

Galatians 4:21–31

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Galatians 4:21–31

1. Connect an item on the left to one with which it corresponds on the right.

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|----------------------|---|-----------------|
| • Mt. Zion | — | 10 Commandments |
| • Mt. Sinai | — | Jerusalem above |
| • Law from Sinai | — | New Covenant |
| • Sarah | — | In Arabia |
| • Hagar | — | Son of Promise |
| • Ishmael | — | Freewoman |
| • Isaac | — | Son of Handmaid |
| • Law from Jerusalem | — | Handmaid |

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Two Mountains Two Laws	
Hagar, the Bondwoman	(Sarah), the Freewoman
Ishmael born after the flesh	Isaac born after the Spirit
Old Covenant	New Covenant
Sinai in Arabia	Jerusalem which is above
Sons of the bondwoman	Children of promise
Bondage	Freedom
Persecutes	Persecuted
Cast out	Heir by faith

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2. Explain Galatians 4:27?

- “For it is written...” This is a quotation from Isaiah 54:1. In the context Israel is pictured as being married and having children in the land prior to the captivity. However, in the captivity they were represented as “childless” or barren. The Messianic Promise presents the “barren” remnant as having more children than the “married”.
- “Thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles...” The promise is not realized in a physical Israel that returns but the “heavenly Jerusalem” which is the church of Christ (Isaiah 54:2–10). This “woman” represents all those Jews who believed on the Messiah (Acts 2:21; Romans 5:5; 9:33; 10:11, 13, 21).

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3. **BONUS:** What does it mean to say that Ishmael was “born after the flesh”? Wasn’t Isaac conceived according to the flesh?
- “After the flesh...” does not refer to natural conception (Romans 4:13–21). Ishmael was conceived according to a human plan that trusted in the power of the flesh (Genesis 16:1–6).
 - “Isaac...was born after the Spirit...” that is, he was born according to the Spirit’s teaching and through belief of His promise. Isaac was a child produced by faith. He was promised of God and could only be received through faith (Genesis 15:6).

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4. **BONUS:** What is the “Jerusalem which is above” and how is it that she is “the mother of us all”?
- “Jerusalem which is above...” corresponds to Paul’s “heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10), it is the church, those in Christ, the spiritual relationship.
 - “Mother of us all...” combines several figures, that of the “new birth” and the “bride of Christ”. We do not want to make too much of the figure other than to convey the idea that only those who are of faith are the sons of God.
 - “The son of the bondwoman shall not be the heir...” These are the unbelieving Jews and apostates who return to the Law of Moses (Galatians 5:4).

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5. Whose children are we, that is, we who are believers and Christians?
- “So then brethren...” Paul is addressing the Galatians, both Jews and Gentiles that have believed. He does not include any Jews that have not believed, or any that refuse to reject the doctrine of the Circumcision (4:9; 5:6).
 - “We are not children of the bondwoman...” The believing Jew did not make his appeal to God in the flesh, and neither did the Gentile (2:16–18).
 - “But of the free...” Our mother is the “freewoman,” that is, we are justified by grace through faith which brings us into the New Covenant, the church of Christ.

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6. How are we “born after the Spirit”?
- “Now we, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise...” Isaac was born through the obedience of faith (Genesis 15–18; Romans 4:11–25). The child that God promised did not come through the power of the flesh (Genesis 21:12; Romans 9:7; Hebrews 11:18).
 - “Him that was born after the Spirit...” Isaac was not conceived until Abraham and Sarah quit relying upon themselves and their plans (Genesis 18). Isaac was born when and how the Spirit had revealed.
 - “We are...children...of the free...” Like Isaac we are born of faith and not the flesh, we are of the Gospel and not the works of the Law of Moses.

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