

▸ Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians*

Chapter 4

Dr. Rod Rosenblatt

Professor of Theology & Christian Apologetics: Christ College of Concordia University (Irvine, Cal.)

- I. ▸ **Vss. 1-2 I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no better than a slave, though he is the owner of all the estate; but he is under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father.**
  - A. ▸ see how ardently Paul calls the Galatians back
    1. ▸ arguments based on experience, on the example of Abraham, on the Scriptures, on chronology, & on analogy
    2. ▸ cites here a political illustration about the young heir
  - B. ▸ ordinary people caught more easily by analogies & illustrations than by difficult & subtle discussions
  - C. ▸ Even in civil law, although the heir is the owner, he is still a slave.
- II. ▸ **Vs. 3 – So with us, when we were children, we were slaves to the elements of this world.**
  - A. ▸ We were heirs, having the promise of a future inheritance to be granted to us through Abraham's Offspring, Christ. (AE 26: 360)
    1. ▸ when time not yet come, Moses was our guardian/manager/custodian
  - B. ▸ "time of the Law" finished in two ways:
    1. ▸ first, through the coming of Christ into the flesh (Gal. 4:4,5; Heb. 9:12)
    2. ▸ second, same Christ comes to us in spirit every day & every hour
  - C. ▸ Paul: "... when we were children, we were slaves to the elements of this world ..."
    1. ▸ that is, Law was dominant over us, oppressed us with harsh slavery
    2. ▸ first, as a political restraint
    3. ▸ second (theological, spiritual use), Law accused, terrified, killed & condemned us before God
  - D. ▸ **To the elements of this world.**
    1. ▸ say some: physical elements (fire, air, water & earth) (AE 26: 362)
    2. ▸ Luther: But Paul has a special way of speaking: refers here to *the Law* of God itself
    3. ▸ Law = "elements of this world"
    4. ▸ Luther: *not* saying this with the intention that the Law should be held in contempt. Paul is not, either.
- III. ▸ **Vss. 4-5 But when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law.**
  - A. ▸ Luther: that is, after the "time of the Law" had been completed, and Christ has now been revealed, & the promise spread abroad to all nations
  - B. ▸ Note how Paul defines Christ here

1. ▶ “Son of God and of the woman” – Paul includes *both* the Person of Christ & the work of Christ
  2. ▶ bothered some of the ancients that Paul seems to “insult the Virgin” by calling her simply “woman”
- C. ▶ Important: “when the time of the Law” was over, Christ did *not* come to establish “a new Law.”
1. ▶ is a very wicked error when monks & sophists portray Christ as “a new lawgiver after Moses” (cf. the Turks & Mohammad)
  2. ▶ We adults, imbued from our earliest years with the noxious doctrine of the papists, absorbed it into our very bones, acquired an opinion of Christ very different from what Paul says here.
  3. ▶ is very important, therefore, to keep Paul’s statement here in mind: to define Christ properly, accurately.
  4. ▶ In what manner has Christ redeemed us?
  5. ▶ words “Christ was born under the Law” should be understood in this way (AE 26: 372)
- IV. ▶ **So that we might receive adoption as sons.**
- A. ▶ Paul means divine sonship (embellishing Gen. 22:18)
1. ▶ Earlier Paul used many other words, phrases to describe what we receive from “the Offspring”: righteousness, life, promise of the Spirit, redemption from the Law, the covenant
  2. ▶ here, Paul names *sonship* & the inheritance of eternal life
  3. ▶ Once the Offspring has removed the curse from us (sin, death, etc.), its place is taken instead by the blessing – righteousness, life & everything good.
- B. ▶ By what merit have we received these blessings? By *none*. (AE 26: 374)
1. ▶ What *could* be merited by men confined under sin, subjected to the curse of the Law, condemned to eternal death?
  2. ▶ have received all this freely, without deserving it, *yet not without merit* – not ours, but that of Jesus Christ!
- C. ▶ Too, together with the gift of sonship, we have also received the Holy Spirit, Whom God, through the Word, sends into our hearts, “. . . crying: Abba! Father!” (as now follows [see below (ed.)])
- V. ▶ **Vs. 6 – And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts.**
- A. ▶ Luther: Spirit is sent forth in two ways:
1. ▶ in primitive church, was in manifest & visible forms (AE 26: 374-375)
  2. ▶ second sending: through the Word, Spirit is sent into the hearts of believers (as Paul writes here) (AE 26: 375)
- B. ▶ means we are able, on the basis of the Word, to judge [**some? (ed.)**] things with certainty
1. ▶ papists & fanatical spirits are unable to judge with certainty *about anything*
  2. ▶ is *not* evident that we have been renewed in minds, have the Holy Spirit

- C. ▶ Luther: saying this to refute the dangerous doctrine of sophists & monks: that *no one can know* for certain that he is “in a state of grace” – even if he does good works & lives a blameless life! (AE 26: 377)
  - 1. ▶ is practically an article of faith throughout the papacy
  - 2. ▶ utterly ruined the doctrine of faith, disturbed consciences, abolished Christ from the church
  - 3. ▶ established idolatry, contempt of God, & blasphemy in the hearts of men
  - 4. ▶ Luther: “For anyone who has such doubts about the will of God toward him and who does not believe for a certainty that he is in a state of grace cannot believe that he has the forgiveness of sins, that God cares about him, or that he can be saved.” (AE 26: 377)
  - 5. ▶ Augustine correct: . . . anyone can certainly see his own faith if he has it . . . But this is what they [the papists] *deny!*
  - 6. ▶ person in position of authority (church *or* government): importance of believing that your office is pleasing to God (AE 26: 378)
  - 7. ▶ Paul: in addition, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts . . .
  - 8. ▶ is clear that the pope with his doctrine disturbs consciences, brings them to the brink of despair
  - 9. ▶ see here how great the weakness of faith is – even in the pious (AE 26: 379)

D. ▶ **Crying: Abba! Father!**

- 1. ▶ Paul could have said “praying,” but he does not. He says “crying.”
- 2. ▶ great comfort of these words (*and* Paul’s words in Rom. 8:26 – “. . . Spirit interceding for us with sighs to deep for words . . .”)

VI. ▶ **Vs. 7 So through God you are no longer a slave but a son.**

- A. ▶ is both a rhetorical exclamation & a conclusion
- B. ▶ We have received the Spirit through the hearing of the Word, can cry “Abba! Father!” (Paul)
  - 1. ▶ means that there is no slavery anymore, but sheer liberty, adoption, and sonship because it is the Father who promises
  - 2. ▶ offers me grace & fatherhood by means of His promises
  - 3. ▶ all that remains is that I accept it; happens when I cry out with a sigh of a son, “Father!”
- C. ▶ Paul’s use of “slave” here (AE 26: 390)
  - 1. ▶ *not* as in 3:28
  - 2. ▶ here Paul thinking of the “slave of the Law” (as in 4:3), sentenced & imprisoned under the Law, under the wrath of God, & under death (seeing God not via promise or as “Father,” but as tormenter, enemy, tyrant)
  - 3. ▶ Paul: This slavery has ended (“You are no longer a slave . . .”)
  - 4. ▶ Paul: If you cry, “Abba! Father!,” then certainly you are no longer slaves, but free men & sons

VII. ▶ **If a son, then an heir through Christ**

- A. ▶ Whoever is a son must be an heir as well. [AE 26: 392]
  - 1. ▶ merely by being born – no work & no merit brings him the inheritance, but only his birth.

- 2. ▶ “heirs” of Almighty God, the Creator of all
  - B. ▶ *but* law in our members is at war with the law of our mind (Rom. 7:23), does not permit faith to be perfect
    - 1. ▶ is why we need the aid & comfort of the Holy Spirit, who in our anxiety intercedes for us with a sigh too deep for words (Rom. 8:26)
    - 2. ▶ sin still clings to the flesh, continually disturbing conscience, hindering faith
    - 3. ▶ causes Christian to cry out with Paul (Rom. 7:24), “Wretched man that I am, . . .”
    - 4. ▶ for Paul, *both* the joy of the Spirit, *and* sadness of the spirit & fear (AE 26: 393)
  - C. ▶ is evident *how difficult a thing faith is* (AE 26: 393-394)
    - 1. ▶ is *not* learned & grasped easily & quickly
    - 2. ▶ weakness & struggle of the flesh with the spirit in the saints is ample testimony how weak their faith still is
- VIII. ▶ **Through Christ.**
- A. ▶ Paul always has Christ on his lips & cannot forget Him.
    - 1. ▶ foresaw that even among those who claimed to be Christians, nothing would be less well known than Christ & His Gospel.
- IX. ▶ **Vss. 8-9 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were in bondage to beings that by nature are no gods; but now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elements, whose slaves you want to be once more?**
- A. ▶ **This is the *conclusion of Paul’s argument.***
  - B. ▶ **From *here until the end of the epistle* he will not argue very much but will set forth commandments about morality.**
  - C. ▶ But first, he scolds the Galatians in great indignation for having let this divine & heavenly doctrine be stolen from their hearts so quickly & easily. (AE 26: 394-395)
    - 1. ▶ = You have teachers who want to lead you back into the slavery of the Law.
    - 2. ▶ I did *not* do this with you; rather I led you “out of darkness into the marvelous light.” (1 Pet. 2:9)
    - 3. ▶ I set you free from slavery, established you in the liberty of the sons of God.
    - 4. ▶ I did not proclaim the works of the Law & the merits of men to you; I proclaimed righteousness & the free gift of eternal & heavenly possessions to you through Christ.
    - 5. ▶ So why did you forsake the light, return so easily to the darkness? Why do you permit yourselves to be dragged down with such ease from grace to the Law & from liberty to slavery?
  - D. ▶ Luther: [again] see here that it is very easy to fall from faith (AE 26: 395)
    - 1. ▶ Galatians attest to this; so do the Sacramentarians & Anabaptists
    - 2. ▶ With great zeal we inculcate, urge, preach & teach the faith, we distinguish the Gospel from the Law in a pure way, but accomplish very little.
    - 3. ▶ Luther: no wonder Paul inculcates Christ in almost every verse!
  - E. ▶ Why does Paul say that the Galatians are “turning back to the weak & beggarly elements,” that is to the Law, when *they never had the Law?*

1. ▶ were *Gentiles!*
  2. ▶ “So was defecting from promise to Law, from faith to works, the same for Paul as serving gods that by nature are not gods?”
  3. ▶ Luther: Whoever falls from the doctrine of justification is ignorant of God & an idolater.
  4. ▶ **Formerly, when you did not know God, you were in bondage.**
- X. ▶ **Vs. 9 But now that you have come to know God.**
- A. ▶ Paul: amazing that you who know God on the basis of faith [in Christ] now fall away so suddenly!
    1. ▶ I thought you held to that knowledge with firmness, had no fear that you would be overthrown with such ease.
    2. ▶ . . . but you evidently have turned back again to the weak & beggarly elements, whose slaves you want to be once more.
    3. ▶ . . . you once believed it was the will of God to bless all nations – *not* through Law but through the *Christ* promised to Abraham; that was how you came to know God. (Gal. 3:9)
  - B. ▶ **Or rather to be known by God.**
    1. ▶ Luther: a rhetorical correction
    2. ▶ Paul: Alas, now you do *not* know God correctly (having gone from grace back to Law). But *God still knows you.*)
    3. ▶ words here, too, are a disparaging of the Law, a denying that we “know God” on the basis of our works (Matt. 11:27, Is. 53:11)
    4. ▶ [again] Paul amazed that Galatians so quickly seduced. Luther: “The same will happen to us!” (AE 26: 402)
    5. ▶ [Paul again] not just “elements,” but he adds “weak & beggarly”
    6. ▶ Luther: compare “conscience” (“weak & beggarly”) with Law (extremely powerful & rich) (AE 26: 403)
    7. ▶ Who would have believed that the Galatians, who had learned the pure doctrine from Paul, would be led astray from it so suddenly, so completely? (AE 26: 407)
  - C. ▶ **Whose slaves you want to be once more?**
    1. ▶ [again] Paul adds to let us know that he is speaking about those who are proud & presumptuous (AE 26: 409)
    2. ▶ [again] Paul denounces the Galatians for wanting to be slaves once more, condemns this slavery.
- XI. ▶ **Vs. 10 – You observe days, and months, and seasons, and years!**
- A. ▶ false apostles teaching observance of days, months, seasons, & years
  - B. ▶ theologians: is a reference to the astrological days of the Chaldeans
  - C. ▶ Augustine: is a reference to that Gentile practice; later saw it as a reference to days, months, etc. *of the Jews* (AE 26: 410)
  - D. ▶ Luther: Paul instructing the conscience, is speaking *not* of the Gentile practice here, but about the observance of days, months, etc. according to the *Law of Moses* (Sabbath, new moon, 1st & 7th month, 3 set seasons or festivals (Passover, Feast of Weeks, Feast of Booths), Sabbatical Year, & the Year of Jubilee)

1. ▶ following doctrine of the false apostles, Galatians observing these as a means of obtaining righteousness, *necessary for righteousness* (& that neglecting them brought damnation)
  2. ▶ is why Paul says they have lost grace & Christian liberty, have turned back to slavery of the “weak & beggarly elements”
  3. ▶ Paul does not permit consciences to be bound by the Mosaic Law in any way, but everywhere sets them free from the Law (Gal. 5:2, Col. 2:16, Lk. 17:20)
- E. ▶ objection: “If Galatians sinned in observing days & seasons, why is it not sinful for you to do the same [Lord’s Day, Christmas, Easter, etc.]?”
1. ▶ Luther: We observe these as completely free, do *not* burden consciences with them, do *not* say that they are necessary for justification or that by them we make satisfaction for sins.
  2. ▶ purpose is simply good order in the church, [later] to preserve the ministry of the Word
- XII. ▶ **Vs. 11 – I am afraid I have labored over you in vain.**
- A. ▶ Paul deeply troubled by Galatians, would have like to have written even more severely, but afraid it would only irritate them (AE 26: 412)
    1. ▶ Luther: so he softens his words, handles the Galatians with gentleness & fatherly care, transfers practically all the blame to himself
  - B. ▶ At the same time, he rebukes them quite sharply.
    1. ▶ words imply that they are either stubbornly unbelieving or that they have fallen away from the teaching of faith
    2. ▶ but they are still sinners – wicked, unrighteous & damned; as such it is vain for them to obey the Law or to “observe days, months, etc.
  - C. ▶ Paul mutes his pen, addresses the Galatians very sweetly
- XIII. ▶ **Vs. 12 – Become as I am, for I also have become as you are.**
- A. ▶ *not* instruction (thus far Paul has been instructing), but filled with feelings (AE 26: 412-413)
    1. ▶ to this point, Paul’s words filled with indignation, denunciations in harsh words (foolish, bewitched, unbelievers, crucifiers of Christ, etc.)
  - B. ▶ teaches by example that pastors should take a fatherly & motherly attitude – *not* toward the ravenous wolves but toward the miserable, misled, & erring sheep
    1. ▶ can’t be called back to their senses by a more severe rebuke; is more likely to anger them
  - C. ▶ Luther adds an admonition: is the nature of sound doctrine that, if taught well & learned well, it unites the minds of men in supreme harmony [but]
    1. ▶ where men neglect the sound doctrine, embrace errors, that harmony of the mind is disrupted
    2. ▶ Where fanatical spirits lead men away from the doctrine of justification, they immediately begin to persecute the pious with bitter hatred – even though previously they loved them dearly!
    3. ▶ Luther: are experiencing this today in our false brethren, the Sacramentarians & the Anabaptists (AE 26: 413-414)

- D. ▶ In Galatia, some had remained faithful to Paul’s preaching of the Gospel, but most, misled by the false apostles, no longer acknowledged Paul as their teacher.
  - 1. ▶ his name, teaching, had become loathsome to them
  - 2. ▶ Luther: am afraid his letter did not succeed in calling many back
  - 3. ▶ So Spirit told Paul to avoid doing more harm than good by his sharp rebuke. (AE 26: 415)
- E. ▶ **Become as I am, for I also have become as you are.**
  - 1. ▶ words should *not* be understood as pertaining to doctrine, but as pertaining to *attitudes*
  - 2. ▶ “Do not judge my heart on the basis of my words; judge my words on the basis of my heart.”
- F. ▶ **Brethren, I beseech you, . . .**
  - 1. ▶ Is it “beseeching” when Paul calls the Galatians bewitched, disobedient to the truth, crucifiers of Christ?
  - 2. ▶ But Paul interprets it *not* as an insult but as “beseeching”
  - 3. ▶ “. . . words were harsh, but take them in the proper way – not as rebuke but as a beseeching”
- G. ▶ **You did me no wrong.**
  - 1. ▶ as if Paul said, “Why should I be angry with you, since you have done me no wrong?” (AE 26: 417)
  - 2. ▶ response: “Then what are we to make of words like you used about us? Admit that we offended you.”
  - 3. ▶ Paul: “You have done me no injury whatever but, in fact, have done many favors for me.”
- XIV. ▶ **Vss. 13-14 – You know that it was because of weakness of the flesh that I preached the Gospel to you at first; and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus.**
  - A. ▶ Paul explains the favors he had received from the Galatians.
    - 1. ▶ 1st (& greatest): I preached Christ to you in great trials & you were not offended by my condition, message of cross did not offend you (AE 26: 417)
    - 2. ▶ . . . everyone who was powerful, wise, learned, or religious hated, persecuted, & spat upon Paul, stepped all over him & slandered him; Galatians were not offended by this. (AE 26: 418)
  - B. ▶ Jerome & others speculate Paul’s weakness as “sexual desire” [!] (AE. p. 418)
    - 1. ▶ most fathers lived in time when church enjoying temporal success, prospered in this
    - 2. ▶ still bishops & others *neglected* the teaching of the Gospel, preached their own commandments [and]
    - 3. ▶ grew smug (were not suffering trials, crosses that always fall on those preaching the pure Word)
    - 4. ▶ Luther: Were we not under constant hatreds, persecution of the devil & the world, Paul would be as ununderstandable [sp.] to us as he was to the whole world for centuries, as he still is obscure & unknown to papists & fanatics

- 5. ▶ “weakness of the flesh” *not* sexual (Jerome & others); means the suffering or affliction that Paul (and other apostles) bore in his body, as contrasted with strength or power (AE 26: 418-419)
- C. ▶ Why does Paul say the Galatians did not scorn him? Surely they did, for they defected from the Gospel! (AE 26: 421)
  - 1. ▶ Luther: Paul tells us himself (AE 26: 421)
  - 2. ▶ is a magnificent commendation of the Galatians, that they were not offended by Paul’s weakness & trial (received him as an angel, as Christ Jesus)
- XV. ▶ **Vs. 15 – What has become of the blessedness you felt?**
  - A. ▶ Luther paraphrases (AE 26: 422)
  - B. ▶ Paul tries to temper, sweeten the bitter drink (that is, the sharp rebuke)
    - 1. ▶ Galatians could be offended [and]
    - 2. ▶ false apostles will certainly put the very worst construction on what Paul writes (are masters at this art)
    - 3. ▶ Paul’s attempt to prevent such twisting of his words, slandering him
  - C. ▶ **For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.**
    - 1. ▶ Luther: Paul praising Galatians beyond all measure
    - 2. ▶ Luther: Galatians must really have been well-founded in the doctrine & faith of Christ
- XVI. ▶ **Vs. 16 – Have I, then, become your enemy by telling you the truth?**
  - A. ▶ Paul says *why* he is speaking so soothingly: suspects they regard him as hostile to them because he has rebuked them so harshly. (AE 26: 423)
    - 1. ▶ said what I said *not* to reproach you, but to call you back to the truth of the Gospel
    - 2. ▶ apply what I said not to your *persons* but to the *disease*
    - 3. ▶ Do not regard me as your enemy, but as your father.
- XVII. ▶ **Vs. 17 – They make much of you, but for no good purpose.**
  - A. ▶ Paul attacks flattery of the false apostles. (Rom. 16:18)
    - 1. ▶ Satan uses tricks & wiles; false apostles swear all they are interested in is advancing the glory of God
    - 2. ▶ claim they are prompted by the Spirit to teach the pure truth, to deliver the elect from errors, etc.
    - 3. ▶ promise sure salvation to those who accept their teaching
    - 4. ▶ pretext of piety; but false apostles are wolves in sheep’s clothing. (Matt. 7:15)
  - B. ▶ possible objection from Galatians (AE 26: 424)
    - 1. ▶ “are doing & saying what they do out of pure love for us”
    - 2. ▶ Paul: “Yes, but to no good purpose.”
    - 3. ▶ false apostles pretended to love the Galatians, claimed to be moved by a divine sort of zeal toward them
  - C. ▶ **They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them.**

1. ▶ as though Paul were saying, “Yes, they burn with zeal, love for you – but it is so that you make much of them in return, shut me out!”
  2. ▶ what Jews accused Paul of (Acts 24:5), what Gentiles accused Paul of (Acts 16:20-21) (AE 26: 425-426)
  3. ▶ offenses could not help causing sorrow to the apostles (Luther: were not “made of iron”)
  4. ▶ offenses do not affect the pious [? (ed.)] who know the devil hates Scripture’s/Paul’s teaching re: justification
- XVIII. ▶ **Vs. 18 – For a good purpose it is always good to be made much of, and not only when I am present with you.**
- A. ▶ as if Paul were to say, “You were zealous for me, loved me dearly when I was with you. Now you should do the same as if I were still there with you.” [and]
  - B. ▶ “. . . put a good construction on my rebuke; it is not evil, but an expression of my sorrow, concern for you.”
  - C. ▶ Luther: is a paradigm of how a faithful shepherd should be concerned for sheep, make every possible effort to keep them in sound doctrine
- XIX. ▶ **Vs. 19 – My little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you!**
- A. ▶ another appeal to Galatians’ emotions: Paul endearingly calls them “his little children” (AE 26: 430)
  - B. ▶ “in travail”
    1. ▶ allegory
    2. ▶ apostles [later, pastors] in place of parents (parents give birth to form of body, apostles give birth to form of mind)
    3. ▶ criticism of false apostles here (AE 26: 430)
- XX. ▶ **Vs. 20 – I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone.**
- A. ▶ contrast a letter with being present in person
    1. ▶ letter affects readers in various ways
    2. ▶ being present, person can interpret, modify, soften, correct, etc.
    3. ▶ Paul wishes he were present in person rather than just writing a letter.
  - B. ▶ **For I am perplexed about you.**
    1. ▶ = I am distraught about you, don’t know how to deal with you in a letter from far away. (AE 26: 432)
    2. ▶ Paul misses nothing, uses everything: He scolds, beseeches, soothes, commends, presents his case with care, etc. to call them back to the truth of the Gospel
- XXI. ▶ **Vs. 21 – Tell me, you who desire to be under law, do you not hear the Law?**
- A. ▶ Paul wanted to end letter here, wanted to be with Galatians in person
  - B. ▶ adds an allegory

- XXII. ▶ **Vss. 22-23 – For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, the son of the free woman through promise.**
- A. ▶ as though Paul were saying, “You have forsaken faith & Christ, have defected to the Law, so let me discuss the Law with you.” (AE 26: 433)
  - B. ▶ Abraham had 2 sons: Ishmael by Hagar, Isaac by Sarah
  - C. ▶ both had same father; what was the difference?
  - D. ▶ story from Genesis (AE 26: 434)
    - 1. ▶ Sarah: “God doesn’t lie, but it may be not via me?”; plan for Abraham/Hagar (Gen. 16:1-2)
    - 2. ▶ Paul’s powerful conclusion – *Not all the sons of Abraham are sons of God!* (cf. Rom. 9:7)
- XXIII. ▶ **Vs. 24 – Now this is an allegory.**
- A. ▶ Luther: Allegories *do not* provide solid proofs in theology. (AE 26: 435-436)
  - B. ▶ Paul had to prove justification by faith in Christ alone via better arguments than “allegory.”
- XXIV. ▶ **Vss. 24-25 – These woman are two covenants. One is from Mt. Sinai, bearing children for slavery: she is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mt. Sinai in Arabia.**
- A. ▶ Luther: Abraham a type of God; has two sons (that is, two nations) represented by Ishmael & Isaac (AE 26: 436)
  - B. ▶ represent two covenants: the old (Mt. Sinai, bearing children for slavery, is Hagar) & the new
    - 1. ▶ *difference*: Ishmael born of the slave according to the flesh (without a promise), could *not* be an heir
    - 2. ▶ contrast the new covenant (AE 26: 437)
    - 3. ▶ therefore, Law/old covenant contains *only physical promises*
    - 4. ▶ Luther summarizes (AE 26: 437-438)
  - C. ▶ **She corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.**
    - 1. ▶ As Paul made Sinai into Hagar, he would like to here make Jerusalem into Sarah [but]
    - 2. ▶ Paul *does* make Sarah into Jerusalem – just not the *physical* Jerusalem.
    - 3. ▶ abolition of the Law, reign established on Hagar & all her children
- XXV. ▶ **Vs. 26 – But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is out mother.**
- A. ▶ Luther reviews: Jerusalem, Hagar, under Law, in slavery, etc. (AE 26: 439)
  - B. ▶ Jerusalem that is above (Sarah)
    - 1. ▶ is truly lordly & free
    - 2. ▶ is our mother, giving birth *not* into slavery but into freedom
    - 3. ▶ = the church
    - 4. ▶ Do *not* interpret “above” to mean church triumphant (as sophists do). It applies to the “church militant!”
  - C. ▶ Luther: “The [so-called] Four Senses of Scripture”

1. ▶ Luther: by means of this, scholastics misinterpreted almost every word of Scripture!
  2. ▶ use of this method on these verses (AE 26: 440)
  3. ▶ what Paul actually says (AE 26: 440)
  4. ▶ must not be led astray into heaven on this (AE 26: 440-441)
  5. ▶ Sarah (or Jerusalem) is our mother, is the church (AE 26: 441)
- XXVI. ▶ **Vs. 27 – For it is written: Rejoice, O barren one that dost not bear; break forth and shout, that who art not in travail; for the desolate hath more children than she who has a husband.**
- A. ▶ Paul quoting Isaiah
    1. ▶ mother of many children, who has a husband, must grow sick & perish; the “barren one” who does not bear must have *many* children. (cf. Hannah – 1 Sam. 2:4-5)
  - B. ▶ Paul shows difference between synagog & church, between Law & Gospel (AE 26: 442-443)
    1. ▶ Law gives birth to many children (men of every age, the best & the wisest) who do not see or recognize any other righteousness but that of the Law (both human & divine)
    2. ▶ Sarah (the free woman, the true church) seems to be barren. (AE 26: 443)
    3. ▶ Paul shows the difference between the Law & the Gospel very clearly.
- XXVII. ▶ **Vs. 28 – Now we, brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.**
- A. ▶ are *not* sons according to the flesh, like Ishmael
  - B. ▶ are *not* like Israel, that boasted of being the offspring of Abraham & the people of God (cf. Christ’s words – Jn. 8:39-40; Jn. 8:42-44)
    1. ▶ remain slaves, will be cast out of the house
  - C. ▶ are children of *promise* (that is, of grace & faith), born of the promise alone (already discussed in 3:8) (AE 26: 449-450)
    1. ▶ are pronounced righteous – *not* on the basis of the Law or of works or of our own righteousness but on the basis of pure grace
  - D. ▶ So much about the allegory.
- XXVIII. ▶ **Vs. 29 – But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now.**
- A. ▶ Luther: contains powerful comfort
  - B. ▶ All who are born & live in Christ will have Ishmael as their persecutor!
  - C. ▶ Luther: We see this today.
    1. ▶ world filled with tumults, persecutions, sects, & offenses
    2. ▶ If we did not fortify our minds with this comfort from Paul, hold fast to justification, we would not be able to bear the power & wiles of Satan. (AE 26: 450)
    3. ▶ hear that *before* the Gospel came everything was tranquil & peaceful; since Gospel’s discovery, everything is in uproar, tumult & revolution.
    4. ▶ ask our opponents: What were the “good things” that followed the preaching of Christ & the apostles?

- D. ▶ doctrine of justification must be learned diligently; it alone can strengthen us against these, comfort us in trials
  - 1. ▶ cannot be otherwise with the world than that it see only offenses, say nothing good will come of it (1 Cor. 2:14)
  - 2. ▶ should be comforted that we are not charged with manifest crimes (murder, adultery, robbery) *but for what we are teaching*
- E. ▶ Gen 21 (Ishmael's persecuting Isaac)
  - 1. ▶ Jews' interpretation of passage (AE 26: 454)
  - 2. ▶ Luther's "take" (AE 26: 454)
  - 3. ▶ Whenever the teaching of the Gospel flourishes, is always this persecution in the church
  - 4. ▶ Paul here fortifying the godly here, so that they are not offended by these persecutions, sects, & scandals
- XXIX. ▶ **Vs. 30 – But what does the Scripture say? Cast out the slave and her son; for the son of the slave shall not inherit with the son of the free woman.**
  - A. ▶ Sarah's statement was no doubt distressing to Abraham (aroused his fatherly feeling for his son, Ismael) (Gen. 21:11-12) (AE 26: 457)
    - 1. ▶ . . . but God confirmed the sentence pronounced by Sarah, said to Abraham, . . .
  - B. ▶ Luther: Here the Ishmaelites hear a sentence pronounced against them that overthrows the Jews, the Greeks, the Romans, etc. who persecute the church of Christ.
    - 1. ▶ will overthrow the papists, all the self-righteous who boast that *they* are the people of God & the church
    - 2. ▶ hope that they will receive the inheritance, judge that we who depend on the promise are not just "barren & desolate" but heretics who have been cast out of the church & cannot be sons & heirs
    - 3. ▶ But God turns this judgment of theirs upside down & pronounces the sentence on them!
  - C. ▶ should note that here the Holy Spirit insults the people of the Law & of works by calling them "sons of the slave woman" (AE 26: 457-458)
    - 1. ▶ as though He were to say, "Why do you brag re: the righteousness of the Law & of works?"
    - 2. ▶ Such sentences provide us with assurance re: the doctrine of the righteousness of faith (as opposed to the doctrine & the righteousness of works).
    - 3. ▶ Even if the religion & discipline of the papacy stood as it once did, we would still have to follow Paul. (AE 26: 459)
    - 4. ▶ example: Bernard (AE 26: 460)
- XXX. ▶ **Vs. 31 – So, brethren, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.**
  - A. ▶ Paul concludes the allegory: "We are not children of the slave."
    - 1. ▶ = *not* under the Law (which gives birth into slavery, which terrifies, accuses, leads to despair)
    - 2. ▶ No! We are free of it through Christ; it cannot terrify & condemn us. [treated earlier]

3. ▶ Regardless how much the children of the slave woman persecute us for a time, our comfort is that they will finally be thrown into the outer darkness. (Matt. 8:12) (AE 26: 460-461)
- B. ▶ Paul found in the words “children of the free woman and of the slave” a wonderful opportunity to argue in support of the doctrine of justification. (AE 26: 461)
  1. ▶ deliberately took hold of word “free”
  2. ▶ used it to discuss Christian liberty (pope has destroyed it, subjected the church to bitter slavery by means of human traditions & ceremonies)
  3. ▶ liberty granted to us through Christ is today our chief defense against the tyranny of the pope
  4. ▶ Christian liberty a completely spiritual matter