

Self-Dependence and Spiritual Slavery Galatians 4:21-25

Verse 21

There is more to the _____ than _____.

You're only hearing _____ the story.

Verse 22

Abraham had two sons by two different types of women: slave and free.

Verse 23

The two sons were born to two different types of mothers, but even more importantly they were conceived in two very different situations:

The son of the slave was conceived through fleshly effort (what Abraham and Sarah could accomplish in their own _____).

The son of the free was conceived through faith in God's promises (what only God could do).

MacArthur (124): "Ishmael symbolizes those who have had only natural birth and who trust in their own works."

Ryken: "[Abraham, with Hagar,] was operating on the principle that 'God helps those who help themselves.'"¹

Keller (121): "Abraham was choosing to rely on his own capabilities.... The faith he had was in himself, as his own 'savior.'"

¹ Ryken, P. G. (2005). *Galatians*. (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Doriani, Eds.) (pp. 183–184). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

Verse 24a

Allēgoreō: “to use analogy or likeness to express something”²

Systoicheō [“corresponds,” verse 25]: “the verb often refers to the ‘lining up’ of items in two columns, exactly the sort of thing that Paul does in this paragraph”³

Paul is laying Scripture beside Scripture to demonstrate the parallels, _____, and principles.

Scripture has one _____.

The God who is sovereign over history chose to illustrate _____ with history.

Verse 24a: “Now, in addition to their literal historical meaning, these events may also be laid alongside spiritual truths as a God-given illustration of them.”

Verse 24b

These two women (and the conception of their sons) are an illustration of two different covenants God has made with His people.

Verse 24c

One covenant is the Law of Moses given at Mt. Sinai. The law shows us our slavery to sin, and those who depend on their effort to keep the law for salvation are in slavery (Galatians 2:16, 3:10, 3:22-23, 4:3).

² Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature](#) (3rd ed., p. 46). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

³ Moo, D. J. (2013). [Galatians](#) (p. 303). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

This can be illustrated by Hagar’s story, because the son born to her was the result of merely _____ effort on the part of _____, unbelieving Abraham and Sarah.

Just as Abraham and Sarah’s scheme of self-effort resulted only in a son born into slavery, so any human scheme to achieve righteousness through our own human effort (“the flesh”) will result only in spiritual slavery.

MacArthur (125): “Anyone, including a Jew, who attempted to satisfy God and gain freedom from condemnation by trying to live up to that covenant in his own self-righteousness was spiritually like a child of Hagar, the bondswoman. He was a slave, struggling for a freedom he could not obtain by his own efforts.”

Spurgeon: “This law is the most rigorous master in the world; no wise man would love its service; for after all you have done, the law never gives you a ‘thank you’ for it, but says, ‘Go on, sir, go on!’ 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.”⁴

Luther: “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.”⁵

Verse 25

Now even though Mt. Sinai (paralleled with Hagar in verse 24) is obviously in Arabia, the best spiritual parallel is actually present-day Jerusalem (the Jewish people and their faith at this time). That is where you are most likely to find people in spiritual _____ because they are trusting human effort (“the flesh”) for righteousness.

⁴ Ryken, P. G. (2005). [Galatians](#). (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Doriani, Eds.) (p. 186). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

⁵ Ryken, P. G. (2005). [Galatians](#). (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Doriani, Eds.) (p. 191). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

Keller (122) "Their heart and approach to God is like Abraham with Hagar, and the fruit in their lives is like Ishmael – just more slavery!"

The physical parallel is _____ > Isaac > Jerusalem, but the spiritual parallel is _____ > Ishmael > Jerusalem.

Romans 2:28-29 For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

Conclusion

Spiritual _____ - _____ leads only to spiritual _____.