

## POPULAR STORIES

### CHAPTER 8

#### HAGAR, SARAH, ISHMAEL & ISAAC

Genesis 15:4; Gal 4: 21-31

We come now to the story of “Hagar and Sarah, Ishmael and Isaac.” Abraham was married to Sara. God promised Abraham a son.

**Genesis 15: 4:...he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.**

Ten years passed.

**Genesis 16: 1: Now Sarai Abram’s wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. 2: And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. 3: And Sarai Abram’s wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. 4: And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived:...15: And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son’s name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael.**

Thirteen or fourteen years passed..

**Genesis 17: 16: [God said unto Abraham,]...I will bless [Sarah], and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her...18: And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! 19: And God said, Sarah thy wife [the only wife God recognized] shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him...**

Another year passed.

**Genesis 21: 1: And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken. 2: For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. 3: And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac...9: And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which [Hagar] had born unto Abraham, mocking. [Hagar, who born after the flesh, persecuted Isaac, who was born after the Spirit.]10: 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. 11: And the thing was very grievous in Abraham’s sight because of his son. 12: 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.**

Turn to Galatians 4. Here is the spiritual meaning of the story we just read.

**Galatians 4: 21: Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? 22: For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. [Ishmael by Hagar the bondmaid; Isaac by Sarah the freewoman] 23: But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman *was* by promise. 24: Which things are an allegory: [a true story teaching spiritual truth]**

We will see Hagar and Sarah represent two covenants, two kinds of religion and the two sons represent two kinds of sons born by these two kinds of religion.

## **TWO COVENANTS**

Hagar and Sarah represent the two covenants.

Hagar represents the covenant of law, of works, which God gave at Mt. Sinai, “the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.” (Ga 4:24 ) The covenant of works given at Mt. Sinai required the sinner to obey the whole law in order to be saved. God said, “This do and live.” It was not given to give us life; it was given to show us our sins to declare us all guilty. So the covenant of works only “genders to bondage.” it never sets a sinner free.

Sarah represents God’s everlasting covenant of grace made with Christ for the salvation of God’s elect. Abraham was married to Sarah, long before Hagar. So God established the covenant of grace long before God even created the world. God gave a chosen people to Christ and said, “My Son, you establish righteousness for your people and you and your people shall live forever!” By so much was Jesus made a Surety of a better testament.”; “The mediator of a better covenant established upon better promises.” (Heb 7: 22; 8: 6)

God established his covenant with Abraham long before Hagar entered the picture. So God established the covenant of grace in Christ long before he gave the law in the garden or at Mt. Sinai. God’s elect were saved before we were lost! God left nothing in the hands of his elect! God fulfills the everlasting covenant of grace. Sara is the freewoman—the everlasting covenant is a covenant of free grace, not based on anything in the sinner.

Sarah remained Abraham’s true wife. Hagar did not change that—nor did the law in the garden or at Mt. Sinai change the everlasting covenant of grace which God made in Christ for his people, “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” (Gal 3: 16-17)

If the heir had come through Hagar then it would have ceased to be by God’s promise—likewise if we were saved by the works of the law, salvation would cease to be by God’s promise and grace, “For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise....*Is* the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” (Gal 3: 18, 21-22)

Hagar was never intended to give life, she was only a handmaid to Sarah—likewise the law was never intended to give life, it was only a handmaid to the covenant of grace, “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. [by Christ] But after that faith [Christ] is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” (Gal 3: 24-25)

This is peace for those who believe God! We are saved by the everlasting covenant of grace which can never be altered because all the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ.

## **TWO KINDS OF RELIGION**

Sarah and Hagar also represent the two kinds of religion.

Hagar represents works religion, “For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.” (Gal 4: 25) “Mount Sinai in Arabia” is outside Israel. So works religion is outside of Christ’s true, spiritual kingdom. All works-law religion is like earthly Jerusalem, with earthly priests, earthly altars, serving the letter of the law, waiting for an earthly kingdom. It is what I refer to when I say “free will, works religion.” The false church of works “is in bondage with her children.” Hagar was a slave and she brought forth a son into bondage like herself. Works religion brings forth children of bondage like themselves.

Galatians 3: 10: For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them...11: The just shall live by faith 12: And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

Galatians 4: 3: Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:...8: Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. 9: But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? 10: Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. (Ga 4:8-10)

Sara represents true religion, the true church of God which is above, “But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.” (Gal 4: 26) Earthly Israel, earthly Mt. Zion and earthly Jerusalem was created by God to picture spiritual Israel, heavenly Mt. Zion in heavenly Jerusalem. When Christ finished his work he arose to the true Mt. Zion and sat down in his throne in true heavenly Jerusalem. So the prophecy is being fulfilled which says, “And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (Isa 2:2-3) This is what is meant in Hebrews 12: 18-24.

Hebrews 12: 18: For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire...22: But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23: To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Sarah was called the mother of many nations. So the true heavenly church of God is the mother of us all who are truly born of God because this church is made up of God’s elect out of every nation under heaven, “For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.” (Gal 4: 27) This is quoted exactly from Isaiah 54 verse 1 right after chapter 53 which declares Christ finished work and went to glory. At Pentecost he began calling all his people all over the world. So the little church of Jewish believers that appeared a barren widow, since they had crucified our Husband, is told to rejoice and fear not because “thy Seed shall inherit the Gentiles,...thou shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.” (Is 54: 3-5) Christ is the God of his elect Israel which he is calling from the whole earth. This is the true church of God! So we are saved by God’s everlasting covenant of grace, born of Christ who sent the gospel to us out of heavenly Zion and called us into his church.

## **TWO KINDS OF SONS**

Ishmael and Isaac represent the two kinds of children born from these two kinds of religions, “he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.” (Gal 4: 23)

Ishmael was born of the bondwoman, after the works of Abraham’s flesh so he was a son of bondage. So it is that works religion by using law and fleshly means only produce sons of flesh.

Isaac represents the true children of God, “Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.” (Gal 4: 28) We were born because God the Father chose us in Christ, because the Son of God redeemed us from the curse of the law, and because God the Holy Spirit regenerated us. We were not born in order to be sons, we were born because we were sons already by the grace of God in Christ. These are the true children of Abraham and the only true heirs of God, according to God’s promise to Abraham.

Galatians 4: 4: When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5: To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6: And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7: Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Galatians 3: 29: And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

## **THE END**

For now, things are like they were then “But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.” (Gal 4: 29)

Like Ishmael mocked Isaac, like the self-righteous world rejected Christ and his disciples, for now, will-working, legalists call us anti-nomians because we declare Christ is the end of the law for the believer. (Rom 10: 1-4) We are not under the law but under grace! (Gal 4: 16, 17; 6: 12-14.) We glory in Christ rather than in our flesh, “We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” (Php 3: 3)

Paul had to deal with this same persecution in his day. He said to the Galatians, “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” (Gal 4: 16) He exposed the will-workers motives for what they really are, “As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” (Gal 6: 12-14)

So we will continue glorying in the cross of Christ and wait on God because he says this, “Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.” (Gal 4: 30) The false religion of works with all her sons of flesh shall soon be cast out by God as was Rahab and Ishmael. The sons of the bondwoman can never be heir with the sons of the freewoman. Grace and works cannot mix here below. They certainly will not mix in glory above.

So this is Paul’s conclusion and application to us who believe, “So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ

shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. (Ga 4: 31; 5:1-6)

**AMEN!**