

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#04-1087 **Cast Out Judaism & the Present Jerusalem** August 9, 2010

**(18) And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before You!” (19) But God said, “No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. (20) “As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. (21) But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year.”** (Genesis 17:18-21 NASB)

Ishmael was the firstborn of Abram through Hagar, his bond wife (slave woman) who was a daughter of Pharaoh, given to him by his free wife (free woman) Sarai. Since they had no children but had the promise of one, Abram and Sarai figured that Hagar had to be the one to bring forth Abram's heir. So, Ishmael was born when Abram was 86 years of age; however, when he was 99, God corrected his error and told him that Sarai would bring forth the child of promise and changed their names to Abraham and Sarah. The next year Sarah gave birth to Isaac.

The name *Abraham* differs from the name *Abram* in that it contains the additional Hebrew letter *hey* (“H”), which signifies the breath (spirit) of God. This distinction is easy to gloss over, but it is prophetically quite significant. Abram is associated with *flesh*, and Abraham is associated with *Spirit*.

**Abram** was the father of **Ishmael**, born according to **flesh**; **Abraham** was the father of **Isaac**, born according to **Spirit**. Abram was given the promise of physical land (Genesis 15:18); Abraham was given the promise of a son. Abram signifies the **Old Covenant**, according to flesh; Abraham signifies the **New Covenant**, according to Spirit. Abram signifies the uncircumcised heart; Abraham signifies the circumcised heart. Abram went out looking for the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:1-4); Abraham went out **looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God** (Hebrews 11:10). Abram is associated with the earthly Jerusalem built by Shem; Abraham is associated with the heavenly Jerusalem built by the Lord. Abraham and all those who died in faith were looking for a better land (country, city), that is, a heavenly one, which is New Jerusalem, the celestial city of God, a holy temple in the Lord, a dwelling of God *in spirit* (Ephesians 2:21-22; Hebrews 12:22).

Now, regarding the legal heir of a son, Ishmael was second in line after Isaac, which led to conflict between Hagar and Sarah and later between Ishmael and Isaac, which has not ceased. When it reached a crisis point, God told Abraham to cast out Hagar and her son (Genesis 21:10). In his love for Ishmael, Abraham cried out to God, who heard and blessed his son. Hagar and Ishmael settled in Arabia, and Ishmael had 12 sons who became 12 princes or leaders of nations (Genesis 25:12-16). Today, the Arab nations trace their roots to Abram's son Ishmael. Some of these nations have been blessed with great wealth due to vast oil reserves. So, God did not forget the Ishmaelites according to flesh.

Now, in Galatians, Paul allegorized (symbolized) the casting out of Hagar and Ishmael.

**(22) For it has been written, Abraham had two sons, one [Ishmael] out of the slave woman and one [Isaac] out of the free woman. (23) But, indeed, he [Ishmael] of the slave woman has been born according to flesh, and he [Isaac] out of the free woman through the promise, (24) which things are being allegorized, for these are two covenants, one, indeed, from Mount Sinai bringing forth to slavery (which is Hagar, (25) for Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, and she slaves with her children), (26) but the Jerusalem from above is free, who is the mother of us all; ... (28) But, brothers, we are children of promise according to Isaac. (29) But then, even as he [Ishmael] born according to flesh persecuted the one [Isaac] according to Spirit, so it is also**

**now. (30) But what says the Scripture? “Cast out the slave woman and her son [Ishmael], for in no way shall the son [Ishmael] of the slave woman inherit with the son [Isaac] of the free woman.” Gen. 21:10 (31) Then, brothers, we are not children of a slave woman [Old Jerusalem] but of the free woman [New Jerusalem]. (Galatians 4:22-26, 28-31 LITV)**

Paul's allegory is a contrast of the Old Covenant with the New Covenant. Hagar, Ishmael, Mount Sinai, and the present Jerusalem are associated with the Old Covenant, flesh, and slavery (bondage). Sarah, Isaac, and Jerusalem from above [i.e., New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2, 10)] are associated with the New Covenant, Spirit, and freedom (liberty). The old represents Judaism, and the new represents Christianity. The two are like oil and water or dark and light; they cannot be mixed.

Paul was dealing with a very serious problem among the ecclesias of Galatia. There were Judaizers trying to bring Christians into Judaism, especially through physical circumcision. Paul, having advanced in Judaism beyond his contemporaries, even to the point of zealotry (Galatians 1:13-14), knew all the warning signs of Judaism. He knew how to discern the false brethren who sought to be justified according to the Old Covenant. These Judaizers were **apparent Jews**, for they were rejecting Christ and the New Covenant and trying to bring the brethren into their bondage (Galatians 2:4). The early ecclesia was in danger of reverting back to Judaism and desiring the earthly Jerusalem instead of pressing on toward New Jerusalem. The Lord made the first obsolete and caused it to disappear in 70 AD when He destroyed Jerusalem with His Roman army.

But, why did Paul allegorize Hagar the slave woman as Mount Sinai? God gave Arabia to Ishmael and his descendants (Ishmaelites), and Mount Sinai is in Arabia, which is where God also gave Moses and the sons of Israel the commandments. As a nation, they entered into a covenant with the Lord (Exodus 19:5) that dated back to Abram and the promise of the land (Exodus 2:24; 6:4-5). This covenant was according to flesh; however, it could have become more than this if the Israelites had been willing to listen to the Lord speak from the mount. The Spirit of the living God would have written the Law on tablets of circumcised hearts, and not on tablets of stone. Instead, they received the letter that kills, not the Spirit that gives life (Deuteronomy 30:6; 2 Corinthians 3:3, 6). They remained slaves to flesh.

In Paul's day, the present Jerusalem was the symbol and bastion of Judaism and the Old Covenant. By linking the city to Hagar and Mount Sinai, Paul placed the earthly Jerusalem in bondage, according to flesh, just as Hagar and Ishmael had been in bondage, according to flesh.

Undoubtedly, Ishmael thought he had a legal right to the land of promise. Due to their rejection of Christ, the apparent Jews became and still are **legal Ishmaelites**, for they too desire the same land, along with the present Jerusalem, which today is a modern city. They joined hearts with Ishmael and aligned themselves with the promises given to Abram and not the better promises given to Abraham. In other words, they became sons of Hagar, the slave woman, not sons of Sarah, the free woman. They are the **bad figs of the cursed fig tree of Judah**. Further, they remained with the externality of Judaism and the external influence of the Spirit of God, just as the ancient sons of Israel followed the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire rather than coming into the spirituality of Christianity and the internal influence of an earnest of the Spirit of God. The two conditions are worlds apart.

Further, just as Ishmael persecuted Isaac, so did the apparent Jews or the bad figs of Judah persecute the early ecclesia (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16). Paul knew what he was talking about, for when he was known as Saul, he too persecuted the ecclesia (Acts 8:1-3; 1 Timothy 1:13). When his eyes were opened to the truth and the promises in Christ and the New Covenant, his name changed from Saul to Paul.

What are we to do? **Cast out the slave woman and her son!** Don't be enslaved to flesh. Cast out the old. **Cast out Judaism and the present Jerusalem.** They must be cast out fully; have no part in either of them. **Embrace the free woman and her Son.** Be free in Spirit. Embrace the new. **Embrace Christianity and New Jerusalem.** The Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother.

Paul never encouraged the saints to look to the earthly, old Jerusalem, then or future. At the end of our present wicked eon, God will bring His judgment upon the city where the Lord was crucified (Revelation 11:8) and the apparent Jews bound to the city, the ones who are antichrist. Let us desire the better promise of New Jerusalem, which speaks of a dwelling out of heaven, that is, immortal, spiritual, glorified bodies joined together in the image of the Son of God. It is coming!