

Review: Gal 4:19-22: Bullinger on Biblical Allegories: All Are Historical; Galatians Presents Historic Figures & Events in an Allegory; Abraham's Adultery with Hagar Violates Biblical Principles and Divine Timing; Hagar Represents Slavery to the Mosaic Law

9. Grace Doctrine Church subscribe to a system of hermeneutics that addresses biblical passages initially from the premise that it is to be taken at face value, i.e., it means what it says, ergo, literally.
10. However, if a passage reveals that it is to be interpreted otherwise, then analysis responds accordingly.
11. There are several allegorical passages in the Bible but Galatians 4:24 is the only one that is so identified in the text.

Allegory. Greek, ἀλληγορία [*allēgoria*], from ἄλλος (*allos*), *another*, and ἀγορεύειν (*agoreuein*), *to speak or make a speech in the agora (i.e., assembly)*. (p. 748)

We have only one (allegory) which is distinctly declared to be such; and that is Galatians 4:22, 24. The modern and common usage of the word *allegoria* is thus quite different from this Scriptural definition. According to the modern sense it is taken to mean a fictitious narrative which has another deeper meaning than that which is expressed.

An allegory *may* sometimes be fictitious, but Galatians 4 shows us that a true history may be allegorized (*i.e.*, be shown to have further teaching in that which actually took place) *without detracting from the truth of the history*. Here note this important fact: *Allegory* is always stated in the *past* tense, and *never in the future*. Allegory is thus distinguished from Prophecy. The *Allegory* brings other teaching out of past events, while the prophecy tells us events that are yet to come, and means exactly what is said.¹ (p. 749)

12. The Judaizers were big on circumcision as a necessary act for Gentiles to be saved. This is legalism that results in a false gospel.
13. In verses 22-23, Paul cites historical events involving Abraham and his progeny as elements in an allegory that contrasts grace and legalism.

Galatians 4:22 - For it stands written that Abraham had two sons, one [Ishmael] by the slave woman [Hagar] and one [Isaac] by the free woman [Sarah].

1. This verse brings into focus the physical birth of two historical figures: (1) Ishmael from the illegitimate union of Abraham and Hagar, and (2) Isaac from the marital union of Abraham and Sarah.
2. Hagar was a slave and her son, Ishmael, was born a slave and remained one for the rest of his life. Sarah was free and her son, Isaac, was born free and remained free the rest of his life.

¹ E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible: Explained and Illustrated* (London: Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1898; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968), 748-49.

Galatians 4:23 - But the son of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son of the free woman was born through the promise.

1. The preposition “according to” refers to norms and standards related to a normal, natural birth. There is no big deal to this. People prove this every day under the false premise that they must find out if they are compatible before they get married.
2. **Red Alert:** You are compatible. And premarital discovery of it is outside the timing of the plan of God with regard to right-man/right-woman. Premarital compatibility results in contributing to the satanic assault on the divine institutions of marriage and family. Compatibility is related to the soul, not the body.
3. What Abraham did was to do what comes naturally, motivated by impatience which justified adultery. The spawn was Ishmael, a slave whose negative historical impact still reverberates over a span of 4,000 years.²
4. Ishmael was born according to the flesh and lived according to the flesh. He was born physically but never experienced the new birth of salvation as did his father and patrilineal half-brother.
5. On the other hand, the birth of Isaac was by means of a miracle, orientation and adjustment to the divine promise, and reliance on the power of God functioning through the integrity of God.
6. Isaac was the son of the promise and is therefore an illustration of grace. The covenant to Abraham was unconditional and therefore the reality of its occurrence was due exclusively to the integrity of God.

² “Abraham (fl. early 2nd millennium BC), first of the Hebrew patriarchs and father of faith for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Knowledge about Abraham comes from two main sources: the biblical book of Genesis and recent archaeological discoveries and interpretations. According to the Bible, Abraham left Ur, in Mesopotamia, because God called him to found a new nation in an undesignated land that he later learned was Canaan. He obeyed unquestioningly the commands of God, from whom he received repeated promises and a covenant that his “seed” would inherit the land. Archaeological finds since World War I have provided a verifiable historical background that tallies with the general context and patterns of the biblical account. On this basis scholars are inclined to take the patriarchs as historical figures and to attempt to fill in the probable places and milieus of Abraham’s journey” (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia*, 15th ed. [Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1979], 1:30).

7. Abraham was informed of a divine intent to provide him with a son through his wife Sarah by means of several prophetic declarations prefaced by the phrase "I will."
8. Although God was gracious to Ishmael and his line, he was never the object of these declarations. It was confirmed by the Lord, "... through Isaac your descendants will be named" (Genesis 21:12). Isaac is the bloodline of Christ through Jacob's son Judah and Judah's son David – all Jews.
9. Ishmael originates the bloodline of Muhammad but through which of the twelve sons is not known, but with Hagar being Egyptian the line is both Semitic and Hamitic.
10. Remember, the birth of Isaac was from two reinvigorated Semitics whose DNA combined to create a new race, the Jew.
11. The allegory presents Ishmael as a symbol of human viewpoint, negative volition, and legalism and slavery related to the Mosaic Law.
12. On the other hand, Isaac is presented as a symbol for divine viewpoint, positive volition, and grace related to salvation and spiritual growth.

Galatians 4:23 - But the son of the slave woman was born according to the natural standard of human procreation, but conversely, the son of the free woman was born by means of the promise.

13. The birth of Isaac was totally dependent upon the grace of God and the promises to Abraham and Sarah rather than by human works.
14. Therefore, the birth of Isaac depended on who and what God was while the birth of Ishmael depended on who and what Abraham and Hagar were.
15. In the next verse Paul reveals that he is presenting historic figures who were involved in historic events in order to construct an allegory demonstrating the contrast between legalism and grace.

Galatians 4:24 - This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar.

1. This verse actually begins with a qualitative neuter plural relative pronoun: **ὅστις, hostis**: "which things." This indicates that what is being discussed is based on literal, historic events.
2. This is followed by the verb "to be": **εἰμί, eimi**, translated "are." The direct object is not a noun but the present passive participle of **ἀλληγορέω, allēgoreō**, best translated "allegorized."
3. The translation is "Which things are being allegorized." Paul makes it clear that the Old Testament events to which he references are not allegorical but that he is using these historical events to construct an allegory.
4. Understand what Paul writes here. He stipulates that the historic events cited in context are being made the subject of an allegory. All biblical allegorical contexts are based on actual events.

5. If there were allegorical passages not based on real events then it would open the gates to interpret the whole of Scripture allegorically.
6. The early church had two major schools of biblical interpretation: (1) the theological school at Antioch which subscribed to the literal-grammatical-historical system of hermeneutics and (2) the school at Alexandria that adopted the allegorical method.
7. Controversy between the two ultimately came to critical point culminating with the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451 which had three significant results: (1) the denunciation of monophysitism \ma-nä'-fa-sī-ti-zam\ (a false doctrine of the hypostatic union), (2) the discrediting of the literal school at Antioch, and (3) the rise of the allegorical school at Alexandria.
8. The last two acts of this council ushered in the theological dark age during which Romanism ruled the Christian world for over a millennium, the primary reason being the unseemly propaganda at both the Council of Ephesus in 431 and Chalcedon in 451.
9. It was the Reformation that let light back into the science and art of biblical analysis through the reemergence of the literal-grammatical-historical method of exegesis, yet there are those in Protestant circles who still today prefer Alexandria's allegorical method of interpretation.

Galatians 4:24 - Which things are being allegorized: these women represent two covenants: one from the mountain called Sinai which keeps on giving birth to slavery [the Mosaic Law]; this is Hagar [the slave woman].

10. The believers in the Galatian churches are being lured back into the slavery of legalism by the Judaizers who stress the necessity of circumcision for Gentiles to be saved.
11. They had believed in Christ for salvation and eternal life but have gone back to Sinai and identified themselves with Hagar who represents the Law, legalism, and slavery.

Galatians 4:25 - Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.