

## GALATIANS 4:21-31 – Sarah or Hagar?

### **KEY QUESTION:** Who is your MOTHER? (v22-26)

- \* Are you children of the SLAVE woman, HAGAR, and her son ISHMAEL or the FREE woman, SARAH, and her son, ISAAC?
  - \* Paul is saying: If you choose to line yourself up with present JERUSALEM, with its laws & dead religion, actually still functionally in SLAVERY & are, in effect, children of HAGAR.
  - \* By resurrendering yourself to 'living UNDER the law,' you are placing yourself back under oppressive & unnecessary BONDAGE.
  - \* Why would you do that, when you could be living in the FREEDOM that comes through FAITH in JESUS CHRIST?
- *Why was Paul's insinuation that the Judaisers / sympathetic Galatians were sons of Hagar so insulting? Why did he propose that they were?*

### **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STORY**

1. Abraham's family line through ISAAC would eventually lead to the MESSIAH.
2. There is a great deal of PROPHETIC SYMBOLISM sprinkled throughout the story → Both Abraham & Isaac are considered to be TYPES of Christ.  
→ *What particularly stands out for you in the story of the births of Ishmael & Isaac? Do you feel sorry for Hagar? Why was Abraham's relationship with Hagar culturally acceptable but biblically not so?*  
→ *In what ways do Abraham & Isaac foreshadow Jesus the Messiah?*

### **TWO COMPARISONS**

1. Hagar represents LAW; Sarah represents GRACE.
2. Ishmael represents FLESH; Isaac represents SPIRIT.  
→ *Why did Hagar represent law (the clue is slavery & bondage) & how did Sarah represent grace? Why does Ishmael represent flesh & Isaac spirit (the clues are the ways Abraham responded to God)?*

Hagar was a SLAVE & represents BONDAGE.  
Sarah was FREE & represents LIBERTY / JOY in Christ.  
Ishmael forever represents what FLESH can produce.  
Isaac represents what the SPIRIT can produce.

### **THREE CONFLICTS**

1. Ishmaels will always PERSECUTE Isaacs (v29-30).
2. There is ongoing TENSION in us all between FLESH & SPIRIT.
3. LEGALISM & GRACE just do not MIX.  
→ *Explain each of these three conflicts. How do they play themselves out?*

- *Where does flesh tend to lead us? What about spirit?*
- *What happens when you try to mix legalism & grace?*

### **THREE POTENTIAL TRAPS**

#### **1. The IMPATIENCE Trap**

- \* It's always so much better to wait for God's TIMING & resist the temptation to RUSH, cut CORNERS or settle for SECOND BEST.  
→ *How does this one work? Why do we tend to fall into it? What happens when we do?*

#### **2. The I'VE GOT A GOOD IDEA Trap**

- \* Sometimes we subconsciously decide God's way is just TOO HARD, but my 'good idea' is a REASONABLE ATTEMPT & that's OK if you're prepared to SETTLE for the best YOU can do, when instead you could have the best GOD can do.  
→ *How does this one work? Why do we tend to fall into it? What happens when we do?*

#### **3. The I CAN DO IT MYSELF Trap**

- \* What God does always comes from SUPERNATURAL SEED. The main obstacle to the outworking of that is our own tendency to MEDDLE, PUSH OR COMPROMISE in trying to FIX or FORCE it ourselves.  
→ *How does this one work? Why do we tend to fall into it? What happens when we do?*

*IN SUMMARY, what lessons did Abraham learn through this saga, & have you learnt them yet?*

**Personal RESPONSE:** Considering where you are right now / what you're facing / what you know is coming around the next corner, ask yourself these 3 questions:

1. *Am I staying patient or fighting impatience?*
2. *Is it good idea or God idea?*
3. *Am I trying to do it myself or leaning on God?*

**PRAYER MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES:** How can your group pray for you?

1. *Are you stuck?*
2. *Are you reeling in aftermath of trying to force it yourself?*
3. *Are you struggling in the waiting?*