GALATIANS 4: HAGAR AND SARAH

It is important to understand that Paul’s allegory to be held in custody under the law is not the same as calling the law bondage. The bondage Paul refers to is the yoke being taught by false teachers who came in teaching that salvation came through keeping the law and oral laws. This is not what the Torah teaches. The Torah is only to point us to Messiah. It was never meant to save anyone. Salvation always came by faith.

GALATIANS 4:4-5
But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive our adoption as sons.

When we were children, we were held in bondage to the rudiments of the world, such as idolatry, paganism, and things which by nature are not gods... all sorts of immoral things.

Messiah was born into a system which punished us with death when we violated the law. God sent His Son so that He might redeem all the cursed ones from the curse. This allows the redeemed ones to become eligible for adoption.

GALATIANS 4:9
But now that you know God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you are turning back to those weak and worthless principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again?

What were the weak and worthless things they were turning back to? Was it the Torah? No. It was the things of the world.... the idolatry, paganism, and immorality.

GALATIANS 4:10
You are observing special days and months and seasons and years!
IS PAUL TALKING ABOUT GOD'S DAYS AND TIMES WHICH HE, HIMSELF OBSERVED? NO. HE IS TALKING ABOUT THE PAGAN HOLIDAYS AND THE TRADITIONS OF MEN.

**GALATIANS 4:12**
I BEG YOU, BROTHERS, BECOME LIKE ME, FOR I BECAME LIKE YOU. YOU HAVE DONE ME NO WRONG.

IF THEY ARE TO BE LIKE PAUL, THEN WAS PAUL KEEPING TORAH? YES. HE KEPT THE FEAST DAYS AND SABBATH (84 TIMES ALONE IN THE BOOK OF ACTS). SO, HOW DID HE BECOME LIKE THEM, BY EATING UNCLEAN AND VIOLATING TORAH? OF COURSE NOT.

**GALATIANS 4:16**
HAVE I NOW BECOME YOUR ENEMY BY TELLING YOU THE TRUTH?

THE GALATIANS WERE TEMPTED TO REJECT PAUL IN FEAR OF GETTING SICK. PAUL WAS GRACIOUS TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TO THE GALATIANS. HOWEVER, THEY COULD NOW REJECT HIM FOR BEING TRUTHFUL. WE SEE THIS IN THE WORLD TODAY. MANY PEOPLE ARE OFFENDED BY THE TRUTH.

**GALATIANS 4:21**
TELL ME, YOU WHO WANT TO BE UNDER THE LAW, DO YOU NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT THE LAW SAYS?


TO DESIRE TO RETURN TO BEING UNDER THE CURSE OF THE LAW MEANS TO SUBMIT TO THE UNLAWFUL PRACTICES OF THE PHARISEES, BECAUSE IT IS TO LIVE BY WORKS AND NOT BY FAITH. LIVING UNDER THE LAW MEANS LIVING BY YOUR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS, NOT BY FAITH.
GALATIANS 4:22-24

FOR IT IS WRITTEN THAT ABRAHAM HAD TWO SONS, ONE BY THE SLAVE WOMAN AND THE OTHER BY THE FREE WOMAN. HIS SON BY THE SLAVE WOMAN WAS BORN ACCORDING TO THE FLESH, BUT HIS SON BY THE FREE WOMAN WAS BORN BECAUSE OF THE PROMISE. THESE THINGS SERVE AS ILLUSTRATIONS, FOR THE WOMEN REPRESENT TWO COVENANTS. ONE COVENANT IS FROM MOUNT SINAI AND BEARS CHILDREN INTO SLAVERY: THIS IS HAGAR.

WHICH TWO COVENANTS DO THESE WOMEN REPRESENT? OFTEN IT IS ASSUMED THAT THEY REPRESENT THE MOSAIC COVENANT AND THE NEW COVENANT, BUT THIS IS NOT TRUE.

VERSE 24 CONFIRMS THAT HAGAR REPRESENTS THE MOSAIC COVENANT, BUT TO IDENTIFY THE COVENANT THAT SARAH REPRESENTS REQUIRES A LOOK BACK AT WHAT PAUL HAD BEEN TEACHING. MUCH TIME IN THE BOOK OF GALATIANS WAS SPENT IN EXPLAINING THAT THE GALATIANS HAD BEEN SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH.

PAUL'S EXAMPLE HAD BEEN ABRAHAM, SO IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT PAUL WOULD USE SARAH AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT. THE FALSE TEACHERS BELIEVED THAT THE GALATIANS NEEDED TO UNDERGO CONVERSION TO JUDAISM IN ORDER TO BE A PART OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. PAUL'S GOING BACK TO THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT REVEALED THAT SALVATION CAME BY FAITH. HE MADE THE POINT THAT A NEWER COVENANT CANNOT ANNUL AN OLDER COVENANT. THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT WAS STILL IN FORCE AND SO FAITH CONTINUED TO BE THE MECHANISM FOR SALVATION. THE MOSAIC COVENANT ONLY BUILT ON THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

AGAIN, PAUL WAS PROVING THAT THE FALSE TEACHERS WERE WRONG IN THEIR ASSUMPTIONS. VERSE 24 ALSO STATES THAT THE COVENANT THAT HAGAR REPRESENTED LED TO BONDAGE.
HOWEVER, PAUL BELIEVED THAT COMING UNDER THE SYSTEM OF JUDAISM (HOLDING THE ORAL LAW TO THE SAME DEGREE AS THE WRITTEN LAW) DID LEAD TO BONDAGE. PAUL SAW HAGAR (AND THE FALSE TEACHERS' WAY) AS A MAN-MADE ATTEMPT AT FULFILLING GOD'S SALVATION PLAN. SARAH (AND FAITH) WAS GOD'S METHOD OF FULFILLMENT.

IN THE ALLEGORY THAT PAUL WAS USING, HAGAR REPRESENTED MAN'S ATTEMPT AT ACCOMPLISHING GOD'S PROMISE OF A SON FOR ABRAHAM. SARAH REPRESENTED GOD'S OWN MIRACULOUS METHOD OF FULFILLING THE PROMISE. PAUL WAS TRYING TO CONVEY THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOD'S WAY OF SALVATION (FAITH) VERSUS THE WAY THAT THE FALSE TEACHERS WERE PUSHING (RITUAL CONVERSION). PAUL WAS USING HAGAR THEN AS A REPRESENTATIVE ALSO OF JERUSALEM, AS IT WAS AT THAT TIME, AND THE CURRENT SYSTEM OF JUDAISM THAT PLACED THE JEWISH PEOPLE UNDER A FORM OF BONDAGE.

THIS WAS WHAT THE FALSE TEACHERS WANTED THE NEW GALATIAN BELIEVERS TO SUBMIT TO. PAUL CONTRASTED THE PRESENT JERUSALEM WITH THE JERUSALEM WHICH WAS ABOVE, NEW JERUSALEM WAS FREE, AND WAS MOTHER OF US ALL (VERSE 26). THIS WAS SARAH IN PAUL'S ALLEGORY AND SHE REPRESENTED THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT THAT DEMONSTRATED THAT GOD'S WAY OF SALVATION WAS THROUGH FAITH.

PAUL WAS NOT DIVORCING THE BELIEVERS IN YESHUA FROM JUDAISM, BUT RATHER THE MAN-MADE SYSTEM SURROUNDING IT. PAUL THEN USED ISAIAH 54 AS THE FOUNDATION OF HIS ALLEGORY IN VERSE 27. THIS PROPHECY WAS ABOUT JERUSALEM, WHICH WAS DESCRIBED AS BEING BARREN BECAUSE HER CHILDREN HAD GONE INTO EXILE.

HOWEVER, ONE DAY THERE WOULD BE AN INGATHERING OF THE PEOPLE, A NUMBER FAR EXCEEDING WHAT SHE WOULD HAVE EXPECTED. IN THIS MILLENNIAL KINGDOM THERE WOULD BE BOTH JEWS AND GENTILES.
THE COMPARISON OF THE NEW JERUSALEM TO SARAH WAS IN KEEPING WITH TRADITIONAL JEWISH INTERPRETATION OF THE BARREN WOMAN WHO BECAME THE MOTHER OF A NATION. JUST AS ISAAC WAS PERSECUTED BY ISHMael, SO, TOO, WERE THE GALATIAN CHILDREN OF PROMISE PERSECUTED BY THE CHILDREN OF THE FLESH. PAUL WAS PRETTY HARSH STATEMENT ABOUT THE FALSE TEACHERS.

INSTEAD OF CALLING THEM, BRETHREN, AS PAUL HAD BEEN CALLING THE GALATIANS, HE IMPLIED THAT THE FALSE TEACHERS WOULD NOT INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE! IN SUMMARY, PAUL CONCLUDED HIS ALLEGORY BY SAYING THAT THE GALATIANS WERE THE CHILDREN OF THE FREE WOMAN AND NOT THE SLAVE WOMAN (VERSE 31).

THERE SIMPLY WAS NO NEED FOR THEM TO UNDERGO RITUAL CONVERSION AND BECOME JEWS AND BE SUBJECT TO THE JUDAIC SYSTEM. THEY WERE ALREADY SAVED AND HAD BECOME PART OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

ROMANS 8:5
FOR THOSE WHO LIVE ACCORDING TO THE FLESH SET THEIR MINDS ON THE THINGS OF THE FLESH, BUT THOSE WHO LIVE ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT, SET THEIR MINDS ON THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT.

THUS IF WE SHOULD BE SETTING OUR MINDS ON SPIRITUAL THINGS, AND THE LAW IS SPIRITUAL, WE SHOULD ALSO BE SETTING OUR MINDS ON THE LAW. THIS IS WHY PAUL HIMSELF SAYS THAT HE TRIES TO ACTIVELY OBEY GOD’S LAW WITH HIS MIND BECAUSE IT IS HIS MIND THAT CONTROLS HIS BODY AND IT IS PAUL’S DESIRE TO DEFEAT THE SIN-MANIPULATION TAKING PLACE IN HIS FLESH SO THAT BOTH HIS MIND AND BODY CAN SERVE GOD’S LAW.

THIS IS WHY IT SAYS ELSEWHERE THAT WE ARE TO LOVE THE LORD WITH ALL OUR HEART, STRENGTH, MIND, AND SOUL... EVERY PART OF US MUST OBEY GOD. WE KNOW THAT TRUE LOVE FOR GOD IS KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS (1 JOHN 5:3).