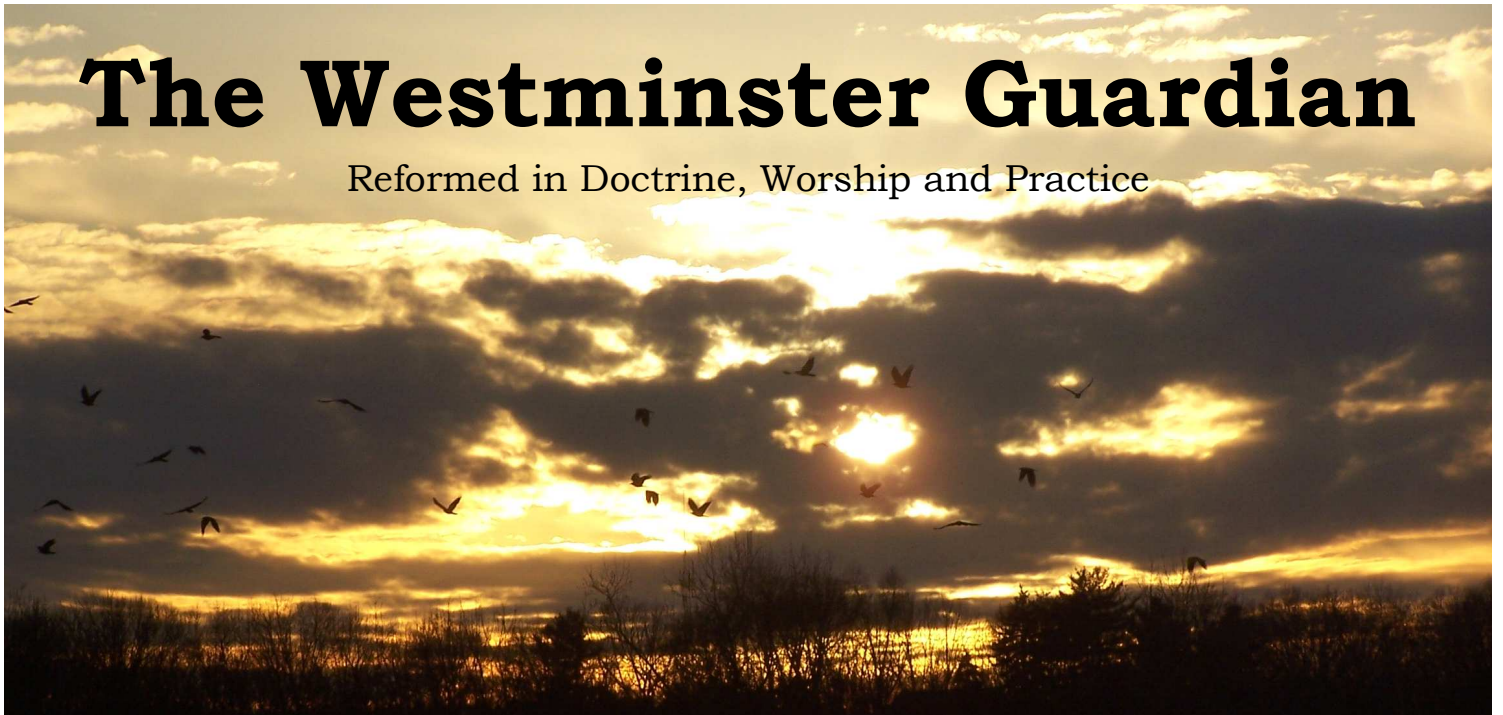


The Westminster Guardian

Reformed in Doctrine, Worship and Practice



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Mention the Lord's Day and the thoughts of many Christians turn at once to the spiritual decline in our country today. Instead of a day spent in seeking to know God more fully, men spend it in vain pursuit of a satisfaction which is but a fleeting prelude to the drabness of another Monday morning. Now, it is right that we should be concerned about the nation, for our constant and continuing responsibility is to go to men and women with the gospel. But we also need to think about the Lord's Day as it concerns us. How should we use it? How can we make it a blessing to our own souls and to our families?

The very title of the day suggests its primary function. It is the day of the Lord's resurrection and so it is the weekly

the first Lord's Day evening was the first of the long series that has continued down Christian history

festival of joy, recalling that first glorious Lord's Day when the Lord met the stricken disciples and thrilled their hearts with the wonder of His resurrection.

The cross had shattered their hopes, for they had been sadly mistaken in their thinking, and their Messiah seemed to have failed. But the Lord's Day morning scattered doubts and fear and gloom, for He had risen from the dead.

But the Lord who appeared to the disciples was the One who had been crucified. The risen Lord among His disciples in the upper room points to His hands and feet and side. So that the first Lord's Day evening was the first of the long series that has continued down Christian history when His people have gathered to reflect on Christ crucified and risen from the dead.

Then again the Lord's Day and the Lord's Supper were from the early days closely linked. When the two disciples walked to Emmaus they were in a state of deep gloom and sorrow. Even when they met with Jesus their eyes were closed so that they did not recognize Him. But as He talked with them their hearts burned within them and as they met with Him at the table He made Himself known to them in the breaking of the bread. Those two at Emmaus were the forerunners of a great company who on the Lord's Day have had zeal and hope rekindled as they have met around the table recalling His dying love, and looking forward to His triumphant return.

The Lord's Day is thus for the Christian the feast day of the new creation. When God created all things He reached the climax of His activity in His creation of man. Then He rested and set apart the seventh day as a weekly reminder of the glory of the Creator and the perfection of His work. But man rebelled and creation was soiled. Man himself was defiled, the image defaced, his nature depraved. What was needed was a new creation, and this was precisely what Christ effected by His atonement, crowned as it was by His resurrection. So the Lord's Day is the weekly reminder of the greatness of the Savior and of the

glory of the new creation. A basic text for the Lord's Day is Paul's glad word of assurance – "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation" – for the Lord's Day helps to keep fresh in our minds the foundation of this new creation.

This means that the Lord's Day is essentially a day of rejoicing. That is why I used the Old Testament language to describe it as "a feast day" or "a festival". That is why we need no other man-made church-devised festivals; for we have the supreme festival. We do not need to wait for an annual event termed "Easter", for every Lord's Day we may greet each other with the reassurance "Christ is risen from the dead." The world will not understand. To spend a day reflecting on God and His glory is for them insufferable boredom. But for us it should be the delight of our heart.

Hence the Lord's Day may well be viewed as a fore-taste of heaven. The Lord's supper, says Paul, means a showing forth of the Lord's death "till He come." When we meet on the Lord's Day we rejoice, but we also realize that as yet "we walk by faith and not by sight." So it is a pilgrims' festival. We rejoice, but we press on. We turn the eye of faith to the exalted Sabbath when we shall see Him face to face.

It is for these reasons that the ministry of the Word is of such importance on the Lord's Day. This is the day when the church gathers together in fellowship. They come to reflect upon the glory of Christ and the greatness of His saving work. But if they are to be delivered from a merely formal gathering with a routine recollection of the resurrection, they must constantly grow in their understanding. Hence the great purpose of the assembly on the Lord's Day is to sit under the ministry of the Word of God.

But obviously we will not spend the whole day in the services of worship. How, then, should we use the rest of the day? How may we make it a day of real profit? Once answer

the Lord's Day is to be used positively and constructively

to this is found in the work of the gospel (1 Cor. 16:1). But to give wisely when there are so many competing demands

involves knowledge. This means reading if we are to be kept informed of the missionary situation in the world at large which calls for our prayers as well as our gifts.

But there is a wider field of reading, which is sadly neglected at the present time. So many Christians live at a rather hectic pace. There is so much activity, so many commitments, and often so much superficiality. The Lord's Day is surely one of God's gracious provisions. Here is the opportunity which is often lacking during a busy week to read the biographies of some of the great men and women of God; to study the truths which have been distilled from the Word;

to read the record of God's dealings with His people in the history of His Church.

All this means that the Lord's Day is to be used positively and constructively. Some people interpret rest in a thoroughly carnal way. For them it seems to mean an enormous dinner followed by a prolonged afternoon sleep to recover from the effects of over-indulgence. The Lord's Day is meant for the nourishment of our souls, not for gluttony and sloth!

The Lord's Day can also be profitably used to give hospitality to some of the lonely people whom we tend to meet in a rather detached way. There are Christians who leave the fellowship of an evening service to return to the empty loneliness of a flat or bed-sitter. Here is an opportunity to practice hospitality. The object is not simply to engage in the idle chatter with which some Christians fill the Lord's Day, but to enjoy fellowship in the things of God. You will find, as Hebrews 13:1 points out, the blessings which God imparts to the generous soul.

It is significant that the New Testament never prescribes the rules and regulations for the Lord's Day. The keynote is liberty rather than law. But liberty does not mean license. It means rather a disciplined freedom to grow in grace. John at Patmos declared that he was "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." Clearly the work of the Spirit in his case was a special activity, as John was to be the recipient of the revelation of Jesus Christ. But it is none the less true for every believer that the key both to the enjoyment and the profitable use of the Lord's Day is that we should be "in the Spirit". The Spirit's ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus (John 16:14), and the Lord's Day is the special occasion for submitting to the interaction of the Spirit. This then is our ultimate aim for the Day- the Spirit of God leading the people of God in worship, fellowship and joyful recollection for the risen Lord, and stirring them to keen anticipation of the glories that lie ahead.

The Sarah-Hagar Allegory Rev. Brian Schwertley, B. A., M. Div.

Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. (Gal. 4:21-31)

divided regarding the reason or purpose as to why this argument occurs where it does. A number of commentators view it as a supplementary argument; that is, a kind of after-thought to the exegetical arguments of chapter 3. In other words, Paul stops to reinforce earlier Scriptural arguments before moving on to specific applications. Others look at this section as a scriptural support for Paul's first imperative, "Become like me" (4:12). According to this understanding the allegory is given as a strong reason to obey his personal appeals which then climaxes with the imperative of 4:30, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son," which essentially means, "expel the Judaizers and their heresies from your congregations." Another view is that Paul having already proven his case by appeals to personal experience and biblical exegesis can now confidently refute a key argument of the Judaizers by using an allegorical analysis; which if given independently of earlier arguments might seem a bit forced. In any case it could be that elements of all these positions are true. They are not mutually exclusive. Paul intends on wrapping up his biblical argumentation for justification by faith alone but also takes the opportunity of using a passage as a proof text that had been abused by the circumcision party. This in turn supports his personal appeals and leads into exhortatory section that follows in Galatians 5.

This analysis raises a question. If this use of allegorical interpretation was directed against a Judaizer argument, what could that argument have been? It seems likely that the Judaizers pointed out that both Ishmael and Isaac were born of Abraham and circumcised but only the descendants of Isaac were the Jews or the true people of God. The descendants of Ishmael were nothing but unclean Gentiles. What then made the difference? The seed of Isaac committed

Introduction

After completing his personal appeal (cf. 4:12-20), Paul returns to an argument from Scripture. The apostle goes back to an argument from Scripture. The apostle goes back to an exegetical appeal to Abraham and his posterity but this time he avails himself of an allegory. This is considered to be one of the most difficult passages in the New Testament. Scholars are

themselves to the law of Moses as the method of coming unto God while the seed of Ishmael did not. Therefore, if the Gentile Galatians wanted to really be God's people, then they needed to place themselves in the line of Isaac who according to their interpretation committed themselves to the law as a means of justification. This kind of argument was clever and some professing Christians may have been wondering how something as simple as faith in Christ *alone* could render a guilty sinner instantly right with God. Thus Paul takes us back to the two sons of Abraham to prove that properly understood they prove that justification is through faith alone and pure grace apart from works.

This section of Scripture is naturally divided into four sections. First, Paul issues a challenge in the form of a question (v. 21). Second, he sets forth the historical background for his argument (vs. 22-23). Third, he gives his allegorical interpretation of this history as a refutation of the Judaizers' teaching (vs. 24-27). Fourth, he applies his interpretation to Galatian Christians and issues some important imperatives that flow from that application (vs. 28-31 and 5:1). As we study these verses we will see that Paul's argumentation is both brilliant and decisive.

Do You Not Hear the Law?

Paul introduces his argument with a penetrating question: "Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?" (v. 21). There are a number of things this question tells us. First, Paul is not addressing the Judaizers but those believers in Galatia who were under the influence of these false teachers. The people addressed had not yet adopted the law; they simply desired to be under the law. The false teachers, however, were Jewish missionaries from churches in Jerusalem and were obviously already under the law. This question indicates that: (1) The false teachers had a strong influence upon a number of Christians in these churches for these saints desired (*thelontes*) to be under the law. Many Galatians were learning or biased toward the circumcision party's interpretation. (2) Since they were not under the law, they were not yet guilty of complete apostasy even though they were in serious danger of it. Some had dabbled in Jewish holy days and were considering circumcision, but they had not been completely converted to the false teacher's position.

Second, the question is a challenge to the Galatians and an indirect slight upon the false teachers who claimed to be experts in the law. Paul essentially says, "So you want to be under the law do you? Before you commit yourself to such a course, you first need to be instructed by the law; for the very law that you want to be enslaved to completely refutes your position. The law itself teaches that we are justified by faith alone apart from the works of the law." "With these Judaizers he uses an *argumentum ad hominem*. That is, he meets them and refutes them on their own ground." ¹Paul is so confident of his position, that he is willing to take what the Judaizers consider to be one of their best arguments and turns it against them.

Third, in this one sentence Paul uses the term "law" in two different senses. In the first use ("under the law") he is referring to the Mosaic legislation which consisted of a very

detailed set of moral, civil and ceremonial regulations. The phrase "under the law" means under the full yoke of the law in all its aspects *as a means of acceptance before God*. The Jews treated the Mosaic law as a covenant of works that men had to obey to be justified by Jehovah and received into the family of God. Such thinking Paul will show turns the law into an unbiblical, legalistic yoke of bondage. As the apostle emphasized earlier in this epistle, anyone who fails to live up to the whole law perfectly and perpetually in every single minute detail is placed under the curse of the law (Gal. 3:10-12).⁴

In the second use of the term law Paul refers to Genesis which is part of the Pentateuch or the five books of Moses. He is referring to divinely inspired history regarding Abraham and his relations with Sarah and Hagar, and his sons by them, Ishmael and Isaac. It is important for us to recognize that (biblically understood) the history recorded in the Scriptures has very important teachings and applications for the modern church. That is because, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16).

Because of the influence of dispensational theology many professing Christians today regard Paul's statement about being "under the law" as condemning any or all uses of the Old Testament law for believers in the New Covenant era. In fact, the notes for the New Scofield Reference Bible argue that the Sarah-Hagar allegory "has...no application to a sinner seeking justification."² In other words according to dispensationalism, Paul wants to make sure that believers completely avoid the whole Mosaic law as a rule for sanctification or holy living. This interpretation, however, not only completely contradicts the broad context of this epistle which is against justification by faith in Christ *plus the works of the law* (cf. Gal. 1:6-9; 2:4-5, 14, 16-19, 21; 3:1-12, 21-24, 26; 4:5-7; 5:4 is decisive, "you who attempt to be justified by law"), but also contradicts the apostle's many other statements on the goodness of the Old Testament moral law. For example, in Romans Paul says, "The law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good" 7:12). All people, once they are justified by the sinless life and sacrificial death of Christ, want to be under the moral law to show their love, gratitude and subjection to Jesus as their Savior and Lord. This desire has nothing to do with justification or with following ceremonial ordinances, but flows from the recognition that sanctification, personal godliness or growth in grace can only come when people who are united to Christ study the moral precepts of Scripture and apply it to their lives. The Holy Spirit gives us the ability to grow while the Bible (including the Old Testament moral laws) gives us the standard.

The Historical Background

After telling the erring Galatians they need to hear the law, Paul introduces the historical narrative from Genesis with the formula, "It is written." This was the way that both Jesus (e.g., Mt. 4:4, 7, 10; 11:10; 21:13; 26:31; etc) and Paul

(e.g., Ac. 23:5; Rom. 2:24; 3:4, 10; 4:17; 8:36; etc) introduced quotes from the Old Testament Scriptures. Here, however, the apostle does not quote specific verses but due to the length of the narrative gives a brief summary instead. "For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise" (vs. 22-23). The apostle draws our attention to three important facts that will be the focus of his allegorical interpretation: Abraham's two sons—Ishmael and Isaac; the status of their mother—Hagar and Sarah; and the unique circumstances surrounding their births.

Paul notes that Abraham had two sons and from the immediate context it is obvious that he is speaking of Ishmael and Isaac. During his long life the patriarch had six other sons by Keturah (Gen. 25:1-2), but these sons played no important role in redemptive history. Ishmael was Abraham's firstborn from Hagar and although circumcised was not chosen by God for His special grace. The name Ishmael means "God heard" which refers to God's regard for Hagar's affliction (Gen. 16:11). Ishmael was to be wild man whose hand would be against every man (Gen. 16:12). His many descendants settled in the wilderness of Paran which is in the lands south of Israel opposite Egypt in the direction of Assyria (Gen. 25:18). He is considered the father of the Arab tribes who have had a long history of hostility to the covenant people (cf. 1 Chr. 5:19). God destined Ishmael for worldly power and greatness *outside* the covenant and salvation blessings (Gen. 17:20-21).

Isaac was chosen by God for His special grace and followed in the godly ways of Abraham. He was the child of promise and direct ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul's adversaries clung to the fact that they were descendants of Abraham according to the flesh, but Ishmael was also a son of Abraham. The crucial question is what the difference between Isaac and Ishmael? Paul answers this question in the following verses. He notes two crucial differences.

First, these sons had two different mothers who had completely different legal standings. Ishmael's mother was a bondwoman. The word used to describe Hagar (*paidiske*) originally referred to any young woman and in some places in the LXX is translated "maiden" or "young girl." Over time, however, it came to be used to describe female slaves. In the New Testament this word *always* refers to some kind of slave. Thus, it is translated as "bondmaid" (KJV), "bondwoman" (NKJV) or "slave woman" (). Hagar was an Egyptian slave (probably quite young) who was purchased by Abraham to help his wife with housework (Gen. 16:3). Sarah, on the other hand was Abraham's legal wife. She was a freewoman. The word "freewoman" (*eleuthera*) means that Sarah was "free, unconstrained, unfettered." She had no social or work obligations outside her marriage relationship. This contrast between slavery and freedom will become an important point in the apostle's application later in this chapter.

Second, the circumstances surrounding their births were radically different. The son of the bondwoman "was born according to the flesh" (v. 23). The expression "according to the flesh" (*kata sarka*) means that Ishmael came into this world as a result of the natural processes of procreation. Hagar was a

healthy woman of childbearing years and as a result of her sexual relations with Abraham she became pregnant and bore a child. The point is that there was nothing unusual about the conception and birth of Ishmael.

Isaac, on the other hand, was born because of God's promise to Abraham to give him a son through Sarah (Gen. 15:4-6; 17:15-21) God providentially allowed Sarah to go through menopause and reach an age decades past the time of menstruation and fertility. Therefore, the conception of Isaac was through a miracle. Jehovah had to honor His own Word and thus supernaturally intervened so that Sarah could become pregnant at the age of ninety and give birth. This does not mean that sexual relations and a normal birth were excluded, but only that a supernatural work of God's Spirit was necessary for the conception to occur. As the author of Hebrews notes, "By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised" (11:11).

Paul will use the historical facts surrounding the births of Ishmael and Isaac to teach the Galatians a valuable lesson about self-effort or legalism versus faith and pure grace. Ishmael came into this world because Sarah had doubts about God's promise and thus attempted to force the situation by her own ingenuity. She thought since God's promise seemed as though it was not going to happen; that she could help the promise become a reality by her own efforts. Consequently, she did not lean on God's Word of grace, but her own efforts. She went to Abraham and convinced him to have relations with Hagar her bondwoman. This plan had nothing to do with God's Word, but was purely a work of the flesh. Her attempt to achieve a blessing through works sprouted from unbelief. It resulted not in a blessing, but a curse for the resulting child and his descendants have persecuted the true children of the promise.

Isaac's birth, on the other hand, only required faith in God's word. All that Abraham and Sarah had to do was trust the promise. No manipulation of the situation was needed. Jehovah promised a gift (a wonderful blessing) and they simply needed to rely on God who had the ability to bring a great multitude of saints from a man as good as dead. "From the very beginning there was a fundamental spiritual difference between the two sons. One son was by proxy, the other by promise. One came by works; the other came by faith. One was a slave; the other was free. Thus, Ishmael and Isaac represent two entirely different approaches to religion: law against grace, flesh against Spirit, self-reliance against divine dependence."³

Paul's Allegorical Argument

After his brief recounting of the historical facts the apostle tells us that this history reveals deeper spiritual truths. These truths, he says, are revealed through an allegorical interpretation: "which things are allegorical." To paraphrase: "These things [the biblical history] may be taken or

interpreted allegorically.” Allegorical interpretation means different things to different people and has been greatly abused by expositors throughout church history. Given this reality, it is important that we carefully define this word in its context. Normally, the word allegorical refers to the hidden meaning in a text or behind a story. Unfortunately, throughout the history of interpretation the allegorical or “spiritual” meaning of a text was more often than not simply some theological, moral or philosophical idea in the mind of the interpreter that was rather arbitrarily imposed on the text. Thus, the interpreter could extract a *different* and deeper meaning from the text which may even contradict or exclude the literal meaning. Therefore allegory was generally rejected by Reformed expositors because it was so independent and divorced from the literal meaning. For example, the Alexandrian philosopher Philo argued that Sarah represented the mind that reaches for the higher wisdom of philosophy while Hagar related to the lower learning of basic studies. Such an interpretation is nothing but speculative, subjective nonsense. Origen, one of the greatest of allegorical interpreters even went so far as to assert that, “All that seems dark and immoral and unbecoming in the Bible simply serves as an incentive to transcend or pass beyond the literal sense.”⁵ These common abuses have nothing to do with Paul’s procedure except for the search for a deeper meaning.

Paul bases his allegory squarely on the historical facts revealed in Scripture and logically ties them to related New Covenant doctrines. The interpretation is not arbitrary because there is a real correspondence between the historical situation in Genesis and the doctrines he is teaching. For this reason some commentators believe that Paul’s procedure is closer to typology than an allegory. Or one could say that it is allegory, but one that is not fanciful, forced or arbitrary. He uses the term that is the best possible sense. “The lesson here taught is derived as naturally from the narrative as an almond-kernel is picked out of an almond shell.... [T]he lesson implied in the incident was so obvious that anyone who listened attentively to the narrative, when it was read, should have understood the deeper meaning immediately.”⁶ Paul’s methodology in this section is more homiletical and rhetorical than exegetical. He must not be faulted for elaborating upon and emphasizing in a different manner something he has already proven exegetically, logically and experientially.

After he tells the Galatians his method of dealing with this history he proceeds to give his allegorical analysis of the persons and events involved. He will connect 4 separate significant interpretations to both Hagar and Sarah. (Sarah is not mentioned by name but the preceding history makes it perfectly clear that she is the contrast to Hagar. The important point for Paul is that Sarah was a free woman who bore free children). The contrasts are more easily noted if placed in parallel columns.

Hagar:

1. Represents the covenant from Mt. Sinai

2. Corresponds to the current Jerusalem
3. Give birth to the current Jerusalem
4. Her children do not share the inheritance.

Sarah:

1. Represents the covenant of promise
2. Corresponds to the heavenly Jerusalem
3. Gives birth to freedom
4. Her children share the inheritance

As we analyze these four areas we will see that Paul is contrasting people who attempt to be justified by keeping the law and thus are mired in a bondage from which they cannot escape; and, those who are justified by faith in Christ alone. Such people are genuinely free and are the true sons of Abraham and Isaac.

The Two Covenants

Paul first contrasts the “two covenants”: “For these are two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar...” (v. 24). The verb “are” (*eistin*) here simply means “represent” or “stand for.” Hagar represents the covenant from Mount Sinai which refers to the Mosaic economy or the Mosaic administration of the covenant. This covenant is said to give birth to bondage or slavery. There are two possible approaches to Paul’s statement. One can view the Mosaic covenant itself as leading to bondage or one can view the apostle’s statement as dealing with the Pharisaical understanding of the Mosaic covenant that was the cornerstone of the Judaizers’ interpretation.

The central problem with the idea that the Mosaic law itself teaches a covenant of works (or that keeping the law is necessary for justification) is the fact that it explicitly contradicts Scripture. Note the following reasons: (1) The Mosaic law was given in a context of grace to a people already redeemed. It was never intended as an instrument of salvation (cf. Ex. 20:2). (2) Paul has already quoted from the Old Testament (Habakkuk 2:4, “The just shall live by faith” [Gal. 3:11]; Gen. 15:6, “Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness” [Gal. 3:6]) to prove that justification is by faith, not by the works of the law. If the law is a new covenant of works, then these quotes would be plain evidence of a blatant internal contradiction within the Torah. (3) The apostle has also quoted from the law (Leviticus 18:5 and Deuteronomy 27:26) to demonstrate that anyone who attempts to be justified by the law is under a curse (cf. Gal. 3:10-12). (4) The Old Testament sacrificial system which is part of the law teaches through types and ceremonies that redemption comes only through the sacrificial death of Christ. (5) Paul has noted that the promise preceded the law by hundreds of years and the Mosaic covenant cannot annul, displace or abrogate this earlier covenant to Abraham (e.g., Gal. 3:15-18). Consequently, the Mosaic covenant builds upon the earlier covenant with Abraham and does not contradict it. With these points in mind, we must avoid the erroneous teaching of classical dispensationalism

which views the Mosaic covenant as *replacing* the Abrahamic covenant with a separate, different alternative to salvation by grace through faith in the Messiah. In fact, the covenant at Sinai came into being because of the Abrahamic covenant and Israel's prior status as the covenant people (cf. Ex. 2:24). (6) In the history of Sarah and Hagar and their children, the birth of Isaac was by the promise that required only *faith*, while the birth of Ishmael was a result of human manipulation, ingenuity or *works*. If Abraham and Sarah had been fully *consistent* in their belief in God's promise, Ishmael would have never been born. (7) Paul in the next verse (25) will tie Hagar to the "*Jerusalem which now is.*" Jerusalem was the headquarters of the Judaizers and the capital of the nation that rejected Christ for a works religion and consequently (like the descendants of Hagar; cf. Gal. 4:29) persecuted the true saints of God. Given all these considerations, any idea that Paul had an axe to grind against the law itself *as understood biblically* is most certainly in error. The apostle is arguing against the law as a system that contributes to or completes a believer's salvation (cf. Gal. 3:21).

It is significant that twice Paul will refer to this Hagar-covenant as coming from Mount Sinai. He even notes that Mount Sinai is located in Arabia (v. 25a). Paul emphasizes that this covenant originated outside the promised land in the Sinai Peninsula where the slave descendants of Hagar dwell. This is a veiled way of saying that the Jews who have not embraced Jesus Christ by faith alone because they have turned the Mosaic law into a system of earning salvation, are really spiritual Ishmaelites. They are pagans whose heart and doctrine is in Arabia with Hagar's slave children. However seemingly wise, dedicated, intelligent, devout, strict and sincere are the efforts of the Jews to keep God's law as a system of merit before Jehovah, they leave men in Arabia with the heathen.

Although Paul mentions two covenants he does not discuss or mention the other covenant. Clearly, however, the context indicates this other covenant is represented by Sarah. Many see in this passage a contrast between the Old and New Covenants. This view is in error. Sarah represents the covenant of promise or the covenant of grace as expressed to Abraham. Here the apostle is not contrasting the Old Testament with the New, but rather an important historical expression of the covenant of grace with the common first century *false* Jewish understanding of the Mosaic covenant. God did not give the Jews the law to lead them into bondage; they rather perverted the law in order to rely on their own works instead of Christ. Remember, Paul has already taught that the law is not against the promise (3:21); that its purpose was not to lead men into slavery, but to Christ to be justified by faith (3:24). As Rushdoony notes, "Paul is *not* saying that God gave two conflicting covenants, but rather that two views of the covenant are in conflict within the church. These two views are comparable to the conflict between Sarah and Isaac on the one hand and Hagar and Ishmael on the other. These two views of the covenant cannot both be true; one means slavery to a false faith, however full of zeal, the other, freedom in Christ."⁷

The Two Locations

In his next contrast Paul takes his argument a step further and reveals that the unbelieving Jews of his own day belong in the same category as Hagar and her slave children: "For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children—but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all" (vs. 25-26). The present city of Jerusalem, which was the home base of the Judaizer missionaries and the philosophical source of their perverted version of the gospel, Paul says, corresponds to Hagar the slave woman who gives birth to slaves. "It must be remembered that it appears that the Judaizing Christians of Jerusalem did not see themselves as a separate entity from Judaism, but rather a movement within that religious group. Their allegiance was to the present Jerusalem and their Jewish heritage, not just to the Jerusalem church."⁸

Paul supports his antithesis with the verb "corresponds" (*sustoicheo*) which was originally a military term for soldiers placed in the same line or column. The apostle is placing Pharisaical Judaism and their spiritual stepchildren, the Judaizers, in the same category as pagan unbelievers. This statement would be shocking to unbelieving Jews and would be taken as a great insult by the Judaizers. Paul is telling the Christians in Galatia that the circumcision party's missionaries are spiritual Ishmaelites. Unbelieving Jews are not really God's people, but are the enemies of God's people.

In the Jewish mindset of the first century, redemptive history began in earnest with Abraham, passed through Isaac and Jacob, extended through Moses and the Sinai Covenant and then as history progressed through David, came to be focused on the present city of Jerusalem. They regarded themselves and their capital city (the center of the temple cultus) as the focus not only of their own hopes, but the hopes of the whole world. Paul crushes their perception of reality by demonstrating that they are not really the children of Abraham at all. But accepting a system of salvation through works, they have rejected the promise and placed themselves in spiritual bondage. They are in the same category as Ishmael—*not* Isaac. No matter what one's genealogy or ethnic background is and no matter what one's former spiritual privileges may have been, if one trusts in the works of the flesh for salvation, one is in bondage. One is an Ishmaelite, an enemy of God and His people. When a person bases his hopes of eternal life on keeping the law instead of or in addition to a simple faith in Christ, he places himself in chains.

In our day when many "evangelicals" accept Roman Catholicism as a legitimate form of Christianity and when "Reformed" churches openly tolerate the Federal Vision heresy in their denominations, we need to embrace the full import of Paul's teaching. Adding the works of the law onto faith or defining faith as including faithful obedience to the law for justification turns professing Christians into slaves.

In God's eyes such people are Ishmaelites. They are enemies of the truth and the genuine church of Christ.

Paul's contrast with the present Jerusalem is the heavenly city: "But the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all." The parallelism here is unusual in that one would expect the apostle to contrast the present Jerusalem with "the Jerusalem of the future." The apostle, however, is concerned to show that the church of Jesus Christ which is the new spiritual Jerusalem exists right now. It has replaced the current earthly city because the unbelieving Jews have rejected faith in Christ for a system of works righteousness and because in God's plan the earthly city lost its significance when Jesus died on the cross. Since the kingdom of God has been taken from Israel and given to the New Covenant multinational church (Mt. 21:43), the nation of Israel with its borders, capital and temple is no longer set apart or holy. In fact, when Paul wrote Galatians, Jesus had already assigned the city over to judgment to be destroyed (Mt. 24:1-35). Membership in God's kingdom is *not* by blood, nationality or works, but is attained solely by faith in the Messiah. Everyone who repudiates their own so-called works of righteousness and instead trusts solely in Jesus is a true child of Sarah and brother of Isaac. Paul's teaching explicitly contradicts dispensational thought which still regards ethnic Israel and Jerusalem as holy and special in God's sight. Remember, Jesus Himself said that Jerusalem as a place of worship would lose its special significance with the coming of the New Covenant (Jn. 4:21); that unbelieving Jewish congregations were synagogues of Satan (Rev. 2:9; 3:9); and that Jerusalem was a persecuting Babylon (Rev. 17:1-18:24).

This new Jerusalem is described as above in heaven for a number of reasons. (1) The earthly city was but a type of the heavenly and eternal city where God dwells. This city is said to descend to the new earth at the second coming of Christ when the living and dead saints are glorified, reunited and then forever dwell in the presence of God. (2) All true believers have their citizenship in heaven (Phil. 3:20) where Jesus lives and reigns. Christians are described as the "church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven" (12:23). Our allegiance, trust, love and devotion is directed to our King at the right hand of God. We pray for God's will in heaven to be established on this fallen earth (Mt. 6:10). We look to Christ in heaven as the foundation of our salvation. He achieved our justification and our holiness flows from the efficacy of His work. His heavenly intercession is what keeps us safe and causes us to persevere. He has gone before us to prepare dwellings for us in paradise (Jn. 14:2) and only because of Him we have an enduring possession for ourselves in heaven (Heb. 10:34). (3) "The Church is said to be above, because it dwells by faith in heaven with Christ."⁹ Faith unites us to the Mediator and thus we are raised up together, and made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6). Our position judicially and mystically is in God's throne room with the Savior. The Spirit of God from heaven dwells in our hearts and makes us all one, no matter what our location. (4) Thus, the heavenly Jerusalem is also the sum total of all true believers in Christ whether Jew or Gentile; and whether in heaven or upon earth.

The heavenly Jerusalem is described as "free." Because Christians receive the promise solely by faith in Christ they are not under the law as a means of salvation. Also, they are not under the Jewish traditions or the elements of this world. The legalist is in bondage to the whole law of God. This law is the most rigorous master in the world. It not only requires a perfect obedience to all its requirements. But it demands a perpetual obedience: twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, fifty-two weeks a year, year after year. This obedience must not only be comprehensive and perpetual, but also applies to everything in our innermost being; our thoughts, intents, motives and desires. People who reject Christ for works need to understand the severity of the bondage to which they have committed themselves. As Spurgeon says, "The poor sinner trying to be saved by law is like a blind horse going round and round a mill, and never getting a step further, but only being whipped continually; yea, the faster he goes, the more work he does; the more he is tired, so much the worse for him. The better legalist a man is, the more sure he is of being damned; the more [seemingly] holy a man is, if he trust to his works, the more he may rest assured of his own final rejection and eternal portion with Pharisees."¹⁰

The more that we understand the bondage of legalism, the more that we can appreciate the freedom that Jesus gives to us by completing His redemptive work. He bids all those who are oppressed by the heavy, unbearable load of works salvation (and the mountain of absurd regulations added by the Pharisees) to embrace Him by faith and experience the liberty of salvation by pure grace: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give your rest" (Mt. 11:28). "You shall know the truth and the truth will make you free...if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (Jn. 8:32, 36). We have been called unto liberty in Jesus the Messiah (Gal. 2:4; 5:13); and we must stand fast in the liberty by which Christ has made us free (Gal. 5:1).

Paul refers to the heavenly Jerusalem as the mother of us all. This statement ties in perfectly with the analogy of free Sarah who gives birth to free children. It also is true theologically in that the Word of God and ordinances have been committed unto the church. This Word is used by the Spirit to bring forth children unto God (1 Pet. 1:23; Jas. 1:18) and then feeds these children with "pure milk" (1 Pet. 2:2; 1 Cor. 3:2) and "solid food" (Heb. 5:14). The Scriptures bring us into the kingdom and cause us to grow up to maturity. As our Lord said, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (Jn. 17:17). Whenever the church ceases to teach the pure doctrine of the gospel and the whole counsel of God faithfully as the Jews did in Jesus' day and the papal church has done, it ceases to be a mother and becomes nothing but a cast out slave.

The fact that Jerusalem is "the mother of us all" (both Jews and Gentiles) refutes the classical dispensational teaching that the Jews are still God's people but are simply given an earthly purpose, destiny and hope. This doctrine invented by J. N. Darby in the late 1820s violates Paul's

antithesis. One is either a Christian who is a member of the heavenly Jerusalem or one is an Ishmaelite slave son who is tied religiously to the earthly Jerusalem. The New Covenant church flows organically out of the Old Covenant church and the crucial common denominator for both is faith alone in the Messiah. Although outward membership in God's Old Covenant community had distinct advantages (e.g., Jn. 4:22; Rom. 3:1-2; 9:4-5) because the Jews had the Scriptures, etc; without faith these advantages are of no value whatsoever. All Christians are "saints." They are God's separated people, the people of the covenant, citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem.

The apostle supports his allegorical analysis with a quotation from Isaiah 54:1, "For it is written: 'Rejoice, O barren, you who do not bear! Break forth and shout, you who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children than she who has a husband'" (Gal. 4:27). This citation (which is a verbatim reproduction of the LXX) fits Paul's interpretation beautifully for it originally was given to reassure Israel that after her restoration He would take her again as wife (Isa. 54:4-8) and she would have far more offspring than ever thought possible. Through God's grace and mercy, that which was barren and forsaken will have descendants that will inherit the nations (Isa. 54:3). God will establish the New Covenant church and the number of Christians will be far greater than the Israel of old. Like Sarah who was childless and from a human standpoint appeared a failure, Israel looked as though she would not bear fruit. But God's gracious sovereign power brought redemption and victory to His people. The victory was not to those who sought salvation by works, for they were conquered by Rome and destroyed as a nation. But those who looked to Christ alone leavened the whole Roman Empire and out this empire came Christian Europe. This great promise continues to be fulfilled in our day as the good news of Christ's perfect salvation spreads throughout the earth.

The Apostle's Application

Having proved his position with an allegorical analysis, Paul is ready to make a personal application to the Galatians: "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise" (v. 28). The personal pronoun "we" is in the emphatic position and indicates that all believers whether Jews or Gentiles are "children of promise." The Judaizers had placed the Gentile Christians in an inferior position to the Jews and required them to convert to something akin to Pharisaical Judaism before they could be fully sons and heirs of the promise. Paul says, "No, my analysis has obliterated such an interpretation. Gentiles who believe in Jesus without adopting the whole law of Moses as a basis of salvation are true sons of Abraham and heirs according to the promise. They are properly represented by Isaac, not by Ishmael. Consequently, we (both Jews and Gentiles) are all brothers. We are all part of God's family by faith in Jesus alone."

As Isaac was born in a special way by the intervention of God's Spirit to fulfill the promise to Abraham, Christians (whether Jewish or Gentile) are born of God's Spirit and are Abraham's spiritual seed. God had promised Abraham that

through him all the nations will be blessed (Gal. 3:8; Gen. 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14). This blessing comes only through faith in the Seed (singular)—Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:16). Abraham had two sons but only one was the result of divine grace; one came as a result of faith in God's word of salvation; only one inherited the promise. Biological lineage and human efforts did not attain the promise. Therefore, the Judaizers' treatment of Gentile Christians as Ishmaelites was totally unscriptural and backwards. The Gentile Christians had all the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant without submitting to the law. In fact, it was the Jews who had not received Christ, but rather had trusted in their lineage and law-keeping that were the Ishmaelites.

The apostle then notes that the enmity and resulting persecution that Ishmael had for Isaac continues in the present with the Jews' persecution of Christians: "But as he who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now" (v. 29). Here Paul answers the question: If Christians are God's chosen people who are part of His family and the heirs of salvation, why are they hated by the non-Christian Jews. The answer lies in the fact that the unbelieving Jews who look to their biological lineage and faithfulness to the Mosaic law for salvation are really Ishmaelites—the enemies of the true people of God. Throughout history hypocrites and self-righteous merit mongers have always been the enemies of true believers. This harsh reality flows from the fact that there is a heart antimony between those born according to the flesh and those born according to the Spirit. They have different mothers and thus one group is heavenly and spiritual while the other is earthly, carnal, unregenerate and hostile to the truth. Jesus noted this when He said to the unbelieving Jews; "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world" (Jn. 8:23).

Our Lord spoke openly to the unbelieving Jews regarding the fact that they were not truly Jehovah's people, but rather were enemies of the cause of God and truth. In fact, they were agents of the devil. He said, "I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you" (Jn. 8:37). "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God" (Jn. 8:42). "You are of your Father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do" (Jn. 8:44). "But because I tell you the truth, you do not believe Me.... He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God" (Jn. 8:45, 47). "I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 2:9; 3:9).

The unbelieving Jews, mocked, sneered, insulted, scoffed and denied that Jesus was the Messiah. They regarded Him as an imposter, a magician and a blasphemer. Their hatred of the Lord was directed against His people and thus they did everything they could to stamp out and annihilate the church of Christ. Luke in the book of Acts highlights the fact that the Jews were the first persecutors of the Christian church and that their hatred for true believers was so strong, they often allied themselves with pagan Rome against the faith (cf. Ac. 4:24-28; 12:1-3; 13:8; 14:5; 17:5-8; 18:12-13;

21:11; 24:1-9; 25:2-3, 9, 24). Their contempt for the Messiah and his people was so radical, they became subservient to the Roman state in order to imprison and kill more Christians. As a result of their complete apostasy the unbelieving branches were broken off of the Lord's olive tree and Israel lost its special status as God's covenant people. That status belongs only to the multinational church of Christ. Thus contrary to the practice of dispensationalist evangelicals, we never encounter Paul raising money for relief for unbelieving Israel during a crisis, but instead he gathers funds for the Christian churches in Judea. The apostle did not see unbelieving Israel as God's special earthly people, but rather as Ishmaelites—wicked enemies of Jehovah ready for God's judgment. Note his words in 1 Thesalonians:

For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they *did* from the Judeans, who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up *the measure of* their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

The unbelieving Jews were displeasing to Jehovah because they rejected and murdered the Messiah and were deliberately impeding the Redeemer's work through their attacks on the first Christian missionaries and their severe persecution of Jewish believers.

The apostle's vitriolic attack upon unbelieving Israel is not anti-Semitism for Paul was a Jew; but rather is directed against their apostasy, unbelief and persecution. Although in God's own time, Israel will be saved en masse and will enter the one true olive tree, the church of Christ (Rom. 11:26), the Jewish people who are not part of the Christian church are clearly no longer the people of God. David Chilton writes,

It is important to remember that Judaism is not Old Testament religion at all; rather, it is a rejection of the Biblical faith altogether in favor of the Pharisaical, Talmudic heresy. Like Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Unification Church, and other cults, it claims to be based on the Bible; but its actual authority comes from the traditions of men. Jesus was quite clear: Judaism denies Christ precisely because it denies Moses (John 5:45-47). Orthodox Christianity alone is the true continuation and fulfillment of Old

Testament religion (see Matt. 5:17-20; 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13; Luke 16:29-31; John 8:42-47).¹¹

The apostle's application takes what is implied in the story of Ishmael and Isaac, draws it out and makes it explicit. Paul can only be referring to Genesis 21:8, 9 where we are told that a feast occurred on the day that Sarah saw Ishmael "making sport" (Heb. *mesaheq*), "mocking" (KJV) or "scoffing" (NKJV) her son Isaac. Ishmael who was around seventeen when this feast occurred, apparently understood Isaac's superior status and thus being angry and jealous, ridiculed him in a cruel manner. This scenario fits perfectly with the context for this incident caused Sarah to demand that Abraham cast Hagar and Ishmael out of their household (Gen. 21:9-12). The translators of the LXX understood the passage in this manner and thus translated *mesaheq* as "mocking" instead of the more literal "making sport." Before Isaac was born Ishmael was regarded as Abraham's sole heir. Thus, the son of Hagar not only learned to see himself in this way but probably felt secure in his position given Abraham's love toward him and the patriarch's advanced age. But then out of the blue, in a miraculous way, Sarah (Abraham's real, free, privileged wife) gives birth. Ishmael was old enough to understand that the great inheritance that he thought he deserved was slipping through his fingers into the hands of Isaac. Therefore, he despised his younger brother. Sarah understood the great threat that Ishmael was to her son and took action. Note that God agreed with her decision (Gen. 21:12). Many professing Christians see cruelty in Sarah's actions. Such a view is in error. She was protecting her son and in her son the inheritance for us all.

The fact that Paul equates Ishmael's mockery and ridicule with persecution fits the apostle's application perfectly for the Judaizers were no doubt mocking Paul and those who stood up for the true gospel. They rejected his authority and likely taught that his gospel was a distortion of the promise. The apostle, therefore, places the Judaizers in the same class as the apostate unbelieving Jews. To mix the redemptive work of the Messiah with one's own works of the law is a rejection of Christ. It makes one an Ishmaelite, an enemy of the church. The Judaizers were, indeed, a more dangerous adversary than the regular Jews because they had a voice within the Galatian congregations. They were as vicious wolves among the flock.

From these verses we should note two key applications. First, for Paul faith in Christ alone is the foundation of true religion, genuine freedom and our only hope of salvation. The Jews placed their faith on their natural descent from Abraham and their obedience to the Mosaic law. The Judaizers mixed this paradigm with the teachings of the apostles and in the process completely destroyed the faith. They forgot that the promise of grace and the faith of Abraham was what they needed. They were blinded by their pride and their additions to God's holy Word. They thought, "We are the children of Abraham. We are the inheritors of the

promise. We are faithful to Moses. We must be God's special people." They needed to learn an important biblical truth: "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God" (Rom. 2:28-29).

Tragically, there are multitudes of professing Christians who follow in the footsteps of the Judaizers. Their doctrines are not wiser, more biblical, nor better than the circumcision party's. For example, the works which the papal church adds on to Christ are not only more numerous than that of the Judaizers, but are derived mainly from pagan sources. They are full of superstitions and idolatry. The poor deluded souls who follow "mother Rome" think, "I am baptized into the one true church. I partake of the Eucharist every week. I pray the rosary every day. I go to confession once a week. I must be assured of eternal life." But the Romanist contention that God only justifies baptized persons who become personally or subjectively righteous is a damnable heresy. By rejecting faith in Christ *alone* they become sons of Hagar.

Sadly, Reformed churches are not immune from the leaven of the Judaizers. The rising popularity of the Federal Vision heresy attests to this reality. Their deluded followers think, "I have been regenerated and saved through my water baptism. I will live a life that is faithful to God's covenant and on the basis of Christ working in me subjectively I will be declared righteous by the Savior on the day of judgment." As one of their own leaders has said, "Yes, we do have the same obligation that Adam (and Abraham, and Moses, and David, and Jesus) had, namely the obedience of faith. And, yes, covenant faithfulness is the way to salvation, for the "doers of the law will be justified" at the final judgment. But this is all done in union with Christ, so that "our" covenant faithfulness is dependent on the work of the Spirit of Christ in us, and our covenant faithfulness is about faith, trusting the Spirit to will and to do according to His good pleasure."¹²

This teaching is virtually identical to the Romanist notion that faith is not purely instrumental but includes the works that flow from faith. It also assumes the papal doctrine that subjective righteousness plays a decisive role in our justification. Like Roman Catholic theologians Leithart attempts to avoid the accusation of salvation through works by ultimately attributing these works to the Redeemer's Spirit working within the believer. This assertion has more in common with the council of Trent than Paul who said that "God imputes righteousness apart from works" (Rom. 4:6). The apostle's whole point in this statement is to refute and exclude the Jewish doctrine of a personal, inherent righteousness as a partial basis of justification. The Federal Vision advocates follow "Mother Rome" in confounding justification with sanctification. The biblical teaching is that God regards and treats as righteous believers in Christ even though in themselves they are not perfectly righteous. As the apostle says, Christ "justifies the ungodly" (Rom. 4:5).

We must all beware of trusting in anything other than Christ for our salvation. People who trust in their heritage, baptism, regular church attendance, good deeds or anything in addition to our Lord's perfect work are Ishmaelites. Many churchgoers today think that they will go to heaven because they are good. They have such deluded thoughts because they have not faithfully been instructed in the essential doctrines related to the gospel (e.g., election, the meaning of faith, the imputation of Christ's righteousness, the true meaning of grace, faith as instrumental, etc). Consequently, they walk in ignorance. Let us therefore heed the apostle's teaching and look to Christ alone for our redemption. All other doctrines, traditions and philosophies leave men in chains.

Second, all true Christians should expect persecution. The spiritual antithesis between the children of the flesh and the children of the Spirit continues throughout history. Every expression of humanism and works salvation whether Roman Catholicism, socialism, communism, Islam and Judaism has an axe to grind against the God of the Bible and especially the doctrines of pure grace. In the modern age where the West has adopted secular humanism, relativism, pluralism and naturalism, Bible-believing Christians are viewed as a threat to the humanistic social order. The exclusive claims of Jesus are regarded as antithetical to democracy and pluralism. As the West's Christian roots fade into the background, the opposition that believers face is first subtle: an article may be censored, a job denied, and verbal mockery may occur. Then comes that anti-hate legislation where Christians are not permitted to publicly express the ethical standard and worldview of Scripture. This in turn may be accompanied by threats, violence and physical persecution. Genuine believers, who are willing to stand up and speak the truth and do God's will, can expect opposition from the Ishmaelites among us. It is inevitable. This antithesis makes it easy to tell if one stands with Jesus or with the persecutors. People who hate believers and ridicule and persecute them are of the devil.

We should expect persecution and be prepared when it comes. Persecution is a trial that sanctifies and strengthens the church. People who are lax in their profession and behavior are not worth persecuting because the Ishmaelites understand that such people are not a threat. Professing Christians who in times of opposition shift their views to satisfy God's enemies are nothing but hypocrites. People who desire the love of those who hate Christ are deluded. Genuine, solid believers are willing to be derided and persecuted because they know it is the lot of true Christian and they know that God rewards those who suffer for His Son. The rewards of grace are eternal and indestructible. The sufferings of this life must always be considered against the background of the eternal bliss and happiness set before us. If one is not willing to be persecuted for Jesus, then he or she should not even claim to be a Christian.

Cast Them Out!

The climax of Paul's allegorical analysis comes in verse 30: "Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? 'Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.'" The apostle quotes from Genesis 21:10 and applies Sarah's command to Abraham to the Judaizers who have been corrupting the churches in Galatia with their false version of the gospel. This powerful analogy demonstrates Paul's rhetorical brilliance. The harsh but inspired words of Sarah (note that Paul refers to her statement as "the Scripture") is pertinent to the present situation in Galatia. The Christians there are tolerating the persecuting sons of the slave girl. This toleration must come to an end at once. The Scripture requires it. This passage teaches us two important principles.

First, the congregations of Christ must cast false teachers (especially those who strike at the gospel) out of their churches by judicial action. This teaching is implied as well as explicitly taught throughout the epistles. Note the following passages:

Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. (Rom. 16:17)

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine... (1 Tim. 1:3)

... holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain. (Tit. 1:9-11)

Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned. (Tit. 3:10-11)

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds. (2 Jn. 1:9-11)

If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness...useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a *means of gain*. From such withdraw yourself. (1Tim. 6:3, 5)

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. (2 Tim. 2:15-16; cf. 3:5)

But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. (2 Thess. 3:6)

From these related passages one can glean the following apostolic approved practices. (1) People who come into a church and teach doctrine that contradict the gospel are to be ordered to cease and desist at once. (2) False teachers are to be admonished to repent and if they refuse to do so after at least two separate warnings from the church courts, they are to be excommunicated from church fellowship. (3) All Christians have a moral obligation to withdraw themselves from teachers who pervert the gospel and are not to even eat or fellowship with such persons. (4) If a church refuses to discipline a false teacher who perverts the gospel, the members of that church have a moral obligation to withdraw from that congregation and attend a faithful one. (5) Church members and church officers who refuse to withdraw from churches that tolerate a false gospel are guilty by association of sharing in the heretic's evil deeds. (6) Church members and officers who tolerate heretical teachings regarding the gospel in their congregations contribute to the increase of false doctrine and ungodliness in their midst. (7) Every Christian but especially ministers and elders should have such a thorough understanding of the true gospel that they are able to refute false teachers when they are encountered. (8) The inspired apostles did not allow for doctrinal diversity at all when it came to the gospel. They made no concessions; did not seek or allow compromises and never considered a kind of doctrinal pluralism for the sake of a superficial harmony.

These apostolic teachings are completely contrary to what is occurring in many churches in our own day. Today, discipline over doctrinal errors relating to the gospel is exceptionally rare. Ministers who advocate multiple heresies

are permitted to take exceptions to the Reformed symbols and equivocate on doctrines long settled in Presbyterian churches. Such churchmen who refuse to discipline are acting like the false prophets of old who proclaimed, "Peace, peace when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14; 8:11). When men view themselves as wiser than the apostles and regard discipline as unnecessary, harsh and unkind surely the apostasy of the church must follow. No true church can long exist when heresy and deliberate deception are tolerated.

Second, Paul gives the reason for this casting out. It is because Ishmael will not be the heir with Isaac. Those who are in bondage to legalism cannot coexist in peace with those who live in gospel freedom. Salvation comes only through faith in Christ and not by the works of the law. Grace and the law as system of merit are antithetical to each other. Martin Luther writes, "Those who try to achieve the status of sons and heirs

by the righteousness of the Law or by their own righteousness are slaves, who will never receive the inheritance even though they work themselves to death with their great effort; for they are trying, contrary to the will of God, to achieve by their own works what God wants to grant to believers by sheer grace for Christ's sake."¹³

If you are working in any way to attain or even contribute to your salvation, then you are a slave. You are still in your sins. Your only hope is to look solely to Christ for your redemption. Only then will you be able to say with Paul, "So then brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free" (v. 31).

1. John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Galatians*, 122.
2. Editor, C.I. Scofield, *The New Scofield Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989), 1430.
3. Philip Graham Ryken, *Galatians*, 184.
4. See F.F. Bruce, *Commentary on Galatians*, 215.
5. Origen, as quoted in L. Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1950), 20.
6. William Hendriksen, *Galatians and Ephesians*, 182.
7. Rousas John Rushdoony, *Romans and Galatians*, 376.
8. Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia*, 334.
9. William Perkins, *A Commentary on Galatians*, 309.
10. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The New Park Street Pulpit* (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim [1857] 1975), 2:126.
11. David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Ft. Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1987), 336-337.
12. Peter Leithart, as quoted in Sean Gerety, *Can the Presbyterian Church in America Be Saved?* (Unicoi, TN: The Trinity Foundation, 2009), 64.
13. Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians*, 26:449.

With regard to self-abasement, on which depends regeneration to newness of life, the whole doctrine was entirely obliterated from the minds of men, or, at least, half buried, so that it was known to few, and to them but slenderly. But the spiritual sacrifice which the Lord in an especial manner recommends, is to mortify the old, and be transformed into a new man. It may be, perhaps, that preachers stammer out something about these words, but that they have no idea of the things meant by them is apparent even from this that they strenuously oppose us in our attempt to restore this branch of divine worship. If at any time they discourse on repentance, they only glance, as if in contempt, at the points of principal moment, and dwell entirely on certain external exercises of the body, which, as Paul assures us, are not of the highest utility (Col. 2:23; 1 Tim. 4:8).

God rejects, condemns, abominates all fictitious worship

overlooking true repentance, devote their whole attention to abstinences, vigils, and other things, which Paul terms "beggarly elements" of the world.

Having observed that the word of God is the test which discriminates between his true worship and that which is false and vitiated, we thence readily infer that the whole form of divine worship in general use in the present day is nothing but mere corruption. For men pay no regard to what God has commanded, or to what he approves, in order that they may serve him in a becoming manner, but assume to themselves a licence of devising modes of worship, and afterwards obtruding them upon him as a substitute for obedience. If in what I say I seem to exaggerate, let an examination be made of all the acts by which the generality suppose that they worship God. I dare scarcely except a tenth part as not the random offspring of their own brain. What more would we? God rejects, condemns, abominates all fictitious worship, and employs his word as a bridle to keep us in unqualified obedience. When shaking off this yoke, we wander after our own fictions, and offer to him a worship, the work of human rashness, how much soever it may delight ourselves, in his sight it is vain trifling, nay, vileness and pollution. The advocates of human traditions paint them in fair and gaudy colors; and Paul certainly admits that they carry with them a show of wisdom; but as God values obedience more than all sacrifices, it ought to be sufficient for the rejection of any mode of worship, that it is not sanctioned by the command of God.

We come now to what we have set down as the second principal branch of Christian doctrine: that is, knowledge of the source from which salvation is to be obtained. Now, the knowledge of our salvation presents three different stages. First, we must begin with a sense of individual wretchedness, filling us with despondency as if we were spiritually dead. This

effect is produced when the original and hereditary depravity of our nature is set before us as the source of all evil a depravity which begets in us distrust, rebellion against God, pride, avarice, lust, and all kinds of evil concupiscence; and making us averse to all rectitude and justice, [it] holds us captive under the yoke of sin; and when, moreover, each individual, on the disclosure of his own sins, feeling confounded at his turpitude, is forced to be dissatisfied with himself, and to account himself and all that he has of his own as less than nothing; then, on the other hand, conscience (being cited to the bar of God) becomes sensible of the curse under which it lies, and, as if it had received a warning of eternal death, learns to tremble at the divine anger. This, I say, is the first stage in the way to salvation, when the sinner, overwhelmed and prostrated, despairs of all carnal aid, yet does not harden himself against the justice of God, or become stupidly callous, but, trembling and anxious, groans in agony, and sighs for relief.

From this he should rise to the second stage. This he does when, animated by the knowledge of Christ, he again begins to breathe. For to one humbled in the manner in which we have described, no other course remains but to turn to Christ, that through his interposition he may be delivered from misery. But the only man who thus seeks salvation in Christ is the man who is aware of the extent of his power: that is, acknowledges him as the only priest who reconciles us to the Father, and his death as the only sacrifice by which sin is expiated, the divine justice satisfied, and a true and perfect righteousness acquired; who, in fine, does not divide the work between himself and Christ, but acknowledges it to be by mere gratuitous favor that he is justified in the sight of God. From this stage also he must rise to the third, when instructed in the grace of Christ, and in the fruits of his death and resurrection, he rests in him with firm and solid confidence, feeling assured that Christ is so completely his own, that he possesses in him righteousness and life.

Now, see how sadly this doctrine has been perverted. On the subject of original sin, perplexing questions have been raised by the schoolmen, who have done what they could to explain away this fatal disease; for

For instead of Christ, they adore themselves

in their discussions they reduce it to little more than excess of bodily appetite and lust. Of that blindness and vanity of intellect, whence unbelief and superstition proceed, of inward depravity of soul, of pride, ambition, stubbornness, and other secret sources of evil, they say not a word. And sermons are not a whit more sound. Then, as to the doctrine of free will, as preached before Luther and other reformers appeared, what effect could it have but to fill men with an overweening opinion of their own virtue, swelling them out with vanity, and leaving no room for the grace and assistance of

the Holy Spirit?

But why dwell on this? There is no point which is more keenly contested, none in which our adversaries are more inveterate in their opposition, than that of justification: namely, as to whether we obtain it by faith or by works. On no account will they allow us to give Christ the honor of being called our righteousness, unless their works come in at the same time for a share of the merit. The dispute is not, whether good works ought to be performed by the pious, and whether they are accepted by God and rewarded by him; but whether, by their own worth, they reconcile us to God; whether we acquire eternal life as their price; whether they are compensations which are made to the justice of God, so as to take away guilt; and whether they are to be confided in as a ground of salvation.

We condemn the error which enjoins men to have more respect to their own works than to Christ, as a means of rendering God propitious, of meriting his favor, and obtaining the inheritance of eternal life: in short, as a means of becoming righteous in his sight. First, they plume themselves on the merit of works, as if they laid God under obligations to them. Pride such as this, what is it but a fatal intoxication of soul? For instead of Christ, they adore themselves, and dream of possessing life while they are immersed in the profound abyss of death. It may be said that I am exaggerating on this head, but no man can deny the trite doctrine of the schools and churches to be, that it is by works we must merit the favor of God, and by works acquire eternal life; that any hope of salvation unpropped by good works is rash and presumptuous; that we are reconciled to God by the satisfaction of good works, and not by a gratuitous remission of sins; that good works are meritorious of eternal salvation, not because they are freely imputed for righteousness through the merits of Christ, but in terms of law; and that men, as often as they lose the grace of God, are reconciled to him, not by a free pardon, but by what they term works of satisfaction these works being supplemented by the merits of Christ and martyrs, provided only the sinner deserves to be so assisted. It is certain that, before Luther became known to the world,

all men were fascinated by these impious dogmas; and even in the present day, there is no part of our doctrine which our opponents impugn with greater earnestness and obstinacy.

Lastly, there was another most pestilential error, which not only occupied the minds of men, but was regarded as one of the principal articles of faith, of which it was impious to doubt: that is, that believers ought to be perpetually in suspense and uncertainty as to their interest in the divine favor. By this suggestion of the devil, the power of faith was completely extinguished, the benefits of Christ's purchase destroyed, and the salvation of men overthrown. For, as Paul declares, that faith only is Christian faith which inspires our hearts with confidence, and emboldens us to appear in the presence of God (Rom. 5:2). On no other view could his doctrine in another passage be maintained: that is, that "we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15).

But what is the effect of that hesitancy which our enemies require in their disciples, save to annihilate all confidence in the promises of God? Paul argues, that "If they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect" (Rom. 4:14). Why so? Just because the law keeps a man in doubt, and does not permit him to entertain a sure and firm confidence. But they, on the other hand, dream of a faith, which, excluding and repelling man from that confidence which Paul requires, throws him back upon conjecture, to be tossed like a reed shaken by the wind. And it is not surprising that after they had once founded their hope of salvation on the merit of works, they plunged into all this absurdity. It could not but happen, that from such a precipice they should have such a fall. For what can man find in his works but materials for doubt, and, finally, for despair? We thus see how error led to error.

John Brown of Haddington, Note on Psalm 2

While I sing, let me remark the horrid nature of sin; let me with broken heart, bewail my neglect of, and opposition to Jesus Christ. Let me with wonder bless his name, that I have not already perished in mine iniquity. Let me with earnestness accept that once debased Redeemer, as my Saviour, my sovereign, my proprietor, my God, my all. Let me learn to know him, rejoice in him, and with holy awe, commit my whole salvation, and the salvation of my country, nay, of all the ends of the earth to him.

Many readers of this magazine will be familiar with one of the finest histories of the Scottish Covenanters, *Men of the Covenant*, written by Alexander Smellie (1857-1923). It went through almost ten editions in his own lifetime and has been republished for our generation by the Banner of Truth Trust. But it is less well known that Dr. Smellie published other writings, one of which is entitled "In the Hour of Silence", sub-titled "A Book of Daily Meditations For a Year" and first published in 1899. Tragically, this most excellent piece from Smellie's pen has been overlooked by Reformed publishers of our own day and is generally unknown by our own generation, even used copies being almost impossible to obtain. It originated through several of Dr. Smellie's friends sending him a selection of Bible verses upon which they asked him to comment in his own inimitable and richly Puritan way. "My warmest thanks are given to those three friends who, in mere grace, and out of the generous kindness of liberal hearts, have sent me the verses which sweeten and ennoble this little book," he writes in the Preface.

The result is a book of pure gold, each one-page daily meditation based upon a single text of Scripture becoming, for the reader, a veritable Jacob's Ladder from heaven to earth. There is something of the "Oriental fragrance" of Samuel Rutherford's famous Letters in all that Dr. Smellie writes. Unlike so many modern manuals and booklets of daily devotional readings, often so shallow and man-centered and unsatisfying, Dr. Smellie keeps dipping his pitcher down into the deep well of

Scripture truth and perpetually he draws it up filled to its brim with water from the wells of salvation. It is an accent distinct indeed from much of the evangelical dialects of today, altogether richer and deeper and ranging over the whole panorama of Christian experience. It leads us to question whether we know the same sorrows of desertion, the ardency of desire after Christ, the same triumphs of appropriation and communion with Him that our fore-fathers in the Faith so richly experienced. No serious believer can read these wonderful daily meditations without being profoundly moved, deeply challenged and made newly aware of the riches of Christ and His salvation. In his own day, Alexander Smellie was a preacher of "rare persuasiveness and quiet power," although it was more through the charm of his pen that he won a world-wide reputation as the finest devotional writer of his day, combining 'high spirituality and staunch evangelicalism with vast knowledge, warm human sympathy and fine literary culture.' No wonder his various books were widely read and 80,000 people used the daily notes he wrote for the International Bible Reading Association.

Let the reader himself sample just one of Dr. Smellie's Daily Meditations and so share the desire of the writer of this article to see this wonderful book in print again, in our own day, for the strengthening of Christ's Church and the encouraging of the Lord's people.

Note: The volume has recently been reprinted as a paperback by Kessinger Publishing, and available from Amazon.com.

King James Bible 400th Anniversary 1611 - 2011

Mr. Brian M. Hanley

It is thankworthy that God preserves His Word (in the original languages of Greek and Hebrew) 'by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages'. Also it has been wonderful that God has given the English speaking churches the King James Bible for the last 400 years. First it was Tyndale Bible of 1526, the Great Bible of 1539, the Geneva Bible of 1560, the Bishops' Bible of 1568, and then the King James Version of 1611. Each Bible translation was based on the Byzantine Greek manuscripts. Each translation was done carefully, not changing needlessly from its predecessor.

The scripture text for properly understanding the preservation of God's word comes from Matthew 5:18, "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." (also see Prov. 30:5, 6). "All scripture", is clarified with the phrase "jot and tittle" indicates that every small detail has received attention.

The new modern translations, are not built upon the Byzantine Greek manuscripts nor do they follow the Bibles translations of the Reformation, instead they went into a radically new direction. The modern translations which are based on Cordex B (Vatican) and Aleph (Sinai) manuscripts that was used by Westcott and Hort. These Greek manuscripts have been pur-

posely rejected by the early church as corrupt and have not been in use for over a thousand years. The Bible teaches that the Bible was given to the church (Romans 3:2) - and as mentioned before, every jot and tittle is preserved. How then can these manuscripts be absent from the church and also be the preserved Word of God?

This new methodology of having original Bible text—which can get better with each new finding, means the present Bible text cannot be trusted. So hypothetically, any day now, an older manuscripts can be found to invalidate what we have in our Bibles today. This type of reasoning undermines the authority of scripture and places man over the Bible. For this very reason we must reject the new translations based on the manuscripts of Westcott and Hort. On the other hand the Byzantine Greek text which was used by all the reformed fathers can be traced back to the early days of the church.

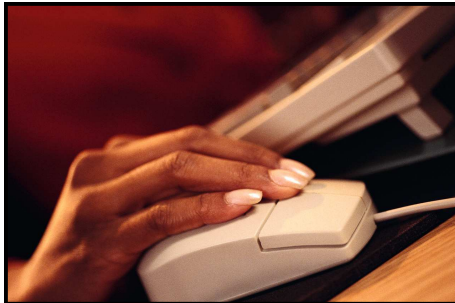
I am an advocate of employing the Authorized King James Version in public and private worship. The King James Version had been authorized by the Church of Scotland (1647) and the 'Presbyterian' Church of England (1647). I am grateful that the WPCUS has from its founding made the Authorized Version their official translation.

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