

A Short Commentary on the Greek Text of Galatians

Chapter 4

Verse 1 Λέγω δέ, ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον ὁ κληρονόμος νήπιός ἐστιν, οὐδὲν διαφέρει δούλου κύριος πάντων ὧν,

I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything,

ἐφ' ὅσον ἐφ' ὅσον inasmuch as, while

νήπιός adjective normal nominative masculine singular νήπιος *infant, minor*—of very young children:

διαφέρει verb indicative present active 3rd person singular διαφέρω *carry through; it makes a difference*

In verses 1-3 Paul has returned to "life under the Law" and will resume "life in Christ" from verse 4. He is setting up a contrast to show the vast difference of what it is like to be under Law compared to being under grace. Verses 1-2 describe a custom typical of what would happen in Paul's day.

ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον ὁ κληρονόμος νήπιός ἐστιν Here is a child that one day will be the heir of a great estate.

οὐδὲν διαφέρει δούλου κύριος πάντων ὧν, Yet, while he is still a child he is under discipline and in some respect is treated no differently from a slave even though he is really master of all.

Verse 2 ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ ἐπιτρόπους ἐστὶν καὶ οἰκονόμους ἄχρι τῆς προθεσμίας τοῦ πατρὸς.

but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father.

ἐπιτρόπους noun accusative masculine plural ἐπίτροπος *manager, foreman, steward*

οἰκονόμους noun accusative masculine plural οἰκονόμος *steward, manager—administrator*

προθεσμίας noun genitive feminine singular προθεσμία *appointed day, fixed or limited time*

ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ ἐπιτρόπους ἐστὶν καὶ οἰκονόμους Whilst being a "child" he is subject to "managers and administrators". As a child he does not understand business management so others undertake the task and he must be obedient to them.

ἄχρι τῆς προθεσμίας τοῦ πατρὸς. This is only for a prescribed period of time, until the child reaches the father's set time for him to come into the management of the estate.

Verse 3 οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς, ὅτε ἦμεν νήπιοι, ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου ἦμεθα δεδουλωμένοι·

In the same way we also, when we were children, were in slavery under the elemental forces of the world.

στοιχεῖα noun accusative neuter plural common from στοιχεῖον *elements (of learning), fundamental principles, letters of the alphabet, elemental substances, elements* from which everything is made *elemental spirits; primary and fundamental principles* (cf. our `alphabet' or `a b c') *of any art, science, or discipline; e. g. of mathematics, elementary doctrines, fundamental teachings, basic principles* Heb 5.12; in a negative sense, humanistic teachings common to Jewish and pagan religions, involving binding traditions, taboos, prohibitions, ordinances, ceremonies, etc., teachings involving either supernatural elemental or animating spirits (probably CO 2.8, 20).

οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς Paul now applies this principle to Christians

ὅτε ἦμεν νήπιοι, With the repeat of this word Paul is referring to the time of minority relating to the people of God during the OT period. He uses "we" in a general sense not necessarily referring to his readers in particular.

ἦμεθα δεδουλωμένοι· In a sense, whilst under the Law, we were "slaves", or in bondage to the Law. The Law condemned us and we needed to be redeemed.

ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου Which of these two uses of the word is Paul using? Either he is speaking of the basic principles of the Law, i.e., the ABC of the Law, or he is referring to the worldly pagan spirits as στοιχεῖα is used in Col 2:8,20. Stott suggests it is the second of these and believes it is Satan who has twisted the Law to enslave people. On the other hand, could Paul be using the term to refer to the pagan Galatians who were in bondage to the evil spirits of the world?

Verse 4 ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός, γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον,

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law,

ἐξαπέστειλεν verb indicative aorist active 3rd person singular ἐξαποστέλλω *send out, send away; send forth: with commissions, as on a mission send, send out, dispatch as removing someone from a place send away,*

ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου i.e. when the years of minority had passed (vs 1-2). Also, at the right time politically, socially and practically.

ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ God sent out His Son on a mission. The use of ἐξ impresses on us the fact of Christ's pre-existence; "He was sent out" from another place.

γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός, "born out of a woman" or "came (γίνομαι) out of a woman". The humanity of Christ is here stressed. He experienced a normal human birth from a woman.

γενόμενοι ὑπὸ νόμον, "came under law". Paul's context focuses on the Law, so it is important for him to emphasise to his readers the fact that Christ subjected Himself to the Law. He was ὑπὸ νόμον "under law", not above the Law, but as a Man He was obedient to the Law; the Law was over Him.

Verse 5 ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ, ἵνα τὴν υἰοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν.

to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

υἰοθεσίαν noun accusative feminine singular from υἰός and θέσις, εως, ἡ, (τίθημι) *a setting, placing, arranging, adoption (of children).*

ἀπολάβωμεν. verb subjunctive aorist active 1st person plural from ἀπολαμβάνω *Receive in return, get back; welcome; to receive (from another, ἀπό) what is due or promised*
The full force of the ἀπό as pointing to a "promise made centuries before".

ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ Paul continues to keep the subject of the Law in focus. Verses 1-3 has shown how people have been "under the law". Being "under the law" also includes being under the "curse of the law" as taught in chapter 3:10. But Paul's readers have been "redeemed" from the Law and its curse.

ἵνα τὴν υἰοθεσίαν There is a purpose in the "redemption" ἵνα. "Adoption" - υἰοθεσίαν. This is the first and only use of this word in Galatians.

ἀπολάβωμεν. Adoption is always something that is received; it is passively received. Adoption is received from the hand of God; (from another, ἀπό).

Verse 6 Ὅτι δέ ἐστε υἱοί, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν κρᾶζον· ἀββα ὁ πατήρ.

And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

Ὅτι δέ ἐστε υἱοί, Adoption naturally brings with it privileges.

ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Once again Paul introduces the Holy Spirit. This is the fourth mention of the Spirit since chapter 3:2. ἐξαπέστειλεν God has "sent out" His Spirit. God "sent out" His Son (vs 4); God "sent out His Spirit" vs 6.

εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν The experimental nature of adoption. Not only adoption but also those who receive the Holy Spirit.

κρᾶζον· ἀββα ὁ πατήρ The NT writers retained the Aramaic word for "father", ἀββα. It is only used three times - Mark 14:36, Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6. It is a term of endearment displaying intimacy, but also used to address a respected person of rank, such as students towards a teacher. ἀββα is such an important word that even today it is retained in the Arabic speaking world of Lebanon, Syria, Israel and Jordan. Families

teach their children to address their father by this Aramaic word, "Abba" even though their every day language is Arabic.

Verse 7 ὥστε οὐκέτι εἶ δοῦλος ἀλλὰ υἱός· εἰ δὲ υἱός, καὶ κληρονόμος διὰ θεοῦ.

So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

εἶ (second person singular of εἶμί) Note that Paul is addressing each separate individual. Something that is not apparent in the English translations except the AV "thou". Until now he has been addressing the Christians as a group.

ὥστε οὐκέτι εἶ δοῦλος This takes us back to the concepts found in verses 1-3. As sons of God we are no longer in the position of being a child (who is "no different from a slave" until he has reached maturity) or a slave. We are now beyond all of that.

ἀλλὰ υἱός Notice the strong use of ἀλλά; "but a son".

εἰ δὲ υἱός, καὶ κληρονόμος. In the light of his illustration in verses 1-3 the Christian has now come of age, and is a "son and an heir through God" κληρονόμος.

διὰ θεοῦ Becoming an "heir" was not through their own efforts. It was through the grace of God.

Verse 8 Ἄλλὰ τότε μὲν οὐκ εἰδότες θεὸν ἐδουλεύσατε τοῖς φύσει μὴ οὐσιν θεοῖς ·

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods.

Ἄλλὰ τότε μὲν οὐκ εἰδότες θεὸν Paul is addressing Jews and Gentiles. In spite of their religions - Judaism and paganism - they did not know God.

ἐδουλεύσατε τοῖς φύσει μὴ οὐσιν θεοῖς In spite of their religions, they were "enslaved" to what were μὴ οὐσιν θεοῖς "not gods".

Paul is causing his readers to look back to the days prior to their conversion with a view to getting them to contrast this with their new life in Christ. Even though they (Jews and Gentiles) claimed to be religious, they were nevertheless without God (Eph 2:12), worshipping those who were not gods.

Veres 9 νῦν δὲ γνόντες θεόν, μᾶλλον δὲ γνωσθέντες ὑπὸ θεοῦ, πὼς ἐπιστρέφετε πάλιν ἐπὶ τὰ ἀσθενῆ καὶ πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα οἷς πάλιν ἄνωθεν δουλεύειν θέλετε;

But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?

ἄνωθεν adverb from ἄνωθεν from above, esp. heaven again, anew John 3:3, 7; meaning repetition.

νῦν δὲ γνόντες θεόν, μᾶλλον δὲ γνωσθέντες ὑπὸ θεοῦ It is as though Paul had made a mistake in his writing which needed to be corrected. What is important in salvation is not that we know God, but rather that He knows us (John 10:14, 2 Tim 2:19).

πῶς ἐπιστρέφετε πάλιν ἐπὶ τὰ ἀσθενῆ καὶ πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα This is Paul's second use of στοιχεῖα where the word must mean the worldly pagan spirits of religious belief and worship. He is returning his readers to his words in verse 3 "*In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world*". In verse 10 he will enlarge upon this both for the Jew and Gentile. Note how Paul describes these "*elementary principles of the world*" as τὰ ἀσθενῆ καὶ πτωχὰ "*weak and poor*" as they are unable to save or make a person right with God.

πάλιν ἄνωθεν δουλεύειν θέλετε; "*you are willing to serve once again*". It is the willingness of his readers to return again to this form of religion that trouble's Paul.

Verse 10 ἡμέρας παρατηρεῖσθε καὶ μῆνας καὶ καιροὺς καὶ ἐνιαυτούς,

You observe days and months and seasons and years!

παρατηρεῖσθε verb indicative present middle 2nd person plural from παρατηρέω *watch closely, observe carefully; watch (maliciously), observe culturally.*

ἐνιαυτούς, noun accusative masculine plural from ἐνιαυτός *certain days of the year a cycle of seasons or years, perhaps sabbatical years as an extended period time, age, era (Luke 4.19)*

Paul now explains his meaning of στοιχεῖα from the previous verse. Both for Jew and Gentiles there was the magnetic pull to return to religious ceremonies and rituals as a means of getting right with God. They were willing to be enslaved by this religious external formalism again. If they submitted to circumcision it would introduce them to a never-ending round of miserable rules and regulations.

Verse 11 φοβοῦμαι ὑμᾶς μή πως εἰκῆ κεκοπίακα εἰς ὑμᾶς.

I am afraid I may have laboured over you in vain.

κεκοπίακα verb indicative perfect active 1st person singular from κοπιᾶω *become weary, tired Mt 11:28*

φοβοῦμαι ὑμᾶς μή πως εἰκῆ κεκοπίακα εἰς ὑμᾶς. In exasperation Paul feels that he might have preached in vain, if his readers return to circumcision.

Verse 12 Γίνεσθε ὡς ἐγώ, ὅτι καὶ γὰρ ὡς ὑμεῖς, ἀδελφοί, δέομαι ὑμῶν. οὐδέν με ἠδίκησατε·

Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You did me no wrong.

δέομαι verb indicative present middle 1st person singular from δέομαι *ask, pray, beg*

ἠδικήσατε verb indicative aorist active 2nd person plural from ἀδικέω *do wrong Injure, harm, damage, spoil*

In verses 12-20 Paul appears to leave his main subject in order to make a personal appeal to the Galatians. He is now writing to them from his own heart demonstrating his deep concern for their spiritual welfare.

Γίνεσθε ὡς ἐγώ, Paul longed for the Galatians to become like him in their thinking. He wants them to realise that circumcision has no saving value just as he does.

ὅτι καὶ γὰρ ὡς ὑμεῖς Paul seems to mean that, as a Christian justified through faith in Christ alone, he too stands in the same position as his readers? As a sinner himself, in need of salvation in Christ, so Paul stands alongside of the Galatian Christians.

ἀδελφοί, δέομαι ὑμῶν. Paul is desperate that the Galatians learn the principle of salvation through faith alone.

οὐδὲν με ἠδικήσατε. Paul wants his readers to know that he is not complaining about their treatment of him, as if they had done something wrong against him.

Verse 13 οἴδατε δὲ ὅτι δι' ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν τὸ πρότερον,

You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first,

ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς Perhaps some illness drove Paul into the higher regions of Galatia. It is possible that his illness had affected his eyes (see vs 15).

εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν τὸ πρότερον, Did God use this illness in Paul to bring the Gospel to the Galatians?

Verse 14 καὶ τὸν πειρασμὸν ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου οὐκ ἐξουθενήσατε οὐδὲ ἐξεπτύσατε, ἀλλὰ ὡς ἄγγελον θεοῦ ἐδέξασθέ με, ὡς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν.

and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus.

ἐξουθενήσατε verb indicative aorist active 2nd person plural from ἐξουθενέω *despise, disdain reject with contempt*

ἐξεπτύσατε verb indicative aorist active 2nd person plural from ἐκπτύω *despise, disdain*

It was a trial for the Galatians to receive Paul given his illness. But they did not reject or despise him. On the contrary, they welcomed him as if he was an angel of God, as even Jesus Christ. However, the current situation seems to be different due to the Judaisers. The Galatians are now despising and rejecting Paul.

Verse 15 ποῦ οὖν ὁ μακαρισμὸς ὑμῶν; μαρτυρῶ γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι εἰ δυνατὸν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ὑμῶν ἐξορύξαντες ἐδώκατέ μοι.

What then has become of your blessedness? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me.

ἐξορύξαντες verb participle aorist active nominative masculine plural from ἐξορύσσω *dig out, tear out* Mk 2:4.

ποῦ οὖν ὁ μακαρισμὸς ὑμῶν; "*Where is your happiness?*" The Galatians cannot be happy and blessed when having to submit to circumcision.

μαρτυρῶ γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι εἰ δυνατὸν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ὑμῶν ἐξορύξαντες ἐδώκατέ μοι. When Paul originally preached the Gospel to them they were so committed to him that they would have willingly given him their own eyes as a means of cure.

Verse 16 ὥστε ἐχθρὸς ὑμῶν γέγονα ἀληθεύων ὑμῖν;

Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?

ἀληθεύων verb participle present active nominative masculine singular from ἀληθεύω *be truthful, tell the truth*. Lit, "*truthing to you*".

ὥστε ἐχθρὸς ὑμῶν γέγονα ἀληθεύων ὑμῖν; Paul is amazed. The Galatians are treating him as if he was their enemy. How can this be when he has spoken the truth to them?

Verse 17 ζηλοῦσιν ὑμᾶς οὐ καλῶς, ἀλλὰ ἐκκλείσαι ὑμᾶς θέλουσιν, ἵνα αὐτοὺς ζηλοῦτε·

They make much of you, but for no good purpose. They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them.

ἐκκλείσαι verb infinitive aorist active from ἐκκλείω *shut out, exclude*

ζηλοῦσιν ὑμᾶς οὐ καλῶς, Are the Judaisers flattering the Galatians with ulterior motives? But this is not good - for the Galatians - οὐ καλῶς.

ἀλλὰ ἐκκλείσαι ὑμᾶς θέλουσιν This is their real motive, namely to exclude them from having faith in Christ alone for salvation, a salvation that is void of circumcision.

ἵνα αὐτοὺς ζηλοῦτε· Their objective is not the benefit of the Galatians; rather it for their own gratification and pride.

Verse 18 καλὸν δὲ ζηλοῦσθαι ἐν καλῷ πάντοτε καὶ μὴ μόνον ἐν τῷ παρῆναιί με πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose, and not only when I am present with you,

καλὸν δὲ ζηλοῦσθαι ἐν καλῷ πάντοτε In principle it is good and right to see what is good in people.

καὶ μὴ μόνον ἐν τῷ παρεῖναί με πρὸς ὑμᾶς. Perhaps this is what Paul found when he was with them - they were positive and cared about him. But, now that he is absent and μη.....ἐν τῷ παρεῖναι they are not thinking good of him due to listening to the Judaisers.

Verse 19 τέκνα μου, οὓς πάλιν ὠδίνω μέχρις οὗ μορφωθῆ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν·

my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!

ὠδίνω verb indicative present active 1st person singular from ὠδίνω *suffer birth pangs, bear amid throes*

τέκνα μου, οὓς πάλιν ὠδίνω So dear were the Galatians to Paul that his anguish for them was like a woman in child birth.

μέχρις οὗ μορφωθῆ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν· What is Paul looking for in the Galatians? He wants them to know Christ as closely as he does (see 2:20). He wants them to form a close bond with Christ which places Christ in their hearts by faith (Eph 3:17 "*that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith*"). Instead of looking longingly towards circumcision, they must look towards Christ; Christ alone.

Verse 20 ἤθελον δὲ παρεῖναι πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἄρτι καὶ ἀλλάξαι τὴν φωνήν μου, ὅτι ἀποροῦμαι ἐν ὑμῖν.

I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

ἀλλάξαι verb infinitive aorist active from ἀλλάσσω *change, alter exchange.*

ἀποροῦμαι verb indicative present middle 1st person singular from ἀπορέω *be at a loss, in doubt, uncertain*

ἤθελον δὲ παρεῖναι πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἄρτι Paul longs and wishes to be with present with the Galatians rather than having to write to them.

καὶ ἀλλάξαι τὴν φωνήν μου, The tone of this letter is stern and severe, but he wishes he could change his voice and perhaps speak to them in a calmer tone.

ὅτι ἀποροῦμαι ἐν ὑμῖν. Why? Because, due to the presence of the Judaisers, Paul has become very uncertain about their stability in the faith.

Verse 21 Λέγετέ μοι, οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι, τὸν νόμον οὐκ ἀκούετε;

Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law?

Paul has now resumed his main topic of Law and faith. He took a diversion from verses 12-20 to deal with a personal issue, but here he picks up his major theme.

Λέγετέ μοι, οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι, This is the Galatian problem. They want to be subject to the Law again. They are listening to the Judaisers and have lost their understanding of justification through faith alone.

τὸν νόμον οὐκ ἀκούετε; If they wish to be subject to the Law again, they must listen to what the Law is actually saying.

Verse 22 γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι Ἀβραὰμ δύο υἱοὺς ἔσχευ, ἓνα ἐκ τῆς παιδίσκης καὶ ἓνα ἐκ τῆς ἐλευθέρας.

For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman.

παιδίσκης noun genitive feminine singular common from παιδίσκη *maid, servant girl, female slave.*

γέγραπται γὰρ Paul does not repeat what he has said earlier in chapter 3 about Abraham and Moses. However, he now returns to the Old Testament to give an illustration.

ὅτι Ἀβραὰμ δύο υἱοὺς ἔσχευ, The narrative to which Paul turns comes from Genesis 16 which describes the birth of Ishmael, and Genesis 21 the birth of Isaac.

ἓνα ἐκ τῆς παιδίσκης καὶ ἓνα ἐκ τῆς ἐλευθέρας. Ishmael was the son of Hagar, Sarah's servant, and Isaac the son of Sarah. In the first case, Hagar was the "female slave", whereas Sarah was not a slave but the "free" woman.

Verse 23 ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἐκ τῆς παιδίσκης κατὰ σάρκα γεγέννηται, ὁ δὲ ἐκ τῆς ἐλευθέρας δι' ἐπαγγελίας.

But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise.

ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἐκ τῆς παιδίσκης κατὰ σάρκα γεγέννηται Ishmael was not the promised child of God. He was born following Sarah's instructions to Abraham. God was not consulted for this birth.

ὁ δὲ ἐκ τῆς ἐλευθέρας δι' ἐπαγγελίας. On the other hand, Isaac was the child of the "promise" that God gave to Abraham. (see Romans 9:7-9).

Verse 24 ἄτινά ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα· αὗται γὰρ εἰσιν δύο διαθήκαι, μία μὲν ἀπὸ ὄρους Σινᾶ εἰς δουλείαν γεννώσα, ἥτις ἐστὶν Ἀγάρ.

Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar.

ἀλληγορούμενα verb participle present passive nominative neuter plural from ἀλληγορέω *speak symbolically or allegorically*

ἄτινά ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα· Paul's use of these OT narratives is somewhat strange. The narratives record facts. Paul, however, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, uses them as an illustration to prove his point.

αὐται γάρ εἰσιν δύο διαθήκαι, Paul is thinking of the two main Covenants in the Bible. The first is the Covenant of Sinai, the second is the Covenant of grace made between Christ and God the Father on our behalf - the "New Covenant". (We commemorate this through Communion).

μία μὲν ἀπὸ ὄρους Σινᾶ εἰς δουλείαν γεννώσα, ἥτις ἐστὶν Ἀγάρ. The old Covenant is from Sinai, in Paul's illustration, is represented by Hagar and is the one that leads to slavery. There is no freedom in the Law. (see Gal 5:1 "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery").

Verse 25 τὸ δὲ Ἀγάρ Σινᾶ ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ· συστοιχεῖ δὲ τῇ νῦν Ἱερουσαλήμ, δουλεύει γὰρ μετὰ τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς.

Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.

συστοιχεῖ verb indicative present active 3rd person singular from συστοιχέω *correspond*

τὸ δὲ Ἀγάρ Σινᾶ ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ· συστοιχεῖ δὲ τῇ νῦν Ἱερουσαλήμ, δουλεύει γὰρ μετὰ τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς. Paul has to emphasise the fact that the Law brings captivity and slavery. He had already said this, "Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed" (Gal 3:23). So, all those who wish to be "under the Law" (4:21) should listen to this; it will only result in slavery.

Verse 26 ἡ δὲ ἄνω Ἱερουσαλήμ ἐλευθέρα ἐστίν, ἥτις ἐστὶν μήτηρ ἡμῶν·

But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.

ἡ δὲ ἄνω Ἱερουσαλήμ This "Jerusalem" is not the physical city, rather it is the spiritual, heavenly Jerusalem from "above". See Heb 12:22.

ἐλευθέρα ἐστίν, ἥτις ἐστὶν μήτηρ ἡμῶν· This where true freedom is to be found. This ἡ δὲ ἄνω Ἱερουσαλήμ represents justification through faith alone in Christ, without the Law.

Verse 27 γέγραπται γάρ· εὐφράνθητι, στείρα ἢ οὐ τίκτουσα, ῥῆξον καὶ βόησον, ἢ οὐκ ὠδίνουσα· ὅτι πολλὰ τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐρήμου μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς ἐχούσης τὸν ἄνδρα.

For it is written, "Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than those of the one who has a husband."

εὐφράνθητι, verb imperative aorist passive 2nd person singular from εὐφραίνω *gladden, cheerbe glad, enjoy oneself, rejoice, be merry*

στεῖρα noun vocative feminine singular from στείρα *barren (woman), one incapable of bearing children*

τίκτουσα, verb participle present active nominative feminine singular from τίκτω *bear, give birth*

ρήξον verb imperative aorist active 2nd person singular from ρήγνυμι *tear (in pieces), break, burst*

βόησον, verb imperative aorist active 2nd person singular from βοάω *call, shout, cry out*

ώδίνουσα verb participle present active nominative feminine singular from ώδίνω *suffer birth pangs, bear amid throes*

Paul's quote here is from Isaiah 54:1 where the Prophet, speaking to the exiles in Babylon announces to them that in their restoration they will have more blessings than they had before exile.

Continuing with his allegory, Paul shows that those who are of faith are like the seed of Sarah (Isaac), who was the "barren one". The blessings that flow from this one (Sarah, the barren woman) will be more than those received through the other, i.e Hagar who represents the Law.

Verse 28 ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀδελφοί, κατὰ Ἰσαὰκ ἐπαγγελίας τέκνα ἐστέ.

Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.

ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀδελφοί, Paul now begins to apply his allegory to the Galatians.

κατὰ Ἰσαὰκ ἐπαγγελίας τέκνα ἐστέ. These Christian Galatians are, just like Isaac, the "children of promise". Not like Ishmael, the child of the slave woman. Certainly not belonging to Sinai. Rather, they belong to the "Jerusalem from above".

Verse 29 ἀλλ' ὡσπερ τότε ὁ κατὰ σάρκα γεννηθεὶς ἐδίωκεν τὸν κατὰ πνεῦμα, οὕτως καὶ νῦν.

But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now.

ἀλλ' ὡσπερ τότε ὁ κατὰ σάρκα γεννηθεὶς ἐδίωκεν τὸν κατὰ πνεῦμα The reference here is Genesis 21:9 "But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing". Ishmael, who was the older child, ridiculed Isaac.

οὕτως καὶ νῦν. The Galatians, like Isaac, are being persecuted by the Judaisers, their belief in justification through faith alone is being ridiculed by those who want to continue being enslaved by the Law.

Verse 30 ἀλλὰ τί λέγει ἡ γραφή; ἔκβαλε τὴν παιδίσκην καὶ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς· οὐ γὰρ μὴ κληρονομήσει ὁ υἱὸς τῆς παιδίσκης μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἐλευθέρας.

But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman.

ἀλλὰ τί λέγει ἡ γραφή; ἔκβαλε τὴν παιδίσκην καὶ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς· οὐ γὰρ μὴ κληρονομήσει ὁ υἱὸς τῆς παιδίσκης μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἐλευθέρας. Genesis 21:10 "So she said to Abraham, Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac". Sarah ordered Abraham to expel Hagar and Ishmael from their house. God later confirms this action, "But God said to Abraham, "Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your offspring be named" (vs 12). In Salvation History the promise of God to the Gentiles came through Isaac alone.

Verse 31 διό, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἐσμὲν παιδίσκης τέκνα ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐλευθέρας.

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

διό, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἐσμὲν παιδίσκης τέκνα The Galatians, through faith in Christ, are not the children of "the slave" which represents the Judaisers with their slavery to the Law. The Christians are represented by Sarah and Isaac, not Hagar and Ishmael.

ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐλευθέρας The Galatians are "the children of the free woman". Freedom is what characterises Christianity; freedom from the rigours of the Law. Paul will continue to expound this theme of "freedom" in the following chapter.

Richard Lee October 2013

