

THE SECRET OF HIS PURPOSE THE PLAN FOR THE FULLNESS OF THE TIMES
TO HEAD UP ALL THINGS IN THE KING,
EVERYTHING IN THE HEAVENS AND ON THE EARTH,
IN JESUS....

By – Stuart H. Pouliot

#25

Cast Out the Bondwoman

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In Paul's day or, we could say, in the early ecclesia days, one of the greatest challenges faced by the Jews that believed on Jesus was either failing to completely come out of Judaism and completely into Christianity, or reverting back, in whole or in part, to Judaism once having come out of it. There was a lot of pressure being exerted on God's people in Christ in those days as the unbelieving Jews caused them a lot of trouble, especially to Paul and his brethren (1 Thessalonians 1:14-16). It boiled down to one question: Is one justified by the works of the law or through faith in Jesus the Messiah (Galatians 2:16)? Take your pick, but don't mix the two. Choose the latter!

Of course, for true Christians, the answer is through faith in Jesus, for by the works of the law no flesh will be justified (Galatians 2:16). Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ (Romans 10:17), and when one hears and believes on Jesus, that one receives the spirit of God (Galatians 3:2).

Paul had to deal with these challenges throughout his ministry as other teachers went forth with a message that distorted the gospel of King Jesus. Simply, men were teaching a gospel contrary to the gospel preached by Paul. Those who listened to this contrary gospel were being led away from the Messiah and the new covenant, and back to Moses, Judaism, and the old covenant. They were told they had to be justified by the flesh; therefore, physical circumcision had to be continued.

This problem was particularly acute for the believers who resided in the area called *Galatia*. In his anguish over these brethren, Paul did not hold back his assessment of their spiritual condition as he labored over them until Christ was formed in them (Galatians 4:19).

You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? (Galatians 3:1-3 NASB)

To correct them, Paul drew their attention to Abraham before the law was given to the sons of Israel. Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness; therefore, those who are of the faith of Abraham, the believer, are sons of Abraham, and they too shall live by faith (Galatians 3:6-14).

Interestingly, after 2,000 years of Christian history, the same dangers exist for believers, and in fact, in our day, there are groups of Christians that are being led away from Christianity and into Judaism, either in whole or in part. They still hold to Christ, at least in some measure, but they are trying to join Christ with Judaism and the old covenant, either for themselves or for the ones

who call themselves Jews (according to the flesh) but are not true Jews (according to the spirit). When Christians believe this way, it is called *Christian Zionism*.

To all who have been and are being persuaded along these lines, Paul would say: *Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman*. This is a word for many Christians in our day; but who is hearing it? Those who teach *dispensational dualism* seem to be deaf to Paul's allegory.

Obviously, such a statement, as well as an understanding of Zionism, needs further elaboration, but we need to build a foundation of understanding before doing so. In particular, we need to understand Paul's allegory as presented in his epistle to the Galatians.

Before looking at the allegory, it is worth noting once again that Paul was dealing with the teaching that one had to be justified by the law. However, they actually were not listening to the law; that is, they did not understand its purpose and result, something Paul previously pointed out in his epistle (Galatians 3:15-29).

Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law? (Galatians 4:21 NASB)

It is with this question in mind that Paul gave the allegory of the two women and the two sons of Abraham.

An Allegory

For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman [handmaid, slave woman] and one by the free woman. But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. (26) But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. For it is written, "REJOICE, BARREN WOMAN WHO DOES NOT BEAR; BREAK FORTH AND SHOUT, YOU WHO ARE NOT IN LABOR; FOR MORE NUMEROUS ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE THAN OF THE ONE WHO HAS A HUSBAND." [Isaiah 54:1] And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. But what does the Scripture say? "CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE AN HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREE WOMAN." [Genesis 21:10] So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman. (Galatians 4:22-31 NASB)

An *allegory* is "a story in which people, things, and happenings have another meaning, as in a fable or parable; allegories are used for teaching or explaining."

In the case of Paul's allegory, it is not based on a fable but on an historical event that is fact, not fiction. The Greeks used allegories without any historical basis, but the Hebrews generally used allegories with an historical basis. Paul was true to his upbringing as a Hebrew.

Hagar and Ishmael and Sarah and Isaac were real characters who lived many years ago. The present Jerusalem and Mount Sinai are real places on earth. New Jerusalem and Mount Zion are just as real, if not more so. Today, they must be discerned in spirit, awaiting the glorious day when they will be unveiled to the world. The promises and outcomes of God are true, and the better promises will be manifested in His appointed time.

Paul wrote that the allegory pertained to two covenants that were represented by two women, two sons, two cities, two mounts, and two sets of promises. One covenant is old, and one covenant is new. One covenant is earthly and based on the flesh, and one covenant is heavenly and based on the spirit of God. One covenant promises an inheritance of a body of land on earth, and one covenant promises an inheritance of an immortal body out of heaven. One covenant offers slavery, and one covenant offers freedom. One covenant comes through a bondwoman, and one covenant comes through a freewoman. One covenant has passed away, and one covenant is here to stay for the ages and beyond.

There is much to be understood in the ten verses presented in Galatians 4 that, perhaps, many Christians do not understand, either through incorrect teaching or ignorance. Frankly, I must confess that, for many years, I truly did not understand what Paul was telling the Galatians. I knew that this epistle was about Jewish believers trying to be justified according to the flesh, but the import of this allegory never hit me.

Mount Sinai in Arabia

Part of the problem that I faced dealt with this one line: Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem.

First, I couldn't grasp how Mount Sinai in Arabia could be likened to the present Jerusalem sitting in the midst of the present-day state of Israel. After all, isn't the present Jerusalem the apple of God's eye and destined to be the capital of the world in the next eon? Well, the answer to this question is no; but let us leave this for the moment.

Second, Mount Sinai being located in Arabia was a challenge because all the biblical maps that I saw placed Mount Sinai in the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt, not in Arabia. This may be a small point to some, but it is important in understanding Paul's allegory.

However, before looking at his allegory, we need to know some of the history of Ishmael, that is, who he was and what he has come to represent.

History of Ishmael

When Abram was 75 years of age, the Lord commanded him to go forth from Haran to a land that He would show him, namely Canaan. The Lord also promised to bless Abram.

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and

I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." (Genesis 12:1-3 NASB)

So, Abram, along with his beautiful wife Sarai and her brother Lot, Abram's nephew, set out for the land of Canaan. (According to the book of Jasher (12:44), Sarai was Abram's niece, which is why she was Lot's sister.) However, upon their arrival, they discovered that there was a severe famine in the land, so they sojourned to Egypt. Abram feared that the Egyptians would kill him and take his wife, so he stretched the truth a bit and told the Egyptians that she was his sister. According to the custom of the day, it was not unusual to call a close female relative a sister, even though, technically, she was not a sibling. We see this same thing in African cultures today.

While in Egypt, Pharaoh's eyes fell upon Sarai, and he wanted her for his harem. However, the Lord was watching over Abram and Sarai, and He struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues. Fortunately for Pharaoh, he figured out that Sarai was Abram's wife and escorted them out of Egypt after making Abram a wealthier man (Genesis 12:17-20). The book of Jasher fills in some details for us.

Now therefore here is thy wife, take her and go from our land lest we all die on account of her. And Pharaoh took more cattle, men servants and maid servants, and silver and gold, to give to Abram, and he returned unto him Sarai his wife. And the king took a maiden whom he begat by his concubines, and he gave her to Sarai for a handmaid. And the king said to his daughter, It is better for thee my daughter to be handmaid in this man's house than to be a mistress in my house, after we have beheld the evil that befell us on account of this woman. (Jasher 15:30-32)

Later, we learn that this handmaid was named *Hagar*.

Now, let us fast forward ten years. Abram had been promised many descendants, but he had no children by Sarai, his wife. Abram deduced that, since he was childless, the heir of his house would have to be his servant, Eliezer of Damascus.

However, the Lord corrected Abram of his natural reasoning: *This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir* (Genesis 15:4). Abram believed in the Lord from then on, but he continued to rely on his natural reasoning for a while longer or, perhaps we could say, Sarai's natural reasoning.

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. 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. 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. (Genesis 16:1-3 ESV)

Since the handmaid was given to Sarai, Abram could not just take her; Hagar, a bondwoman, was Sarai's possession, so only Sarai could release Hagar to Abram. When she did, Hagar became Abram's bondwoman wife (Genesis 16:3). In those days, a woman could be a freewoman or a

bondwoman, free wife or bond wife. Sarai was free, and Hagar was bond. This is an important distinction that, as we will see, is vital in order to properly understand Paul's allegory.

After Hagar conceived, Sarai detected that she was despised by Hagar, so she complained to Abram; but since Hagar was Sarai's possession, he told her to do what was good in her sight. When Sarai treated Hagar harshly, Hagar fled to a spring of water in the wilderness on the way to Shur between Kadesh and Bered. [Shur is another important aspect of the story that will be taken up later.] An angel of the Lord met Hagar, told her to return to Sarai, and gave her a further word.

The angel of the LORD said to her further, "Behold, you are with child, and you will bear a son; and you shall call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has given heed to your affliction. He will be a wild donkey of a man, His hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hand will be against him; and he will live to the east of all his brothers." (Genesis 16:11-12 NASB)

Hagar returned to Abram and bore him a son when he was 86 years of age (Genesis 16:16). For the next 13 years, Abram and Sarai undoubtedly thought that Ishmael was the son promised by the Lord. But then the Lord appeared to Abram, confirmed His covenant with Abram, and changed his name to Abraham.

"As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you will be the father of a multitude of nations. 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. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you." (Genesis 17:4-6 NASB)

Then the Lord gave Abraham a heavenly jolt, so to speak.

And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. 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." (Genesis 17:15-16 ESV)

According to Abraham's natural mind, this was a physical impossibility, and it was from man's view. How could a child be born to a man that was 100 and a wife that was 99 and beyond childbearing? But God!

We might be tempted to think that Abraham turned against his firstborn son in favor of Isaac, the son of promise, but this is not true. Ishmael was Abraham's firstborn son, and he loved him.

And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before You!" But God said, "No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him

a great nation. But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year." (Genesis 17:18-21 NASB)

God not only heard Abraham's words but knew his heart of love for his son. Ishmael would be blessed, but not in the same way as Isaac would be blessed. It wasn't Ishmael's fault that God had not chosen him to carry forth the line of Abraham that would be a blessing to all the nations and from which would come forth a multitude of nations and kings.

So, 14 years after the birth of Ishmael, Abraham begat Isaac, his son of promise through Sarah. Again, Sarah was beyond childbearing years, so God had to move upon Sarah's womb in order to bring forth Isaac. His birth was a type of the greater birth that resulted from the holy spirit coming upon the virgin Mary, and the power of the Most High overshadowing her in order to conceive Jesus, the Son of God (Luke 1:35).

As a side note, it is interesting that an interval of 14 years passed before Paul went to Jerusalem to submit his gospel to the other apostles (Galatians 2:1). Part of his time was spent in Arabia, which has led to much speculation over where in Arabia he went and for what purpose. Perhaps by revelation, he was led by the spirit of the Lord to Mount Sinai where he learned God's purpose for the law, which he explained to the Galatians. Paul also reported to the Corinthians that 14 years prior he had been snatched away to the third heaven and to paradise (2 Corinthians 12:2-4). These observations are significant but not within the scope of this writing; just some food for thought.

Continuing on with the story of Ishmael; there was obvious conflict between Sarah and Hagar that spilled over to Ishmael as well. Scripture does not give much detail of this conflict, but the book of Jasher (21:14-15) indicates that when Isaac was five years of age, Ishmael sat opposite him with a bow in hand with the intention of killing Isaac. Sarah saw this, which led her to demand that Hagar and her son be cast out.

And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. (Genesis 21:9-10 KJV)

Abraham was distressed over this conflict, for he loved his son. Again, God knew Abraham's heart, so He encouraged him.

And God said unto Abraham, let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also, of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed. (Genesis 21:12-13 KJV)

The next day, Abraham rose and sent Hagar and Ishmael on their way. They wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. When their water ran out, Hagar lamented over the fate of her son. The angel of God called to her and told her to lift up the lad. Her eyes were opened to see a well of water, and they lived.

And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt. (Genesis 21:20-21 KJV)

Ishmael's land is Arabia

Now, it is important to understand where Ishmael lived, that is, the territory that became associated with his name and his descendants and that was his inheritance from God. After all, God did bless him. In what area (land) did God bless him?

So far, the record tells us that he lived east of all his brothers, that he left Abraham's tent and traveled to the wilderness with his mother, and that he lived in the wilderness of Paran. But there is more.

These are the years of the life of Ishmael, one hundred and thirty-seven years; and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people. They settled from Havilah to Shur which is east of Egypt as one goes toward Assyria; he settled in defiance of all his relatives. (Genesis 25:17-18 NASB)

Thus, his descendants, the Ishmaelites, settled from Havilah to Shur, which is east of Egypt as one heads toward Assyria. Roughly speaking, this territory is present-day Saudi Arabia, an important point needed in order to understand where Mount Sinai was located during the exodus of the sons of Israel under the command of Moses. This was Ishmael's inheritance that was east of his relatives.

In biblical terms, Ishmael lived on the east side of the Red Sea; from the Red Sea to close to Babylon. It is also important to note that he did not live in the Sinai Peninsula, which was part of Egypt at the time, nor did he live in Kadesh Barnea; he lived south of Kadesh and north of Shur, which is in the southern-most part of Arabia on the east side of the Red Sea.

Further, the Ishmaelites are also synonymous with the Midianites, as confirmed in the account of Jacob's sons selling their brother Joseph into slavery.

"Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers listened to him. Then some Midianite traders passed by, so they pulled him up and lifted Joseph out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. Thus, they brought Joseph into Egypt. (Genesis 37:27-28 NASB; also, Genesis 37:36; 39:1; Judges 8:22-24)

Midian was a son of Abraham through his second free wife, Keturah (Genesis 25:1-2), which means that the Ishmaelites and the Midianites were related to one another through Abraham. Also, Kedar, one of Ishmael's sons, married a Midianite and lived southeast of the Dead Sea (1 Chronicles 1:29).

Finally, scripture also tells us that Esau married one of Ishmael's daughters, and we know that Esau or Edom lived east of the Jordan in the area called *Edom*, or present-day Jordan.

So, Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan displeased his father Isaac; and Esau went to Ishmael, and married, besides the wives that he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth. (Genesis 28:8-9 NASB)

It is quite apparent that a whole lot of intermarriage took place in the land east of Egypt, the Red Sea, and the Jordan River in what is called *Transjordan*. Psalm 83:6 refers to the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, Moab, and the Hagrites. It is also abundantly clear that Ishmael and his descendants lived in what is called *Arabia*, and not Canaan or Egypt. Arabia is their land.

Today, many Arabs are considered to be descendants of Ishmael. Thus, on a purely physical level, the Ishmaelites of today are mostly Arabs.

With this short history, we now can consider the allegory, starting with verse 25: Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem. To understand what Paul meant, let us break this sentence into three components: first, Mount Sinai in Arabia; second, Hagar is Mount Sinai; and third, these correspond to the present Jerusalem.

Mount Sinai in Arabia

The first component is Mount Sinai in Arabia, which is quite interesting.

First, in Galatians 4, Paul contrasted two covenants, what are called the *old covenant* and the *new covenant*. Mount Sinai represents the old covenant, which is the covenant made between God and the sons of Israel as they stood at the foot of the mount after passing through the Red Sea.

Moses was called up on the mountain to stand before the Lord and receive the commandments written on stone tablets. Unfortunately, the sights and sounds coming from the midst of the mountain were too much for the Israelites, and they feared for their lives. They cried out: "*Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die*" (Exodus 20:19). The commandments were first spoken for all to hear, but the people were so frightened for their lives that they did not listen, which revealed a rebellious pattern for the nation that would lead to their demise. It could have been their Pentecost; the time in which they would have received the holy spirit and the law would have been put in their minds and written on their hearts (Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 36:26). However, instead of drawing near to the Lord, they withdrew from Him. It is for this reason that the commandments were written on stone tablets.

Paul called this the *ministry of death*, for the old covenant was based on letters written on inert stones and not on living, human hearts. The letter kills, but the spirit gives life (2 Corinthians 3:7). Thus, it is important to realize that Paul's use of Mount Sinai is a reference to the old covenant given to the sons of Israel through Moses. Hold to this one truth, for it vital in understanding Paul's allegory.

Second, Paul identified Mount Sinai with Arabia and not with Egypt. If you haven't noticed, some biblical maps place Mount Sinai in the Sinai Peninsula, which in Moses' time was the land of Egypt, and not in Arabia where Ishmael dwelt.

The Sinai Peninsula is like a wedge that runs south from the Mediterranean Sea and is bordered on the west by the Gulf of Suez, biblically called the Red Sea (Exodus 10:19), and on the east by the Gulf of Aqaba, also biblically called the *Red Sea*. For example, in 1 Kings 9:26, the Red Sea is identified with the land of Edom, which refers to the Gulf of Aqaba. The present-day nations of Israel and Jordan are its northernmost borders, and Saudi Arabia is the entire eastern border. Both gulfs drain into the much larger body of water also called the *Red Sea*. In other words, the two gulfs are like arms of the Red Sea that extend up into Egypt, but in biblical times, both were called the *Red Sea*.

This is an important distinction because a number of biblical commentators place Moses' exodus from Egypt on the western side of the Gulf of Suez, which means that they crossed over from Egypt into the Sinai Peninsula, which would have placed them in the wilderness of Egypt and not the wilderness of Shur (Exodus 15:22). Such thinking places the famous mount in Egypt in the Sinai Peninsula and not in the land of Ishmael, as clearly placed by Paul.

For many years, I have been puzzled how this could be true. As I studied maps, the proposed location of Mount Sinai did not make much sense to me. Further, it left me in the dark as to the meaning of Paul's reference to Mount Sinai in Arabia.

The answer to the puzzle is quite simple. Moses and the sons of Israel traveled down the eastern side of the Gulf of Suez (Red Sea), which is on the western edge of the wilderness of Egypt (Exodus 13:18; Judges 11:16). When they came to the southern tip of the wilderness of Egypt, they went east toward the Gulf of Aqaba (Red Sea) (Exodus 14:1-4) and crossed over to Arabia into the areas identified as the land of Midian and the wildernesses of Shur, Sin, Sinai, and Paran (Exodus 15:22; 16:1; Numbers 10:12; 33:11, 15), all of which were located to the east of Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula and to the east of the Gulf of Aqaba, and which are the territory of Ishmael (Genesis 21:21; 25:18).

Now, the question arises: Where is Mount Sinai located?

There is an abundance of archeological evidence supporting the theory that Mount Sinai is located in the present-day Saudi Arabia and is called *Jabal al Lawz* in the ancient territory of Midian to the east of the Gulf of Aqaba. Unfortunately, archeological studies have been stopped by the Saudis, and it is believed that they have built a nuclear missile base next to Jabal al Lawz. Time will tell if this will play some part in the prophetic future.

At any rate, the point of all this is that there is ample, even overwhelming, evidence that Mount Sinai is Jabal al Lawz in Saudi Arabia. Thus, Paul knew his geography and his history.

Hagar is Mount Sinai

The next component of verse 25 is Hagar is Mount Sinai.

Paul connects Mount Sinai in Arabia with Hagar because Arabia is the land of her son, Ishmael; it is his inheritance, and, according to the allegory, in a legal sense, all associated with Mount Sinai

is his as well, meaning the old covenant belongs to Ishmael as well. He not only connects Hagar to the mount, but more explicitly states that Hagar is Mount Sinai.

Again, allegorically speaking, everything that transpired at Mount Sinai is historically associated with it and identified with Hagar and her son. Look at it this way—Mount Sinai has been deeded to Hager and her son.

Again, we need to be reminded that Mount Sinai represents the old covenant established with the sons of Israel through Moses. As such, Hagar represents the old covenant as well, which is based on the flesh and inheriting a physical land called *Canaan*. Of equal significance is the fact that it is not associated with Sarah and her son, Isaac, which represents the new covenant, which is based on better promises and inheriting a different kind of land, an immortal body.

Actually, the old covenant regarding the land of Canaan must be traced back to when Abram (not Abraham) was promised the land. There was no child of promise given at this point; it was simply a promise of land. As cited earlier, God told Abram: *Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you*. Later, the Lord showed Abram the land he was to receive.

The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever [till the eon]." (Genesis 13:14-15 NASB [CLV])

Also, Abram (not Abraham) went into Hagar and begat Ishmael. So, in a sense, Ishmael is associated with the old covenant and the inheritance of the land. After all, at this point, he was the firstborn son of Abram, and later was second in line for the inheritance, behind Isaac, at least as far as the physical land of Canaan was concerned. Allegorically then, Ishmael was blessed with the old covenant before Isaac was born. This means that the promise of the new covenant, which is a better covenant of better promises, became associated with Sarah and Isaac, never with Hagar and Ishmael.

Corresponds to the Present Jerusalem

Finally, the third component of verse 25 is the phrase *corresponds to the present Jerusalem*.

Clearly, the present Jerusalem is the ancient city of Jerusalem that sat in the midst of the land of Canaan or, in Paul's day, Judea. As we will see, it also speaks of the present-day or modern-day Jerusalem that has been built on the ruins of the ancient city that was destroyed by God's Roman army in 70 AD.

What did Paul mean by the phrase *corresponds to the present Jerusalem*; corresponds in what way? In Paul's day, the present Jerusalem represented the Jews who not only rejected Jesus as Messiah and the king of Judah but also demanded His crucifixion. Jerusalem continued to be the bastion of Judaism that not only stood against Christianity but sought to destroy it. We could say they were bound to legalism—the legalism of the old covenant instituted at Mount Sinai. They

remained under the law that was a ministry of death, not the spirit that gives life. The Jews that were not Christians continued to think of themselves as the chosen of God who had a claim on the land of Canaan as promised to Abram. In other words, their belief system was based on the flesh of outward signs and actions and on a piece of real estate, not on the heart and the leading of the spirit of God and the new real estate of immortal, celestial, spiritual bodies.

Through their flesh, they wanted to recover the ancient city of Jerusalem with a fully functional temple of dead stones and animal sacrifices and to establish the kingdom of God on earth with their flesh and become the head of the nations. They had no vision of themselves becoming New Jerusalem, the celestial city that has the glory of God, which is the dwelling of God in spirit, a holy temple in the Lord made up of many individual living stones (Ephesians 2:20-22; 1 Peter 2:4-5). Their whole perspective was temporal and physical, not heavenly and spiritual.

Apparent Jews

It is essential to see how Paul defined the Jews that occupied what he called the *present Jerusalem*. They were what could be called *apparent Jews*. To Paul, these Jews represented the very character of Jerusalem; that is, they defined the city. Take note of the two translations of the same verse in which the words *apparent* and *appearance* are used in relation to the Jew.

For not that which is *apparent* [outwardly] is the Jew, nor yet that which is apparent in flesh is circumcision; but that which is hidden is the Jew, and circumcision is of the heart, in spirit, not in letter, whose applause is not of men, but of God. (Romans 2:28-29 CLV)

For not he who is *one in appearance* is a Jew, nor is that which is such in appearance in flesh circumcision; but he who is one in secret is a Jew, and that is circumcision which is of the heart, in spirit, not in letter, whose praise is not of man but of God. (Romans 2:28-29 REB)

Essentially, Paul stated that calling oneself a Jew did not, and still does not mean that one is a true Jew in the eyes of God. God is the one who determines who a true Jew is, not man, and it really is not based on genes. A Jew according to God is not one who is one outwardly, that is, one who has the physical sign of circumcision of the flesh. This does not make one a Jew. A true Jew is one who has a circumcision of the heart, something only God can see. It is a spiritual circumcision that only comes when one believes on Jesus and receives an earnest of the spirit of God within. All who do not meet God's definition of a Jew are apparent Jews, that is, Jews in appearance only, not of the heart, even though they might have the correct genealogy back to Jacob. Jesus Himself carried this thought one step further as He revealed Himself to John in the Patmos vision.

'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.' ... 'Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you.' (Revelation 2:9; 3:9 NASB)

Undoubtedly, when He spoke these words for John to hear, Jesus had in mind the very ones who falsely accused Him of blasphemy. The Jews that sent Him to the cross were the true blasphemers.

Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your judgment?" They answered, "He deserves death." (Matthew 26:65-66 ESV)

The ones who say they are Jews are the apparent Jews—the ones who say they are Jews based on their flesh. Jesus declares that they are not Jews but liars. These are mighty strong words, but they are the truth because they come from the one who is the truth.

Without any doubt, Paul understood what Jesus spoke to John. (I believe John's Revelation should be dated prior to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. A more appropriate date might be 65 AD.) When he was called *Saul* before meeting the risen Christ on the road to Damascus, he was, by his own admission, a blasphemer: *I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor* (1 Timothy 1:13). He was very much like King Saul who persecuted David, a type of King Jesus. He had been leading the pack that was trying to destroy the Way (Acts 8:1-3). He was fighting against the head of the body of Christ, but he came to learn that his fight was in vain and could not be won. Instead, the risen one won Paul.

I believe that during the interval of 14 years, Paul received amazing revelation from scripture as he was in Arabia, especially in relation to the battle that raged between the son of the flesh, Ishmael, and the son of the promise, Isaac, or between the flesh and the spirit. Paul could look back on his days as a blasphemer and persecutor and see himself in the shoes of Hagar's son.

But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh [Ishmael] persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit [Isaac], so it is now also. (Galatians 4:29 NASB [added])

As Paul penned these words, he must have thought of himself as a persecutor like Ishmael. This has not changed in our day, for many apparent Jews continue to reject Messiah Jesus and even consider Christians to be dogs. Not much has changed in relation to the present Jerusalem. But the day will come when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:10-11).

Legal Ishmaelites

Hopefully, this understanding gives more light to Paul linking Hagar to Mount Sinai and the present Jerusalem. Those who have rejected and continue to reject Christ and call themselves *Jews* based on flesh are not only apparent Jews but also Ishmaelites in the eyes of God or, as some call them, *legal Ishmaelites*. Why? In rejecting Christ and the new covenant of better promises, the apparent Jews chose and have chosen to remain under the old covenant that was instituted at Mount Sinai. They seek the inheritance of ancient Jerusalem and the surrounding land of Canaan given to Abram, the father of Ishmael, not Abraham, the father of Isaac.

They are quite content with receiving a physical and earthly inheritance. As such, they have become the legal children of Hagar and legally bound to Ishmael's inheritance, allegorically speaking. It is as if a legal line, not a geographical one, were drawn from the old Jerusalem to Mount Sinai in Arabia. By their very rejection of Christ, they have bound the old Jerusalem (in contrast to New Jerusalem) to Hagar and Mount Sinai. They, along with the present Jerusalem, have been legally bound to the land of Ishmael and the promise to Abram before he became Abraham.

This is a legal transaction and not one based on genealogy or bloodline, or even geography. Paul makes it very clear that those who rely on genealogy or bloodline are simply children of the flesh, making themselves allegorical Ishmaelites.

But there is a punch line to the story.

Cast out the bondwoman

But what does the Scripture say? "CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE AN HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREE WOMAN." [Genesis 21:10] So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman. (Galatians 4:30-31 NASB)

Paul quoted the words of Sarah as she spoke to her husband Abraham. She was mocked by Hagar and wanted her out of her house for good. This distressed Abraham, but God told him to listen to his wife. In other words, God told Abraham to cast out the bondwoman Hagar and her son Ishmael, and so he did.

The Hebrews epistle was written to those who were also in danger of not casting out the bondwoman. They were reminded that the old covenant was about to disappear, that is, Judaism—centered on the present Jerusalem, the temple, the Levitical priesthood, and the many sacrifices—was soon to become obsolete. For me, this is one of the proofs that Paul had a hand in writing Hebrews.

When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear. (Hebrews 8:13 NASB)

According to God's principle that is repeated throughout scripture, the first order must be taken away in order to establish the second order.

He does away with the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (Hebrews 10:9b-10 ESV)

The first or old covenant was taken away so that the second or new covenant, the better covenant of better promises (Hebrews 8:6), could be established. All vestiges of the first order passed away and were made obsolete when God sent His Roman army to destroy Jerusalem and

Judaism in 70 AD. In the eyes of God, the old covenant is no more and must not be embraced in any shape, form, or manner. This is the meaning of cast out the bondwoman and her son.

All who do so are free and are living according to the spirit that gives life. All who do not are in bondage to the old covenant according to the letter that kills; they are legal Ishmaelites, legally bound by God's divine court to Hagar and Mount Sinai in Arabia.

Christian Zionism

Has this changed in our day? Hardly! Today, there are whole groups of Christians that embrace both covenants in a strange hybrid that holds not only to Christ and Christianity but also to Moses and rabbinical Judaism, to varying degrees. It is called *Christian Zionism*.

Undoubtedly, there are permutations (or various schools of thought) of Christian Zionism—I make no attempt to explain them. It is enough to say that I have rejected what I once believed along these lines.

Why? Because Christian Zionism tramples underfoot the Son of God. It is based on the theory (theology?) of *dualism* that states God is working on two different lines. One line is the gentile (non-Jews) believers and the church, and the other line is the apparent Jew and the state of Israel. One line is according to the spirit, and the other is according to the flesh. One line is heavenly (you know, golden streets, pearly gates, mansions in the sky, and all), and one is earthly, associated with a dusty piece of real estate in the Middle East. By the way, some include Jesus the Messiah of Israel in both lines, others do not.

As I have written elsewhere, the proper way to view what God is doing is called *graftage*.

See *Dualism, Reversionism, Graftage* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art39.pdf>

How are we to view the Jew of our day? As we would anyone else in the world—love them! If we love the Jews, regardless of where they reside, in Jerusalem or not, we need to tell them that God loves them, and they need to believe on Yeshua (Jesus), the true Messiah and king of Judah, and the one who legitimately holds the birthright name of *Israel*. Jesus is the Israel of God. Unbelieving Jews need to be made jealous over the gospel, not encouraged to continue on their present course wed to the bondwoman.

For more on this, see *Until Shiloh Comes* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art66.pdf>

We need to heed Paul's exhortation to cast out the bondwoman. The question each of us must ask is this: Is our mother Hagar, or is she Sarah? Are we in bondage, or are we in freedom? Are we children in slavery, or are we children of promise? Is our destiny based on the flesh, or is our destiny based on the spirit?

Conclusion

As a final summation, while Paul was in Arabia, he must have contemplated the nature of the earthly Jerusalem that he knew all too well. Although he knew the glory of God did not fill the temple of that day, perhaps he wondered if it would once again come into that glory. After all, Saul (Paul) had believed the Jews were God's chosen people.

But following his Damascus experience, in whatever manner it actually manifested to him, all of Paul's world had to be reassessed, including the old covenant and Jerusalem itself. Somewhere in this process, he came to see that the earthly Jerusalem had become obsolete, just as the old covenant through Moses had become obsolete and was passing away. Perhaps, he actually saw New Jerusalem as John saw it. After all, Paul wrote to the Corinthians about his experience of being caught up to paradise and the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:1-6).

Further, when Paul wrote to the Thessalonians (1:16) that the wrath has come upon the Jews to the utmost—the Jews that were persecuting Christians and had demanded the death of their Messiah—he must have thought back on Jesus' prophetic word about Jerusalem.

"So the king inwardly swelled with fury and was made to teem with anger. And then, sending his soldiers (troops), he destroyed those murderers and set their city in flames. (Matthew 22:7 JM-NT)

Paul's present Jerusalem was going to be destroyed and he knew why. He did not hold on to the earthly, for he had seen something so far beyond and so glorious that he could not hold to something so temporal. Besides, why hold onto something that was going to be burned up in the fire of God, literally? In his allegory, he was saying: Let it go! We have been given something far, far better.

I believe that Paul was so caught by this truth that he was pressed to warn his people according to the flesh that had believed on Jesus but were in danger of going back to the old. As a Hebrew, I also believe he wrote the epistle to the Hebrews. If he did not, someone very close to him certainly did. Some have suggested Luke, his co-worker. This letter was written out of great concern for Hebrew believers as the day was drawing near for the wrath of God to be poured out on the unbelieving Jews and their beloved city and temple that had become a den of robbers. He had to warn them. *Open your eyes! Come outside the camp where Christ is!* The present Jerusalem is no longer our safe haven. We have a new, not an old, Jerusalem based on better promises! It is heavenly, meaning it has all the nature and character of the heavenly realm where Christ is now seated.

Consider this question: If Paul saw a revived earthly Jerusalem along with its temple and animal sacrifices, a belief of those who hold to dualism and Christian Zionism, then why is there absolutely no reference, not even an intimation of such, in any of Paul's letters or in any of the other books of the new testament? If it were so important, as some claim today, then why no mention of it? It seems to me that such ones take the shadows and types of the old testament and make them realities apart from the one who sums up all of them as the reality. His name is Jesus!

For those that believe Romans 11 and Paul's proclamation that *all Israel will be saved* refutes what I am claiming, I refer you to another article I wrote that attempts to explain this.

See *Fullness of the Nations—All Israel Saved* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art64.pdf>

If Paul were alive today, without doubt, he would be proclaiming with all his might to all who are in bondage to the present earthly Jerusalem, unbeliever (Jews) and believer (Christians) alike —

But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. (Galatians 4:26 NASB)

Can we do no less than cast out the bondwoman and speak the truth in love to those who haven't done so?