

Hagar, Mt. Sinai and the two Covenants

What can we learn from these scriptures about covenants and the curse of the law? What is the curse anyway?

Gal.4:21 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.

23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.

24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.

25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

Why is this? Because they are holding onto keeping the law of God without accepting Yeshua as the only one we can go through to the Father. He became the high priest of God. They rejected the priceless gift of grace.

26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, (from the death (penalty) which is the mother of us all.

27 For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

What has the woman “Agar” have to do with our salvation? What does the word “allegory” mean? What are the two Covenants Paul is talking about? This scripture has puzzled many people. We hope to answer some of the questions in this study.

Paul is talking to a new Gentile congregation in Galatia that he has been working with for some time. The problem he is addressing is that while he was away from them, other men, some Jewish agnostics, people who was teaching worship of angels and severe physical purification of the body, had come in teaching that the new converts had to keep certain traditions and other man-made laws in order to earn their salvation. Neither of these false ministers were teaching that Yeshua Christ was the son of Yahweh or that He had “redeemed” (taken away) the curse of the law from those who repent. Paul’s teaching of Yeshua, as the Son of Yahweh, was being taken lightly. Paul was having to go through the basics again, showing them that there was no law that they could keep that would take away the penalty of death for past sins. He is not doing away with keeping the laws of Yahweh by any means, but wants them to understand that those who depend solely on their own ability, not accepting Christ’s atoning blood, to keep the laws are still living under the “curse” of the law, which is the eternal death penalty. He insists that keeping Yahweh’s Commandments is still what Yahweh requires and that the law reveals what sin is. But the believer, through the sacrifice of Yeshua, can repent of his/or her sins and become righteous before Yahweh through the faith of Christ. When we trash our old life and accept the new life that Yeshua offers then we no longer have to fear death. We are promised eternal life, not physically but spiritually.

1Jn.2: 3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

Rom. 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

1Jn. 3:4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

Rom. 3:21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. (One cannot boast that he has earned righteousness by his ability to keep the law).

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. (One can be righteous in Yahweh's justification through faith if he lives by the spirit)

29 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

1Cor. 7:19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

Rom. 5:13 For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

Romans 8:1-15

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

(What is the "law of sin and death"? Is it not that death is the penalty for sin?) Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.)

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin

4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity (an enemy) against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. (selfish attitude) Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live

Paul has just explained that we, without the holy spirit of Yahweh, cannot please Yahweh or keep his Commandments because our natural minds are an enemy to righteousness. Without accepting Yeshua as Savior one cannot receive the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38 tells us what the requirements are:

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Now that we understand what the “curse” or “bondage” of the law is, and how Yeshua redeemed the sinner of the death penalty, we will get back to Agar and the two Covenants. In Gal. 4:21-31 Paul uses an “allegory” (a symbolic representation) to picture the two covenants. One: Yahweh gave the Ten Commandments, the Statutes and Judgments to ancient Israel to be delivered by Moses, and this was done on Mt. Sinai. The first part of the covenant was the Ten Commandments, followed by Judgments, beginning in Exodus 20:1-26 followed by the judgments in the next chapters to chapter 24. Then instructions are given in how to construct Yahweh’s sanctuary, and who were to officiate as Priests, how and when sacrifices were to be offered, and for what purpose. Much later the blessings and curses were given in the book of Deut. 30:15-18 That was the first covenant between Yahweh and Israel which Agar, which was in bondage, under the eternal death penalty when sin was committed.

Now we will go to the next covenant. The better covenant.

In Gal. 4:21 Paul asks the question: Why do you want to be under the curse (death penalty) of the law again? Read Gen. 17:21 and 21:9-19. Paul uses the story of Abraham’s two wives to illustrate his point. Agar was a slave (under bondage) who was sent away; her offspring was not accepted as part of the family heritage, the covenant with Israel. Her son, Ishmael, was born through a physical process, “of the flesh”, but Sarah’s son, Isaac, was a miracle of promise, which represents the spiritual aspect of Yahweh’s plan. So Agar, because she was in bondage, a slave, “of the flesh” was used to represent the first covenant, and anyone who still clings to physical works to earn salvation, rejecting the sacrifice of Yeshua. Paul says they are still in bondage and under the curse of the law, and accuses them of persecuting the family of promise (faith) because, not a physical death but a permanent death never to be resurrected.

To find the next Covenant we go to the prophet Isaiah where Paul quoted Isa. “54:1 Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.”

When we read the whole chapter we see that Yahweh is foretelling the distant future age of Israel in a new covenant, and all the things he plans for them. Isa. 55:3-5

3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

4 Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.

5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

Jeremiah 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Hebrews 8:8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

Hebrews 8:13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

Hebrews 12:24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Isaiah 55:3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

What is the “promise” of the new covenant for those who have accepted Yeshua as their Redeemer and Savior? These scriptures will explain that it is eternal life:

Mark 10:30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world (age) to come eternal life.

Luke 10:25 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

Luke 18:18 And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? The following scriptures answer this question:

John 3:15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

John 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

John 6:54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

John 17:2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

This explanation infuriated the Jewish rulers but it thrilled the Gentiles.

Acts 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Romans 2:7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

Romans 5:21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

1 Timothy 6:19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Titus 1:2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

Titus 3:7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

1 John 1:2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

1 John 2:25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

1 John 5:11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

1 John 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

Jude 1:21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Hebrews 13:20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

Isaiah 61:8 For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

Jeremiah 32:40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

Ezekiel 16:60 Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.

Ezekiel 37:26 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

This second covenant was began with the New Testament church and will climax in the 6th age just prior to the age when all things are made new in Rev. 21 & 22. Paul refers to these ages in Eph. 2:7, 3:5,&21

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