

Who is Your Mother?

Galatians 4:21-31

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- Interest today in researching family trees and connections
- Importance of knowing one's bloodline if of Jewish descent
- Because they could trace their physical roots back to Abraham, most believed that they were the true sons of Abraham.
- Paul, in Galatians 3—4, addresses the paternity question: Who is your spiritual father?
 - The spiritual blessings promised to Abraham's offspring does not come through law keeping, but through faith.
 - The law was never intended to save, nor to supersede or replace God's promise to Abraham. It was a temporary measure until Jesus instituted the new covenant.
 - Those who are of faith are the genuine spiritual sons of Abraham

Who is Your Mother?—Galatians 4:21-31

A. The Historical Background—Genesis 12—21

1. The "Full" Story—Genesis 12--21
 - a. God's promises Abram a "land, seed (or offspring), and blessing"
 - b. When Sarai was unable to conceive children, Abram proposed making Eliezar his adopted son
 - c. God promised Abraham that "*one from his own body*" would be his heir.
 - d. At age 86, Abram marries Hagar, Sarai's slave, and bears Ishmael
 - e. At age 99, God changes Abram's name to Abraham and Sarai's name to Sarah as a promise that they would be a "*father of many nations*"—Genesis 17:3, 16
 - f. God also promised Abraham that "*Sarah, your wife, shall bear you a son*"—Genesis 17:19-21
 - g. At age 100, Abraham and Sarah welcome Isaac into their home
 - h. At the weaning of Isaac, Ishmael mocks him, and he and his mother, Hagar, are exiled to Arabia.
2. Paul's Summary—Galatians 4:21-23
 - a. Abram had two sons: Ishmael, born to the slave woman, Hagar; and Isaac, born to the freewoman, his wife, Sarah.
 - b. Ishmael was born "*according to the flesh*"—by taking matters into their own hands without God's guidance, motivated by selfish desires and fulfilled by purely human means.
 - c. Isaac was born "*through promise*" by faith.—Hebrews 11:11

B. The Spiritual Interpretation—Galatians 4:24-27

1. General warning about allegorizing Scripture
2. Specific spiritual truth Paul draws from this historical incident
 - a. Hagar and her son, Ishmael, symbolize the covenant of law and works
 - 1) The law was given at Mount Sinai in Arabia. Hagar is associated with Mount Sinai
 - 2) The law and legalism cater to the flesh—to "look at what I've done" attitude
 - 3) Hagar and Mount Sinai identified with Judaism and legalism—Galatians 4:25
 - b. Sarah, and her son, Isaac, represent the covenant of grace and faith
 - 1) The "Jerusalem from above" is the "new Jerusalem"—Galatians 4:26
 - 2) The "new Jerusalem" will be heavily populated as predicted in Isaiah 54:1—Galatians 4:27
 - 3) Heaven is populated with those who are "*born from above*" by faith.
 - 4) We, by faith, are like Isaac, children of promise.

C. The Application for Today—Galatians 4:29-31

1. Legalism and grace cannot co-exist—Galatians 4:29
2. Legalism must be thrown out—Galatians 4:30
3. Experience the liberty which is ours in Christ!—Galatians 4:31