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## **Galatians 4:21-31: Hermeneutical Gymnastics or Historical Interpretation**

Jason Q. vonEhrenkrook

An intriguing and controversial area of New Testament studies is the use of the Old Testament in the New. Few other issues have received more attention in recent years, and its importance cannot be overestimated. As Snodgrass remarks, "no subject is perhaps more important for the understanding of the Christian faith than the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament."<sup>1</sup> The Old Testament Scriptures are the bedrock from which the Christian faith was formed. Two central realities serve as the basis for Christianity: The Old Testament and Jesus Christ. Unquestionably, great benefit can be reaped from an understanding of apostolic hermeneutics. However, a closer look at this subject raises some unsettling questions. On the surface, it appears that the New Testament writers took great liberty with the text, often to the exclusion of the historical context. Snodgrass observes that "the New Testament writers have been disturbingly creative in the use of the Old Testament"<sup>2</sup>

One such passage surrounded with hermeneutical tension is Galatians 4:21-31, or commonly known as "Paul's

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<sup>1</sup> Klyne Snodgrass, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New," New Testament Criticism & Interpretation, ed. David A. Black & David S. Dockery (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 409.

<sup>2</sup> Snodgrass, New Testament Criticism, 410.

allegorical interpretation.” In this passage, Paul uses allegory to interpret the familiar Old Testament story of Sarah and Hagar to prove that the Galatian believers were children of Sarah. He goes to great lengths to show that Hagar’s seed corresponds to the Judaizers and Sarah’s seed corresponds to the Galatian Christians. How can the apostle Paul use an Old Testament story that obviously speaks of Jewish progeny and contradict the passage in applying it to Christians? Was Paul unconcerned about the historical context? Did he believe his apostolic authority allowed him freedom to use the Old Testament as he wished? Obviously a paper of this size cannot exhaust this passage. Nevertheless, this writer will attempt to show that, while on the surface Paul seems to be ignoring the historical context, a closer look at this passage reveals a hermeneutic deeply rooted in the Old Testament scriptures. After noting some preliminary considerations, this paper will proceed to exegete the passage in light of this hermeneutical tension.

### **Background Considerations**

A proper understanding of this text is dependent upon several background considerations. One is the hermeneutical framework in which Paul is working. Most obviously, the apostle Paul was a well-educated man. Philippians 3:4-6 gives a biographical sketch of Paul highlighting his Judaic background. Acts 22:3 indicates specifically Paul’s educational background. Paul was educated under Rabbi Gamaliel the Elder, grandson of Hillel, a leading Rabbi and founder of a school of interpretation. In contrast to the school of interpretation known as Shammai, Hillel’s school followed a looser interpretation of the scriptures. Certainly Paul was very familiar with the seven rules of interpretation characteristic of Gamaliel and his followers. More important to this discussion, however, Paul’s training implies that he was well-versed in the

Old Testament scriptures, perhaps having significant portions committed to memory.

Of the various methods of Jewish exegesis, three are important for this discussion.<sup>3</sup> *Typological* exegesis found a “correspondence between people and events of the past and those of the future.”<sup>4</sup> Key to this method of interpretation is the pattern established by a previous text and the explanation/correspondence of that pattern in the interpretation. *Allegorical* exegesis seeks to find within a text a “spiritual meaning (usually cosmological or ethical as practiced by Philo) divorced from its historical setting.”<sup>5</sup> Specifically the emphasis lies in the “hidden or symbolic meanings rather than the literal meaning.”<sup>6</sup> Within this spectrum of allegory,<sup>7</sup> Philo stands in stark contrast to that of Rabbinical Jewish interpreters. Philo’s Hellenistic leanings characterized his allegorical interpretation in mystical light, completely void of any historical sensitivity. Palestinian Jewish interpreters, however, while using some allegory on rare occasions, stayed much closer to the historical context of the text. As Perriman aptly comments on this distinction,

the former [Alexandrian] is more elaborate and more extensive, drawing heavily on Greek learning; its purpose is primarily to accommodate the Scriptures to

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<sup>3</sup> Ferguson lists six methods: *Literalist, Targumic, Typological, Allegorical, Peshet, Midrashic*; Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 509.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 509.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Trent C. Butler, *Holman’s Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1991), s.v. “Allegory,” by Michael Fink.

<sup>7</sup> Allegorical interpretation tends to be extremely fluid, sometimes coming closer to typology. For this reason, it is hard to precisely define allegorical interpretation.

Hellenistic thought and culture. The latter [Rabbinical] is less common, less systematic, and stays closer to the literal meaning of the text, operating strictly within the single tradition of Yahwistic revelation.<sup>8</sup>

*Midrashic* exegesis emphasizes the application of Scriptures to the contemporary setting. In essence, Midrash "expands the relevance of the text," yet was typically guided by the seven rules of Hillel.<sup>9</sup>

However one understands Paul's use of allegory in this passage, it must stand in stark contrast to that of Philo. Like Paul, Philo uses this Old Testament story to establish a contrast between the slave and the free. For Philo, Hagar represents "the preliminary learning that can be obtained in the schools." and Sarah "exemplifies virtue, and her offspring is true wisdom."<sup>10</sup> In contrast to this, as will be shown later, Paul's exegesis in this passage grows organically from the historical context of the Old Testament. On the comparison of Philo and Paul, Hanson rightly observes,

His [Paul's] motives for using it [allegory] were, as far as we can discover, far from being those of the Alexandrians, and especially Philo, who wanted by allegory to avoid the necessity of taking historical narrative seriously; Paul on the contrary used allegory as an aid to typology, a method of interpreting the Old Testament which, however fanciful some of its forms

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<sup>8</sup> Andrew C. Perriman, "The Rhetorical Strategy of Galatians 4:21-5:1, *The Evangelical Quarterly* 65 (1993), 29.

<sup>9</sup>Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 509.

<sup>10</sup>Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 203.

may be, does at least regard history as something meaningful.<sup>11</sup>

### **An Exegesis of Galatians 4:21-31**

The remainder of this discussion will focus on the text at hand, Galatians 4:21-31. The surrounding context and argument of the letter will be considered in light of Paul's allegorical interpretation of the Hagar/Sarah pericope.

The impetus of this letter is an apparent attack on the gospel of grace. Certain Judaizers had slipped into the Galatian churches and were teaching a gospel contrary to that of Paul's. Their gospel was a mixture of faith and works, specifically the "work" of circumcision. If the Gentile Christians were to really please God and identify with this "New Israel," they would need to partake in circumcision. To this, Paul's letter responds with a resounding "ABSOLUTELY NOT!" Because the essence of the gospel is at stake, Paul's letter to the Galatians is filled with passion and intensity.

The text of this discussion (4:21-31) is typically understood as closing Paul's argument from the Old Testament for the gospel of justification by faith. In 3:6-9, Paul bases his argument on Abraham's faith as seen in Gen. 15:6. He then proceeds in 3:10-29 with a string of Old Testament quotations to continue his proof of justification by faith. This leads to the conclusion in 4:1-7 that those justified by faith are children of God and not slaves. With this in mind, Paul marvels that the Galatian believers are turning back to the στοιχεῖα of the law (e.g. observing days). Motivated by fear of their near apostasy, Paul turns to an emotional appeal based on their previous response to Paul and his gospel (vv. 12-20). Continuing the previously established freedom/slavery motif, Paul moves into

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<sup>11</sup>Richard P. C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1959), 83.

his final argument from Scripture, the Hagar-Sarah allegory. Most commentators, baffled by questions as to Paul's use of scripture in this section, usually relegate this to a supplementary position, as if this argument was an afterthought of Paul's. Betz rightly argues, however, that this section serves as a "highly forceful" argument in Paul's thesis.<sup>12</sup> Under the logical assumption that Paul would "save the best for last," this section leads to the climax of Paul's scriptural argument, namely "get rid of the slave woman and her son" (4:30 NIV).

Although not explicitly stated in the text, most commentators understand this argument to be *ad hominem*; that is, countering the Judaizers' own application of the Sarah-Hagar incident. Jobes observes that the "story of Abraham was evidently a persuasive part of the Judaizers' argument."<sup>13</sup> Apparently, as Jobes puts it, the Judaizers were "arguing that if the Christians of Galatia claimed to be children of Abraham by faith and therefore heirs of God's promise to Abraham, then they should identify with Abraham's descendants by being circumcised."<sup>14</sup> Longenecker as well reconstructs their argument as follows:

The Judaizers had evidently contemporized the Hagar-Sarah story in their argument to prove that since the promises were made to Abraham and his seed, who was Sarah's son Isaac, Gentile Christians had no share in the promise unless they submitted to the Mosaic law given to Isaac's posterity and were circumcised.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 240.

<sup>13</sup>Karen Jobes, "Jerusalem Our Mother: Metalepsis and Intertextuality in Galatians 4:21-31," *Westminster Theological Journal* 55 (1993), 300.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Longenecker, *Galatians*, 207-208.

This mirror-reading of the text is particularly helpful in the analysis of Paul's hermeneutic. Paul deepens the contrast between him and the Judaizers by completely reversing their argument.

Paul introduces his Sarah-Hagar argument with a simple but direct question: οἱ ὑπο νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι τὸν οὐκ ἀκούετε; Earlier, Paul could not help but marvel that the Galatian believers would desire to return to the slavery from which God had set them free (4:9). Now Paul directly confronts those individuals who are wishing<sup>16</sup> to be ὑπο νόμος. The first use of νόμος refers to the Judaic system of regulations, often understood as the Mosaic law. However, the second appearance of this word seems to be used in the more broader sense as referring to the Old Testament Scriptures. This makes sense in light of the ensuing phrase γέγραπται γάρ. Paul is convinced that the ones who are desiring to be under the Judaic system of law keeping do not fully understand the broader message of that law. In essence Paul is saying, "are you sure about what you are getting into? Here is what the law *really* is saying."

Paul now proceeds to introduce the historical background to "the law" that he is about to explain via an allegory. γέγραπται γάρ typically precedes a direct quotation from the Scriptures in Pauline usage; however, in this instance what follows is more of a summary from several passages in Genesis.<sup>17</sup> Two key figures emerge from this verse which

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<sup>16</sup>Paul's use of θέλοντες "implies that his converts had not yet fully adopted the Judaizers' nomistic principles and practices" [Longenecker, *Galatians*, 206].

<sup>17</sup>Longenecker understands this as a hint to the *ad hominem* nature of Paul's argument. In other words, apparently the same argument as used by the Judaizers was already before Paul's addressees. Paul is assuming their familiarity with the story (Longenecker, *Galatians*, 207)



establish Paul's framework for the ensuing antithesis: Isaac and Ishmael (implied from the two sons of Abraham). Also, important in this verse is the introduction of two key concepts: παιδίσκης and ἐλευθέρως. Slavery and freedom are essential elements to Paul's argument in this letter and particularly this passage.

Continuing the historical background of the Sarah-Hagar story in v. 23, Paul establishes an important contrast by using the μὲν . . . δε construction. On the one hand, Ishmael was born κατὰ σάρκα but on the other hand, Isaac was born δι' ἐπαγγελίας. The NIV translates κατὰ σάρκα "was born in the ordinary way," emphasizing the natural means of procreation. Longenecker also understands Ishmael's birth as that "by the natural process of procreation."<sup>18</sup> While this is certainly true, it seems that Paul is making a more specific contrast, especially since Isaac as well was born through natural sexual relations. Elsewhere, Paul equates being ἐν τῇ σαρκί to living under the law (Rom. 7:5-6). For Paul, being under the law indicates a mentality that exalts human effort in conjunction with the work of God. Given their age, Sarah and Abraham thought it necessary to *help God* fulfill His promise to them. As George puts it, "the birth of Ishmael was the result of the outworking of the philosophy that God helps those who help themselves."<sup>19</sup> Already Paul is setting the stage for his surprising reversal of this familiar story. In contrast to Ishmael's birth through human effort, the birth of Isaac was δι' ἐπαγγελίας. God's promise (cf. Gen. 15:4-6; 17:15-21) was that Abraham and Sarah together would bear a son. For the aged and infertile couple, this truly was a miracle of God.

Paul now moves into his interpretation of this story, thus arousing the tension surrounding the text. ἀπὸ functions as a

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<sup>18</sup>Longenecker, *Galatians*, 208.

<sup>19</sup>Timothy George, *Galatians*, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 338.

summary of the previous historical discussion. *These things are now being interpreted allegorically.*<sup>20</sup> There is much controversy residing in this short phrase, most of it revolving around Paul's use of the *hapax legomena* ἀλληγορούμενα. How should Paul's use of this term be understood? Is Paul making use of the highly suspect method of interpretation popularized by Philo? Or rather, did Paul, although using the word "allegory," actually intend to mean typology as George and the NIV imply?<sup>21</sup> This explanation does not seem entirely satisfactory considering the widespread use of allegory by this time. Why would Paul choose a highly technical term such as ἀλληγορούμενα to convey purely typological interpretation? As Longenecker points out, the use of the present passive participle suggests that Paul in some fashion is interpreting the passage allegorically.<sup>22</sup> However, perhaps the term ἀλληγορούμενα is fluid enough to include the sense of typology. At any rate, as will be shown below, Paul's use of allegory stands in stark contrast to that of Philo's as it is deeply rooted in the broader context of Scriptures.

Paul elaborates on his allegorical interpretation, using the postpositive γάρ to indicate a continuation of his previous thought. Here Paul leaps from the immediate historical context to draw a significant parallel: the women represent two covenants. By his use of δύο διαθήκαι, Paul seems to be referring to the "Old covenant that is Torah-centered, under which the Judaizers were attempting to subsume the faith of Galatian Christians, and the New covenant that is Christ-centered, which Paul proclaimed."<sup>23</sup> Paul then goes on to

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<sup>20</sup>This writer's translation.

<sup>21</sup>Thus the NIV: *These things may be taken figuratively.*  
See also George, *Galatians*, 340: "What he [Paul] here called allegory might better be termed typology."

<sup>22</sup>Longenecker, *Galatians*, 210.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid*, 211.

identify the first covenant as Hagar, intricately connecting Hagar with Mount Sinai and slavery. On the surface, this connection is exactly what would be expected and probably what was being taught by the Judaizers.

The connection of Hagar with Mount Sinai in Arabia is significant. Understood in Jewish traditions, Mount Sinai is the place where the law was given to Moses. Longenecker comments, "Hagar and her son Ishmael, who have to do with Mount Sinai, are to be associated with the present city of Jerusalem and her children, from whence the Judaizers came. For, says Paul, Jerusalem, like Hagar, 'is in slavery with her children.'"<sup>24</sup> Already, Paul hints towards his significant reversal of this story by linking Hagar and slavery with Jerusalem.

Paul's use of *συστοιχεῖ* in v. 25 has led some commentators to see the establishment of two parallel lists comparing Sarah and Hagar. The word, *συστοιχεῖ* is used "of soldiers, to stand in the same line."<sup>25</sup> Therefore, George comments, "Paul was establishing two columns of implied correspondences and complementary antitheses."<sup>26</sup> He then goes on to reconstruct two corresponding lists of Sarah and Hagar.<sup>27</sup> George completes the "implied" missing elements of

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid, 213.

<sup>25</sup>Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and augmented by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, 2nd ed., ed. F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), s.v. *συστοιχεω*.

<sup>26</sup>George, *Galatians*, 342.

<sup>27</sup>HAGAR

Ishmael, son of slavery  
Birth "according to the  
flesh"  
Old Covenant  
Mount Sinai

SARAH

Isaac, son of freedom  
Birth "through the  
promise"  
New Covenant  
[Mount Zion]

Sarah and Mount Zion and will go on to identify the "heavenly Jerusalem" as "the counterpart of Sarah."<sup>28</sup> In similar fashion, Longenecker sees the corresponding lists of Sarah and Hagar as forming a chiasmic structure in which Sarah is shown by logical parity to be the Jerusalem above and mother of all true believers.<sup>29</sup> While these analyses are helpful at one level, they do not account for the significance of the missing elements. Where one would expect to find Sarah brought into the picture, Paul skips a step, moving immediately to the Jerusalem above. The contrast then of vv. 24-26, initially established between Sarah and Hagar, is actually between the two Jerusalems: the present Jerusalem (representative of the Old Covenant) and the Jerusalem above (representative of the New Covenant). The mother of all true believers is "the Jerusalem above." It is this statement which leads to the crux of Paul's argument.

*For it is written, Rejoice, you barren woman who is not bearing children; break forth and shout, you who are not laboring, because the children of the desolate are more than the one having a husband.<sup>30</sup>*

γέγραπται γάρ introduces Paul's justification for his previous assertion that "the Jerusalem above is free, which is

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Present Jerusalem	Heavenly Jerusalem
<sup>28</sup> George, <i>Galatians</i> , 343.	
<sup>29</sup> Longenecker, <i>Galatians</i> , 213.	
A     Hagar	
B     Mt. Sinai	
C     slavery	
D     the present city of Jerusalem	
D1    the Jerusalem above	
C1    freedom	
B1    (Mt. Zion)	
A1     our mother [ie. Sarah]	

<sup>30</sup> Author's translation.

our mother." Unlike the first appearance of this phrase, this one introduces a direct quotation from the LXX version of Isaiah 54:1. How does Isaiah 54:1 relate to the Sarah-Hagar pericope? Although Sarah was barren, she certainly does not fit the characteristics of the barren one in this verse, for she apparently has no husband. As Jobes notes, "a surface reading of Isa 54:1 is disappointing."<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, upon closer analysis, Paul's use of Isaiah 54:1 actually serves as the interpretive key to the entire passage. Paul's use of Isaiah 54:1 indicates that his allegorical interpretation of the Sarah-Hagar pericope is dependent upon the broader context of Old Testament Scriptures in light of a redemptive-historical perspective.<sup>32</sup>

According to Jobes in her article, it is the "intertextual echoes" which provide the interpretive key to this passage. These echoes ring from Genesis through Isaiah. As Jobes argues, "it is the nexus of Sarah's story in Genesis, Isaiah's use of Sarah, and Paul's further use of Isaiah that forms the intertextual space in which the theme of barrenness is to be understood."<sup>33</sup> In other words, the context from which Paul is working is much broader than the Genesis account.

Paul's quote from Isaiah introduces an important theme, that of barrenness. Barrenness was viewed as a curse and shame in the Old Testament economy.<sup>34</sup> Only through the divine intervention of God was this barrenness overcome. The result was the birth of a hero in Israel's history. However, it is

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<sup>31</sup>Jobes, "Jerusalem, Our Mother," 303.

<sup>32</sup>This writer credits Karen Jobes for much of his understanding on this passage. For further study, see Karen Jobes, "Jerusalem, Our Mother: Metalepsis and Intertextuality in Galatians 4:21-31," *Westminster Theological Journal* 55 (1993), 299-320. See also Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1989).

<sup>33</sup>Jobes, "Jerusalem, Our Mother," 306.

<sup>34</sup>Note Elizabeth's comments in Luke 1:25 after discovering she was pregnant with John.

Isaiah's transformation of the barrenness theme that is significant for this discussion. Isaiah uses Genesis 11:30 to speak of the fruitfulness of Jerusalem.<sup>35</sup> Barrenness, rather than being associated with a woman, is now associated with a city. And the child of the barren woman according to Isaiah is a people. In Isaiah, the barrenness of Jerusalem is the result of her spiritual adultery (Isa 64:10). She is a city who has become desolate as a wilderness. Historically, she is in captivity.

Although the imagery in Isaiah 54:1 is implicitly connected to Genesis 11:30, Isaiah earlier intricately attached the Jerusalem imagery to the Sarah pericope. Speaking to those "who pursue righteousness, who seek the Lord," Isaiah exclaims, "Look to Abraham your father, and to *Sarah* who gave birth to you in pain" (Isa 51:1-2 NASB, emphasis mine). According to Isaiah, the children of Sarah and Abraham are those who "pursue righteousness, who seek the Lord." As Jobes aptly observes, "Isaiah's transformation associates Sarah's barrenness with the miraculous birth of a people whose heart is after God, instead of with the birth of an individual son to an individual woman."<sup>36</sup> In Isaiah's context, the city of Jerusalem is the barren woman awaiting God's intervention with a miraculous birth. Jobes states that,

Barren Jerusalem is cursed because of sin, because of her inability to keep the law. According to Isaiah, her only reprieve from her barren and cursed state awaits that glorious day when her judgment is past, when she will be a mother-city, when she will rejoice over miraculously giving birth."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Note the LXX comparison of Gen 11:30 and Isa 54:1:  
καὶ ἦν Σαρα στείρα καὶ οὐκ ἔτεκνοποιεῖ (Gen 11:30)  
Εὐφράιθητι, στείρα ἢ οὐ τίκτουσα (Isa 54:1)

<sup>36</sup>Jobes, "Jerusalem, Our Mother," 308.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid, 313.

Isaiah's prophecy is anticipating the birth of a people whose *hearts* will be after God. His concern is not a religious identity, nor is it nationality. His concern is an internal righteousness, a law in the hearts of the people (Isa 51:7). This principle rings faint echoes of the prophet Jeremiah, who anticipates a *new covenant*,

“Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, *My covenant which they broke . . . .* But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord. “I will put My law *within them*, and on their *heart* I will write it...” (Jer 31:32-33 NASB [emphasis mine]).

Ezekiel also anticipates this new covenant including an added dimension of the indwelling of God's Spirit (Eze 37:14). The prophet Joel in different terms speaks of this same climactic event in which God's Spirit will be poured out on *all mankind* (Joel 2:28-32). It is Peter's use of this Joel passage in Acts 2:14-21 that gives the apostolic redemptive-historical framework from which the Apostle Paul is working. Although Paul does not refer to each of these prophets here, these form the broader salvation-historical context operative in Paul's understanding of the Sarah-Hagar pericope.

In relation to his use of Isaiah 54:1, “the force of Paul's argument is based on the major premise that the barren one of Isa 54:1 has in fact given birth.”<sup>38</sup> Jobes proceeds to convincingly prove that this miraculous birth was in fact the resurrection of Jesus.<sup>39</sup> Whatever specific event this miraculous

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Jobes conjoins the images of childbirth with resurrection (Isa 26:17-19; Rom 1:4; Col 1:18) to validate this point. For Jobes, “the event which, according to Paul himself, radically altered his own

birth is to be associated with, the apostle Paul understood it to be in some way related to Jesus Christ. The Christ-event births a people who populate the ἄνω Ἱερουσαλήμ, the city which mothers all who believe in Jesus Christ, whether circumcised or not. For Paul, this is what the law *really* says (cf. v 21).

Because of this, Paul can specifically refer to the Galatian believers as the ἐπαγγελίας τέκνα. Herein lies Paul's astounding reversal of the Judaizers' argument. Abraham's seed has nothing to do with nationality. Paul is claiming that the ἐπαγγελίας τέκνα are those in Galatia who have placed their faith in the Messiah Jesus Christ, both Jew and Gentile alike.

This leads Paul to the climax of the *probatio*. After establishing who the true children of Abraham are, Paul appeals once more to the Genesis story. Based upon Paul's redemptive-historical understanding of the Sarah-Hagar pericope, Paul uses Genesis 21:10 to exhort the Galatian believers to remove the Judaizers from their presence. The command here is to "cast out, throw out, dispose of" the Judaizers and their teaching. This is not an anti-semitic justification for the persecution of Jews, for Paul elsewhere states his passionate burden for the Jewish people (Rom 10:1). Rather, Paul's command is directed against those who had distorted the gospel of grace. In many areas, Paul was a man of tolerance, but when it came to the gospel, Paul would not budge. As George aptly states it, "when this kind of heresy invades the church, there can be no question of compromise or concessions for the sake of a superficial harmony."<sup>40</sup>

In conclusion, what many commentators understand as Paul's "second thought" actually serves as his strongest argument in the *probatio*. Paul justifiably uses ἀλληγορούμενα to highlight the distinction between his interpretation and the

reading of Scripture was his encounter on the Damascus road with the *resurrected* Jesus" ("Jerusalem, Our Mother," 314).

<sup>40</sup>George, *Galatians*, 347.



traditional understanding of the Sarah-Hagar pericope. Paul's interpretation is based on the exegetical insights of the prophet Isaiah, placing the Sarah-Hagar pericope in the broader scope of salvation-history. Paul contrasts his redemptive-historical perspective to that of the Judaizers' atomistic interpretation. In so doing, he establishes a hermeneutic that is deeply rooted in the broader scope of the Old Testament, a hermeneutic far superior to the shallow, short-sighted understanding of the Judaizers.