** You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. **12** He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, **13** both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. **14** Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant." **22** When he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham. **23** Then Abraham took Ishmael his son and all those born in his house or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day, as God had said to him. **24** Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. **25** And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. **26** That very day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised. **27** And all the men of his house, those born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him. (Genesis 17:1b-14 & 22-27)

This is a crucial point in the history of God's chosen people. A covenant is made between YHWH and Abram. Nations would come from Abram's seed, because of this, God changes

Abram's name to Abraham, which means "father of a multitude." Circumcision was established to denote who they as a people were—God's chosen people. Every male, whether they were born of Israel or Israeli owned, from then on was circumcised. That fleshly trait was the physical sign of the everlasting covenant between God and the Abrahamic line. Thus must also be kept in mind, because this is another important shadow that will be seen later in the study.

God then tells Abraham how this would all come about: through Sarai, his wife. The heir that was promised to Abraham in Genesis 15 was always to come from her, but Abraham gave into human want instead of waiting for God's promise to be fulfilled. So it can be said that he gave into the fleshly instead of waiting for the spiritual:

And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. **16** I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from 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 hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"
18 And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!" **19** God said, "No, but 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. **20** As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. **21** But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year." (Genesis 17:15-21)

Sarai's name is changed to Sarah, because she would bear an heir for Abraham and nations would come from her. Because of their age, Abraham did not believe that they would have any other child besides Ishmael, so Abraham says, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!" (17:18). Ishmael was not God's chosen son for Abraham, so God tells Abraham that a son through Sarah would be his heir. His name would be named Isaac, which means "laughter" or "mockery." This would be the son with whom the covenant would be established (17:19).

What is interesting is what happened to Ishmael. In Genesis 16:7-13, after Hagar had conceived, Sarai dealt harshly with her, so Hagar ran away:

The angel of the Lord found her [Hagar] by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. **8** And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai." **9** The angel of the Lord said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her." **10** The angel of the Lord also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude." **11** And the angel of the Lord said to her, "Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has listened to your affliction. **12** He shall be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen." **13** So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing," for she said, "Truly here I have seen him who looks after me."

YHWH was listening to Hagar's affliction, thus her son's name, Ishmael, means "God will hear." God was going to bless Ishmael, and many offspring would come from him. God also said this to Abraham. In Genesis 17:20, God said, "As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall

father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation." Since God said that the covenant was not to be established with Ishmael but with Isaac, it is certain that Ishmael was not the heir promised to Abraham in Genesis 15 (Genesis 17:19-21). Therefore, Ishmael did not come from the works of God. He came about from the works of Abraham. It is evident that God never wanted Abraham to have a child with someone who was not his wife Sarai, for she was the one to give birth to Isaac, the chosen heir. So why didn't God reprimand Abraham and Sarah for what they did?

Although everything in the life of Abraham is not recorded in the Scriptures, it could be speculated that there was some form of punishment, but since nothing is stated, it would just be assumption. No assumption should be made. Even though it may not have been how God wanted things to actually operate, God allowed certain things to happen so that He could use them as examples or shadows of some ultimate goal. That is exactly the case with Ishmael and Isaac. This is another issue that will be seen more as this study develops.

In Genesis 21:1-5 & 8-21, finally, after roughly 24 years, Abraham has Isaac, his God-chosen heir:

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. **8** And the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. **9** But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing. **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. **15** When the water in the skin was gone, she put the child under one of the bushes. **16** Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot, for she said, "Let me not look on the death of the child." And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. **17** And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. **18** Up! Lift up the boy, and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make him into a great nation." **19** Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. **20** And God was with the boy, and he grew up. He lived in the wilderness and became an expert with the bow. **21** He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

Isaac was born and circumcised on the eighth day, just as God commanded. Sarah, then, tells Abraham to cast out the bond-woman and her son Ishmael, so that he could not become heir with Isaac. This displeased Abraham, because Ishmael was his son as well. God came to Abraham and told him to do as his wife Sarah said. Why did God allow this to happen? It seems that the casting out of the bond-woman and her son would be a shadow of an ultimate goal. Hagar and Ishmael were not being punished for anything that they did.

They were being used in a living parable, so that those living during the time of this antitype would be able to clearly see what was occurring in their time. This is why God blessed Hagar and Ishmael. Although they were cast out, God provided for them, and a great nation came from Ishmael's seed, which was fulfilled according to Genesis 25:12-18.

The Symbolism Of Abraham's Two Sons

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. (Galatians 4:21-31)

This is why the account of Abraham and his two sons played out the way it did. That true-life event (or living parable as it is sometimes called) would symbolically represent something sometime in the future (v. 24), and at the time of Paul's writing of the Galatian letter, it was occurring (v. 28). The antitype of Abraham's two sons with their respective mothers occurred in the first century. So who was who? Hagar represented Mount Sinai, the Old Covenant with the Law, and Jerusalem. Hagar's Children represented fleshly Israel. Sarah represented Mount Zion, the New Covenant, and the New Jerusalem. Sarah's Children represented spiritual Israel. They represent two different covenants, peoples, worlds, and natures.

Ishmael was born of a bondswoman by the authority of the flesh (Genesis 16:1-4 & 15). He would represent the children of Israel under bondage of the Law under the Old Covenant. Isaac was born of a freewoman by promise through the power of the spirit (Genesis 17:19-21). In his book *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Max King shows an interesting comparison of Abraham's two sons by further explanation of what has just been presented:

Ishmael was born after the flesh (Gal. 4:23) and Isaac was born after the Spirit (Gal. 4:29). This contrast of flesh and spirit with respect to the birth of these two sons is based upon the manner that each came into being. Ishmael was born after the flesh in that his birth was according to the common course of nature, his parents being of a reasonable age, so there was nothing uncommon or supernatural in his birth. The birth of Isaac was above and beyond the ordinary course of nature, involving the promise of God, and calling forth from Abraham and Sarah an act of faith. ... Both were physically born, but the power by which they were both born was different. The birth of Ishmael of a bondswoman, according to the natural course of nature, became a fitting representation of Abraham's fleshly descendants, and the state of their bondage under the Old Covenant. By contrast, the birth of Isaac to a

freewoman was symbolic of Abraham's seed born of faith through Christ, and their freedom under the New Covenant.¹

There are two concepts to keep in mind. Although both Ishmael and Isaac were both born physically, the nature of their births were what was important. Ishmael was born from human desire. Therefore, it can be said he was born of the flesh (Galatians 4:23). Isaac was born from the desire of YHWH. His birth was of promise and prophecy. For physical signs of this miraculous birth, God not only foretold that it would happen by his doing (Genesis 17:15-16), but it occurred during the time of Abraham and Sarah's lives when they naturally could not bear any children (Genesis 17:17). Therefore, it can be said that he was born of the spirit (Galatians 4:23 & 29).

Genesis 21 indicates that Hagar and her son Ishmael resided within their lord's (Abraham's) house at the same time that Sarah and her son Isaac did for a time.² Since Ishmael was physically the first-born son and heir in Abraham's house, he would be the one to receive the inheritance. Sometime after Isaac was born, when he was weaned, Sarah realized the problem of Ishmael being the first born:

And the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. **9** But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing. **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." (Genesis 21:8-10)

Ishmael was the first-born, so he was to receive the inheritance. Isaac was the first-born chosen by God, so Ishmael had to be removed from the house. With the removal of Hagar and her son Ishmael from their lord's house, Isaac, God's chosen heir, could then receive the inheritance. This was the shadow of what would have to take place in the first century. Since the antitype of Abraham's sons and their two mothers occurred in the first century (Galatians 4:29), which covenant does Hagar represent? Who are Hagar's children? Which covenant does Sarah represent? Who are Sarah's children? In response to these questions, it is the opinion of this writer, that Hagar represents the Old Covenant with the Law, and her children were Israel. Sarah represents the New Covenant, and her children are spiritual Israel (the church, followers of Christ).

Israel (Ishmael) with the Law had to be removed from the Lord's house, so that the true chosen heir, spiritual Israel (Isaac), could then receive the inheritance. Just as was seen in Genesis 21, Isaac could not fully receive the inheritance as rightful heir until Ishmael was removed from the house. So if the antitype of Abraham's two sons of their respective mothers occurred within the first century, as Paul indicated to the Galatians, what events signify the beginning of the co-residency of symbolical Ishmael and Isaac and the casting out of antitypical Ishmael so that antitypical Isaac could then receive the inheritance as rightful, God-chosen heir? The Scriptures seem to indicate that the co-residency of symbolical Ishmael (fleshly Israel) and Isaac (spiritual Israel) began on Pentecost, and the casting out of symbolical Hagar and Ishmael (the Law and fleshly Israel) occurred at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. This will be seen as the study develops.

¹ Max King, *The Spirit Of Prophecy* (Colorado Springs, CO: Bimillennial Press, 2002), 61. Print.

² Sarah called Abraham her husband lord (Genesis 18:12).

Introduction

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. (Galatians 4:21-31)

In the last study, a series of questions were asked. One of these questions was this: who did Hagar and her children represent? In the opinion of this writer, based from what was said in Galatians 4:21-31, Hagar represented the Old Covenant with the Law and her children represented fleshly Israel. The majority of scholars do not dispute this. Paul took a true-life account, blatantly said what represented what, who represented who, and explained the overall physical and spiritual importance of the account. It was a foreshadow of what was to come, and Paul said that it was occurring at the very time he was writing this letter to the Christians in Galatia (v. 29).

A Bondwoman Gave Birth To A Child Of Bondage

It is certain that Hagar represented the Old Covenant and her children represented fleshly Israel. How? Why? Paul said there were two women: one was a slave and one was free. Each one represented something else, but they were the same in framework. Each one was a mother. Paul told the Galatians that Sarah (the Jerusalem from above) was their mother (4:26). The Greek word for mother, "mētēr," means "mother" literally or figuratively. Metaphorically, "mētēr" can refer to a source from whence something came. The followers of Christ metaphorically came from Sarah their mother. What is important is what Sarah represented. This very same concept applies to Hagar. She was the metaphorical source of fleshly Israel. She represented the Old Covenant with the Law. Therefore, Paul is saying that the Old Covenant with the Law is the mother of fleshly Israel. Israel came from the Old Covenant with the Law.

Hagar was the mother of fleshly Israel, but who was she exactly?

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. **15** And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. (Genesis 16:1-4b & 15)

Hagar is called a "servant." This Hebraic word, "shiphchâh," refers to a female servant, as an extension of the household. Other translations use words such as "slave" or "bondservant." This bondservant gave birth to Ishmael. Thus, he, being born of a servant, would be a servant as well under normal circumstances, but he was to be born as Abram's heir. For a time, he was the heir. Ishmael was born to Abram when he was 86 years old (Genesis 16:16). When he turned 100 years old, Isaac was born to him (Genesis 21:5). Ishmael was Abram's heir until Isaac was born to Abraham, so Ishmael was heir for about 14 years.

What is important about Ishmael becoming Abram's heir is how he became heir. Sarai wanted a child, so she told Abram to provide them with a child through her maidservant Hagar (Genesis 16:1-4b & 15). God said that he would provide them with an heir, but Ishmael was not the one. Isaac was the one:

And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. **16** I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from 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 hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" **18** And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!" **19** God said, "No, but 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. **20** As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. **21** But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year." (Genesis 17:15-21)

Ishmael was not the God-chosen heir. Isaac was. Isaac was chosen by God. His birth was of promise and prophecy. For physical signs of this miraculous birth, God not only foretold that it would happen by his doing (Genesis 17:15-16), but it occurred during the time of Abraham and Sarah's lives when they naturally could not bear any children (Genesis 17:17). Therefore, it can be said that Isaac was born of the spirit (Galatians 4:23 & 29). This could not be said about Ishmael, for he was born through human want (Genesis 16:1-4b & 15). It could thus be said that Ishmael was born of the flesh through human desire by the natural course of mankind (Genesis 16: 1-4b & 15; Galatians 4:23), and Isaac was born of the Spirit through divine desire by miraculous means of promise and prophecy (Genesis 21:1-7 & Galatians 4:23 & 29).

Thus, there were two heirs: one of the flesh and one of the Spirit. From the time of Isaac's birth, Ishmael and Isaac were co-heirs for the inheritance:

And the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. **9** But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing. **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. (Genesis 21:8-14)

This passage indicates that both Ishmael and Isaac lived in their father’s house as co-heirs for some time. Ishmael was around long enough for Isaac to grow until he was weaned (Genesis 21:8). It wasn’t until this time that Sarah realized the problem. She saw Ishmael laughing in a mocking manner and decided that Hagar and her son, Ishmael, had to leave. She told Abraham to send the two away. After YHWH came to Abraham and told him to listen to his wife, Abraham sent the two out of his house.

If Sarah did not want Ishmael to be co-heir with her son Isaac, why did she wait until this time to have Abraham send them away? There could be various ways to answer this question, but the one answer that would fit all the criteria is this: this is the exact time that God wanted it to happen. God wanted the same thing that Sarah did but for a different reason. Sarah wanted them gone because of her frustration of Ishmael’s mockery and most likely the discontent she already had for Hagar (Genesis 16:4-6). God desired their removal from Abraham’s house because of what it would mean. As Paul has already indicated, this account would be used metaphorically to represent something else in the future (Galatians 4:24). For God to approve of Sarah’s command of the removal of Hagar and Ishmael and of the time of this decision shows that this was also his desire. This was how it was to unfold. Ishmael being born first then Isaac, the co-reigning of two heirs in their father’s house, and the removal of the first heir so that the second could be sole heir as ultimately intended was all allowed by God. God allowed these events to unfold this way at these specific times, because he could then use it all as a living parable—a shadow of things to come.

Abraham sent Hagar and her son Ishmael away—out of his house, ending the co-heir reign of Ishmael and Isaac. With Ishmael out of the picture, Isaac became sole heir. What did this make Ishmael? Hagar was a bondservant. She gave birth to a son, who in normal circumstances would have also been a slave by birth, but he was born the first-born heir of Abram. He would have been heir, but this was not the desire of YHWH. God chose Isaac as heir, because the covenant was through Isaac’s bloodline. When Ishmael was cast out with his mother Hagar, he was no longer an heir. He was just a slave like his mother. Therefore, it could be said that Ishmael, being born of a bondservant, was always born into a state of bondage, for that became his destiny.

Hagar As The Covenant Of Mount Sinai

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. (Galatians 4:24-25)

Hagar, a slave, gave birth to an offspring who became nothing more than a slave. Paul blatantly says that Hagar represents a couple things: Mount Sinai with the covenant given from Mount Sinai and the “present” Jerusalem. When Moses brought the children of Israel to the mountain, a covenant was made there between God and his people. Along with this covenant came the Law. There were rules, regulations, procedures, days and festivals to keep, priests, sacrifices, and a tabernacle. This covenant, along with its Law, did nothing

but make Israel a slave. This is exactly Paul's point in Galatians 3:15-26 before he introduced this allegory:

To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. **16** Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. **17** This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. **18** For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise. **19** Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. **20** Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one. **21** Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. **22** But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. **23** Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. **24** So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. **25** But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, **26** for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

Paul indicates that the covenant made on Mount Sinai with the Law did not replace the covenant made with Abraham. It did not add to that promise either. It was implemented for transgressions until Abraham's seed came—Jesus. Until the time, the Law was their guardian, but this guardian (the covenant of Mount Sinai) was a guardian of enslavement, as Paul goes on to explain:

I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, **2** but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. **3** In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. **4** But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, **5** to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. **6** And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" **7** So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. (Galatians 4:1-7)

Remember that Paul is speaking to Christians. Christians were no longer guarded by the Law. They were no longer slaves, but sons of God and the inheritance, for they had been baptized into Christ:

But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, **26** for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. **27** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. **28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **29** And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Galatians 3:25-29)

Just as Paul told the Galatians that the Old Covenant with the Law placed Israel in bondage, he also told the Christians in Rome that Israel had been held captive by the Law (7:6).

The Law also became known as the ministry of death (2 Corinthians 3:7), for it was the Law that brought sin to light:

What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." **8** But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. **9** I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. **10** The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. **11** For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. (Romans 7:7-11)

The Law was not sin. In fact, Paul even stated that the "the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good" (Romans 7:12). Because it showed forth what sin was, man could not follow it. The Law, although holy and good, could not save man (Hebrews 7:19). Thus, it condemned him (2 Corinthians 3:9). So it was said by Paul to the Christians in Corinth, "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law" (15:56). No one could be made righteous by the Law. If the Law could have made Israel righteous, then Christ's sacrifice would have been in vain (Galatians 2:21). There would not have been a need for Messiah. "Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. **22** But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin" (Galatians 3:21-22a).

The Old Covenant with the Law was the guardian that kept Israel enslaved until Messiah came—Abraham's seed (Galatians 3:16). Opposite of that ministry of death and bondage that could not bring righteousness, Jesus, Israel's redeemer, would bring in everlasting righteousness, for his ministration is exactly that:

And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. **4** Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. **5** Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, **6** who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. **7** Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, **8** will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? **9** For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. **10** Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it. **11** For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory. (2 Corinthians 3:3-11)

Hagar As The "Present" Jerusalem

Hagar also represented the Jerusalem that existed at the time that Paul wrote this letter to the Christians in Galatia. Jerusalem was the city and the focal point of the land that Israel possessed. It was also the major commercial city for merchants in the entire land. The land that they possessed was the inheritance promised by God to Abraham's seed:

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." (Genesis 12:1-3)

And he said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." **13** Then the Lord said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. **14** But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. **15** As for yourself, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. **16** And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." **18** On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, **19** the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, **20** the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, **21** the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites." (Genesis 15:7, 13-16, & 18-21)

God promises Abraham that his offspring would inherit the land he was in, but they would be servants in a land that was not theirs. The children of Israel were servants in Egypt until the exodus. After a 40-year wandering in the wilderness, they then entered the land to possess it, and they did. Jerusalem was later built and became the focal point of Judea. The promise was fulfilled, at least in one aspect.

As it is with much of the Old Testament Scriptures, the "Christian world" sees all of this as just a promise of a physical inheritance. It was fulfilled, and that was the end of it. Thus, the account is just another story to learn from, but this account has two layers. This is even made clear in Hebrews 11. It is true that all occurred physically, but there was a spiritual side to all of it. In his book *The Spirit Of Prophecy*, Max R. King expounds upon this very idea:

There is a temporal and spiritual promise contained in this passage, and, as seen in Paul's allegory, the temporal promise would be developed and fulfilled first. This accounts for the fact that throughout the Old Testament, the fleshly promise overshadows the spiritual promise. While Hagar bears children, Sarah is barren and stands in the background. However, the fact that the temporal promise was first, and received primary consideration throughout the Old Testament, does not mean it has a greater value or standing than the spiritual promise: quite to the contrary. ... The temporal promise was not the one on which Abraham set his heart. His hope was in Isaac, not Ishmael. His faith was extended beyond Canaan, the inheritance of his fleshly seed, to the land typified by Canaan that would be inherited by Isaac his spiritual seed. In other words, he did not look for inheritance in the Jewish world, but rather the Christian world, to which the Jewish world pointed.³

As was mentioned before, this is the exact point that is made by the writer to the Hebrews in 11:8-16:

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. **9** By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. **10** For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. **11** By faith Sarah herself received power to

³ Max King, *The Spirit Of Prophecy* (Colorado Springs, CO: Bimillennial Press, 2002), 65-66. Print.

conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. **12** Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore. **13** These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. **14** For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. **15** If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. **16** But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

Abraham went to live in the promised land, and he lived there as if he were in a foreign land, living in tents as if he were just a stranger not one who belonged (v. 9). This was the same for Isaac and Jacob—heirs of the same promise. Why does the writer of the Hebrew letter say this? The answer is in the next verse: “he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God” (v. 10). Abraham was already in the promised land, but he was looking forward to a different land—a heavenly one. He died in faith seeing the spiritual promised land by faith, “having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth” (v. 13). Interestingly enough, the Greek word for “earth” in that verse is “ge,” which refers to “country,” “ground,” or “land.” This means they were strangers and exiles on that temporal promised land. “But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city” (v. 16).

They were in the promised land, but they did not receive the promise. They were in that land, but by faith, they saw that land afar off (v. 13). It was important for Israel to possess a physical land because of what it meant. The temporal was important, but the spiritual was far more important. God prepared that city that Abraham looked forward to. It was the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22). It was the Jerusalem from above (Galatians 4:26).

Ishmael and his mother had to be removed from his father’s house so that Isaac could be sole heir and finally receive the inheritance, for he could not until Ishmael was removed. Just like Hagar had to be removed, the Old Covenant with all of its attributes had to be removed as well, one of those attributes being the land, which was generalized by its focal point—Jerusalem. The temporal had to make way for the spiritual, so the physical, temporal land also had to be removed to make way for the permanent, spiritual land.

Introduction

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. (Galatians 4:22-31)

In the last study, the focus was on the identification of Hagar and her children. Hagar represents the Old Covenant of Mount Sinai with the Law, and her offspring (physical Israel) are those enslaved by that system. She corresponds to the "present" Jerusalem which was the epicenter of the Jewish world. There is little doubt who Paul is referring to when it comes to the metaphorical Hagar and her offspring. What must be identified now is who Sarah and her children represent. In this allegory, there is definite parallelism between these two figures—Hagar and Sarah. Hagar represented the covenant of Mount Sinai and the "present" Jerusalem. Therefore, Sarah represents the new covenant of a greater mountain and a different Jerusalem.

Sarah As The Covenant Of Mount Zion

In Galatians 4:24, Paul said that "these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai...she is Hagar." As she represents Mount Sinai, she also represents the covenant that came from that Mount. There are things characteristic about Mount Sinai that are very interesting to take note of:

1 On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. **2** They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain, **3** while Moses went up to God. The Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: **4** You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. **5** Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; **6** and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel." **7** So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the Lord had commanded him. **8** All the people answered together and said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." And Moses reported the words of the people to the Lord. **9** And the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and

may also believe you forever.” When Moses told the words of the people to the Lord, **10** the Lord said to Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments **11** and be ready for the third day. For on the third day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. **12** And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, ‘Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death. **13** No hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live.’ When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain.” **14** So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people; and they washed their garments. **15** And he said to the people, “Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman.” **16** On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. **17** Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. **18** Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. **19** And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. **20** The Lord came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. **21** And the Lord said to Moses, “Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to the Lord to look and many of them perish. **22** Also let the priests who come near to the Lord consecrate themselves, lest the Lord break out against them.” **23** And Moses said to the Lord, “The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for you yourself warned us, saying, ‘Set limits around the mountain and consecrate it.’” **24** And the Lord said to him, “Go down, and come up bringing Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the Lord, lest he break out against them.” **25** So Moses went down to the people and told them. (Exodus 19)

God was in the process of making another covenant with His people. If they obeyed, they would be made “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (v. 6). The twelve tribes of Israel came to this mountain to enter into covenant with their God and to become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

God wanted the children of Israel to believe the words of Moses forever (v. 9), so God told Moses that He was going to come down on top of the mountain in a thick cloud (v. 9) in the sight of all the children of Israel (v. 11). Verses 16, 18, & 19 describe the greatness and fearfulness of the presence of the Lord in apocalyptic language that is seen various times throughout the Scriptures. There was a thick cloud. The Mountain was wrapped in smoke. There were trumpet blasts, lightning, and thunder. It does not seem to be the case that YHWH physically came down though. He came down on top of Mount Sinai (vv. 11 & 20), but He said in what manner that would be—a cloud (v. 9). It was not necessary for the children of Israel to see Him physically with their own eyes, for they were to hear not see (v. 9). Yes, the text does say that He would come down in the sight of all the people (v. 11), but that does not necessitate that they actually saw God. What they saw were signs of His presence (vv. 16 & 18-19). In this way, they could see (or better put, know or understand) that they were before God’s presence. Those who broke through to catch a glimpse of the Lord would be punished (v. 21), not because they would actually see Him but because of their mindset in doing so. They had already been warned to not do so (v. 23). For one to try would be disobedience and would be punished.

What should also be noted is what was commanded of the people before God “came down” on the third day:

10 The Lord said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments **11** and be ready for the third day. For on the third day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. **14** So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people; and they washed their garments. (vv. 10-11 & 14)

They had to be consecrated and had to wash their garments. They had to be made holy and clean before they could be before the presence of the Lord. Even in doing this, the children of Israel were still not in such a condition that they were allowed to fully be in the presence of the Lord:

10 The Lord said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments **11** and be ready for the third day. For on the third day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. **12** And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, 'Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death. **13** No hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain." (vv. 10-13)

They had to be sanctified and have clean garments to be before their Lord, but they could not fully be in His presence. They could see that it was there before them, but they would not go up or even touch. It was within their grasp but so far away.

Paul said that "one is from Mount Sinai" (v. 24). Therefore, the other woman (Sarah) represents a different Mount. This is Mount Zion, which is discussed in the letter to the Hebrews:

18 For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest **19** and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. **20** For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned." **21** Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear." **22** But you have come to Mount Zion. (12:18-22)

The Hebrew writer describes Mount Sinai. This was the mountain by a "blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest **19** and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them" (vv. 18b-19). This describes exactly what happened at the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai in Exodus 19. The Hebrew writer even quotes a passage from Exodus 19 that would bring the entire account to the minds of the readers: "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned" (v. 20b). This is what God commanded in Exodus 19:12-13: "**12** And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, 'Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death. **13** No hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live."

The Hebrew writer is telling his audience that, unlike their forefathers who came to a Mountain that was tangible [a mountain that could be touched but was not allowed by command of God (Hebrews 12:18; Exodus 19:12-13)], they had come to a different mountain. They had not come to the mountain that Hagar represented but the mountain that Sarah represented. This mountain represents an intangible, metaphorical, spiritual

mountain from whence the New Covenant would be fully established at the consummation of the ages. This is why, in Revelation 14, John saw in the vision Lord Jesus on top of Mount Zion *with* his people (v. 1).

In Exodus 19, God was going to come on top of the mountain, but all the people had to make ready and clean their garments before His arrival (vv. 9-11). Even after they had done these things, when YHWH had "come down," they still were not in a condition in which they could fully be in His presence. Not only were they not allowed to go up, they could not even touch the edge of the mountain (vv. 12-13), but the mountain to which the recipients of the Hebrew letter had come to was altogether different.

Just like the children of Israel did in Exodus 19, Israel [the olive tree, both Jew and Gentile (Romans 11)] in the first century was washing their garments and making ready before the coming of the Lord. This is why the letters written by Peter and Paul are full of instructions to abstain from sexual immorality, lying, corruptibility, and the like, because they were being cleansed for Messiah's return (2 Corinthians 11:2). Thus, they were instructed to walk in a manner worthy of the name that they bore (Colossians 1:10; 1 Timothy 2:12) and to help one another through the transition they were in (Hebrews 10:23-25), as they continued to hold fast, looking for the coming of the Son of Man with the kingdom.

In the vision that John saw, at the coming of the Son of Man, Israel (spiritual Israel, Jew and Gentile) had been made clean and was wearing white garments. They had been found clean at the return of the Messiah:

1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree. **2** Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, **3** saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." **4** And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel: **5** 12,000 from the tribe of Judah were sealed, 12,000 from the tribe of Reuben, 12,000 from the tribe of Gad, **6** 12,000 from the tribe of Asher, 12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali, 12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh, **7** 12,000 from the tribe of Simeon, 12,000 from the tribe of Levi, 12,000 from the tribe of Issachar, **8** 12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun, 12,000 from the tribe of Joseph, 12,000 from the tribe of Benjamin were sealed. **9** After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, **10** and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" **11** And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, **12** saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen." **13** Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" **14** I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. **15** "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. **16** They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. **17** For the Lamb in the midst of the throne

will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." (Revelation 7)

Israel had gone through cleansing and preparation. They had also gone through much persecution and tribulation. John saw that Israel had made it through the tribulation and had washed their garments in the blood of the lamb, making them white. Unlike Israel who could not go up to be with their Lord but had to stay at the foot of Mount Sinai, spiritual Israel, who washed their garments in the blood of the Lamb, were in such a condition that they could up on the mountain to join their Lord:

1 Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. **2** And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, **3** and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. **4** It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, **5** and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless. (Revelation 14:1-5)

Christ's return in A.D. 70 for the destruction of Jerusalem and the consummation signified the completeness of the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4) that Jesus would redeem his people from under Law and those who "did not know God, [who] were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods" (Galatians 4:8). These are the ones that made up the olive tree after the breaking off the natural branches of unbelief and the grafting in of the wild branches (Jew and Gentile) (Romans 11:11-24). These are the ones who made it out of the tribulation (Revelation 7:14). These are the ones who washed their garments in the blood of the lamb (Revelation 7:14), as they prepared for the return of Messiah, making themselves like "pure virgins" (2 Corinthians 11:2 & Revelation 14:4). These are the ones that made up the spiritually, numerologically significant 144,000 seen in the vision of John in Revelation 7 & 14: the number of completeness concerning the adoption of sons for the consummation (12,000 of every tribe making 144,000) (Galatians 4:1-6 & Revelation 7). These are the offspring of Sarah: the sons of the free (Galatians 4:23 & 31).

The olive tree, the true people of God, were the free sons. They were the children of promise (Galatians 4:28), because they were the metaphorical offspring of Sarah. They, at the adoption of sons, as the true heirs to the kingdom, could fully be in the presence of their Lord. Thus, they no longer had to stay at the edge of the mountain but got to go up on top of the mountain with their Lord (Revelation 14:1).

Sarah As The Jerusalem From "Above"

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. (Galatians 4:24-26)

Just as Hagar and Sarah both represent two different covenants, and two different mountains, they both represent two different Jerusalems. Hagar represented the Jerusalem that existed at the time that Paul wrote this letter to the Christians in Galatia: the "present"

Jerusalem (v. 25). Jerusalem was the city and the focal point of the land that Israel possessed. It was also the major commercial city for merchants in the entire land. The land that they possessed was the inheritance promised by God to Abraham's seed:

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." (Genesis 12:1-3)

And he said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." **13** Then the Lord said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. **14** But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. **15** As for yourself, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. **16** And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." **18** On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, **19** the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, **20** the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, **21** the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites." (Genesis 15:7, 13-16, & 18-21)

God promises Abraham that his offspring would inherit the land he was in, but they would be servants in a land that was not theirs. The children of Israel were servants in Egypt until the exodus. After a 40-year wandering in the wilderness, they then entered the land to possess it, and they did. Jerusalem was later built and became the focal point of Judea. The promise was fulfilled, at least in one aspect.

As it is with much of the Old Testament Scriptures, the "Christian world" sees all of this as just a promise of a physical inheritance. It was fulfilled, and that was the end of it. Thus, the account is just another story to learn from, but this account has two layers. This is even made clear in Hebrews 11. It is true that all occurred physically, but there was a spiritual side to all of it. In his book *The Spirit Of Prophecy*, Max R. King expounds upon this very idea:

There is a temporal and spiritual promise contained in this passage, and, as seen in Paul's allegory, the temporal promise would be developed and fulfilled first. This accounts for the fact that throughout the Old Testament, the fleshly promise overshadows the spiritual promise. While Hagar bears children, Sarah is barren and stands in the background. However, the fact that the temporal promise was first, and received primary consideration throughout the Old Testament, does not mean it has a greater value or standing than the spiritual promise: quite to the contrary. ... The temporal promise was not the one on which Abraham set his heart. His hope was in Isaac, not Ishmael. His faith was extended beyond Canaan, the inheritance of his fleshly seed, to the land typified by Canaan that would be inherited by Isaac his spiritual seed. In other words, he did not look for inheritance in the Jewish world, but rather the Christian world, to which the Jewish world pointed.⁴

⁴ Max King, *The Spirit Of Prophecy* (Colorado Springs, CO: Bimillennial Press, 2002), 65-66. Print.

As was mentioned before, this is the exact point that is made by the writer to the Hebrews in 11:8-16:

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. **9** By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. **10** For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. **11** By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. **12** Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore. **13** These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. **14** For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. **15** If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. **16** But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

Abraham went to live in the promised land, and he lived there as if he were in a foreign land, living in tents as if he were just a stranger, not one who belonged (v. 9). This was the same for Isaac and Jacob—heirs of the same promise. Why does the writer of the Hebrew letter say this? The answer is in the next verse: “he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God” (v. 10). Abraham was already in the promised land, but he was looking forward to a different land—a heavenly one. He died in faith seeing the spiritual promised land by faith, “having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth” (v. 13). Interestingly enough, the Greek word for “earth” in that verse is “ge,” which refers to “country,” “ground,” or “land.” This means they were strangers and exiles on that temporal promised land. “But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city” (v. 16).

They were in the promised land, but they did not receive the promise. This land is the “present” Jerusalem (the Jerusalem that Hagar represented) at the time of the Galatian Letter, in the first century. They (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) were in that physical land, but by faith, they saw that spiritual promised land afar off (v. 13). It was important for Israel to possess a physical land because of what it meant. The temporal was important, but the spiritual was far more important. The temporal pointed to the spiritual. God prepared that city that Abraham looked forward to. It was the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22). It was the Jerusalem from above: the Jerusalem that Sarah represented (Galatians 4:26). This “above” does not refer to a Jerusalem previously spoken of but a spiritual Jerusalem from heaven above not earth below:

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. **2** And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. **4** He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” (Revelation 21:1-4)

At the return of Messiah, after the complete bringing in of the new heaven and earth, the holy city, New Jerusalem, that was hoped for and seen afar off by Abraham (Hebrews 11:10), came down out of heaven from God. According to the vision that John saw, there was no resurrection up to the New Jerusalem above, because the Jerusalem comes down from heaven (Revelation 21:2). At the consummation, the Olive Tree of Romans 11 (Jew and Gentile), the ones being prepared as a "pure virgin" for the bridegroom, Jesus (2 Corinthians 11:2), receive/become (in another sense) the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:10). Israel no longer had to go to the temple to be close to God, because God came down to man and is now dwelling among them. "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God" (Revelation 21:3b).

Israel no longer had to stay at the edge of the mountain. They could now fully be in His presence, having washed their garments in the blood of the Lamb and made their garments white as snow. They were the children of Sarah—children of the new covenant from Mount Zion and of the Jerusalem from above (Galatians 4:26 & 31). They were no longer before Mount Sinai. They had "come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, **23** and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, **24** and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant" (Hebrews 12:22-24).

Introduction

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. (Galatians 4:22-31)

Thus far, in the past three studies on the allegory of Abraham's two sons penned by the apostle Paul, it has been made clear that Hagar represented the covenant with the law from Mount Sinai and Jerusalem, and her offspring, Ishmael, represented Israel. Sarah represented the covenant of Mount Zion and the Jerusalem from above, and her offspring, Isaac, represented spiritual Israel—the pruned and grafted olive tree (Messianic Jew and Gentle) (Romans 11). If Ishmael represented physical Israel and Isaac represented spiritual Israel, a question arises: if Ishmael represented a group of people, as did Isaac, how can both these groups come from the same person Isaac, Jew and Messianic Jew? This may cause a dilemma for some, but this will be made clear.

Paul's Concern For The Galatians

In the letter to the Galatians, Paul was addressing the problem that the Christians in Galatia had, which was continuing in the works of the Law for the purpose of salvation or "being perfected." This is evident by what Paul says in 3:1-6:

1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. **2** Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? **3** Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? **4** Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? **5** Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— **6** just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"?

It seems fairly certain that the majority of the Christians in Galatia were of Gentile origin. It is very likely that the Galatian Christians had been proselytes to Judaism. Although most, if not all, seemed to be of Gentile origin, Paul indicates that they were going back to the things or works of the Law (4:9-10). Whether the Galatians were Gentile proselytes or just Gentiles who became Christians (also keeping in mind that it is likely there were Jews there as well), Paul is still speaking of those who were going back to the things (or works) of the Law. Paul narrows it down to most likely being proselytes in 4:9-10:

8 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. **9** But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? **10** You observe days and months and seasons and years! **11** I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

Notice the question he asks the Galatians, "But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?" "Elementary principles" sounds like traditional talk on the sins of the world, but Paul makes his contextual statement clear. He follows his question with a statement of works they continued in that caused the question to arise: "You observe days and months and seasons and years!" These works were of the Law. These were "weak and worthless elementary principles" of the Jewish world that these Galatians were turning back to once more, purposely placing themselves back under bondage, as slaves once more, and as has already been seen in this study so far, those who were "slaves," in this context, were children of Hagar—fleshly Israel, the children of the Law of Mount Sinai (4:23-24).

The Galatians were going back to things of the Law, which seemed to discourage Paul: "I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain" (4:11). What caused these Christians to return to things of the Law? Because of their own belief and interpretation of things, they could have been doing this on their own initiative, but Paul had evidently been working with them much as to have "labored" over them. So Paul seems to know that they had to have been taught to continue in these works of the Law, for he says in 3:1, "O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?"

It was most likely a result of teaching that they may have received from teachers of false gospels:

6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— **7** not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. **8** But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. **9** As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. (1:6-10)

Paul knows that these Christians had been listening to another "gospel," as he states it. As Paul says, that does not mean there existed two sets of good news. There was only one true gospel, but the idea that there existed another "gospel" or message that could easily persuade others means that message must have had characteristics like the one true gospel to easily persuade those in Galatia. If Paul had in fact "labored" over these people, then it seems likely that they would have been knowledgeable enough to know the difference between true gospel teachings and "a gospel contrary to the one" preached to them. The closest teachings to the teachings of Christ were those of the Law, for not only did He follow it perfectly, he came to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17). Also, as it seems evident that the teachings that had persuaded the Galatians to continue in works of the Law, all signs point to the Judaizers as the culprits of these false gospels.

It could very well be the case that Judaizers had taught that the things of the Law had to be kept to receive salvation to those in Galatia. There could be two possible reasons for this,

subsequently making two sects of Judaizers: (1) there may have been those who, as anti-Christians, believing that the Israel of the Law was the only true people of God, were trying to persuade former proselytes to Judaism or Jews to leave the teachings of Jesus behind and return to Judaism or (2) there may have been Christians who believed that the things of the Law had to be followed in order to be saved and were teaching that to others, consequently making them a type of Judaizers. It seems like the Judaizers (uncertain the sect) are most likely the cause of the desertion.

This essentially points to an answer for the question: if Ishmael represented a group of people, as did Isaac, how can both these groups physically come from the same person Isaac, Jew and Messianic Jew? Ishmael represented a physical nation, and Isaac represented a spiritual nation. Both nations would come through Isaac's posterity. The spiritual nation (who Isaac pointed to) became the remnant (true spiritual Israel) of his physical descendants. The physical nation separated and cast out from the spiritual nation (spiritual Israel) is the nation that Ishmael pointed to—Isaac's physical descendants that did not accept Jesus as Messiah.

One Nation Becoming Two

A problem that has existed since not long after the first century is the distinction that has been made between Jews and Christians. What should have been one true group of people essentially became two very different groups. In a sense, that is what actually happened. There were Jews and there were Christians. The problem is the mentality for the difference between the two groups.

The prophets of Israel prophesied of a Messiah that would redeem Israel. This prophesied Messiah was Jesus the Christ. Jesus was a descendant of Abraham (Matthew 1:17) of the tribe of Judah (Matthew 1:2). In Genesis 49:9, Judah is called a lion's cub, while Jesus (the greatest from the tribe) is called "the lion of the tribe of Judah" (Revelation 5:5). Genesis 49:10 says, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples." The scepter would never leave Judah, for Jesus was not only the lion of the tribe of Judah but the root of David as well. Isaiah prophesies of this root:

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. **2** And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. **3** And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, **4** but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. **5** Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. **10** In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious. (11:1-5 & 10)

This root would become king of an everlasting kingdom:

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. **7** Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and

with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9:6-7)

Just as children are told in stories that the lion is the king of the jungle, the lion of Judah is the king of the kingdom of heaven, for He was the one to sit on the throne of David. Revelation 5:5 calls the Lamb, Jesus (John 1:29), the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" and "the Root of David." Jesus was not only a descendant of Judah but a descendant of King David as well (Matthew 1:17), fulfilling the prophecy of the one of who would sit on the throne of David (Luke 1:32).

In His first advent, Jesus, the Lamb, Lion, and true King and heir to the Davidic throne, came to redeem the children of Israel, for only He could do it. He told His disciples in Matthew 15:24, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Israel had been under bondage to the Law, because they could not follow it. Therefore, they were slaves to the Law (Romans 7:6), never fully being saved by it. The Law became known as the ministry of death (2 Corinthians 3:7), for it was the Law that brought sin to light:

What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." **8** But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. **9** I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. **10** The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. **11** For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. (Romans 7:7-11)

The Law was not sin. In fact, Paul even stated that the "the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good" (Romans 7:12). Because it showed forth what sin was, man could not follow it. The Law, although holy and good, could not save man (Hebrews 7:19). Thus, it condemned him (2 Corinthians 3:9). So it was said by Paul to the Christians in Corinth, "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law" (15:56). No one could be made righteous by the Law. If the Law could have made Israel righteous, then Christ's sacrifice would have been in vain (Galatians 2:21). There would not have been a need for Messiah. "Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. **22** But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin" (Galatians 3:21-22a).

The Law was implemented for transgressions until Abraham's seed came—Jesus (Galatians 3:16). Until that time, the Law was their guardian, but this guardian (the covenant of Mount Sinai) was a guardian of enslavement. Opposite of that ministry of death and bondage that could not bring righteousness, Jesus, Israel's redeemer, would bring in everlasting righteousness, for His ministration is exactly that:

And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. **4** Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. **5** Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, **6** who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. **7** Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, **8** will not the ministry of the Spirit have even

more glory? **9** For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. **10** Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it. **11** For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory. (2 Corinthians 3:3-11)

Christ's ministration that far surpassed the ministration of death in glory would comfort those that He came to redeem out from that very ministration of sin and death—the Law:

I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, **2** but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. **3** In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. **4** But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, **5** to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. **6** And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" **7** So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. (Galatians 4:1-7)

Remember that Paul is speaking to Christians. Christians were no longer guarded by the Law. They were no longer slaves, but sons of God and the inheritance, for they had been baptized into Christ:

But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, **26** for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. **27** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. **28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **29** And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Galatians 3:25-29)

To redeem something or someone, it means to pay a price of some sort to release from the power of something or someone, whether to make a slave to someone or something new or to release to freedom. Jesus came to do both. Just like God redeemed His chosen people out from under bondage to Egypt (Exodus 6:6), Jesus came to redeem the lost sheep of Israel out from under the Law of sin and death (Galatians 4:5; Romans 8:2). As Paul told the Romans, they were made free from sin but became servants of righteousness (6:18). Although they became servants, this type of enslavement was one of liberty. Paul told the Galatians, "So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman. For freedom Christ has set us free" (4:31-5:1). Only Christ could redeem Israel, but the Messiah's first advent brought the splitting of a nation.

Those Who Accepted and Those Who Did Not

When it became known that the Messiah had come to redeem His people, it is obviously clear what kind of freedom that the Jews thought they would be receiving. Even when John the Baptist was at work, he preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand (Matthew 3:2). When Jesus began His ministry, He began with the same teaching: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17b). Jesus even instructed His own disciples to preach the same thing when He sent them out, but He did so with instruction: "These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, **6** but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. **7** And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand'''" (Matthew 10:5-7). He

instructed them to only preach this message to the Jews, because they were God's people and the promises had always been made to Israel, Abraham's descendants.

This is why the gospel was preached to the Jew first, then the Gentile (Romans 1:16), for Jesus was sent for the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 15:24). The promises had been made to them, and they were under bondage. Christ's first advent was for the beginning of His work of the redemption of God's people. He had become their Rabbi, friend, brother, and lord. At the end of His work, He would also be their savior, redeemer, bridegroom, high priest, and king. Because of their unwillingness and hardness of heart, fleshly Israel would not accept Jesus as these things because He was not what they expected. Jesus knew this was how they would be as well, so He told a parable prophesying fleshly Israel's rejection and their resulting end:

As they heard these things, he [Jesus] proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. **12** He said therefore, "A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. **13** Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, 'Engage in business until I come.' **14** But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.' **15** When he returned, having received the kingdom... [he said, skipping down to v. 27b] as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.'" (Luke 19:11-15a & 27b)

Many (if not all) did not want to accept him, because he was not a physical king bringing in a physical kingdom. Since the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E., Israel had always been under another nation's thumb. It seems to be the case that much of their redemptive hope consisted much of being physically delivered from Rome and becoming a powerful, feared nation, as they were the chosen people of God. They understood that they on this physical plane would be in the kingdom of God, but what they misunderstood about the kingdom was the nature of it. They understood it to be physical, whereas the nature was spiritual.

Jesus knew that they would not understand either. This is why he continued to teach the multitudes things in the form of parables:

Then the disciples came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" **11** And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. **12** For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. **13** This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. **14** Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: "'You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive. **15** For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.'" (Matthew 13:10-15)

To this same multitude, Jesus told the parable of the weeds:

He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, **25** but while his men were sleeping, his enemy

came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. **26** So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. **27** And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?' **28** He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' **29** But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. **30** Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'" **34** All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable. **35** This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet: "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world." **36** Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." **37** He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. **38** The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, **39** and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels. **40** Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. **41** The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, **42** and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. **43** Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. **51** Have you understood all these things?" They said to him, "Yes." (Matthew 13:24-30, 34-43, & 51)

But did the disciples truly understand the nature of it? It seems that they understood the kingdom of heaven but still had trouble grasping the nature of it. In Matthew 20, ten disciples become angry at two other disciples for asking for prime positions on either side of their lord in the kingdom:

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. **21** And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." **22** Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." **23** He said to them, "You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." **24** And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. (vv. 20-24)

They seemed to believe that Jesus, as king, would have the authority to give them high ranking positions in the kingdom. This is why the other ten became angry with them. All twelve of them were disciples under the same rabbi. For two to become more important than the others would offend the rest of the disciples. But they still didn't seem to entirely grasp the nature of it, for Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking." This kingdom would not be an ordinary kingdom:

But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. **26** It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, **27** and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, **28** even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (vv. 25-28)

In a kingdom, there are ranks and positions of hierarchy and authority. This is just how kingdoms can efficiently operate, but in the kingdom of heaven, there is not such. This would make the kingdom of heaven significantly different from all other kingdoms, because

it would not function like an ordinary physical kingdom. It would be a spiritual kingdom, where the greatest would also be servants and the firsts would also be slaves.

Division Of A Nation II

In the last study, it was seen how Christ's first advent caused the division of a physical nation. The very nation that Jesus was sent to save, the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 15:24), did not accept Jesus as their prophesied king, savior, and redeemer. It seems that Jesus even knew that the majority of His people, the physical descendants of Abraham, would not accept Him as their king:

As they heard these things, he [Jesus] proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. **12** He said therefore, "A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. **13** Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, 'Engage in business until I come.' **14** But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.'" (Luke 19:11-14)

In this parable, the nobleman went to a far country to receive his kingdom and then return. He gave his servants a job to do while he was away, but his citizens hated him and did not want this nobleman to reign over them. The question that must be asked is "why?" Why did they not want this man to reign over them?

In this parable, the nobleman was Christ and his servants were the physical descendants of Abraham—Israel. Jesus knew that they would not accept Him as king. But why? A reasonable answer seems to be the type of kingdom He would receive. As Luke records in Luke 19, Jesus "proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately" (v. 11). Many seemed to believe that Jesus was their Messiah and with Him, there among them, they could then expect the kingdom to suddenly appear at any time. It is reasonable to assume that they expected this because of the kind of kingdom they thought they would be in.

As was mentioned before, since the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E., Israel had always been under another nation's thumb. It seems to be the case that much of their redemptive hope consisted much of being physically delivered from Rome and becoming a powerful, feared nation, as they were the chosen people of God. They understood that they on this physical plane would be in the kingdom of God, but what they misunderstood about the kingdom was the nature of it. They understood it to be physical, whereas the nature was spiritual. In John 6, after Jesus fed the "five thousand," He told his disciples,

"Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost." **13** So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. **14** When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!" **15** Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself. (vv. 12b-15)

They knew this Jesus to be a prophet and deciding that He was truly the one prophesied about, they were going to make Him king by force. They were expecting a physical king, and since Jesus had not done it yet, it seems they were going to make it happen themselves. Jesus knew what they were about, so He escaped to the mountain.

When Jesus and His disciples were on their way to Jerusalem, Matthew records another event proving those in Jerusalem acknowledged Jesus as their prophesied king:

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, **2** saying to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. **3** If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once." **4** This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, **5** "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'" **6** The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. **7** They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. **8** Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. **9** And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" **10** And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" **11** And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee."

As Jesus entered, the citizens of the city celebrated His entrance into the city as they would a king. They covered His path with branches and cloaks while shouting "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" and calling Him the "Son of David." This would imply Jesus as the heir to the Davidic throne, making Him their true king.

Christ was given up to be crucified by the same nation he was to be king over. During his questioning, Christ clearly stated the nature of this kingdom of which he would be king:

So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" **34** Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" **35** Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?" **36** Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world." **37** Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." **38** Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" (John 18:33-38)

The purpose of Jesus' birth was so he could become Israel's redeemer and king—"to bear witness to the truth" (v. 37). His kingdom was not of the world. If it was a physical kingdom, his followers would have fought to spare Jesus' life. If he died, he could not be king and physically reign. Christ's kingly reign and kingdom was not of a physical nature. It was of a spiritual nature. This was not what national Israel expected or wanted. Thus, they rejected their redeemer and king.

Paul's Explanation From Scripture

Since the Galatians were continuing in things of the Law, Paul decided to take a different approach to the situation. Paul, more than any of those in Galatia, would know the teachings of the Law and knew that even the teachings of the Law pointed to the gospel that he had preached to them in Galatia. Paul was a Pharisee and a son of a Pharisee (Acts 23:6) and was the pupil of Gamaliel, a famous and knowledgeable Rabbi of that time (Acts 22:3). Paul was a well-educated Pharisee that knew the Law and, with his conversion to the cause of Christ, understood the implications of the Law and Christ's fulfillment of it. To explain to the Galatians that what they were continuing in was folly, Paul uses the Scriptures to show them how it was vain:

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. **2** Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? **3** Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? **4** Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? **5** Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— **6** just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? **7** Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. **8** And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” **9** So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. **10** For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” **11** Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” **12** But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” **13** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— **14** so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:1-14)

The Law could not save man. It only condemned man (Romans 7). That which was of the flesh (Law) could not save man, so it could also not perfect man by any form or fashion. For those in Galatia to continue in aspects of the Law for the purpose of salvation was vain and folly. The one who supplied the spirit to them and worked miracles among them did so by the hearing of faith not by the Law. This is why those in Galatia were “children of Abraham” (v. 7); they had received the gospel by hearing and accepted it by faith (Galatians 1:9). Being a descendant of Abraham could not provide salvation nor could the Law provide justification. As Paul stated, “no one is justified before God by the Law” (v. 11), because (using the prophet Habakkuk) “the righteous shall live by his faith” (Habakkuk 2:4b).

The promises and blessings were always to Abraham and his descendants, but, as Paul stated, “It does not say, ‘And to offsprings,’ referring to many, but referring to one, ‘And to your offspring,’ who is Christ” (Galatians 3:16b). Because of Christ, the Gentiles could now partake of the blessing of Abraham (Galatians 3:14). Through Christ, Gentiles could also become children of Abraham, therefore becoming children of God because “those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith” (Galatians 3:9). Through Christ, all (whether Jew or Gentile) could become children of God, not by race but by grace (Romans 6:14).

Paul acknowledges the Galatians' continuance in the things of the Law: “how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you

want to be once more? **10** You observe days and months and seasons and years! **11** I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain" (Galatians 4:9-11). Since they wanted to continue in the Law, Paul uses his Pharisaical knowledge of the Torah to reason with the Galatians:

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. **5:1** For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. (Galatians 4:21-5:1)

Paul is showing them, from the Torah itself, that (through the living parable of Abraham and his two sons) there would be two groups of people. One group would have right to the inheritance as first born but would not be chosen of God as they followed the flesh being born of the flesh. The other group would be chosen of God as they followed the spirit being born of the spirit. This group would ultimately become the true first-born and heir.

Physical Israel (the Jews) came before followers of Christ, as they were the physical descendants of Abraham. The promises were to them for they were the first-born and heir. The majority of them rejected their Messiah and king to continue in the Law. They were Ishmael (children of the bondwoman) as they followed the flesh, being in bondage to the Law by their own accord. The Messianic Jews (Israelites that accepted Jesus as messiah and king) and the gentiles allowed into the kingdom of heaven (collectively called the church) became true Israel as they followed the spirit being born of the spirit. They were the ones chosen of God, becoming the God-chosen heir to the promises. They were Isaac (children of the free woman) as they followed the spirit.

Paul shows those in Galatia that the Torah itself prophesied of a time that the descendants of Abraham (physical Israel) would eventually be cast out from their father's sight (or removed from their father's house) (v. 30), which resulted from their rejection of their prophesied and awaited redeemer, messiah, and king (Luke 19:14 & John 19:15), and that the true descendants (spiritual descendants) of Abraham would ultimately become heirs to the promises and be in covenant relationship with their creator. It was always there in the scriptures, and Paul (a scholar and rabbi in the Torah and the prophets) brings it all to light for those who desired to be under the Law.

The Implication

For Paul to bring all of this to light for those in Galatia, a major implication is made. It is evident who represents who in the allegory: the Jews represent Ishmael and those who

accepted Christ represent Isaac. Each group is representative of a covenant. The traditional amillennial view is that the old covenant with the Law passed away with Christ at the cross. This idea comes from what Paul said to the Colossians in 2:13-14: "And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, **14** by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross." The problem with this view is this—Paul makes it clear from this allegory that just as both groups of people coincided at one time so did the covenants which they represented. Just in this context, Paul gives two major indications of the overlapping of two covenants.

The first major time indication Paul gives is in v. 25: "Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children." Hagar is representative of Mount Sinai and the product derived from it—the old covenant with the Law. If an epicenter of physical locality could be pinpointed to represent everything that was the Law, it would be Jerusalem. It was the capitol city of the Israeli nation. It was the city of the kings of Israel. Jerusalem was where the temples stood and the major feasts and the sacrifices were made. Hagar corresponded to this city. What Jerusalem was this? It was the "present" (the time of Paul penning this letter) Jerusalem. This is the Jerusalem post-crucifixion of Christ and pre-destruction of the city in A.D. 70. As long as Jerusalem, with its people and temple, still stood so did the old covenant with the Law.

Every item associated with the Law could not pass away until the old covenant connection had been severed—the old relationship between heaven and earth. This is exactly what Jesus meant when he said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. **18** For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished" (Matthew 5:17-18). Until every connection between heaven and earth had been severed, the new connection between the renewed heaven and earth could not be completely made. In other words, until Ishmael and his mother had been cut off and cast away, Isaac (the son of the free woman and God-chosen heir) could not receive the inheritance. Therefore, physical Israel, the "present" city of Jerusalem, and the temple had to be destroyed. This was their severing from their Lord's presence and the casting away. This was their punishment for their rejection of their prophesied and awaited redeemer, messiah, and king. This was their divorcement. Once this was completely accomplished every dot and iota of the Law had completely passed away, because it had all been accomplished.

The second major indication Paul gives is in v. 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."

The Implication II

As was seen in the last study, Paul showed those in Galatia that the Torah itself prophesied of a time that the descendants of Abraham (physical Israel) would eventually be cast out from their father's sight (or removed from their father's house) (v. 30), which resulted from their rejection of their prophesied and awaited redeemer, messiah, and king (Luke 19:14 & John 19:15), and that the true descendants (spiritual descendants) of Abraham would ultimately become heirs to the promises and be in covenant relationship with their creator. It was always there in the scriptures, and Paul (a scholar and rabbi in the Torah and the prophets) brings it all to light for those who desired to be under the Law.

For Paul to bring all of this to light for those in Galatia, a major implication is made. It is evident who represents who in the allegory: the Jews represent Ishmael and those who accepted Christ represent Isaac. Each group is representative of a covenant. The traditional amillennial view is that the old covenant with the Law passed away with Christ at the cross. This idea comes from what Paul said to the Colossians in 2:13-14: "And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, **14** by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross." The problem with this view is this—Paul makes it clear from this allegory that just as both groups of people coincided at one time so did the covenants which they represented. Just in this context, Paul gives two major indications of the overlapping of two covenants.

As was seen in the last study, the first major implication that is made indicating the overlapping of two covenants is in Galatians 4:25: "Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children." Hagar is representative of Mount Sinai and the product derived from it—the old covenant with the Law. If an epicenter of physical locality could be pinpointed to represent everything that was the Law, it would be Jerusalem. It was the capitol city of the Israeli nation. It was the city of the kings of Israel. Jerusalem was where the temples stood and the major feasts and the sacrifices were made. Hagar corresponded to this city. What Jerusalem was this? It was the "present" (the time of Paul penning this letter) Jerusalem. This is the Jerusalem post-crucifixion of Christ and pre-destruction of the city in A.D. 70. As long as Jerusalem, with its people and temple, still stood so did the old covenant with the Law.

Every item associated with the Law could not pass away until the old covenant connection had been severed—the old relationship between heaven and earth. This is exactly what Jesus meant when he said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. **18** For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished" (Matthew 5:17-18). Until every connection between heaven and earth had been severed, the new connection between the renewed heaven and earth could not be completely made. In other words, until Ishmael and his mother had been cut off and cast away, Isaac (the son of the free woman and God-chosen heir) could not receive the inheritance.

Therefore, physical Israel, the “present” city of Jerusalem, and the temple had to be destroyed. This was their severing from their Lord’s presence and the casting away. This was their punishment for their rejection of their prophesied and awaited redeemer, messiah, and king. This was their divorcement. Once this was completely accomplished every dot and iota of the Law had completely passed away, because it had all been accomplished. As long as Ishmael was present, Isaac could not receive his God-given inheritance. Ishmael and his mother had to be cast away. There could no longer be a connection to Abraham’s house if Isaac was to be sole heir. It is the same with Jerusalem and the temple. As long as Jerusalem stood so did the old covenant with the Law and the sacrifices. The Jews would definitely have no reason to believe that they had been forsaken by their God and replaced.

The second major indication Paul gives is in v. 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.” To understand what is meant and implied by what is said, the account of this persecution recorded in Genesis must be analyzed. This can be seen in Genesis 21:1-5 & 8-14:

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. **8** And the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. **9** But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing. **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.

Isaac was born and circumcised on the eighth day, just as God commanded. Sarah, then, tells Abraham to cast out the bond-woman and her son Ishmael, so that he could not become heir with Isaac. This displeased Abraham, because Ishmael was his son as well. God came to Abraham and told him to do as his wife Sarah said. Why did God allow this to happen? It seems that the casting out of the bond-woman and her son would be a shadow of an ultimate goal. Hagar and Ishmael were being used in a living parable, so that those living during the time of this antitype would be able to clearly see what was occurring in their time. This was during the first century as Paul was penning this letter. This is why God blessed Hagar and Ishmael. Although they were cast out, God provided for them, and a great nation came from Ishmael’s seed, which was fulfilled according to Genesis 25:12-18.

What was it that caused Sarah’s decision? Why did she want Hagar and Ishmael cast out? The answer lies in Genesis 21:9: “Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian [Ishmael], whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing.” The Hebrew word for “laughing” means to laugh in mockery—to make sport of someone or something. It seems that Ishmael was making fun of (or making sport of) Isaac through some form of mockery. Some commentators have reported that some Jewish traditions tell of more than just mockery. It

has been said that Ishmael shot at Isaac with an arrow, pretending that Isaac was some kind of sport. Although this is not recorded in the Torah, the mockery of Isaac from his older brother Ishmael was still a form of persecution. Whether there was more to it or not, the idea of persecution being present is still solid and present in the Genesis account. This was a shadow of what would occur to the antitype of Ishmael and Isaac.

Persecution Of The Judaizers

In the first century, the Jews (Ishmael) persecuted those who had accepted Christ (Isaac). This came in many forms. There were many that persecuted or harassed other Jews for abandoning the ways of the Old Covenant for the path they had chosen and to return to the old ways. This idea is seen in this very letter to those who were returning to things of the Law for soteriological purposes or those who were abandoning the way of Christ.

At the very outset of this letter from Paul, he speaks of what they had done soon after they had heard the gospel:

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— **7** not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. **8** But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. **9** As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:6-9)

Paul is astonished that they had, as he stated it, “so quickly” deserted their Lord. They did this by turning to a different gospel. It is fairly evident that this “different gospel” was one preached by the Judaizers, pushing the importance of the works of the Law for the purpose of salvation, for they were continuing to observe appointed times and festivals (Galatians 4:10).

Paul begins to set the Galatians straight again by showing them the vanity of the Law for the purpose of salvation or (as he states it) “being perfected:”

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. **2** Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? **3** Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? **4** Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? **5** Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— **6** just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? **7** Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. **8** And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” **9** So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. **10** For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” **11** Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” **12** But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” **13** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— **14** so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:1-14)

For the Galatians to return to things of the Law for salvation or “being perfected” was almost as if the sacrifice that Messiah had made was in vain. The Law was like a curse in the sense that (since man could not keep it, thus not being saved by it) it placed those under it in bondage. Thus, they were under a curse. “For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them’” (3:10).

God made sure that the Israelites knew that those who did not keep the things of the Law would be accursed for they would then be under the curse of the Law—a slave:

Now Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, “Keep the whole commandment that I command you today. **2** And on the day you cross over the Jordan to the land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall set up large stones and plaster them with plaster. **3** And you shall write on them all the words of this law... **8** And you shall write on the stones all the words of this law very plainly.” **9** Then Moses and the Levitical priests said to all Israel, “Keep silence and hear, O Israel: this day you have become the people of the Lord your God. **10** You shall therefore obey the voice of the Lord your God, keeping his commandments and his statutes, which I command you today.” **11** That day Moses charged the people, saying, **12** “When you have crossed over the Jordan, these shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin. **13** And these shall stand on Mount Ebal for the curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. **14** And the Levites shall declare to all the men of Israel in a loud voice: **26** “‘Cursed be anyone who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’ (Deuteronomy 27:1-3a, 8-14, & 26)

The Israelites could not keep the Law. Therefore, they were under bondage to the Law and the curse of sin. Jesus came to save these lost by becoming the ultimate sacrifice for them. In this way, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree’” (Galatians 3:13). They no longer needed the things of the Law to be placed into the “restored Eden” relationship with God. Thus, Paul asks them this question: “but now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?” (Galatians 4:9).

Physical Persecution

Although the spiritual persecution was definitely occurring since the time of Christ’s ministry, it was not the only form of persecution that God’s chosen spiritual people would suffer from their predecessor to the inheritance. The followers of Christ received much physical persecution from the Jews by beatings and killings after the ministry of Christ. The closer it got to the time of the destruction of the temple the worse it became.

The book of Acts has various examples of the persecutions that God’s people endured during the transition period between Christ and his second advent. One such event is recorded in Acts 16:16-24:

As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. **17** She followed Paul and us, crying out, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.” **18** And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly

annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour. **19** But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. **20** And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. **21** They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice." **22** The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. **23** And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. **24** Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

During the time of Christ's ministry, he spoke often of the persecution that would come. Not only did Christ preach it but the disciples had been warned by Jesus himself that they would be persecuted:

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **11** Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. **12** Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:10-12)

Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. **17** Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, **18** and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. **19** When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. **20** For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. **21** Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, **22** and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. **23** When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. (Matthew 10:16-23)

In Matthew 24, after Christ's lamentation over Jerusalem's demise in light of his second advent, he continues to tell his disciples how (concerning the structures of the temple) "there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down" (v. 2). So they asked their Rabbi, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?" (v. 3b). In answering his disciples, he gave them various signs:

They will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. **10** And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. **11** And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. **12** And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. **13** But the one who endures to the end will be saved. **14** And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (vv. 9-14)

Jesus said that God's chosen would be put to death and that many false prophets would arise and lead many astray. Paul addressed both of these issues in his letter to the Ephesians. At the penning of his letter, both of these signs had taken place, and they would

only get worse. This was a clear indication that “the end” or the end of the age was truly nigh or at the door, as James stated it (5:9).

Before his Olivet discourse, Jesus spoke to the scribes and Pharisees, prophesying what they would do and the result of their actions:

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, **30** saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ **31** Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. **32** Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. **33** You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? **34** Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, **35** so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. **36** Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. (Matthew 23:29-36)

And they would do this, beginning with the crucifixion of their awaited redeemer, king, and messiah. The Jews would then go on to persecute, beat, and kill God’s chosen elect and heir, antitypical Isaac, and spiritual Israel. Paul, in his letter to the Christians in Thessalonica, would confirm that they were filling up their cup:

For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, **15** who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind **16** by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But God’s wrath has come upon them at last! (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16)

Because of all the obvious signs that had manifested, Paul knew that it was so close to the time of Christ’s second advent that God’s wrath was about to fall on the wicked—the fleshly who persecuted the spiritual.

In the book of Revelation, John saw that Jerusalem had filled up her measure and that she would soon be laid to waste:

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters, **2** with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk.” **3** And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. **4** The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality. **5** And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: “Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth’s abominations.” **6** And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. **15** And the angel said to me, “The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. **16** And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, **17** for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over

their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. **18** And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth." (17:1-6 & 15-18)

Her measure or cup was full, and she was drunk with the blood of the saints. She would soon be made "desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire" (v. 16b). It was about to happen. "Surely I am coming soon" (Revelation 22:20).

Conclusion

Paul shows very clearly that the antitypical Ishmael and Isaac existed simultaneously for a time during the first century, and that until Ishmael was removed, Isaac could not receive the full inheritance. God's chosen elect would be relieved from their persecution at the second advent of Christ when that "present" Jerusalem was destroyed and the fleshly inheritors (physical Israel) was removed and destroyed. God's chosen inheritors (spiritual Israel) would then receive the inheritance, as rightful God-chosen heirs.