

Introduction: How should we interpret Scripture?

Throughout the history of the Church, Christians have employed various methods of interpreting Scripture. Some have approached the biblical text *allegorically*, looking for deeper spiritual meanings beyond the words themselves. Others have emphasized *moral* or *theological* interpretations, seeking to understand how a passage relates to Christian belief and practice. We believe, however, that the most faithful approach to interpreting Scripture is the *historical-grammatical* method, which seeks to understand the meaning intended by the original author by carefully considering the language, grammar, historical setting, and literary context of the passage.

Main Point: Because we are children of God's promise rather than slaves under the Law, we must understand our _____ in Christ and _____ in accordance with it.

Galatians 4:21-31

- Paul addresses them with a question and then references an important account take from the _____. (vv. 21-23)

(1) His rhetorical question highlights the situation they find themselves in.

“you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law?”

(2) His OT reference is a summary of the births of Abraham’s sons taken from Gen. 16, 18, & 21.

(3) He then highlights important differences between these two births.

Son #1 - _____ (Gen. 16)

Son #2 - _____ (Gen. 18,21)

→ “son of the _____ woman”

→ “son of the _____ woman”

→ “born _____ the flesh”

→ “born _____ the promise”

- Paul then explains that the two women from the account can be understood as an _____ to help the Galatians understand the inferiority of the Law. (vv. 24-26)

(1) These women serve as _____ examples for Paul’s argument.

“this may be interpreted allegorically” - ἀλληγορέω (allēgoreō) – to use analogy or likeness to express something

- It is possible that the Judaizers had used this analogy to undermine Paul’s teaching, arguing that Paul had brought the initial teachings about Christ to the Galatians (rep. by Hagar), but now they must embrace the fullness of the Law (rep. by Sarah).

“...Paul is not introducing allegory as an interpretive principle, but as a tool for illustration. Much like the use of metaphors and similes—illustrations can be used within a contextual approach for picturing certain truths.”

– Michael Vlach, *The Old in the New*

(2) These women represent two _____.

- An analogy is drawn between a covenant and a _____, as they each produce offspring or children after their image or station. This highlights the ultimate “source” from which people derive their spiritual life and relationship to God. (Burer)

Covenant #1 – The _____ Covenant

→ “from Mount _____” (Exod. 19:1-9)

→ “bearing children for _____”

→ “Now Hagar....corresponds to the present _____ for she is in slavery with her children.”

“...his emphasis is on the religious significance of the city: the present city of Jerusalem to which the Judaizers looked as the source and support of their gospel.” - Richard Longenecker

“This analogy works well because [the Judaizers’] center of activity was indeed the city of Jerusalem. Note that the problems in Antioch began when people from James arrived, and James was without a doubt active, even paramount in Jerusalem.”
– Michael Burer

Those who rely upon the Law for righteousness find themselves _____, even as the unbelieving Jews are!

Covenant #2 – The _____ Covenant or the _____ Covenant?

→ “the Jerusalem _____ is free”

- This is the spiritual home of all who believe (Heb. 11:10, 12:22, 13:14)
- It also anticipates the restoration of Jerusalem under the reign of Christ in the Millennium (Ezek. 40-48)
- In the New Creation, the Heavenly & Earthly Jerusalems will be one together (Rev. 21-22)

→ “she is our _____”

- Believers are set free from the Law and its curses by faith in Christ and our existence is bound up with Him and so we seek the things above where He is (Col. 3:1)

Paul's Quotation of Isa. 54:1

This passage is preceded by the most well-known of the “Servant Songs” (Isa. 52:13-53:12), which is itself preceded by the promises of the Lord's salvation which will be brought to the future Jerusalem.

- *This salvation will be accomplished through the _____ of the Lord who dies in the place of His people (Isa. 53)*
- *The quotation is the beginning of the response of the people to all that the Lord has done for them, culminating in their delight and rest in His “covenant of peace” which will be eternal for them (54:10).*
- *Although Paul has referred repeatedly to the Abrahamic Covenant, he likely has the New Covenant in mind here as it is the means by which God's promised salvation comes to mankind through Messiah!*

“Though the New covenant is not explicitly mentioned in Galatians...it is securely in Paul's mind. In fact, this becomes clearer when, in Galatians 4:22ff., he sets off the New covenant (Sarah, Mt. Zion) from the old (Mosaic) covenant (Ishmael, Mt. Sinai). We Gentiles enter into the promised blessing of Gen. 12:3 through the New covenant in Christ... [The covenants of promise] all depend on the *mediation of Christ in the New covenant* (Heb. 12:24).” – Paul Henebury

Paul's quotation demonstrates the _____ of “Sarah” in his illustration.

“The citation from Isaiah thus shows that just as God will greatly bless Israel and multiply her after her exile is complete because of the promises long ago made to Abraham and realized through Sarah, similarly God in the present time is multiplying his people through Paul's ministry among the Gentiles based on those same promises.” –Burer

- A proper understanding their true identity should demand a _____ from the Galatians. (vv.28-31)

(1) The Galatians should understand themselves in relation to _____ because they are in Christ.

“Now you...like Isaac, are children of promise.”

(2) They should not, therefore, be surprised by the _____ they have with the children of slavery (the _____).

(3) He then quotes Sarah's own words from Gen. 21:10.

(4) His conclusion ties this illustration back to the argument about the true identity of believers.

“So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.”

Hagar → Ishmael → Mosaic Covenant (Law) → Earthly Jerusalem → Her Children → _____!

Sarah → Isaac → Abrahamic – New Covenant (Faith) → Jerusalem Above → Believers → _____!

Concluding Thoughts

1. What we _____ to be true about ourselves greatly impacts our behavior.

2. Understanding our identity in view of Christ's _____, _____, and _____ works exhorts and encourages us towards faithfulness.

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→ “born <u>according to</u> the flesh”	→ “born <u>through</u> the promise”
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Hagar → Ishmael → Mosaic Covenant (Law) → Earthly Jerusalem → Her Children → Slavery!

Sarah → Isaac → Abrahamic – New Covenant (Faith) → Jerusalem Above → Believers → Freedom!

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