

Freedom or Bondage: Which is Yours? Galatians 4:21-5:1

Allegory: To offer spiritual principles based on a literal event. Galatians 5:24

The literal story of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar offers spiritual principles about freedom from bondage.

Abraham: the father of the Jewish people.

Sarah: Abraham's wife and mother to the Jewish people.

Hagar: The Egyptian maid to Sarah.

A timeline for Abraham, Sarah and Hagar:

- Abraham is 75 when God first promised him a "great nation." Genesis 12:1-3
- At age 85, with no children, Sarah offers Hagar to bear a son. Ishmael is born when Abraham is 86. Genesis 16:15-16
- Abraham is 99 when God again promises a son through Sarah who is 89. Genesis 17:1-5
- When Abraham is 100 and Sarah 90, God gives them a son, Isaac, in fulfillment of His promise. Gen. 18:9-15; 21:1-8

Spiritual principles for us today:

- Do you want God to accept you based on your performance of keeping the law or His promises to love you unconditionally? Galatians 4:21

Adapted from Tim Keller, Galatians for You, p.117-118

1	2	3	4
Law Obeying Law Relying	Law Disobeying Law Relying	Law Disobeying Not Law Relying	Law Obeying Not Law Relying
Under the law Self-righteous + superior Externally they are sure they are right with God Internally they are insecure Think Pharisees	Believe in the law but they struggle to follow it Guilt-ridden and afraid Believe they need to follow the law, that the law is what saves them, but they can't get their act together	No concern for God or His law, secular and relativistic They choose their moral standards and try to meet them. Their self- righteousness is self-made	Christians who understand the gospel and are living out of the freedom of it Obey the law out of joy More tolerant than #1 More confident than #2 Struggle to live out #4

- Compare the choices of Hagar and Sarah to determine what kind of relationship you have with God. Which describes your life? Genesis 4:22-30

HAGAR
'The Bond Woman'

"So Sarai said to Abram, 'Now behold, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I will obtain children through her.'
Genesis 16:1-6

- Life based on human effort alone.
- Covenant based on the law, Mount Sinai
- Living as slaves in earthly Jerusalem
- Ishmael was a natural birth by man.
- One that mocks those of faith in the promise

Ishmael

ABRAHAM

SARAH
'The Free Woman'

So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him. Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac.
Genesis 21:1-7

- Life based on God's power. Rom.4:21
- Covenant based on God's promises. Gen. 12
- Living by grace in the new Jerusalem. Rev. 21:2
- Isaac was a supernatural birth from God by the Spirit. John 3:3, 5
- Persecuted because of faith in Christ.

Isaac

In summary: Galatians 4:31; 5:1

- Pursue a life of freedom by trusting in God's promises for salvation by faith alone in Him.
- Admit that our salvation is a miraculous new life by God's power and not human effort.
- Turn from any performance based life where you attempt to gain favor with God by what you do.
- We must live by faith in God's promises:
 - Do not grow impatient because God does not immediately provide for you.
 - A faith relationship can mean a delayed gratification of all His promises.

Digging Deeper & Lifegroup Discussion

Galatians 3:3 says, "Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?"
In what ways do you try to be accepted by God by being perfected in your own strength?

Titus 3:4-7: "But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared,⁵ He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,⁶ whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,⁷ so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

In vs. 4, what do you learn about God's heart for you? In vs. 5, what does not save you at all? What is salvation based on? In vs. 6, what did Jesus do that you cannot do to gain salvation? In vs. 7, what did you gain from God in the future that you did not earn? Paul is going out of his way in Galatians 4 to make the point that the Galatians cannot take their salvation into their own hands. Throughout Scripture God confounds our assumptions by doing the impossible, whether it is allowing a 90 year old Sarah to give birth to a son of the promise named Isaac, or a virgin named Mary giving birth to our promised Savior named Jesus.