

# Galatians

## Chapter 4

Verse 1 continues the thought from 3:27-29 about heirs of the promise given to Abraham. Go back and review that section.

In verses 1-7 he points out that minor heirs are not able to inherit until they mature. He seems to be making an analogy to the immature faith of the Galatians who are now considering coming under the rules and laws of the Jews rather than maturing in their faith in Christ.

In verses 4-5 he reflects on the meaning of Christ being born of Mary. For Paul, why did Christ come?

In verses 8-11 he returns to the idea of their backsliding from freedom into slavery to the law. It ends with his wondering if he wasted his time and effort on them. (But he didn't write them off he wrote them the rest of the letter.) But sometimes, don't we wonder if those we are teaching or leading are ever going to get it? When have you felt that way or caused a parent or teacher to ever feel that way?

In verses 12-20 Paul writes about his physical infirmity that he had while he was with them. What do you think that was? No one knows for sure. But there are clues.

In verses 19-20 he reflects that he is again in pain this time though is pain of trying to birth the faith in the Galatians from afar.

In verses 21-31 Paul offers the analogy of Abraham having a child with his wife Sarah and his slave Hagar. He says one is the child of the flesh and the other the child of the promise. Here Paul sees two distinct covenants. The first one is with Hagar which he relates to Jerusalem (and the Jewish laws.) The other one is with Sarah and the new Jerusalem, which we read about in Revelation 21, (and freedom from the law.)

I do not know what he is trying to say with the quote from Isaiah 54:1 in verse 27. Let's see if we can figure it out together.

The quote in verse 30 from the story of Hagar and Ishmael in Genesis 21:10 may mean for the Galatians to drive out the missionaries who are telling them to be circumcised and obey the Jewish law.

Note that 5:1 stands alone. For some scholars it seems to be a conclusion for this chapter. For me it does that but also leads us into the next chapter where this discussion about slavery and freedom continue.