

Paul's Allegory: The Deeper Meaning of Scripture

Galatians 4:21-31

I. Review: Last Week's Lesson from Isaac and Ishmael

- Galatians Overview: Paul's preaching, the Judaizers' coming; the central issue: Justification by faith in Christ apart from works of the Law
- Last week: Central message of Galatians 4:21-31: Every Christian is a miracle of grace (no matter what your testimony)
 - Paul uses historical background of Isaac and Ishmael, Sarah and Hagar
 - Genesis 16:

Galatians 4:22-23 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. ²³ His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise.

- a. Many years passed after the promise of Genesis 15... God was still not acting on what He had promised
- b. Sarah saw that she continued to be barren... by then, she was 76, and Abraham was 86... the time for her to bear children was past
- c. Sarah got an idea, and took matters in her own hands;

Genesis 16:2 "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said.

- d. Abraham acted in self-reliance, according to self-wisdom; God did not command this, Abraham was not looking to God to fulfill His promise
 - e. As a result, Abraham lay with Hagar, she conceived and gave birth to a son, Ishmael
 - f. This is the son of the FLESH... a son born IN THE ORDINARY WAY... the son of the SLAVE WOMAN
2. The essence of the life under the law is “I am on my own! I must think, I must act, I must make it happen!” The flesh thinks, the flesh chooses, the flesh acts... the flesh gives birth to flesh
- Ishmael represents a normal individual, a sinner apart from sovereign grace... born in the normal way, living the normal life
 - Isaac represents a supernatural individual, a sinner saved by sovereign grace, born again by the power of the Spirit, living by that same Spirit, walking daily in faith in the promises of God
 - Paul’s clear assertions about both these people

Galatians 4:28-29 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.

²⁹ At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now.

- “Children of promise” = born by supernatural intervention by God, “born by the power of God”
- “son born in the ordinary way... literally from the Greek “born according to the flesh”... like every other baby that’s ever been born; even worse, born because of a sinful impulse in Sarah and Abraham—taking matters in their own hands, coming up with their own plans
- The son born “by the power of the Spirit” is literally “according to the Spirit”... flesh vs. Spirit
- Christian pay attention: YOU ARE ALL LIKE ISAAC, CHILDREN OF PROMISE, BORN BY THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

- This is what you are... now live up to it!!
- Don't live like a slave... in slavery to the Law... in slavery to the flesh... trying to save yourself by your good works!!
- Live every moment as an HEIR OF THE COMING KINGDOM!!!
- The New Jerusalem, the heavenly city, is your origin... and your destiny... there is nothing you can do to climb a ladder of good works up to that celestial city... but there is also nothing Satan or the world or your own sin nature can do to stop you from getting there
- Live as a free son or daughter of the living God!
- So... that's the main idea, last week's message
- Today: let's go deeper, as Paul went deeper... let's look at the way Paul argues... let's look at the ALLEGORICAL MEANING of the Old Testament history that Paul is using here
- In doing this, let's learn why **seeing deeper meanings is essential** to understanding many Old Testament passages and prophecies... but let's also learn why **seeing deeper meanings is dangerous** as well... looking at the historical dangers of allegorical methods of interpreting the Scripture

Finally, let's apply the deeper spiritual lessons of Isaac and Ishmael one more time... let's see again the central lesson for all of us—who we are and how we should live; how the heavenly Jerusalem is our true home... let's also see the double warning—of what the Ishmael's will do to us; and what will happen to the Ishmaels.

II. Deeper Spiritual Meaning: Essential, But Dangerous

A. Paul Turns to Allegory... a Surprising Move

Galatians 4:24-26 These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. ²⁵ Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city

of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. ²⁶ But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.

1. Challenging part of Galatians
2. Paul literally says, “These things are allegories... “ or “This is allegorizing...”

B. Definition of Allegory

1. First, the word “allegory” literally means “to say other than what one seems to be saying”
2. A better idea is “ANALOGY”... one thing represents or illustrates another
3. An allegory is an extended metaphor, with smaller metaphors making up the larger one
4. Most famous from Christian History is John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*

C. Deeper Spiritual Meaning **Essential** to Understanding Scripture

1. Central issue: How Scripture testifies to Christ—His person and His work
2. Jesus’ Clear Statements: Scripture testifies about me
 - a. John 5: Moses wrote about me... and if you don’t see that, you don’t understand Scripture properly

John 5:46 If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.

BUT... you will never find Jesus in the five books of Moses if you don’t look deeper, at spiritual meanings

Jesus gave a plain example in John 3:

John 3:14-16 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one

and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

In other words, the bronze serpent was a PICTURE of the saving work of Christ on the cross

b. Post-resurrection Instruction

i) Luke 24

Luke 24:25-27 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Luke 24:44-48 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

ii) Acts 1: the Forty-Day Seminary

Acts 1:3 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

3. Examples of spiritual interpretations

- a. The flood and Noah
- b. The near-sacrifice of Isaac
- c. The Exodus
- d. The Passover
- e. Every animal sacrifice... types, shadows

Hebrews 8:5 They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven.

Hebrews 10:1 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming-- not the realities themselves.

4. Book of Hebrews goes into great detail about these things... it has a whole chapter on the priest-king Melchizedek... but it says that spiritual understanding is meat, not milk

Hebrews 5:6 And he says in another place, "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

Summary: Christ is the main message of all of Scripture... if you don't see the deeper, spiritual meaning in the Old Testament, you will miss its message!!

If that is so, why don't the Jews, who scour the Scripture carefully, find Christ there?

5. SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS: ... if you don't see Christ in the animal sacrificial system, and in the Passover, and in the Tabernacle, and in the bronze serpent, and in the Exodus, and in Melchizedek... you are not understanding the fullness of those passages at all... your eyes are blinded to the deeper meanings of Scripture

6. This is the very problem with unbelieving Jews:

2 Corinthians 3:14-16 But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

D. Types vs. Allegory

1. But these are generally called "types"... things really acted out in history, but which God ordained would also to act out/represent aspects of the future work of Christ/redemptive history
2. Allegory: the text itself is symbolic... it was written like a kind of a secret code... and if you have the decoder ring, you can break the code and get the secret, hidden meaning

In allegorical exegesis the sacred text is treated as a mere symbol, or allegory, of spiritual truths. The literal, historical sense, if it is regarded at all, plays a relatively minor role, and the aim of the exegete is to elicit the moral, theological or mystical meaning which each passage, indeed each verse and even each word, is presumed to contain

E. The Dangers of Allegorical Interpretation

1. A little history: a City named Alexandria
 - a. How Greeks used allegory to shine up Greek mythology's embarrassments
 - b. Philo started doing it with the OT
 - i) Greek-speaking Jew
 - ii) Loved Greek philosophy, especially Plato
 - iii) Sought to marry it with Old Testament
 - iv) Said literal/historical reading of OT is like Plato's shadow in the cave analogy: the true meaning is deeper
 - c. Church history
 - i) Clement, his disciple Origen ... both lived in 2nd century Alexandria
 - ii) Developed whole system of allegorical interpretations of OT
 - d. BUT Antioch: answered back 4th/5th centuries... angry at the weird liberties the allegorizers were taking with the Bible
 - e. Allegory took off... became the norm
 - f. Augustine, many others developed the "Four-fold" meaning of the text
2. Basic idea: God has hidden the true meaning of Old Testament; only the spiritual can search it out
 - a. Scripture has three levels of meaning, corresponding to the three parts of a human being: body, soul, spirit

- b. Body: bare literal meaning—simple history, rules of grammar
- c. Soul: moral meaning—for moral instruction, how to be a morally upright person
- d. Spirit: allegorical/mystical meaning, ultimately pointing to Christ, and to one's relationship with Him

3. Examples of Allegorical interpretations

Origen

- a. Example: sermon by Origen on the battle of Jericho
 - i) Joshua = Jesus
 - ii) Walled city of Jericho = the world
 - iii) Seven priests carrying the Ark = Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, James, Jude, Peter
 - iv) Rahab, the prostitute = the church, redeemed sinners
 - v) The scarlet cord = the blood of Christ

Origen's 27th homily on the book of Numbers, he describes growth in the spiritual life based on the 42 stopping places of Israel in the wilderness mentioned in Numbers 33... from slavery in Egypt to the crossing of the Jordan River into the Promised Land

Origen: "Why else would Moses write this down for us? How else could this be helpful for us?"

b. Joshua: Kings in the Cave

Origen's eleventh homily on Joshua, which deals with the five kings who attack Gibeon in chapter ten and end up hiding in the cave at Makkedah after the Lord's lengthening of the day and the destruction of their armies by Israel.

"Now these five kings indicate the five corporeal senses: sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell; for it must be through one of these that each person falls away into sin. These five senses are compared to those five kings who fight the Gibeonites, that is, carnal persons."

c. Numbers: (Origen, Augustine)

Number 2 = The two Testaments

Number 3 = The Holy Trinity, the resurrection of Christ, the three kinds of sin (deed, word, thought), and the three aspects of humanity's nature (body, soul, spirit).

Numbers 5, 50, 250, and 500:

Origen: "And the number five hundred, or two hundred and fifty, either contains the mystery of the five senses perfected a hundred-fold in Him."

Number 10

Origen: "Now the number ten is a sacred one, not a few mysteries being indicated by it."

Numbers 22, 273 and 1000

According to Origen, the Levites were counted (Num. 3). The count of all the males a month old and upwards. They were 22,000. The numeral 22 coincides with the number of the Hebrew Alphabet, the numeral 1000 is a symbol of heaven. As if their work was to register the names of all the people in a heavenly language so that everyone may share in the heavenly glory.

Later exegetes went almost bizarre with this allegorical interpretation:

Pope Gregory the Great: Job's seven sons represent the twelve apostles; his friends represented heretics; his 7000 sheep represented God's faithful people; his 3000 camels represented wicked Gentiles!!

4. Dangers

- a. No rhyme or reason for interpretations: interpretations seem to come from the imagination of the interpreter... the bible treated allegorically becomes putty in the hands of the interpreter... he shapes it whatever way he wants

- b. Loss of the importance of history... either downplaying the historical side or failing to see how marvelously God has sovereignly controlled history to bring about his spiritual purposes
- c. Denigration of the physical world: they do all this because of a philosophical disrespect for the physical world... DUALISM
- d. No discernment between genres of Scripture: allegorists treat historical narratives the same as they treat parables... searching for hidden meanings
- e. Spiritual elitism: only the “spiritual” can read/understand Scripture... “Emperor’s New Clothes”
- f. The Bible floats away from the common reader, who utterly despairs of getting anything out of it

F. How Can Paul Use Allegory?

- 1. First answer: He’s an apostle... he can run the red lights of sound exegesis, like an ambulance, fire-truck, police officer, Presidential motorcade
- 2. Better answer: is it really allegory? Isn’t rather just a type... an illustration from history not much different than the bronze serpent? Or the Exodus?

G. Our Basic Approach to the Old Testament

- 1. Grammar: study each word as normal human speech
- 2. Context: set each story in its context
- 3. Locating the text in redemptive history... how does this fit into the flow of what God has done in history
- 4. Seeing timeless examples of God’s character and humanity’s nature
- 5. Seeking types or Christ, deeper spiritual meanings according to the patterns used in the NT... without denying the historical significance

6. DON'T GET ATTRACTED to "DaVinci Code" deeper hidden meanings approach to the Bible—like you see in National Enquirer or *The Bible Code* (computer study of repeated letter patterns—every fiftieth letter in the Hebrew text of Genesis, starting with the first law spells the Hebrew word "torah"... so what?? Finding Hitler's name, predicting the future????)

III. Digging into this Particular "Allegory"... and Applying Its Lessons

A. Basic Identification (again)

1. Two sons: Ishmael (the slave) and Isaac (the heir)
2. Two women: Hagar (the slave woman) and Sarah (the free woman)
3. Identification: two women represent two covenants
 - a. Vs. 24-25: The Old Covenant = Hagar = Mount Sinai in Arabia = present city of Jerusalem... it "bears children" for slavery (Law can make no one free!!)... present city of Jerusalem = unbelieving Jews... SLAVERY
 - b. Vs. 26: the free woman (Sarah, though never mentioned) = "Jerusalem that is above" = FREE = "our mother"... the New Covenant, "bears children for heaven"

B. Central Spiritual Lesson: New Covenant in Christ makes us FREE

Galatians 4:21 Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says?

Galatians 4:31 Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

1. Free from the Law's meticulous requirements (circumcision, dietary regulations, ceremonial observances—special days, animal sacrifices)
2. Free from the requirement to obey the Law in order to maintain a good relationship with God
3. Free from sin itself... for the Old Covenant had no power to do that!!!

John 8:34 "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

Romans 8:3 the law was powerless

Hebrews 10:4 it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

4. Especially: Free from the Law's condemning power!!!
5. WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO LIVE AS SLAVES???
6. Live free in every way!!

Galatians 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

- a. Free from rituals, yes
- b. But also free from a legalistic mindset...earning God's favor
- c. AND BETTER, free from guilt for sin by the blood of Jesus... free from fear of condemnation
- d. AND free from sin itself by the indwelling Spirit

C. Other Powerful Lessons

1. Jerusalem that is above... BEARING CHILDREN FOR GOD... missions!!!
 - a. Isaiah 54 follows Isaiah 53
 - i) Paul is quoting Isaiah 54:1...
 - ii) Pretend there are no chapter divisions; no verse divisions... and the text in Isaiah just flows together...
 - iii) Isaiah 54:1 immediately follows this:

Isaiah 52:13-15 See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. ¹⁴ Just as there were many who were appalled at him--his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness-- ¹⁵ so will he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of

him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.

Isaiah 53:5-6 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:11-12 After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. ¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

CHRIST'S ATONING WORK for the sins of His people... not only Jews but also Gentiles

- iv) Then comes the beautiful result of Christ's work: unbridled celebration by "Zion", what Paul calls the "heavenly Jerusalem"... a city, a mother, who up to that time had been spiritually barren, but now at last can bear children for God

Isaiah 54:1 "Sing, O barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband," says the LORD.

It is a time of joy and of bearing children for God... she will need an EXPANDED TENT for all the children she will bear:

Isaiah 54:2-3 "Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. ³ For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities.

- b. The "children" are converts to Christ, spiritual sons of Abraham, in fulfillment of the key promises made to Abraham

- i) promises

Genesis 12:2-3 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Genesis 15:5 He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars-- if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

Genesis 17:4-5 "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. ⁵ No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations."

Genesis 22:17-18 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed

ii) this DID NOT HAPPEN until Christ came: the Jewish nation was not giving birth to spiritual children of Abraham in the Old Covenant; indeed the Old Covenant had NO POWER to do this

iii) Fulfillment after Christ... after Pentecost

Galatians 3:26-29 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Galatians 4:28 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.

PAUL IS ASSERTING THAT THE CONVERSION OF GENTILES LIKE THE GALATIANS IS A DIRECT FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM... and is only possible through the finished work of Christ on the Cross... the NEW COVENANT in His blood bears spiritual children to Abraham... even better, to God!!

- c. Paul is speaking of MISSIONS!!! The “children” of the Jerusalem that is above are Christians, won to faith in Christ by the spread of the gospel
- d. A beautiful historical note: one of the most influential sermons of all time was preached from Isaiah 54:2... called “The Deathless Sermon” by William Carey, May 30, 1792 at Friar Lane Baptist Chapel, Nottingham, England:

Isaiah 54:2-3 Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

- 1) Expect great things from God; 2) Attempt great things for God

This man had written a tract: “An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to use means for the conversion of the heathen”

Organized the first Protestant missions effort from England to win the lost in distant lands

APPLICATION: FBC should also Expect great things from God when it comes to evangelism and missions!!!! [Galatians series interrupted; yearn to see fruit here in Durham; but also yearn to see FBC part of a vast missions movement to the ends of the earth; Northern Bai people of China]

2. Some physical Isaacs are spiritual Ishmaels

- a. The unbelieving Jews of Paul’s day, though they are physically descended from Abraham and from Isaac, yet SPIRITUALLY they are no different than Ishmael—they are slaves, outcasts, not heirs
- b. Stunning assertion:

Galatians 4:24-25 One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. ²⁵ Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children.

- c. In other words, if you went to the literal city of Jerusalem in Paul's day and preached the gospel to those people, they would attack you and try to kill you as they did to him! Why? Because they are SLAVES OF SIN!!!

Acts 21:30-31 Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut. ³¹ While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar.

- d. So it is even today: many Jews are hardened in their hearts toward Christ and use their positions of influence and their money to hinder the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ; indeed evangelism is as illegal in Jerusalem as it is in Iran and Saudi Arabia!!
 - e. We must PRAY for the hardness to be lifted from the hearts and blindness from the eyes of Jewish people so they can no longer be spiritual Ishmaels, but may be converted to being spiritual Isaacs as well
3. Some physical Ishmaels are spiritual Isaacs (Isaiah 60)
- a. Last week, I was asked by a brother in Christ "Does this mean all descendants of Ishmael are going to be condemned??"

Galatians 4:30 But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son."

- b. Praise God, no!!!
- c. After God had Abraham drive out the slave woman, He protected her and Ishmael from dying in the desert... he opened her eyes to the presence of a well that saved her life
- d. This was in direct answer to Abraham's prayer for her

Genesis 17:18 And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!"

- e. Ishmael then settled in the desert regions of Arabia and grew to become a great and populous nation of desert-dwellers; people we now know as Arabs—they are descendants of Ishmael
- f. Ishmael's sons are listed in Genesis 25: TWELVE SONS of Ishmael
- g. The first two sons of Ishmael:

Genesis 25:13 These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, listed in the order of their birth: Nebaioth the firstborn of Ishmael, Kedar

- h. Isaiah 60: another prophecy about Zion... what I think Paul would call the “Jerusalem that is above”... the future heavenly home of the people of God... a great INGATHERING of the scattered children of God:

Isaiah 60:1-7 "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. ² See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. ³ Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. ⁴ "Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the arm. ⁵ Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come. ⁶ Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD. ⁷ All Kedar's flocks will be gathered to you, the rams of Nebaioth will serve you; they will be accepted as offerings on my altar, and I will adorn my glorious temple.

Some of Ishmael's descendants are chosen by sovereign grace, and Christ has shed his blood for them!!

Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

i. In other words, SOME OF ISHMAEL'S PHYSICAL DESCENDANTS WILL BELIEVE IN JESUS and become spiritual children of Abraham like Isaac... sons of the promise

j. Some physical Ishmaels will become spiritual Isaacs!!

4. The New Jerusalem is our future home... set your heart on it!!!

Galatians 4:26 But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.

Revelation 21:1-4 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

Revelation 21:10-11 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹ It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

Hebrews 11:13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.

Hebrews 11:16 Instead, they were longing for a better country-- a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

Colossians 3:1-4 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When

Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5. Ishmael persecutes Isaac: Persecution is our lot

Galatians 4:29 At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now.

- a. As I said last week, some of the bitterest persecution of true Christians comes from legalistic religious people
 - b. The most extreme and painful in the world now is at the hands of Ishmaelites... Muslims... who live out the epitome of a legalistic, works-based religion—Islam; 9 of the top 10 most violently persecuting nations on earth are Muslim
 - c. But also secular Israel and its city Jerusalem have made evangelism illegal
 - d. Our nation will become more and more hostile to true Christianity
 - e. Expect persecution in the future... pray for those being persecuted now
6. Exclusion from New Jerusalem is Ishmael's future
- a. Understand the terrifying imagery with which Paul ends
 - b. This is a strong picture of condemnation on Judgment Day

Galatians 4:30 But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son."

Matthew 7:23 hen I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

Matthew 25:41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Now: Lord's Supper preparation