

# Covenant Lineage Allegorically Prefigured: “Which Things Are Written Allegorically” (Galatians 4:21–31)

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## INTRODUCTION

**A**MONG PAUL’S USES of the Old Testament, perhaps most complex, baffling, and elusive

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are his uses of Genesis and of Isaiah in Gal 4:21–31, with the claim, “these things are ἀλληγορούμενα.”<sup>1</sup> What warrants his appeal to *allegory*? What in the Old Testament authorizes the apostle’s dual assertions: (1) “Now you, brothers, in keeping with Isaac, are children of promise” (4:28), and (2) “But what does the Scripture say? ‘Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not receive an inheritance with the son of the free woman’” (4:30). The conundrum is ancient as Antiochene commentaries indicate.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, the

Reformers puzzle over Paul’s appeal to allegory,

viewing it as out of character with his uses of the Old Testament.<sup>3</sup>

Contemporary exegetes tend to reflect the assessment of their Antiochene forebears that Paul really had in mind typology or perhaps a restrained allegory that fades into typology.<sup>4</sup> Because scholars describe Paul’s statement, “these things are ἀλληγορούμενα,” as indicating that he engages either *typological* or *allegorical interpretation*,<sup>5</sup> they tend to locate the origin of *the allegory* within Paul’s interpretive skillfulness rather than within the Genesis narrative itself.<sup>6</sup>

Contemporary discussions concerning Paul’s use of ἀλληγορούμενα exclude the third and middle option from purview. Exegetes fixate on two alternatives. They reason that Paul either (1) engages in *typological/allegorical interpretation*—the Genesis story is *historical* and he assigns symbolic spiritual representations to elements of the narrative, or he (2) reads the story as *an allegory*—the story is an

*ahistorical account* from which Paul draws symbolic spiritual aspects that contribute to his argument.<sup>7</sup> Like the Antiochenes, exegetes reject the latter but also shortsightedly favor the former giving the impression, if not advocating, that Paul's argument in Gal 4:21-31 hangs upon his innovative and creative reading of the Genesis narrative rather than upon an allegory written within the Old Testament text by which the historical persons and events narrated bear symbolic significances pointing beyond themselves.<sup>8</sup> The crucial question is that which exegetes do not adequately address. What, within the Genesis narrative, warrants Paul's argument? Thus, the neglected third, or middle, option, which constitutes the concern of this essay, is that *Paul reads Scripture's story of Abraham as historical narrative invested with symbolic representations embedded within the characters and the two contrasting births of two sons—one by natural order, the other by divine promise. Hence, the Genesis text itself, not Paul's interpretation of the text, is allegorical while simultaneously upholding the historical authenticity of those characters and events.*

Contemporary exegesis of Gal 4:21-31 generally accepts the historicity of the Abraham narrative and upholds biblical authority to the degree that it regards Paul to be authoring Scripture with his letter to the Galatians. Nonetheless, the fact that exegetes generally seem to bypass inquiry into what warrants Paul's use of the Genesis narrative prompts at least two questions. First, why does Paul feature Scripture as the ground of his argument, unless he believes the Abraham narrative itself, as written, entails allegory? Second, unless allegorical features are embedded within the Old Testament narrative itself and were there to be recognized all along to authorize Paul's use of the story, then what warrants his argument in Gal 4:21-31 other than "privileged apostolic insight" or interpretive adroitness to spin an allegory to controvert his opponents and to convince his converts to remain loyal to his gospel? If the allegory is not present in the Genesis narrative as written, how can the apostle avoid justified accusations of exploiting interpretive sleight

of hand? How does Paul not leave his converts in a fideistic lurch, looking to his interpretive dexterity rather than to Scripture to authorize them (1) to cast out the Sinai covenant and its descendants, the Judaizers and those who embrace their "other gospel," and (2) to warrant his affirmation that Gentile believers are children of promise?<sup>9</sup>

Where, in all his disputations, does the apostle Paul assert raw apostolic authority instead of appeal to Scripture as authorization upon which his converts and readers should hang their trust and receive his gospel as true? This is emphatically so in his letter to the Galatians, among whom his apostleship is under assault and dispute. Luke describes Paul as *reasoning with his hearers from Scripture* (Acts 17:2). He grounded his disputations and preaching of the good news of Christ with appeals to the Scriptures so that his hearers could trace out his proclamations as they "examined the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so" (Acts 17:11). Is this not the kind of faith Paul seeks to elicit, a faith authorized by Scripture, not a faith warranted by rhetorical human cleverness that can spin an impressive but contrived allegory (cf. 1 Cor 2:1-4)?

#### **REVELATION OLD AND NEW: MYSTERY IN GALATIANS**

The above sequence of questions calls for the need to identify Paul's Old Testament warrants for using the Genesis narrative concerning Abraham under the rubric of *allegory*. Contemporary exegetes tend to fixate upon Paul's interpretive insight as distinctive, even unique to the extent that some add a kind of disclaimer, which others should not attempt to reproduce Paul's *allegorical interpretation*.<sup>10</sup> This derives in part from efforts to account for and to safeguard, as unique, the revelatory insight Paul received through his Damascus road Christophany which he describes as "the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:12ff).<sup>11</sup> Such stress upon Paul's apocalyptic and revelatory insight into the gospel at the expense of another essential strand in the fabric of his gospel dominates and inclines negligence concerning the apostle's scriptural warrants.<sup>12</sup>

**THE THEOPHANIC REVELATION OF JESUS  
CHRIST AUTHORIZES PAUL'S APPEAL TO  
ALLEGORY**

The fact that Paul conceives of his gospel as simultaneously (1) promised long ago, even “preached beforehand to Abraham” (3:8), with the promise now being fulfilled (3:16), and (2) concealed for long ages past but now revealed (1:12ff; 3:23ff; cf. Rom 16:25-27), requires one to locate the apostle’s warrants for his use of the Abraham narrative in two locations. These locations are: (1) *within his revelatory insight* imparted through his Christophany on the Damascus road, but also (2) *within the Old Testament text itself* wherein the very act of revealing the gospel in advance entailed concealing of the gospel for full disclosure in “the fullness of time” (cf. Gal 4:4). This calls for even-handed attention to the warp and woof in the fabric of Paul’s gospel without which the gospel’s full grand array and glory is diminished.

The Old Testament’s *promise and fulfillment* axis, entwined with *revelatory veiling or concealing*, forms the warp of Paul’s gospel, while Christ’s advent and his theophanic revelation to the Pharisee Saul, bringing fulfillment by *revealing what had been concealed*, forms the woof of the apostle’s message. That the gospel was promised long ago and is now fulfilled with Christ’s coming, and that the gospel, at the same time that it was promised in ages past, was also veiled or concealed and finally revealed only now with the coming of Messiah is, as various other scholars agree, a revelation schema evident not only in Paul’s letters where he employs the noun *μυστήριον* but also present within his letter to the Galatians where the word is absent.<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps Jesus’ epiphany along another road, the road to Emmaus, is instructive concerning Paul’s Damascus road Christophany. The narrative of Luke 24:13-35 dramatizes the biblical concept of *mystery*. First, it entails Jesus’ act of revealing the Scriptures concerning the Christ accompanied by the act of concealing his identity in plain sight by keeping their eyes from recognizing him, yet they are fully culpable for their blindness, for Jesus

rebukes them failing to believe all that the prophets have spoken concerning Christ, both that he should suffer and enter into his glory (Luke 24:25-26). This is followed by Jesus’ blessing and breaking of bread, an act that purposefully recalls the same act during the last supper (22:19), an act that reveals Christ’s identity concealed from the two disciples in plain sight, by opening their eyes to recognize him as the Christ revealed in Scripture. What had been concealed in plain sight, both objectively in Scripture (24:25-27) and subjectively within their sight (24:16), was now revealed plainly to the two disciples (24:31) who exclaim to one another, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was speaking to us on the road, as he explained the Scriptures to us?” (24:32).

This account entails *concealing* and *revealing* in two distinguishable spheres or realms. These two acts and the two dimensions are both crucial for understanding the biblical concept of mystery as Paul portrays it. Both the concealing and revealing entail two spheres: *objective* (knowledge veiled while simultaneously made known) and *subjective* (knowledge restrained from apprehension, yet with culpability, but later bestowed with understanding). So, both Christ’s coming to fulfill Scripture, and his opening of eyes, thus giving faith that brings understanding, are *revelatory*. The former revelatory act constitutes the good news; the latter, the good news received through belief.

Fresh revelation brings clarity to former revelation that comes with a veil. Veiled former revelation becomes lucid as the climactic finale to the storyline clarifies the dramatic development and escalation of the story’s whole plotline. *Mystery*, biblically conceived, is akin to how a mystery novel is written to be read, proceeding from beginning to end. As one traces the storyline’s development and progression, the story builds toward its dramatic climax at which point the mystery is finally revealed. Embedded within characters, events, settings, and plotted conflict throughout the storyline of a mystery novel are hints, foreshadows, prefigurements, and harbingers written in such a manner

as to incite expectation of full and final resolution eventually to be revealed with surprises that invite deep reflection.

So it is with Scripture. As the story unfolds, hope that the promised Seed who will bring salvation awaits the time which is not yet come. Concurrent with this escalating hope, one finds woven into the storyline characters, events, settings, and plotted conflict, all posing as puzzling enigmas, riddles, prefigurements, and conundrums that tantalize and add to anticipation that builds toward the plotline's climax so that when the time is fulfilled and the mystery finally reaches its climactic point of revelation, with its multifaceted culmination, as with the two disciples Jesus met along the Emmaus road, readers smack their foreheads with their palms and exclaim, "But, of course! There it was all along. It was right before my very eyes from the beginning. How could I have missed it? How could I not have seen it until it was made obvious to me?"

What is now revealed is what was always there in plain sight to be seen for all who have eyes. Such is the way the Old Testament was written. Such is the way Scripture bears witness to Christ Jesus. Such is the way Jesus reveals his kingdom (cf. Mark 4:10ff). Such is what dawns upon Paul by way of his encounter with the resurrected Christ on the road to Damascus. Thus, Paul writes, "Now to him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery concealed for long ages, but is now disclosed through the prophetic scriptures, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known for the obedience of faith unto all the Gentiles—to the only wise God through Jesus Christ, to him be glory forever" (Rom 16:25-27). The same Scriptures that concealed the mystery for long ages are the media through which the mystery is now revealed. Thus, the enigmatic and concealing features within Scripture's storyline, no less than the straightforward promises and predictions, are integral to the gospel's fulfillment and revelation, even though recognized most fully only from the vantage point of fulfillment.<sup>14</sup>

#### **THE LAW, AS OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE, AUTHORIZES PAUL'S APPEAL TO ALLEGORY**

Translators and exegetes tend to take Paul's statement, ἅτινά ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα, as "these things are *interpreted* allegorically."<sup>15</sup> Acceptance of this translation tends to locate authorization of Paul's use of the Genesis story in the apostle's interpretive method, implying that the allegory is not located in the Old Testament itself. As a corrective, this essay proposes a more careful identification of Paul's warrants for his use of the Abraham story in Genesis because Paul's fourfold explicit reference to Scripture, including his introductory formula, "for it is written that Abraham had two sons" (4:22), requires that ἅτινά ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα be understood in the sense, "these things are written allegorically."<sup>16</sup> Consequently, the Old Testament text itself authorizes Paul, who has seen Christ Jesus to whom the Scriptures bear witness, to say, "These women are two covenants."<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Paul's reception of the gospel, not through any human agency but by the "revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:11ff), reveals to him the mystery that had previously remained concealed from him, namely "God's Son" (1:16). This also entails the revelation of ἡ πίστις (3:23), which Paul presents as *objectified*, a substitute for the revelation of Abraham's Seed, the crucified and risen Jesus Christ.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the fact that no fewer than four explicit appeals to the Old Testament Scriptures enclose Paul's use of the present passive participle in the statement, ἅτινά ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα, most exegetes reason that unlike his ordinary reading of Scripture, in this case Paul interprets the Abraham narrative by assigning allegorical or symbolic representation (not written into the original text) to its personages and events above and beyond their originally designed *prima facie* function.<sup>19</sup> Yet, scholars want to distinguish Paul's appeal to allegory from Philo's and that of the later Alexandrian school while accepting the Antiochene notion that if the Genesis narrative itself entails allegory then it is not historical.<sup>20</sup> Some concede that "allegorical interpretation" enters in so that "Gal. 4:21-31 is a

highly allegorical representation of Old Testament history” with Paul appealing to “hidden and symbolic meanings in the words,” reflecting a general Jewish background.<sup>21</sup> Most reflect the influence of a school of thought that largely dominates, looking to interpretive practices within Second Temple Jewish literature to account for Paul’s uses of the Old Testament. This leads many to scour the literature, especially rabbinic literature, to explain that Paul’s uses of the Old Testament are hardly distinguishable from the Jewish rabbis’ appropriation techniques.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, ignored is the need to locate the Old Testament textual *warrants* for Paul’s appeal to allegory in the Genesis text because leading exegetes contend that, on passages such as Galatians 4:21-31, believers should be content with accepting and reproducing the apostle’s *conclusions* without being able to trace or to reproduce the apostle’s *exegetical procedures* as normative for Christians to follow.<sup>23</sup> D. A. Carson correctly objects.

Even if one distinguishes between appropriation techniques and hermeneutical assumptions, something crucial seems to be missing: appealing to hermeneutical assumptions to explain the difference in the exegetical results of Paul the Pharisee and the exegetical results of Paul the apostle is in danger of saying no more than that now that Paul is a Christian, inevitably he finds Christian themes in the Old Testament that he did not find there before. At one level, of course, that is true, and Paul would admit it: it was his conversion on the Damascus road that enabled him to see many things in a new perspective.<sup>24</sup>

Is it not unreasonable to think that Paul expects to convince his converts by grounding his argument in Gal 4:21-31 in nothing more than his adeptness to spin an impressive allegory from the Genesis narrative on the authority of a Christophany, his reception of “the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:12ff)? Is it not necessary to inquire how Paul’s use of Scripture methodologically differs from that

of his Jewish opponents who trouble the Galatians so that he proves his opponents wrong and convinces his converts? How does Paul justify his finding an allegory *in the Old Testament text itself* and do so with the expectation that his readers will track with him?

Belief that Paul devised the allegory and assigned symbolic representations to features in the Abraham narrative that were neither in the historic personages and events nor in the writing of the Old Testament narrative seems to dominate exegetical essays and commentaries concerning Galatians 4:21-31.<sup>25</sup> These approaches are less than satisfying for at least two reasons.

First, Paul appeals to Scripture with expectations that his readers will be able to recognize in the Genesis narrative the allegory that he claims is actually there. In 4:21-31 he brackets his appeal to the Genesis allegory by pressing his singular lead question, “Do you not hear the Law?” (4:21) with his reprise, “But what does the Scripture say?” (4:30). Do not these questions together constrain Paul’s readers to refuse to accept his conclusions as warranted apart from being able to trace, to embrace, and to reproduce his exegetical reasoning and argument as integral to, normative for, and eliciting Christian faith? Otherwise, how can Gentile believers be convinced that Scripture, not nimble manipulation of Scripture, legitimately leads to Paul’s conclusion, “So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman?”

Second, as Steven DiMattei demonstrates, examination of ancient sources shows that the predominant use of the verb ἀλληγορέω among ancient authors is with the sense “to *speak* allegorically,” in which case it is usually the original author or the personified text itself which speaks allegorically.<sup>26</sup> Tryphon (ca. 60-10 B.C.), a Greek grammarian from Alexandria, provides examples of fourteen kinds of tropes among which is ἀλληγορία which he describes as “an enunciation which while signifying one thing literally, brings forth the thought of something else.”<sup>27</sup> Likewise, Pseudo-Heraclitus writes, “The trope that says one thing but signi-

fies something other than what is said is called by the name *allegoria*.<sup>28</sup> So Paul's appeal to Scripture which, though portraying one thing—the birthing of two sons to Abraham from two different women—signifies something else—spiritual lineage from two distinct and different covenants—entails the trope, allegory, when he writes, “These things are *written allegorically*.” The focus of Paul's appeal to Scripture, lineage or origin of birth, signaled by the genitives following the preposition *ek* (ἐκ)—one *from* the slave woman and one *from* the free woman (ἕνα ἐκ τῆς παιδίσκης καὶ ἕνα ἐκ τῆς ἐλευθέρως), prepares for his explicit uncommon metaphor: “These women are two covenants” (4:24).<sup>29</sup>

The first of these two observations deserves fuller consideration. The notion that Paul assigns allegorical significance to the elements of the Genesis narrative does not adequately account for the apostle's fourfold appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures to authorize his claim, ἅτινά ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα (4:24), where the participle is a plural substantive standing in the predicate following the plural subject, ἅτινα, which refers to Abraham, his two sons, the two women, and the two ways of birthing the sons. Given his repeated explicit appeals to the Old Testament Scriptures and his express declaration, ἅτινά ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα, it is difficult to understand Paul's claim to mean anything other than *these things are written allegorically*, indicating that the Genesis narrative itself, which is historical in character, was written so that the personages and events portrayed, symbolically represent things beyond themselves.<sup>30</sup> Ponder the care with which Paul places his use of ἅτινά ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα within no fewer than four explicit appeals to the Old Testament Scriptures, two bracketing on either side.<sup>31</sup>

If the Galatians want to be subject to the law, then they should give proper attention to hear what the Law actually says. So, Paul structures the whole paragraph in 4:21-31 around one command from the Law that the Galatians who are tempted to heed the Judaizers' “other gospel” need to obey—Cast

*out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not receive an inheritance with the son of the free woman* (4:30).<sup>32</sup>

Paul begins his four explicit appeals to Scripture by asking, “Speak to me, you who crave to be under the law, do you not hear the Law?” (v. 21). Paul's question seems purposely a play on the meaning of *the Law*.<sup>33</sup> While Paul's dispute with his opponents concerning who constitutes the children of Abraham entails God's restricted jurisdiction given to *the law as covenant*, the apostle questions the Galatians whether they are actually listening to *the Law*.<sup>34</sup> Thus, with this pun on *the Law*, requiring readers to distinguish the Law of Moses *as Scripture* which contains the Law of Moses *as covenant*, Paul makes his first express appeal to Scripture, the Pentateuch (cf. Rom 3:21; Luke 24:44).

Following this lead interrogative he offers an affirmative appeal to the Old Testament to authorize his reasoning concerning the gospel, *for it is written* (γέγραπται γάρ, Gal 4:22). This introductory formula ordinarily prefaces a direct quotation from the Old Testament (as in 3:10, 13; 4:27). However, here it introduces Paul's summation of the Genesis narrative concerning strikingly different births of two sons to Abraham, one born *according to the flesh* (κατὰ σάρκα) and the other *through promise* (δι' ἐπαγγελίας), from two starkly different women, one a *slave* and the other *free*.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the common introductory formula of 4:22—*for it is written* (γέγραπται γάρ)—governs the present passive participle, ἀλληγορούμενα (4:24), giving it the natural sense, *these things are written allegorically*.

Paul repeats his common introductory formula again to authorize his argument in 4:27—*for it is written*—to preface his direct quotation of Isaiah 54:1, which because it puzzles exegetes, often receives little comment, if any.<sup>36</sup> Paul's fourth authoritative appeal to Scripture, when he repeats the question with which he begins the paragraph with the pun on *the law* confirms taking ἅτινά ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα as *these things are written allegorically*. As he begins by interrogating, “Do you

not hear the Law [i.e., Scripture]?” (4:21), so in 4:30 he enforces his initial appeal with a reprise, a kind of inclusio, that presses the first question again, “But what does the Scripture say?”

**A CHIASTIC & BRACKETING  
ARRANGEMENT OF CITATION  
FORMULAS**

Verses	Chiasm	Scripture Citation Formula
4:21	A	<b>Do you not hear the Law?</b>
4:22	B	For it is written
4:24	C	These things are written allegorically
4:27	B'	For it is written
4:30	A'	<b>But what does the Scripture say?</b>

Between his initial (A) and reprising (A') interrogatives, forming a bracket, Paul twice affirms, “for it is written” (B, B') and these authoritative appeals to Scripture enclose the assertion (C), “These things are written allegorically.” Paul, in other words, does not relent. The Scriptures—Genesis and Isaiah—authorize his dual concluding appeal to the Galatians: (1) to cast out the Sinai covenant and its descendants, the Judaizers and those who preach “another gospel,” and (2) to affirm that Gentile believers are children of promise. If Paul expects the Galatians to obey the Law’s command (“Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not receive an inheritance with the son of the free woman.”), then he also obliges them to trace his reasoning and recognize that Scripture warrants his appeal for the Galatians to obey this command from the Law. This means that the apostle expects the Galatians and contemporary exegetes to recognize allegory within Genesis itself, authorizing his use of the Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar narrative in 4:21-31.

**THE ABRAHAM NARRATIVE AND  
PAUL’S ARGUMENT**

Debate continues whether Galatians 4:21-31 is more directly related to what precedes (2:11-4:20) or to what follows (5:2-6:10) and what function the

passage has in that relationship. The prevailing view has been that 4:21-31 constitutes the last in a series of arguments that support Paul’s thesis in 2:15-21.<sup>37</sup> More recently Longenecker proposed that 4:12 begins what he describes as a “deliberative” rhetorical section concluding at 6:10, following the “forensic” rhetorical portion of 1:6-4:11.<sup>38</sup> Keeping in mind that Longenecker regards 4:21-31 as an *ad*

*hominem* or emotional argument (note 19 above), it is understandable that he regards the passage “as part of his appeals and exhortations headed by the imperative ‘become like me!’ of 4:12.”<sup>39</sup> Despite arguments to the contrary, no alternative view has received wide acceptance among scholars to replace the traditional view that 4:21-5:1 is the final segment of Paul’s argument that begins in 3:1.<sup>40</sup>

**GALATIANS 4:21-5:1: CLIMAX OF  
THE ABRAHAM NARRATIVE IN PAUL’S  
RHETORICAL ARGUMENT**

Given the prominence of the Abraham narrative throughout Paul’s argument, in 3:1-5:1, it hardly seems plausible that 4:21-5:1 is an “afterthought”<sup>41</sup> but that Paul’s citation of the Law’s command—“Cast out the slave woman and her son!”—is the fitting climax of the entire segment (3:1-5:1).<sup>42</sup> Hays observes, “It is a stunning rhetorical moment. Paul has saved his ace, his most dramatic argument for the end. If the Galatians have followed Paul’s exposition of the allegory, they will not miss the import of this command: Scripture is speaking directly to them, telling them to throw out the rival Missionaries and their converts.”<sup>43</sup> It seems that Hays and others correctly read 4:21-5:1 as the rhetorical climax of Paul’s foregoing argument rather than as the beginning of what follows.

As already noted, use of the Abraham narrative of Genesis enters much earlier in Paul's argument than in 4:21-31.<sup>44</sup> Appeals to the narrative reflect historical progression in the Abraham story, from reception of promise to the birth of two sons. This correlates with Paul's insistence that close attention to the storyline within the Books of Moses is indispensable for correctly recognizing that because the promise to Abraham antedates the giving of the law (3:17); the law covenant, rather than modifying the promise, is eclipsed by it (3:18ff).<sup>45</sup>

So, early in Galatians 3 Paul appeals to Genesis 12 and 15 "as the locus of the definitive statement of, and scriptural proof for"<sup>46</sup> linking the Galatians' reception of the Spirit with Abraham's being declared righteous (*καθώς*, *just as*, Gal 3:5-6). This deserves closer attention to be provided below. Likewise, Paul features Genesis 12, 15, and 22 in his argument of Gal 3:16, when he asserts, "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed . . . who is Christ."<sup>47</sup> Paul's appeal to the Abraham narrative reaches its apex in 4:21-31 as he inquires "Speak to me, you who crave to be under the law, do you not hear the Law?" and asserts that Abraham's two sons, their mothers, and the ways they gave birth to the sons are written allegorically.

The Galatians need a brisk refresher concerning the significance of their reception of the Spirit. Strong as are both (1) Paul's indictment, "O, foolish Galatians!", and (2) his question, "Who has bewitched you?", the important thing is, as Stephen Fowl observes, "that Paul is the one who both establishes the hermeneutical priority of the Galatians' experience of the Spirit and interprets this experience as a sign of participation in the blessing promised to Abraham."<sup>48</sup> That Paul is willing to suspend his entire case against the Judaizers upon one question must not be missed. His singular question would be to no avail but would be counterproductive, if reception of the Spirit, including miracles and signs, accompanied the Judaizers' preaching.

Paul inquires, "I want to learn from you only this: Did you receive the Spirit *from the deeds required by the law* or *from the hearing of faith*?"<sup>49</sup>

Whatever may be the precise nuances of the two contrasting expressions beginning with *from* (ἐκ), that they refer to the Mosaic Law covenant and the gospel (promise), respectively, is sufficient for present concerns.<sup>50</sup> Paul's initial appeal to the Galatians, while interested with sequence—whether they received the Spirit (1) from his proclamation of the gospel among them, or (2) from the Judaizers' later attempts to impose the law upon them—also concerns the effects and consequences of receiving the Spirit (cf. 3:3-5). This is made obvious when Paul not only reiterates the question but also links the Galatians' reception of the Spirit with Abraham's reception of justification. For Paul, "possession of the Spirit seals the actuality of righteousness," for the status of divine sonship is confirmed in the believer's heart by the Spirit's cry, "Abba! Father!" (4:6).<sup>51</sup>

The poignancy of the apostle's questions seems more fully expressed in what he writes to the Corinthians:

Now we received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit that is from God, in order that we might understand the things freely given to us by God. And we are speaking these things not in words taught by human wisdom but words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual things to those who are spiritual. But the natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor 2:12-14).

The priority of the Spirit in Paul's argument essentially raises the question whether (1) having the Spirit brings light and understanding to Scripture, or (2) having the Scriptures brings the Spirit (cf. John 5:39).<sup>52</sup> The priority of receiving the Spirit does not induce Paul either to dismiss Scripture's pertinence, or to impose his own interpretations upon the biblical text. Instead, Paul beckons the Galatians to acknowledge that their reception of the Spirit entails removal of the veil from their eyes



(cf. 2 Cor 3:16), providing the aperture through which the disparate and diverse disclosures of the Old Testament come into proper focus in the person of the resurrected Christ. In other words, Paul reasonably expects the Galatians to trace his argument through to his conclusions, climaxing in the allegory from Genesis.<sup>53</sup>

Paul underscores correlation between the Galatians and Abraham in at least two notable ways. First, Paul correlates the Galatians' reception of the Spirit with Abraham's being declared righteous (*καθώς*, *just as*, Gal 3:5-6). Second, he stresses that the gospel was proclaimed to both, even using compound verbs with the pro- prefix to aid the associations.<sup>54</sup> Of the Galatians he writes, "O foolish Galatians! Who bewitched you, before whose eyes *Jesus Christ crucified was publicly placarded?*" (3:1). Concerning Abraham he says, "The Scriptures foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles *ἐκ πίστεως*, *preaching the gospel in advance* to Abraham, 'In you all the nations will be blessed' (3:8).<sup>55</sup> Paul confirms the correlation between the Galatians and Abraham by writing in 3:9, "So then, those who are *ἐκ πίστεως* are blessed with faithful Abraham," which he validates by conflating Gen 12:3; 18:18; and 22:18.<sup>56</sup>

Yet there is more, for the query concerning reception of the Spirit correlates the Galatians not only with Abraham's being declared righteous (3:5-6) but also with Paul, for their reception of the Spirit is not unlike his reception of the gospel "through revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:11-12) in so far as the veil lifted from his and their eyes. As Beverly Gaventa has shown, Paul's conversion is paradigmatic "as an example of the gospel's singular and exclusive power to overthrow human conventions, commitments, and values and to replace those with 'the faith of Jesus Christ' (2:16)."<sup>57</sup> Thus, Paul draws upon his experience of the gospel's power to exhort the Galatians. Yet, as Stockhausen insightfully observes, Paul's letter to the Galatians reflects a "constitutive presence of Abraham's story" so that, even though Paul does not cite the Genesis narrative in Galatians 1 and 2, "the story of

Abraham is a remarkable parallel at its earliest point to Paul's own story and to the pattern which the Galatians have followed and to which Paul writes to exhort them to remain constant."<sup>58</sup> Thus, Stockhausen suggests that portions of Paul's letter to the Galatians not ordinarily read as governed by his scriptural argument, for example 4:12-20, invite reconsideration. Is it plausible, then, that Paul's statement, "you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus," reflects "the ambiguity of Gen. 18.2, 9-10, 13 and so on between the angelic figures and the Lord alone"?<sup>59</sup>

For example, correlations between the Galatians and Abraham appear natural in Galatians 4:8ff. For the Galatians were Gentiles formerly enslaved to those things that by nature are not gods, not unlike Abraham before the Lord called him. Likewise, Paul characterizes the call of the Galatians like the call of Abraham when he writes, "But now that you have come to know God, or rather, to be known by God, how are you turning back again toward the weak and worthless rudiments whose slaves you desire to become again?" (4:9). Paul's grammatical adjustment to the passive voice mid-sentence underscores that their call originates in divine initiative—"known by God"—just as Abraham's call (Gen 12:1).<sup>60</sup>

If Stockhausen's suggestion is correct that Paul's pattern throughout his letter to Galatians correlates with the Abraham narrative, given Paul's imagery in Gal 4:19—"My children, for whom I am again overcome with the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you"—what if the apostle's maternally voiced endearment and distress over his spiritual children reflects correlation with the protracted time of anticipation Abraham and Sarah awaited the promised son, during which time the son of the slave woman was conceived and born?<sup>61</sup> The question has merit, for Paul's prior argument that Christ (1) is the Seed to whom the promises were spoken (3:16) and (2) is God's Son who was born of a woman under the law in the fullness of time prepares for Paul's arresting claim that he is in the throes and travail of birth pangs concerning his

children for whom he labors (cf. 4:11) that they might be the seed of Abraham.<sup>62</sup> This imagery of the apostle's travailing to give birth distinctly correlates to and anticipates the barren woman who is *not* in labor pains but who will have more children than the woman who has a husband.<sup>63</sup> Is it too much to suppose that the apostle is implying that his apostolic call catches him up into eschatological identity with Sarah, the barren woman, as he travails in birth pains in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy concerning the desolate woman?<sup>64</sup>

The birth Paul awaits is *through promise*, not *according to the flesh* (cf. 4:23). This birth is of God, not of his own doing. Accordingly, in preparation for his allegory from Genesis (4:21-31), Paul gives his metaphor an unexpected turn. What the maternal imagery evokes is wholly inadequate to give full expression to the richness of his apostolic and pastoral endearment for and travail over his spiritual children. This is so because, even though he labors for his converts, that which he desires to be formed is not within himself.<sup>65</sup> In fact, not even his children are to be formed. On the contrary, the birth for which Paul endures labor pains is the divine birth of *Christ's becoming incarnate within the Galatians*.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, Paul writes, "My children, for whom I am again overcome with the pains of childbirth *until Christ is formed in you*." This is how the promise spoken to Abraham—"In you all the nations shall be blessed" (3:8)—now realizes fulfillment. As God's Son became incarnate through the woman who bore him, so Paul is in anguish until Christ, the promised Seed, is formed within the Galatians (ἐν ὑμῖν) through the agency of his ministry.<sup>67</sup>

How fitting it is, then, that following this rich imagery Paul offers his final appeal to the Galatians with the allegory from the Genesis narrative concerning Abraham. He does so to clinch his argument with the dual conclusion that the Galatians should: (1) banish the Sinai covenant and its adherents from their midst, and (2) be firmly convinced of their birth as children of the free woman, not of the slave woman (4:21-31).

#### **THE USE OF SCRIPTURE IN GALATIANS 4:21-5:1 WITHIN PAUL'S RHETORICAL ARGUMENT**

At last, the dominant questions that generated and have guided this essay emerge to be answered directly. Much has been stated already concerning warrants located within the latter day revelation of the mystery to Paul through the theophanic appearance of Christ on the road to Damascus. What remains is to locate warrants within the Abraham narrative in Genesis for Paul's claim that "these things were written allegorically" and to understand what authorizes his use of Isa 54:1.

Paul's climactic paragraph consists of three segments. First, the apostle summarizes featured elements of the Abraham narrative. "Speak to me, you who crave to be under the law, do you not hear the Law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one from the slave woman and one from the free woman. But the son from the slave woman was born according to the flesh, and the free son was born through promise." Second, Paul explains those things he cites from Scripture. He announces, "These things are written allegorically, for these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, who is Hagar, giving birth into slavery. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and represents the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, who is our mother." Then Paul provides supporting scriptural explanation by quoting Isa 54:1, "Rejoice, barren woman who bears no children; burst out with son and cry aloud, you who are not in labor pains! For more are the children of the forsaken woman than those of the woman who has the husband." Third, the apostle applies the allegory as he presses its significance upon the Galatians:

Now you, brothers, in accord with Isaac are children of promise. But just as at that time the one born according to the flesh persecuted the one born according to the Spirit, so also now. But what does the Scripture say? Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not receive an inheritance with the son of the free

woman. Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman but of the free woman. For unto freedom Christ set us free; stand firm then and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Paul frames his interrogative—“Speak to me, you who crave to be under the law, do you not hear the Law?” (v. 21)—with negative connotations and sarcasm entailing references to both time and status. His expression, to be *under the law* (ὑπὸ νόμου) occurs three previous times in the letter (3:23; 4:4, 5). These uses show that wanting to be *under the law* is to desire regression to *childhood*; to the era before *the fullness of time*; to the status of nonage, of slavery, of being confined under the law’s custody; to dwell under the law’s curse, a grave and undesirable condition from which one needs redemption that only Christ provides. Thus, to desire to be *under the law* is tantamount to repudiating God’s Son who was born *under the law* for the very purpose that he might become a curse to redeem those who were *under the law* (3:13), that they might receive adoption as sons (4:5), a point Paul later underscores (5:4).

As shown earlier, the apostle’s lead question points the Galatians to his climactic question, “What does the Scripture say?” (4:30). If the Galatians actually hear what the Law commands, they will act upon its command: “Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not receive an inheritance with the son of the free woman.” True as it is that Paul’s citation of Scripture to warrant this conclusion is evident, appealing to the Abraham narrative of Genesis and to Isa 54:1 as he does, what warrants Paul’s use of these portions of Scripture? What justifies his claim that the Genesis narrative entails allegory?

As one begins to search for answers to these questions, given Paul’s use of Isa 54:1, it becomes apparent that Paul does not originate the allegory. Furthermore, that Genesis, not Isaiah, establishes the Sarah-Hagar allegory is evident because Paul writes, “for it is written that Abraham had two sons” (4:22), which the apostle claims is “written

allegorically.”

It may be instructive to observe that for Paul, use of Sarah from Isa 54:1 is not unlike use of Melchizedek from Ps 110:4 is for the writer of Hebrews. As David, in Ps 110:4, does not originate the Melchizedek typology, so Isaiah does not create the Sarah-Hagar allegory. Sarah and Melchizedek have this in common. Outside the Genesis narrative both receive only one explicit mention in the remainder of the Old Testament. Hebrews devotes far more to Melchizedek from the scant mentions of him in Gen 14:18-20 and in Ps 110:4, and much of this from what is not written of him (Heb 7:1-10), than Paul gives to Sarah from numerous accounts concerning her in Genesis and one explicit mention in Isa 51:2 besides the allusive reference in 54:1. Therefore, because Isaiah’s allusive use of Sarah and of Hagar in 54:1 goes beyond the bare storyline of Genesis, it seems apparent that the prophet provides an aperture or lens that sharpens the focus for the apostle to see the allegory that actually is present in Genesis.<sup>68</sup>

Isaiah and Paul recognize that the narrative story in Genesis is laden with clusters of symbolic representations concerning salvation that is to come in latter days. For both apostle and prophet the text is a scriptural account of historical persons divinely invested with symbolic significances that transcend their own experiences and times, converging together within an allegorical story, bearing significance that reconfirms the promise and engenders hope that the promise will be fulfilled in the latter days when Messiah, Abraham’s true seed, is to be revealed. Thus, by quoting Isa 54:1, Paul is drawing the Galatians’ attention to the fact that what they are now experiencing at the hands of those who trouble them with a different gospel was allegorically written long ago *in nuce* in the Genesis narrative that entails Abraham, Sarah (the desolate woman), Hagar (the woman with the husband), and the contrasting conceptions and births of two boys.

As this essay begins to draw to a close, the following presentation of the warrants for Paul’s uses

of the Genesis narrative and Isaiah is intended to be evocative, not exhaustive, and instructive, not conclusive.

### **SARAH'S DESOLATION, DIVINE OBSTACLE TO GOD'S PROMISES**

For both the apostle Paul and the prophet Isaiah, essential to the Abraham narrative of Genesis is the divinely plotted obstacle expressed in Gen 11:30, "Now Sarah was barren, and she had no child."<sup>69</sup> The entire story of Abraham and God's promises in Genesis emerges from and proceeds upon the premise that Sarah is incapable of bearing children. Thus, from the outset, the writer of Genesis signals two decisive features. Of first importance is Sarah's need for God to intervene miraculously on her behalf, if she is to bear a child. Second, the story entailing Sarah, Abraham, and God's promise of seed to them, that accents their creaturely helplessness to reverse the reproach of barrenness, is larger than life, larger than any of the individual personages within the story, thus infusing symbolic significances into the story that reach beyond the characters and events themselves, even if the one who writes the story does not fully grasp these significances in anticipation of the promise's fulfillment. To paraphrase his words elsewhere, Paul recognizes that *these things in the Abraham narrative took place allegorically, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the ends of the ages have come* (cf. 1 Cor 10:11).

The import of the story's premise promptly becomes evident in Genesis 12. Thus, even before God speaks his promise to Abraham, the humanly insurmountable impediment to the promise's fulfillment is already known both by those in the story and by readers. Given Sarah's sterility, how will God surmount his own imposed impediment in order to keep his promise to Abraham that "in you all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" (12:3) and "to your seed I will give this land" (12:7)? The plot thickens as the promise repeatedly hangs upon the scantest thread of hope as recipients of the promise are constrained to trust in God alone.

### **SARAH THE DESOLATE AND HAGAR THE WIFE**

Both age and aging exacerbate the obstacle posed by Sarah's barrenness. When the Lord initially speaks the promise to him in Haran, Abraham is already seventy-five years old. Ten years after entering Canaan, when Abraham is eighty-five and Sarah is still barren, *she gave her servant Hagar to be Abraham's wife* that he might father the promised son with her (Gen 16:3-4). That Sarah gave Hagar to be Abraham's *wife* accounts for Isaiah's words, "For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married."<sup>70</sup> Sarah, in her desolation, requires a husband greater than Abraham, if she is to bear the promised son. In the portion not explicitly cited by Paul but nonetheless surely included by implicature and to be inferred by readers, Isaiah depicts God as the husband who ends Sarah's reproach in that he reverses Israel's.<sup>71</sup>

Fear not, for you will not be ashamed;  
be not confounded, for you will not be  
disgraced;  
for you will forget the shame of our youth,  
and the reproach of your widowhood you will  
remember no more.  
For your Maker is your husband,  
the LORD of hosts is his name;  
and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer,  
the God of the whole earth he is called.  
For the LORD has called you  
like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit,  
like a wife of youth when she is cast off,  
says your God.  
For a brief moment I deserted you,  
but with great compassion I will gather you.  
In overflowing anger for a moment  
I hid my face from you,  
But with everlasting love I will have compassion  
on you, says the LORD, your Redeemer (Isa  
54:4-8).

Abraham is eighty-six when Ishmael is born (Gen 16:16). Thirteen years later, in Abraham's

ninety-ninth year, the Lord reaffirms his covenant promise (Gen 17:1). Of Sarah, God says, "I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her" (17:15 *ESV*). Abraham responds, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" (17:17 *ESV*). At last, just as God promised, in Abraham's one hundredth year Sarah gives birth to Isaac, Abraham's son (21:1, 5).

Then another divinely imposed obstacle to the fulfillment of God's promises enters the story. It intrudes at the Lord's own command to Abraham to slay his promised son as a sacrifice (22:2), an obstacle God designs to test Abraham's faith but also to function as a parable. The whole episode dramatically represents things greater than its individual components.<sup>72</sup> Isaac lives because of substitutionary sacrifice, surely a feature that shadows heavenly things and foreshadows things to come, hinted at in Isaac's presageful query, "My father! Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (22:7 *ESV*), but also in Abraham's equally prophetic and confident reply, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son" (22:8 *ESV*).

### **SARAH'S DESOLATION ENTAILS PREFIGUREMENT**

In Genesis the impediment that Sarah's barrenness poses to fulfillment of God's promise is the beginning of a significant theme extending through Genesis and beyond, reaching all the way to the birth narrative in Luke's Gospel. Besides Sarah, two further iterations of barrenness within the narrative both entail covenant couples who are direct descendants of Abraham and Sarah. Rebekah is barren, but like his father, Isaac implores the Lord's favor and she gives birth to twins (Gen 25:21-24). Barrenness, which at this juncture is expressly revealed as divinely imposed, is a motif that continues with Rachel whose rivalry with her sister, Leah, moves her to imitate Sarah by giving her servant (Bilnah) to Jacob as a wife to bear children in her

place (30:1-2).<sup>73</sup> At last the Lord opens her womb with the birth of Joseph, as Rachel acknowledges saying, "God has taken away my reproach. May the Lord add to me another son!" (30:22-24 *ESV*).

Is it not significant that at crucial moments in Israel's history that a barren woman embodies, as it were, Israel's desolation and hope in that the Lord favors the woman with the birth of a son who becomes Israel's deliverer?<sup>74</sup> Is it not worthy of mention that a barren woman, Elizabeth (Luke 1:7), miraculously conceives and gives birth to Messiah's cousin and herald, John the Baptist? Thus, it is fitting that, as the mother of Israel, Sarah's desolation representatively foreshadows the nation's desolation out of which hope arises (cf. Isa 1:7; 5:9; 6:11; 13:9; 17:9; 24:13). It is not surprising, then, that the desolation motif plays a significant role throughout Isaiah (cf. 49:8; 49:19; 54:1, 3; 62:4; 64:10), whom Paul quotes (Gal 4:27). In as much as the Seed to whom the promise was spoken was born of a woman in the fullness of time, Paul cites Isaiah who suggests that Sarah, figuratively speaking "remained barren throughout history until the coming of her child, Christ (recall Gal 3:16, 19)."<sup>75</sup> For Isaiah, Sarah's desolation prefigures Zion, and her giving birth to Isaac foreshadows the birthing of those "who pursue righteousness" and "seek the Lord" (51:1-2). Entailed and therefore implicit within Sarah's desolation and miraculous giving of birth to a people who seek the Lord and pursue righteousness is what plays out in the drama on the mountain. There, Isaac is cast in the role of symbolically representing a people for whom substitutionary sacrifice takes place as the lamb, about which he presciently inquired earlier (Gen 22:7), intercedes as Isaac's substitute, not only sparing his life but also sustaining God's promise.

### **SARAH'S BARRENNESS CALLS FOR FAITH IN GOD WHO GIVES LIFE**

The barrenness motif's inception and recursion in Genesis makes clear that fulfillment of God's promise concerning the seed is not subject to the will of human flesh but, as with the person-

ages in the Bible's storyline, beckons readers to lift their eyes of faith upward to the giver of life, to the Lord who closes and opens the womb, bringing forth life from deadness,<sup>76</sup> but also simultaneously directs their eyes ever forward along the storyline to anticipate a future manifestation of God's power to fulfill his promises in Abraham's seed. As with the personages within the narrative, so also for those who read the patriarchal story, the barrenness theme heightens anticipation and hope that God will fulfill his promises through those uncommonly conceived and born. Each one, however, one after the other—Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph—born in a singular manner, also receives God's reconfirmation of the promises first spoken to Abraham (26:3-4, 24; 28:3-4, 12-15; 35:9-15; 48:3-6). These individual reaffirmations of the promises point to future fulfillment. Each recipient of covenant reaffirmation holds fast these promises in anticipation of their fulfillment, yet each one dies, not seeing the promises fulfilled (cf. Heb 11:39). Nevertheless, they prefigure another who would be uncommonly conceived but who would also receive what was promised. This one singularly conceived, to whom the promise is spoken, is Christ, Abraham's Seed (Gal 4:4; 3:16).<sup>77</sup>

### THE COVENANT SIGN OF CIRCUMCISION AND THE THING SIGNIFIED

Without dispute the Genesis narrative grounds Paul's observation that one son was born *according to the flesh* (κατὰ σάρκα) but the other was born *through promise* (δι' ἐπαγγελίας). Elsewhere Paul uses the phrase *according to the flesh* with no negative connotations when simply referring to ethnic descent (Rom 9:3), even referring to Christ's physical descent (Rom 1:3; 9:5). In Gal 4:23 the phrase *according to the flesh* is not uncomplimentary in so far as it refers to ordinary physical conception and birth. However, because Paul juxtaposes *through promise* (δι' ἐπαγγελίας) in Gal 4:23 with *according to the flesh*, the latter phrase takes on a pejorative connotation. This negative sense is present because

God inextricably binds his promise concerning Abraham's seed to the covenant sign of circumcision. Consequently, while the two expressions feature the two distinct ways by which the sons were born, they also accent the greater spiritual distinctions signified by the sign of the covenant, the circumcision in the flesh. This is what Paul sees in the Abraham narrative of Genesis that leads him to intend a pejorative contrast by juxtaposing *according to the flesh* (κατὰ σάρκα) versus *through promise* (δι' ἐπαγγελίας; 4:23). From this the apostle infers, "But just as at that time the one born *according to the flesh* persecuted the one born *according to the Spirit*, so it is now also" (4:29). By saying "just as at that time," Paul indicates this distinction he extrapolates—*according to the flesh* (κατὰ σάρκα) and *according to the Spirit* (κατὰ πνεῦμα)—is present within the Genesis narrative because *to be born through promise* (δι' ἐπαγγελίας) signifies heavenly birth that is not subject to the will of human flesh (cf. John 1:13).

From the beginning, to bear only the *sign* of the covenant in the flesh, the removal of the foreskin (Gen 17:11), while not possessing the *spiritual reality* to which the ritual cutting points, rendered one Abraham's seed born *according to the flesh* (κατὰ σάρκα) but not Abraham's seed born *through promise* (δι' ἐπαγγελίας). Is this not precisely what Paul claims elsewhere? He does so when he writes, "For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but 'Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.' This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring" (Rom 9:6-8 ESV; cf. 2:17-29). Though Ishmael bears the sign of the covenant in his flesh (Gen 17:23), he lacks the spiritual reality signified by the covenant sign. Thus, even though he is from Abraham, he is not of Abraham's seed. On the other hand, Isaac, who receives the sign of the covenant after Ishmael (Gen 21:4), also possesses the spiritual reality symbolically represented by the sign, a heart circumcised by the Spirit (cf. Rom 2:29),

manifest by his belief in God who alone brings forth life from what is dead (Gen 25:21; cf. Rom 4:17ff).<sup>78</sup>

At the risk of importing extraneous categories, in the Abraham narrative Paul finds the vertical axis distinguishing *what is of heaven* from *what is of earth* as his contrasts show.

What emerges to the foreground is the vertical axis made obvious in the contrast between “the

4:22	One born κατὰ σάρκα	The other born δι’ ἐπαγγελίας
4:25	ἡ νῦν Ἰερουσαλήμ	ἡ ἄνω Ἰερουσαλήμ
4:29	The one born κατὰ σάρκα	The one born κατὰ πνεῦμα

Jerusalem now” and “the Jerusalem above” (4:25). If Paul’s argument in Gal 3:15-4:6 proceeds largely along the temporal axis of revelation’s progression, entailing *before* the coming of the Seed and *now* that the Seed has come (cf. esp. 3:15-25), in 4:21-31 his argument accents the vertical axis while retaining the temporal. The temporal axis recedes without disappearing, made evident in Paul’s comparison: “just as *at that time* . . . so also it is *now*” (4:29).

As argued earlier, much in the Genesis narrative warrants the vertical axis observed in uses by both Isaiah and Paul. Paul attributes the allegory to Genesis, including the two women as two covenants, two mountains, and two Jerusalems, before he states, “for it is written” and then quotes Isa 54:1 to ground his claim, “Now the Jerusalem above is free, who is our mother” (Gal 4:26).<sup>79</sup> Given Paul’s knowledge of Isaiah, it may seem odd that at this juncture he does not cite 51:2. Here, not only is Sarah’s role as mother more expressly mentioned, but this is also the only Old Testament use of Sarah’s name outside Genesis.

Look to Abraham your father  
and to Sarah who bore you;  
for he was but one when I called him,  
that I might bless him and multiply him  
(Isa 51:2; ESV).<sup>80</sup>

Instead, Paul quotes 54:1.<sup>81</sup>

“Sing, O barren one, who did not bear;  
break forth into singing and cry aloud,  
you who have not been in labor!  
For the children of the desolate one will be more  
than the children of her who is married,” says  
the LORD (Isa 54:1; ESV).

Surely, Paul cites Isa 54:1 because of verbal similarities with Gen 11:30, for both passages accent Sarah’s barrenness.<sup>82</sup> In addition to *barrenness* as a catchword, Paul uses Isa 54:1 and not 51:2 because it contrasts two women, obliquely referring to Sarah and Hagar. Additionally, the passage evokes “the whole rippling pool of promise found in the latter chapters” of Isaiah including the inclusion of the Gentiles as recipients of Israel’s eschatological blessing.<sup>83</sup> Hays rightly observes, “Paul’s link between Sarah and a redeemed Jerusalem surely presupposes Isa. 51:2, even though the text is not quoted in Galatians 4. It is Isaiah’s metaphorical linkage of Abraham and Sarah with an eschatologically restored Jerusalem that warrants Paul’s use of Isa. 54:1.”<sup>84</sup>

As argued above, the Genesis narrative concerning Sarah and Hagar, respectively birthing Isaac and Ishmael, establishes that not all who descend from Abraham are his true children. In Isaiah this theme plays out under the imagery of the city of Jerusalem bearing two identities: (1) enslaved Jerusalem, and (2) free Jerusalem. Isaiah cries out against Jerusalem as “an evil seed” (σπέρμα ποινηρόν, Isa 1:4) because “they have forsaken the LORD, they have despised the Holy One of Israel” (ESV 1:4). Jerusalem, “the faithful city has become a whore”; formerly “Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers” (ESV 1:21).

But Isaiah envisions another Jerusalem, the Jerusalem above, after the Lord avenges himself

by judging her for her sins and by banishing the evildoers. The city that became a haven for the unrighteous (1:21-23) “shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city” (ESV 1:26). Here, the Greek text reads a little differently: “shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful *mother city*, Zion” (1:26). Unlike the Hebrew, the Greek text identifies Jerusalem as a *mother* (μητρόπολις πιστῆ Σιών), informing Paul’s statement, “Jerusalem, our mother,” which he grounds by citing Isa 54:1.<sup>85</sup>

Within the passage Paul cites from the prophet, by synecdoche, Isaiah substitutes the city imagery for the nation in his allusion to Sarah, first as a barren woman (Isa. 54:1) and then as an afflicted city (54:11ff). Zion will be restored (51:3); the desolate woman’s offspring will outnumber those of the woman who has the husband (54:1). Thus, Paul cites this passage, for it reflects the Lord’s reaffirmation of his promise to Abraham: “I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her” (Gen 17:16). As the Lord reaffirms his promises to Abraham that desolate Sarah will conceive and bear the promised son, so the Lord reaffirms his promises “to the barren woman, Jerusalem, that even though she is as good as dead, she will yet live with her many children.”<sup>86</sup>

### CAST OUT THE SLAVE WOMAN

Paul cites Isa 54:1 also because the prophet’s implicit association of those who do not pursue righteousness or seek the Lord (51:1) with Hagar, whose son is born according to the flesh, provides the textual bridge to assist his readers to recognize how the Genesis narrative (Gen 21:10) authorizes him (1) to correlate Gentile believers with Isaac as children of promise; (2) to identify the Judaizers with Ishmael and their opposition to Christ’s followers with Ishmael’s persecution of Isaac, and (3) to equate Sarah’s command to Abraham to banish Hagar as the Law’s command to the Galatians to cast out the Mosaic Law and its preachers (Gal 4:28-31). The allegorical function of the Genesis narrative concerning Sarah and Hagar warrants

Paul to use Sarah’s appeal to Abraham with slight adaptation, not merely by application but as Scripture, even the Law, as directly commanding them: “Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not receive an inheritance with the son of the free woman.” Paul’s adaptation is slight but significant by replacing “my son Isaac” with “the son of the free woman.”<sup>87</sup> The Genesis allegory warrants this alteration, for Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac all bear symbolic representation pointing to things greater than themselves because they are characters in the drama of the fulfillment of God’s promise with a trajectory that spans Israel’s history under the law until the fullness of time comes when Messiah, the Seed to whom the promises were spoken, is revealed (Gal 3:15-4:1-7). Therefore Paul reprises his question, “Do you not hear the Law?” (4:21) by asking, “But what does the Scripture say?” (4:30) and by answering, “Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not receive an inheritance with the son of the free woman” (4:30). Because the slave woman represents the Sinai covenant, Paul means that the Law (as Scripture) commands that the Galatians are to cast out the Sinai covenant with its descendants, the Judaizers, who trouble them with their message that is subversive to the gospel of Jesus Christ because it is of the flesh and not of the Spirit (cf. Gal 3:3).

### CONCLUSION

Where exegetes locate the apostle Paul’s warrants for his claim that Scripture’s Abraham narrative entails an allegory, whether (1) inscribed in the text of Genesis, (2) formulated by Isaiah’s use of the narrative, or (3) forged by the apostle out of his revelatory-enhanced interpretive insight, is not only disputed but raises valid concerns if Christian faith cannot trace or reproduce his exegesis. Thus, how exegetes represent what they think the apostle Paul is doing by citing Scripture the way he does in Gal 4:21-31, if not careful, may result in unintended consequences. In particular, to claim that Paul is engaged in *allegorical interpretation*, though



perhaps not intended, at best states the case poorly because it necessarily implies that the apostle generates the allegory in the same way that describing Paul's use of Scripture in 1 Cor 10:1-11 as *typological interpretation* attributes too much to Paul. To use such designations as *allegorical interpretation* or *typological interpretation*, even if unintended, does at least two things. First, it implies that what Paul now discovers concerning Christ in the Old Testament Scriptures is grounded in little more than his fresh revelatory bias effected by his conversion. Second, it implies that foreshadows of Christ in the Old Testament are rendered so by retrospect after Messiah's coming, thus inadequately accounting for the fact that foreshadows of the Christ really are there to be seen within the Old Testament, albeit often hidden in plain sight, yet capable of being recognized, if one has eyes with which to see.<sup>88</sup>

Fear to be associated with the Alexandrian and later allegorical schools of exegesis begets innovative exegetical efforts to dodge acceptance of Paul's words at face value in Gal 4:24, that those things he references in Genesis are actually written allegorically. This essay proposes that how Paul structures his argument in 4:21-31, explicitly citing Scripture four times to accent by enclosing his claim that "these things are ἀλληγορούμενα," compels readers to understand that he means that the Abraham narrative itself is *written allegorically*. Hence, while Genesis presents the personages and events as real history, also embedded into the text are features that render Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac, with their experiences directed by God's actions among them, all symbolically representative of things greater than themselves.

What Paul is saying in Galatians 4 is akin to what he writes in 1 Corinthians 10, where he states, "Now these things happened to them *typologically*, but they were written down for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (10:11). As with Israel's experiences, so it is with the patriarchs. Under the controlling providence of God, they and their experiences are divinely imbued with figurative significances that foreshadow things to come.

As with the writer to the Hebrews, Paul recognizes that the domestic affairs within Abraham's household are *parabolic*. They symbolically represent coming events of vast redemptive significance (cf. Heb 11:19). In 1 Corinthians 10 Paul uses the adverb *typologically* (τυπικῶς, v. 11) to describe how God providentially brought about the discrete events of Israel's experiences which are inscribed within Scripture "for us" (10:1-11). Similarly, in Galatians 4 the apostle uses the participle *written allegorically* (ἀλληγορούμενα, v. 24) to depict how God imbued the features of the continuous narrative of Genesis concerning Abraham and his household with symbolic representation "for us" who are "children of promise in accord with Isaac. This symbolic imbue, since the gospel was first announced to Abraham, has continuously foreshadowed the coming Seed, calling for belief in God who brings life out of death.

To be sure, the theophanic revelation of Jesus Christ to Paul on the Damascus road, entailing both his conversion from Pharisee to Christian and his call from rabbinic advocate for the law to apostle of the good news of Jesus Christ, alters how he reads and teaches the Law and the Prophets. The veil that covered his heart is now removed.

Thus, Christ's incarnation and his revelatory visit to Paul forms one of two crucial loci that warrant the apostle's understanding and use of the Old Testament Scriptures to ground his proclamation that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of God's promises made to Abraham, reaffirmed to the patriarchs, and sustained throughout the prophets. Indeed, his sight of the resurrected Christ marks not only the beginning of his Christian faith but also his role as Christ's apostle. Paul, however, never pulls apostolic rank to ground his gospel exclusively in his revelatory insight acquired by his heavenly visit from the Christ. Paul never acts as if this insight is his alone, as though only he has the Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 7:40). On the contrary, he believes the gift of the Spirit universally distinguishes all who belong to Christ (Gal 3:2ff). Therefore, because the Spirit provides spiritual insight and understanding, in all his disputa-

tions concerning the gospel, Paul invariably grounds his gospel in the Old Testament, the second essential locus that authorizes his insistence that Christ Jesus is the fulfillment of God's ancient promises.

Indeed, Paul's reasoning from the Scriptures sometimes is hard to understand (cf. 2 Pet 3:16), as his appeal to Scripture's allegory in Gal 4:21-31 proves to be. This is in large measure due to the nature of Old Testament revelation, which in the very act of revealing the gospel in advance entails concealing of the gospel to await full and clear disclosure in the fullness of time, when Messiah comes. To the degree that Paul's reasoning from Scripture seems clouded, perhaps to that degree the veil has not yet been fully lifted from the eyes of one's heart (2 Cor 3:14-15). Thus, grasping how the Old Testament foreshadows Christ and the gospel calls for patience and requires spiritual insight to trace Paul's reasoning from the Scriptures. It also calls for diligence like the Bereans show as they eagerly welcome the Word but also examine the Scriptures daily to see if what Paul teaches is true (Acts 17:10).

Paul reserves the allegory to serve as the capstone of his argument in Gal 3:1-5:1, thus expecting his readers to trace his reasoning from the Scriptures. Sarah and Hagar with their respective sons, born in vastly different ways, allegorically prefigure two distinctly different covenants and those who trace their spiritual descent from them. Either one's lineage traces to Isaac through promise or to Ishmael from the law covenant. Because the Judaizers trace their lineage to the Sinai covenant, they are children of the slave woman with Ishmael. They are children of Sinai, heirs of the Mosaic law covenant. Their lineage is *according to the flesh*. By stark contrast, believers in Christ, in accord with Isaac, are born *through promise*, born *according to the Spirit*. They are children of the promise, the true seed of Abraham because they belong to Christ, Abraham's Seed to whom the promises were spoken (Gal 3:29, 16).

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>I am grateful to Lance Kramer for his research assis-

tance during the spring semester 2010. Lance, a 2010 graduate in Biblical Studies from Northwestern College, graciously shared his research for an essay he wrote on Gal 4:21-31 for an independent study.

<sup>2</sup>See Robert J. Kepple, "An Analysis of Antiochene Exegesis of Galatians 4:24-26," *Westminster Theological Journal*, 39 (1977): 239-49. For example, Chrysostom explains that by using ἀλληγορούμενα Paul "inexactly called the type an allegory." Antiochene exegetes wrongly inferred that allegory denies historicity.

<sup>3</sup>Luther writes, "Allegories do not strongly persuade in divinity ... as painting is an ornament to set forth and garnish a house already builded, so is an allegory the light of a matter which is already otherwise proved and confirmed" (*Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, English Translation, 1860, 347). Cf. Timothy H. Mashke, "The Authority of Scripture: Luther's Approach to Allegory in Galatians" *Logia* 4, no. 2 (April 1995): 28. Similarly, Calvin reasons concerning Galatians 4:21-31, "Viewed simply as an argument, it would not be very powerful; but as a confirmation added to a most satisfactory chain of reasoning, it is not unworthy of attention." (*The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians and Ephesians* [trans. William Pringle; Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, n. d.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979], 134).

<sup>4</sup>In favor of typology, see Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (trans. Donald H. Madvig; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 139-40. See also Andrew Perriman, "Rhetorical Strategy of Galatians 4:21-5:1," *Evangelical Quarterly* 65 (1993): 27. Cf. F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on Galatians* (New International Greek Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1982), 217, where he states, "He is not thinking of allegory in the Philonic sense.... [H]e has in mind that form of allegory which is commonly called typology." See idem, "Abraham Had Two Sons': A Study in Pauline Hermeneutics," in *New Testament Studies: Essays in Honor of Ray Summers in His Sixty-Fifth Year* (ed. by Huber L. Drumwright & Curtis Vaughan; Waco, TX: Baylor University, 1975), 83. See also Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University, 1989), 116. In favor of allegory, see, James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Black's New Tes-

tament Commentaries; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 247-48. Cf. Richard Longenecker, *Galatians* (Word Biblical Commentary; Dallas: Word, 1990), 209-10. See also R. P. C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origin's Interpretation of Scripture* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1959; repr. 2002), 83, who states, "Paul ... used allegory as an aid to typology, a method of interpreting the Old Testament which, however fanciful some of its forms may be, does at least regard history as something meaningful."

<sup>5</sup>Many leading voices reject the idea that there is any prospective element to be found within the Old Testament types but insist that types are to be understood by way of retrospective interpretations of OT person, institutions, and events. See, e.g., Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (2 vols.; New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 2:363-66, 384; R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament: His Application of Old Testament Passages to Himself and His Mission* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 39-42; and David L. Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible: A Study of the Relationships Between the Old and New Testaments* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1991), 197-98.

Even scholars who believe that embedded in the Old Testament types are prospective elements describe their understanding as *typological interpretation* as does James Hamilton: "I would offer the following working definition of typological interpretation: typological interpretation is canonical exegesis that observes divinely intended patterns of historical correspondence and escalation in significance in the events, people, or institutions of Israel, and these types are in the redemptive historical stream that flows through the Bible" ("Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah? Tracing the Typological Identification between Joseph, David, and Jesus," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 12, no. 4 (2008): 52. Likewise, Paul A. Kramer, who believes that what Paul sees in the Old Testament Scriptures after his reception of the "revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:12, 16), was always there to be seen, uses the confusing designation, *typological interpretation* and *allegorical interpretation*, emphasizing Paul's interpretation of the Old Testament text rather than

the designed allegorical meaning of the Old Testament text as written. For example, Kramer claims, "It would seem . . . that the burden of proof lies with those who would argue that Paul's reading of the passage is something other than an allegorical reading of the Genesis narrative" (186-85) and, "Paul reads the Abraham story typologically" (200-01; 208; "Mystery Without Mystery in Galatians: An Examination of the Relationship Between Revelatory Language in Galatians 1:11-17 and Scripture References in Galatians 3:6-18; 4:21-31," [Ph.D. diss, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2004]). Cf. Peter J. Leithart who states, "The apostles teach us to recognize that 'how it turned out' exposes dimensions of the original event or text that may not have been apparent, and perhaps were not even there, until it turned out as it did. Typological reading is simply reading of earlier texts in the light of later texts and events" (*Deep Exegesis: They Mystery of Reading Scripture* [Waco, TX: Baylor University, 2009], 74).

To speak of *typological interpretation*, using the adjective to modify *interpretation*, creates confusion by focusing upon the *act of interpretation* rather than upon the *act of revelation*. This essay proceeds on the belief that typology and allegory are fundamentally categories that belong to the *act of revelation*, not the *act of interpretation*. The reader discovers types and allegories that are already present in the text. For greater explanation see A. B. Caneday's response to the question, "Can you discuss the significance of typology to biblical theology?" pp. 66-98 in "The SBJT Forum: Biblical Theology for the Church," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 10, no. 2 (2006): 88-100.

<sup>6</sup>John Calvin's comments pose dilemmas consistent with those engendered by contemporary exegetes with their explications of the text. Calvin writes, "But what reply shall we make to Paul's assertion, that these things *are allegorical*? Paul certainly does not mean that Moses wrote the history for the purpose of being turned into an allegory, but points out in what way the history may be made to answer the present subject. This is done by observing a figurative representation of the Church there delineated" (*Galatians and Ephesians*, 136).

<sup>7</sup>For example, on Gal 4:24ff, Kramer offers these two options and excludes the third when he observes, “It would not be superfluous to note the difference between saying that Paul read the narrative allegorically (i.e., he viewed the story as historical and assigned higher spiritual truths to various parts of it for illustrative purposes) and saying that Paul read the narrative as an allegory (i.e., the narrative was an a-historical story from which Paul draw [sic] higher spiritual truths). Few, if any would argue that Paul thought the Genesis narrative was without historical basis” (“Mystery without Mystery in Galatians,” 185, n. 115).

<sup>8</sup>The notion that Paul assigns allegorical or typological significance to the personages in the Abraham narrative is akin to the side room commentary concerning the stained glass window panels of King’s College chapel, Cambridge University: “[W]hen Christianity was a new religion, it linked itself to the sacred Jewish past. It made the Jewish scriptures its own, calling them ‘The Old Testament’. It treated this ‘Old Testament’ as prophecy of its own ‘New Testament’. ‘The Old Testament’ was a story of ‘types’—prophecies and stories awaiting their full (Christian) actualisation.”

<sup>9</sup>Cf. Steven DiMattei, “Paul’s Allegory of the Two Covenants (Gal 4.21-31) in Light of First-Century Hellenistic Rhetoric and Jewish Hermeneutics,” *New Testament Studies*, (2006): 121. DiMattei rightly shows that because Paul defines Hagar, the slave woman, as the Sinai covenant, when he quotes Gen 21:10, “Cast out the slave woman,” his reference is to the law covenant.

<sup>10</sup>The most explicit formulation of this proposal seems to be offered by Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 126-29 with 218-20.

<sup>11</sup>Longenecker writes, “What then can be said to our question, ‘Can we reproduce the exegesis of the New Testament?’ I suggest that we must answer both ‘No’ and ‘Yes.’ Where that exegesis is based upon a revelatory stance, where it evidences itself to be merely cultural, or where it shows itself to be circumstantial or *ad hominem* in nature, ‘No’... Our commitment as Christians is to the reproduction of the apostolic faith and doctrine, and not necessarily to the specific apostolic exegetical practices.... I propose that in the

area of exegesis ... we may appreciate the manner in which the interpretations of our Lord and the New Testament writers were derived and may reproduce their conclusions by means of historico-grammatical exegesis, but we cannot assume that the explanation of their methods is necessarily the norm for our exegesis today. And that, I propose, is an important step in the development of a sound approach to interpretation today” (*Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 218-20). Richard Hays rightly responds to Longenecker, “There is no possibility of accepting Paul’s message while simultaneously rejecting the legitimacy of the scripture interpretation that sustains it” (*Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 182).

<sup>12</sup>For example, J. Louis Martyn, “Apocalyptic Antinomies in Paul’s Letter to the Galatians,” *New Testament Studies* 31 (1985): 410-24. Find this and many other essays in Martyn’s influential book, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark; Nashville: Abingdon, 1997).

<sup>13</sup>See, e.g., others who observe this same phenomenon. C. Marvin Pate notes, “Although Paul does not use the word ‘mystery’ in Galatians, that concept seems to be operative in 1:4-5, 12, 16, especially since the term ἀποκάλυψις, which he does use, is a technical one that encompasses mystic experience” (*The Reverse of the Curse: Paul, Wisdom, and the Law* [Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000], 183-185). See also, D. A. Carson, “Mystery and Fulfillment: Toward a More Comprehensive Paradigm of Paul’s Understanding of the Old and the New,” in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 2—The Paradoxes of Paul* (ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 424-25. James D. G. Dunn comments, “Paul describes his ‘conversion’ in apocalyptic terms as a ‘revelation’ (Gal. 1:12, 16) ... which unlocked the mystery of God’s purpose hidden until now. Hence also Paul’s use of the characteristically apocalyptic term ‘mystery’ itself to describe his own sense of the eschatologically final revelation and commission which had been given him” (“How New Was Paul’s Gospel? The Problem of Continuity and Discontinuity,” in *Gospel in Paul: Studies on Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans—Festschrift for Richard N. Longenecker*

(ed. L. Ann Jarvis and Peter Richardson; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994], 376). See also Philip A. Kramer, “Mystery Without Mystery in Galatians: An Examination of the Relationship Between Revelatory Language in Galatians 1:11-17 and Scripture References in Galatians 3:6-18; 4:21-31,” (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2004).

Carson further explains the interplay between Paul’s reception of the “revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal 1:12ff) and his use of Scripture: “Even though he knows full well that he came to his Christian understanding via the Damascus road experience, and not in classes on exegesis, he also argues that what he, as a Christian and an apostle, finds in the Scriptures is actually *there*, and the reason unconverted Jews do not see it is because “to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it take [*sic*] away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts” (2 Cor 3:14-15). In other words, as far as Paul is concerned, conversion to Christ removes the veil to enable the reader to see what is actually *there*. Judging by his passionate handling of Scripture in Galatians, and in his slightly less passionate but scarcely less intense handling of Scripture in Romans, Paul is concerned to show that the gospel he preaches has in fact actually been announced by what we now refer to as the Old Testament” (“Mystery and Fulfillment,” 411).

<sup>14</sup>This latter point, however, does not justify designating the apostles’ uses of the Old Testament, *typological* or *allegorical interpretation*. This is to underscore the point made in note 5 above and in the text linked to the note.

<sup>15</sup>Paul’s statement is variously translated “this is an allegory” (NRSV), “this is allegorically speaking” (NASB), “this may be interpreted allegorically” (ESV), or “this may be taken figuratively” (NIV). These translations reflect the common assumption accepted among commentators and exegetes that the verb ἀλληγορέω means either (1) “to speak allegorically” or (2) “to interpret allegorically.” Most exegetes reject the former and adopt the latter so that they read Gal 4:21-31 as out of character with Paul’s usual handling of the Old Testament. Cf. Richard N. Longenecker, “Graphic Illustrations of a Believer’s New Life

in Christ: Galatians 4:21-31,” *Review and Expositor* 91 (1994): 194. Cf. Friedrich Büchsel, “ἀλληγορούμενα,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (trans. and ed. Geoffrey Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 1:260-63.

<sup>16</sup>Among exegetes, it seems to be accepted *a priori* that if the personages in the Genesis text are allegorical then they cannot be historical. Consider Patrick Barker’s comments: “It could be argued that there is not much difference between ‘to speak allegorically’ and ‘to interpret allegorically,’ and that whichever way we understand the word, the passage in question is still an allegory. But it is surely one thing to claim that the narrative in Genesis was originally conceived by its author or redactor as an allegory and quite another thing to claim that it is being, or is to be, interpreted as an allegory. If the author or redactor intended to provide an historical account of what happened to Abraham and the other figures in the story, then to maintain that the narrative was spoken allegorically is to contradict the intention of the author or redactor” (“Allegory and Typology in Galatians 4:21-31,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 38 (1994): 204.

<sup>17</sup>R. V. G. Tasker observes, “Paul’s exegesis in [Gal 4:21-31] . . . is not fanciful or arbitrary when once it is recognized that the Old Testament is not just history, but *sacred* history, in which the ultimate end which God had in view during the long period of self-revelation to a particular race, is foreshadowed in the circumstances and events which preceded its final realization. In the old covenant, in other words, was prefigured the shape of things to come” (*The Old Testament in the New Testament* [1946; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963], 93).

<sup>18</sup>It is noteworthy that Paul uses the verb “to reveal” (ἀποκαλύπτω) twice in Galatians, in 1:12 and 3:23. That Paul conceives of ἡ πίστις in Gal 3:22-26 as *objectified* is made clear by the fact that (1) ἡ πίστις is the subject of the verb “to come” (ἔρχομαι; 3:23, 35) and the object of the verb “to reveal” (ἀποκαλύπτω; 3:25); and (2) ἡ πίστις, in 3:22-26, clearly replaces what readers would otherwise expect as “coming” and “being revealed,” namely, “the Seed” (3:16, 19) or “the Messiah” (see 3:16, 24). “The ἡ πίστις of which Paul speaks was not present until it ‘came’ and was ‘revealed’

making and eschatological entry. Πρὸ τοῦ ἐλθεῖν τὴν πίστιν (3:23) corresponds to a series of clauses, both temporal and telic, that relate the Law to the promise and to its fulfillment. The Law played a temporal and purposeful role that anticipated the coming of the Seed, Messiah. The Law's own temporal and purposeful design restricted the extent of its jurisdiction, 'until the Seed would come' (ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα, 3:19)." See A. B. Caneday, "The Faithfulness of Jesus Christ as a Theme in Paul's Theology in Galatians," in *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies* (ed. by Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle' Milton Keynes, Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson, 2009), 200-01. Hans D. Betz is surely correct to observe that ἡ πίστις "describes the occurrence of a historical phenomenon, not the act of believing of an individual" (*Galatians* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979], 176, n. 120). These observations stand whether one takes πίστις Χριστοῦ (3:22) as "Christ's faithfulness" or as "faith in Christ."

<sup>19</sup>Cf. Longenecker, "Galatians 4:21-31," 194.

<sup>20</sup>John Chrysostom, *Comm Epist ad Gal* IV.710 (PG 61.662): Καταχρηστικῶς τὸν τύπον ἀλληγορίαν ἐκάλεσεν ("he inexactly called the type an allegory"). See Robert J. Kepple, "An Analysis of Antiochene Exegesis of Galatians 4:24-26," *Westminster Theological Journal* 39 (1977): 239-49. A. T. Hanson notes, "We came to the conclusion that in Gal. 4.21f Paul was in fact using typology, not allegory; but that his typology becomes so complicated and uncontrolled that it is beginning to verge into allegory" (*Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974], 161). Cf. Dunn, *Galatians*, 242-59; G. W. Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts* (JSNTS 29; Sheffield: JSOT, 1989), 141-54.

<sup>21</sup>For example, A. T. Hanson reasons, "Paul is not here [Gal 4:24] trying to emancipate the meaning of the passage from its historical content and transmute it into a moral sentiment or a philosophical truth, which is almost the invariable function of Alexandrian allegory" (*Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture* [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1959], 82). One who argues for Hellenistic connections is Curtis D.

McClane, "The Hellenistic Background to the Pauline Allegorical Method in Galatians 4:21-31," *Restoration Quarterly* 40 (1998): 125-35.

<sup>22</sup>Two leading voices in this school of thought are: (1) E. Earle Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity* (WUNT 18; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1978); idem, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981 [1957]); idem, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity: Canon and Interpretation in the Light of Modern Research* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991); and (2) Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*. Cf. Peter Enns, "Fuller Meaning, Single Goal: A Christotelic Approach to the New Testament Use of the Old in Its First-Century Interpretive Environment," in *Three View on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (ed. Kenneth Berding & Jonathan Lunde; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 167-217.

<sup>23</sup>See notes 7 and 8 above. Peter Enns reasons, "What is 'proper' exegesis for Paul is determined by his time, not ours, and this recognition must factor into any contemporary discussion of how we explain the NT use of the OT.... The fact that such an exegetical maneuver would not be persuasive today (and in my opinion should not be reproduced ...) should *not* dissuade us from making the necessary observation that Paul's handling of Scripture here in Galatians 3:15-29 is a function of his Second Temple context" ("Fuller Meaning, Single Goal," 185). Enns contends that though Christians should model their "approach to Scripture after that of the apostles," he explains that "where we follow the NT writers is more in terms of their hermeneutical goal than in terms of their exegetical methods and interpretive traditions. The latter are a function of their cultural moment.... This means that they model for us a hermeneutical 'attitude,' so to speak, that is authoritative for us, even if the authority does not function as a five-step hermeneutical guide" (216-17).

<sup>24</sup>Carson, "Mystery and Fulfillment," 410. This is the problem with E. P. Sanders's truism devoid of explanatory power: "In short, this is what Paul finds wrong with Judaism: it is not Christianity" (*Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977], 552).

<sup>25</sup>For example, Richard N. Longenecker posits, “But if we view Paul’s use of the Hagar-Sarah story here in Galatians 4:21-31 as principally an *ad hominem* argument [appeal to emotion rather than to reason]—that is, responding in kind to some treatment of the same story by his Galatian opponents—then we need not see Paul saying that allegory was built into the biblical narrative itself, but rather, that the biblical narrative is now being treated by interpreters (whether the Judaizers, or Paul, or both) in an allegorical fashion” (“Galatians 4:21-31,” 194). Cf. F. F. Bruce, who states, “Paul now endeavours to reinforce his argument by means of an allegorical interpretation of the Genesis story of Hagar and Sarah, with their respective sons Ishmael and Isaac. Paul himself calls his interpretation ‘allegorical’ (v 24)—that is to say, the entities in the story stand for something other than their *prima facie* sense, whether that ‘something other’ was intended by the original author (as, say, in Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*) or is the contribution of the interpreter (and even when it is the contribution of the interpreter, the interpreter frequently thinks that he is bringing out the intention of the original author)” (*Galatians*, 214-15).

<sup>26</sup>DiMattei, “Paul’s Allegory of the Two Covenants,” 106-07. DiMattei cites Demetrius, Strabo, [Pseudo-] Heraclitus, Josephus, Philo of Alexandria, and Plutarch. He observes, “The only exception to this usage is to be found in the writings of Philo of Alexandria, and perhaps additionally the two examples found in Plutarch. Moreover, out of the total 26 times that Philo uses the verb, the number of occurrences where the verb means ‘to interpret allegorically’ is rather thin. The *Homeric Allegories* of [Pseudo-] Heraclitus, however, just may be a better source in determining a more accurate picture of the verb’s usage in antiquity. Despite the relatively small size of the treatise . . . the author uses the verb significantly more than any other writer of his time period, on average three times per page of Greek text compared to Philo’s once every 92 pages of Greek text! [Pseudo-] Heraclitus employs the verb *ἀλληγορεύω* a total of 26 times, *all* of which either express the idea that Homer speaks allegorically when speaking about the gods, or that a specific element in the text was spoken of allegorically” (106-07).

<sup>27</sup>*De tropis*, 1.1—Ἀλληγορία ἐστὶ φράσις ἕτερον μὲν τι κυρίως δηλοῦσά ἕτερου δὲ ἔννοιαν παριστώσα. See DiMattei, “Paul’s Allegory of the Two Covenants,” 106.

<sup>28</sup>*Homeric Allegories* 5.2—Ὁ γὰρ ἄλλα μὲν ἀγορεύων τρόπος ἕτερα δὲ ὧν λέγει σημαίνω ἐπωνύμως ἀλληγορία καλεῖται. See DiMattei, “Paul’s Allegory of the Two Covenants,” 106.

<sup>29</sup>Anne K. Davis rightly observes, “The puzzling characteristic of this strange metaphor is its failure to use any recognized symbols, so the meaning is unclear and even somewhat startling” (“Allegorically Speaking in Galatians 4:21-5:1,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 14 [2004]: 166). To highlight the “strange metaphor,” Davis contrasts it with familiar metaphors—“you are the salt of the earth” (Matt 5:13) and “this cup is the new covenant” (1 Cor 11:25), metaphors that use *vehicles*, the specific words, that give the metaphors their figurative power.

<sup>30</sup>This is not to imply that Paul suggests that either those entailed in the Genesis narrative (Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, etc.) or the writer of Genesis, Moses, understood the allegorical aspects of the drama, but it is to suggest that the apostle claims that God designed the allegory and saw to it that it was recorded in Scripture “for us” (cf. Rom 4:25; 1 Cor 10:11).

<sup>31</sup>Longenecker claims that because *ἀλληγορούμενα* is a present passive participle, its form favors the notion “that Paul is saying that ‘these things are [now] being interpreted allegorically’” (“Galatians 4:21-31,” 194). With greater grammatical and textual warrant it seems more likely that Paul uses the present passive participle, *ἀλληγορούμενα*, to mean “these things are written allegorically,” stands in harmony with the perfect passive indicative *γέγραπται* (“it is written”) in 4:22, the finite verb from which the participle would derive its temporal reference. As such, the participle indicates that Scripture itself (i.e., Genesis), assigns allegorical significance to what is written concerning Abraham, his two sons, the slave woman, the free woman, the son born according to the flesh, and the son born through promise.

<sup>32</sup>Cf. Andrew T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul’s*

*Thought with Special Reference to His Eschatology* (SNTSMS 43; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1983), 11.

<sup>33</sup>Cf. James W. Aageson, *Written Also for Our Sake: Paul and the Art of Biblical Interpretation*, (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993), 83.

<sup>34</sup>Here, it is well recognized that Paul uses *the law* (ὁ νόμος) with two distinguishable senses, first, *under the law* (cf. 3:23; 4:4), as referring to jurisdiction of the law covenant, the Mosaic law, and second, *hear the Law*, as referring to Scripture, the Pentateuch. Cf. Bruce, *Commentary on Galatians*, 215, and Longenecker, “Galatians 4:21-31,” 193.

<sup>35</sup>The trend is to infer hints from Gal 4:22 that Paul is not voluntarily introducing the Genesis narrative concerning Sarah and Hagar into his argument, for the straightforwardness of the text favors his opponents, but that he is constrained to comment upon the narrative because his opponents have used it to their advantage. See C. K. Barrett, “The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians,” in *Rechtfertigung: Festschrift für Ernst Käsemann* (ed. J. Friedrich, W. Pohlmann, and P. Stuhlmacher; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976), 9.

It may be that Paul is responding to his Judaizing opponents’ use of the Abraham narrative in their effort to authorize their “other gospel” with Scripture. It is reasonable, though unnecessary, to infer that Paul may not initiate use of the Genesis narrative in his argument but may be correcting his opponents use of it. Whether he initiates or responds, one still has to account for the fact that Paul’s fourfold appeal to Scripture in 4:21-31 in order to authorize his gospel places the burden of proof upon those who contend that Paul engages innovative interpretive techniques rather than accept that the Old Testament texts themselves (Genesis and Isaiah) bear within themselves allegorical qualities that warrant Paul’s use of them. For a general reconstruction of the Judaizers’ use of the Abraham narrative see Barrett, “The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians,” 15.

<sup>36</sup>A notable exception is Karen H. Jobes, “Jerusalem, Our Mother: Metalepsis and Intertextuality in Galatians

4:21-31,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 55 (1993): 299-320.

<sup>37</sup>For example, Ernest DeWitt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (International Critical Commentary; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921), lxxiv. Likewise, Betz, *Galatians*, 238-40.

<sup>38</sup>Longenecker, *Galatians*, 199. Cf. Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians*, 145-46.

<sup>39</sup>Longenecker, *Galatians*, 199.

<sup>40</sup>Cf. Moisés Silva, *Explorations in Exegetical Method: Galatians as a Test Case* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 95-100.

<sup>41</sup>Burton stated, “Before leaving the subject of the seed of Abraham it occurs to the apostle, apparently as an afterthought, that he might make his thought clearer and more persuasive by an allegorical interpretation of the story of Abraham and his two sons” (*Galatians*, 251).

<sup>42</sup>See, e.g., Frank Matera, *Galatians* (Sacra Pagina; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical 1992), 177-78. Betz contends that this passage contains the “strongest argument” in all of 3:1-5:1 and that it provides the suitable rhetorical conclusion to the whole section (*Galatians*, 238-40).

<sup>43</sup>Richard B. Hays, “The Letter to the Galatians,” *New Interpreter’s Bible* 11 (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 305.

<sup>44</sup>Steven Fowl’s definition of *allegorical reading* notwithstanding, argues with warrant that “Paul’s reading of Abraham’s story is allegorical throughout Galatians 3-4,” not just in 4:21-31 (“Who Can Read Abraham’s Story? Allegory and Interpretative Power in Galatians,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 55 [1994]: 79). By *allegorical reading*, Fowl means “interpretations that either explicitly or implicitly counter conventional views about a text, a character or an event” (79). Fowl relies upon David Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley: University of California, 1991).

<sup>45</sup>This “salvation-historical” sequence is integral to Paul’s argument “that Torah and Christ are not coexistent or coterminous allies. They are allied in God’s purpose only in the sequential relationship of ‘before’ and ‘now’, of Prefiguration and fulfillment, for Christ’s bearing Torah’s curse ‘upon the tree’ is the long-awaited ‘Amen’



to God's promise to Abraham" (Caneday, "The Faithfulness of Jesus Christ," 200).

<sup>46</sup>Carol K. Stockhausen, "2 Corinthians 3 and the Principles of Pauline Exegesis," in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel* (ed. Craig A. Evans & James A. Sanders; JSNTSS 83; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 149. Stockhausen insightfully contends, "I would argue that a fundamental awareness of the constitutive presence of Abraham's story in Paul argument requires that Paul's arguments in the whole of Galatians be seen, not as isolated 'arguments from Scripture,' but as a connected series of statements, which have the primary goal of correctly interpreting the story of Abraham itself and concomitantly show the relationship between that story, the gospel and contemporary events and persons" (149-50).

<sup>47</sup>The point should not be missed that Paul is claiming that the promise was spoken in Christ's presence. I make this observation elsewhere: "Paul reasons that Messiah was present when the promises were spoken. This is no more remarkable than his earlier claim, 'And scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles ἐκ πίστεως, proclaimed the gospel in advance to Abraham: in you all the Gentiles will be blessed'" (3:8) Messiah is Abraham's unique seed to whom the promises were spoken" (Caneday, "The Faithfulness of Jesus Christ," 201).

<sup>48</sup>Fowl, "Who Can Read Abraham's Story?," 83-84.

<sup>49</sup>Cf. the similar question Luke records that Paul asked the disciples of John the Baptist in Ephesus (Acts 19:1).

<sup>50</sup>For the sake of the argument, it is not crucial to identify the exact meanings of the respective expressions, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου and ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως. Cf. Caneday, "The Faithfulness of Jesus Christ," 191. See also T. David Gordon, who contends, "If we would understand the polemic of Galatians, we must describe it in terms of 'Torah or Christ' rather than in terms of 'Works or Faith'" ("The Pattern at Galatia," *Interpretation* 41 [1987]: 36).

<sup>51</sup>Geerhardus Vos, "Paul's Eschatological Concept of the Spirit," in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos* (ed. Richard B. Gaffin; Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R, 1980), 110. Cf.

M. M. B. Turner, "The Significance of Spirit Endowment for Paul," *Vox Evangelica* 9 (1975): 56-69.

<sup>52</sup>Hays poses the question a little differently: "[I]s the scriptural text to be illuminated in the light of Spirit-experience, or is Spirit-experience to be measured by normative constraints laid down by the text? This is the fundamental question at issue between Paul and the teachers who were influencing the Galatians" (*Echoes of Scripture*, 108).

<sup>53</sup>Against this, Charles Cosgrove claims, "In Gal. 4:21 ff. Paul introduces an allegorical-typological interpretation in a *debate* situation where he cannot expect his audience to be predisposed toward his conclusions" ("The Law Has Given Sarah No Children [Gal. 4:21-30]" *Novum Testamentum* 29 (1987): 221).

<sup>54</sup>Though the two verbs are προεγράφη (προεγράφω) and προεηγγελίσαστο (προεηγγελίζομαι), it also seems plausible that Paul purposely writes προεγράφη, in 3:1, to link with another expression that includes the noun γραφή, and another προ- compound verb, προοράω, as in προῖδοῦσα ἡ γραφή, (3:8), a subtle kind of word play between the cognate verb, προεγράφη, and noun, ἡ γραφή.

<sup>55</sup>"Simply put, Abraham belongs to 'us,' οἱ ἐκ πίστεως (vv. 7, 9), not to 'them,' οἱ ἐκ νόμου. In principle, the progenitor of the Jewish race, to whom the gospel was 'preached beforehand' (v. 8), finds his proper identification in the age of the Spirit, not the age of the flesh, even though he lived in the pre-eschatological era." See Don Garlington, "Paul's 'Partisan ἐκ' and the Question of Justification in Galatians," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127 (2008): 578.

<sup>56</sup>Paul recognizes that "they shall be blessed" (ἐνευλογηθήσονται, Gen 22:18) correlates with "God justifies" (δικαιοῖ ὁ θεός, Gal 3:8) so that the promised blessing is equated with being justified. The clear implication is that Paul sees a three-fold equation: "reception of the Spirit" = "justification" = "Abrahamic blessing." This is evident, for Paul interchanges these as he proceeds through his argument in Gal 3:1-14. In 3:14 he adds another element to the equation when he identifies "reception of the Spirit" with "reception of the promise."

<sup>57</sup>Beverly R. Gaventa, "Galatians 1 and 2: Autobiography

as Paradigm,” *Novum Testamentum* 28 (1986): 326. Cf. George Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography* (SBLDS 73; Atlanta: Scholars, 1985).

<sup>58</sup>Stockhausen, “The Principles of Pauline Exegesis,” 149-50, 152.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>60</sup>Hays comments, “The artful wording of v. 91 illuminates the deep theological syntax of Paul’s gospel: ‘Now, however, that you have come to know God—or rather to be known by God...’ The self-correction is an artful way of calling attention to the theological ‘ungrammaticality’ of any claim that we as finite creatures can save ourselves by attaining a higher knowledge of God.... The Galatians have entered a new world not because of some epistemological advance of their own, but because God, in elective love, has now ‘known’ them” (“The Letter to the Galatians,” 287).

<sup>61</sup>Beverly R. Gaventa rightly proposes, “Paul’s anguish ... reflects the anguish of the whole created order as it awaits the fulfillment of God’s action in Jesus Christ” (“The Maternity of Paul: An Exegetical Study of Galatians 4:19,” in *The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul and John in Honor of J. Louis Martyn* [ed. R. T. Fortna and B. R. Gaventa; Nashville: Abingdon, 1990]: 194).

<sup>62</sup>Paul’s verb of choice (ὠδίνω) is not his usual verb to depict his apostolic laboring (κοπιᾶω; e.g., 1 Cor 4:12; 15:10; Gal 4:11). Yet, it seems reasonable to understand Gal 4:19 to intensify his comments concerning his apostolic labor on behalf of the Galatians (4:11) under the imagery of birth pangs, preparing for citation of Isa 54:1.

<sup>63</sup>That Paul uses “to suffer great pain” (ὠδίνω) in 4:19 to anticipate the same verb within his later quotation from Isa 54:1 confirms that the apostle correlates himself with the Abraham narrative. Gaventa rightly argues, “Galatians 4:19 associates Paul’s apostolic vocation with the anguish anticipated in an apocalyptic era and recalls to the Galatians their own crucifixion with Christ. As such, Gal 4:19 employs a conventional metaphor—that of the anguish of a woman in labor—to identify Paul’s apostolic work with the apocalyptic expectation of the whole created order” (“The Maternity of Paul,” 191). For Gaventa’s mention of the Gala-

tians’ crucifixion cf. “until Christ is formed in you” (4:19) with Paul’s account in Gal 2:20.

<sup>64</sup>Robert Brawley contends, “Paul’s audacious claim to be in the pangs of childbirth (Gal 4,19) places him in parallel with Sarah who underwent the pangs of childbirth for Isaiah’s children of Jerusalem (Isa 51,2 LXX). Paul’s travail has a double reference indicated by the use of πάλιν in 4,19. It has to do with his present consternation over the Galatians. It also represents his earlier role when he first proclaimed the gospel to them (4,13-14)” (“Contextuality, Intertextuality, and the Hendiadic Relationship of Promise and Law in Galatians,” *Zeitschrift für Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 93 [2002], 113).

<sup>65</sup>Hays notes that Paul does not say, “My children, I am again overcome with pains of childbirth until you are birthed anew in Christ” (“The Letter to the Galatians,” 296).

<sup>66</sup>Concerning this turn in the imagery, Gaventa rightly argues that Paul does not write, “until I bring forth Christ in you’ ... for two reasons. First, God and God alone brings forth Christ.... Second, neither Paul nor any other believer wills Christ into existence or forms Christ within himself or herself” (“The Maternity of Paul,” 197).

<sup>67</sup>Hays observes, “The pronoun ‘you’ is plural, and the phrase ἐν ὑμῖν (*en hymin*) is best translated not as ‘in (each one of) you’ but rather as ‘among you, in your midst’” (“The Letter to the Galatians,” 296). Though the congregational accent is doubtless present, it can hardly become a reality apart from the assembling of individuals in whom Christ is formed discretely.

<sup>68</sup>Though their approaches are different from the one presented in this essay, two resources are nonetheless resourceful concerning Sarah in Isaiah. See Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 111-21; and Jobes, “Jerusalem, Our Mother,” 299-320. For example, Jobes states, “When Paul calls this trope ἀλληγορούμενα ... [h]e simply is simply preparing his readers to understand that this exposition of Sarah and Hagar goes beyond the traditional historical understanding of these women. He is transforming the story of Sarah and Hagar from narrative history to (realized) prophetic proclamation just as Isaiah did” (317-18).

<sup>69</sup>LXX—Gen 11:30 (ἦν Σαρα στεῖρα καὶ οὐκ ἐτεκνοποίει); Isa 54:1 (εὐφράνθητι στεῖρα οὐ τίκτουσα).

<sup>70</sup>Jobes wonders, “If, as many interpreters suggest, the barren one is Sarah, then it obviously must refer to her in that time of her life before she gave birth to Isaac. But this identification does not seem completely apt, for in the quotation the barren one is contrasted with the one ‘who has a husband.’ It was Sarah, not Hagar, who was the wife of Abraham” (“Jerusalem Our Mother,” 302).

<sup>71</sup>On how the NT writers sometimes intend reference to wider contexts than the brief citations actually quoted, see C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Substructure of New Testament Theology* (London: Nisbet; New York: Scribners, 1953). “We have seen reason to suppose that they often quoted a single phrase or sentence not merely for its own sake, but as a pointer to a whole context” (idem, *The Old Testament in the New* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963], 20).

<sup>72</sup>Concerning the *Akedah* narrated in Genesis 22, it is instructive to observe that Heb 11:19 treats the narrative of Genesis 22 as *parable*, for the author explains that Abraham reckons that God is able to raise someone from the dead “and ἐν παραβολῇ did receive him back.” This is akin to Paul’s use of ἀλληγορέω.

<sup>73</sup>Though the Genesis text does not explicitly indicate that God is the one who shuts the womb from conceiving, in 30:1-2 the text makes this explicit when Jacob responds to Rachel’s complaint, “Give me children, or I shall die!”, “Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?”

<sup>74</sup>Find the barrenness theme elsewhere in the case of Manoah and his wife with the birth of Samson (Judg 13:1-24), concerning Hannah and the birth of Samuel (1 Sam 1:2, 6), and implied in the story of the Shunammite woman and the birth of her son (2 Kgs 4:14). Except in the case of the Shunammite’s son, barrenness plays the purposeful role of displaying the extraordinary power and glory of the Lord who, in displays of uncommon grace to bring about conception and birth against nature’s impediment, and the sons born became Israel’s deliverers. Is it unreasonable to infer that this barrenness theme with such displays of God’s

power, from the beginning, foreshadows the greatest uncommon birth of the greatest deliverer of all, not just from a barren womb but from a virgin’s womb? After all, this greatest uncommon conception of all fulfilled the promise of the Seed made to Abraham whose wife, Sarah, was the barren one.

<sup>75</sup>Cosgrove, “The Law Has Given Sarah No Children,” 231. Cosgrove observes, “Here, then, is the argument. If Is. 54:1, in speaking of Sarah-Jerusalem, implies that her barrenness extends until the eschatological time of fulfillment, *then the law has given Sarah no children*. And with this point Paul reinforces in the strongest possible terms the repeated accent in Galatians that *life* (the Spirit, the realization of the promise, access to the inheritance, the blessing of Abraham) is not to be found in the Torah.”

<sup>76</sup>Space prohibits development of Paul’s association of Isaac’s miraculous conception and birth from Sarah’s barren and aged womb, which was as good as dead (cf. Rom 4:19; Gen 18:11), with resurrection in Christ Jesus (Rom 4:17-25). On this see Jobes, “Jerusalem, Our Mother,” 314-316; and Joshua W. Jipp, “Rereading the Story of Abraham, Isaac, and ‘Us’ in Romans 4,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 32 (2009): 217-42.

<sup>77</sup>In contrast to this way of reading the recursive barrenness theme in Genesis, with its accompanying motifs, Mary Callaway contrasts Isaiah’s use of the theme in 54:1 as speaking of a future revelation of God’s power while Genesis uses the theme to portray God’s past faithfulness to his people (*Sing, O Barren One: A Study in Comparative Midrash* [SBLDS 91; Atlanta: Scholars, 1986], 63-64). Read properly from retrospect, Genesis does portray God’s past faithfulness to his covenant promises, but Paul’s uses of the Abraham narrative constrain us to read the storyline prospectively, as predictive of God’s future revelation to be realized in Christ Jesus.

<sup>78</sup>Jobes assumes that Paul is compelled to counter his opponents’ use of the Abraham narrative. So she argues, “The story of the ‘seed’ and ‘inheritance’ as found in Genesis 17 seems to support the argument of the Judaizers: if the Gentile Christians of Galatia truly want to identify themselves as children of Abra-

ham and recipients of the promised inheritance, then they, too, like Abraham (not to mention the Lord Jesus himself), should be circumcised. Through circumcision, the sign of the Abrahamic covenant, they should identify themselves with God's covenant people. And yet Paul uses the same story of Abraham to argue just the opposite. How so? Paul's argument in Gal 4:21-31 resonates, not with the Genesis narrative, but with Isaiah's transformation of its themes of seed and inheritance. By using Isa 54:1 to sound the note of barrenness in Gal 4:27, Paul is metaleptically evoking echoes of Isaiah's proclamation concerning the seed and the inheritance" ("Jerusalem, Our Mother," 310).

<sup>79</sup>Not to be missed is the fact that the two covenants are (1) the Mosaic covenant God makes with Israel at Sinai, and (2) the promise covenant God makes not only with Abraham but also speaks to Christ, who is Abraham's Seed (cf. Gal 3:16). Cf. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 114-15.

<sup>80</sup>Some might be tempted to suppose that the two passages are in contradiction because Isaiah 51:2 reads, "Look . . . to Sarah, who *travails to bear* you," while Isa 54:1 uses the same word negatively, "Sing, O barren one, who does not bear children, break forth and cry aloud, you who are *not travailing in birth pangs*." Cf. the Greek text: ἐμβλέψατε . . . εἰς Σαρραν τὴν ὠδίνουσαν ὑμᾶς (Isa 51:2 LXX) and εὐφράνθητί στείρα ἢ οὐ τίκτους ἢ ῥῆξον καὶ βόησοῦ ἢ οὐκ ὠδίνουσα (Isa 54:1 LXX).

<sup>81</sup>It is uncertain whether first century A.D. synagogue services (*haftarah*) included the selection from the Prophets, Isaiah 54, following the lesson from the Torah, Genesis 16, concerning Sarah's giving Hagar to Abraham as a wife to bear the promised son. The NT provides evidence for *haftarah* readings in the synagogue as in Acts 13:15 and Luke 4:17.

<sup>82</sup>Cf. Jobes, "Jerusalem, Our Mother," 306-07. Cf. LXX of Isa 54:1 (εὐφράνθητι στείρα οὐ τίκτους) and Gen 11:30 (καὶ ἦν Σαρα στείρα καὶ οὐκ ἔτεκνοποίει). See also Martinus C. De Boer, "Paul's Quotation of Isaiah 54.1 in Galatians 4.27," *New Testament Studies* 50 (2004): 387

<sup>83</sup>Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 120.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup>I owe this observation to Jobes, "Jerusalem, Our Mother," 310). Cf. Isa 54:12ff. By way of contrast, cf. Isa 64:10, "Your holy cities have become a wilderness; Zion has become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation."

<sup>86</sup>Jobes, "Jerusalem, Our Mother," 309. Jobes credits Isaiah with "transforming" the Genesis story of Sarah which becomes the basis for Paul's use in Gal 4:21-31. Despite her approach, different from this essay's, her summary is on target when she states, "Isaiah's proclamation (1) provides an interpretation of Sarah's motherhood that can be taken to have wider reference than to the nation of Israel; (2) merges the concepts of matriarchal barrenness and the feminine personification of capital cities to produce female images of two Jerusalems, a barren, cursed Jerusalem and a rejoicing Jerusalem; and (3) introduces the concept of a miraculous birth to a barren woman as a demonstration of God's power to deliver a nation of people from death" (309).

<sup>87</sup>Cf. Paul's wording with the text of the LXX with differences highlighted.

Gen 21:10—ἐκβαλε τὴν παιδίσκην ταύτην καὶ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς, οὐ γὰρ κληρονομησεὶ ὁ υἱὸς παιδίσκης μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ μου Ισαακ.

Gal 4:30—ἐκβαλε τὴν παιδίσκην καὶ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς· οὐ γὰρ μὴ κληρονομησεὶ ὁ υἱὸς παιδίσκης μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἐλευθέρως.

<sup>88</sup>Much of the Old Testament is parabolic and must be read or heard as one reads or hears Jesus' parables, such as the Parable of the Sower. Symbolic representation really is there in the parable, if one has ears to hear and eyes to see.