

Galatians: The Letter that Saved the Church

The Child of the Promise



Galatians 4:12-31

Blackhawk Church 2021

The Letter So Far

Gal 1:11-2:14

- Paul's gospel is superior. It is directly received from Jesus Christ.
- It's not connected to Jerusalem. But Jerusalem confirmed it.
- "Those guys" get their authority from the Jerusalem leaders.
- The Jerusalem leaders are hypocrites who are teaching things they know are wrong.

Gal 2:15-21

- Why follow the Torah, if it can't fix what's wrong with us and the world?
- Only being united with Jesus can make us right (justify).

The Letter So Far

Gal 3:1-18

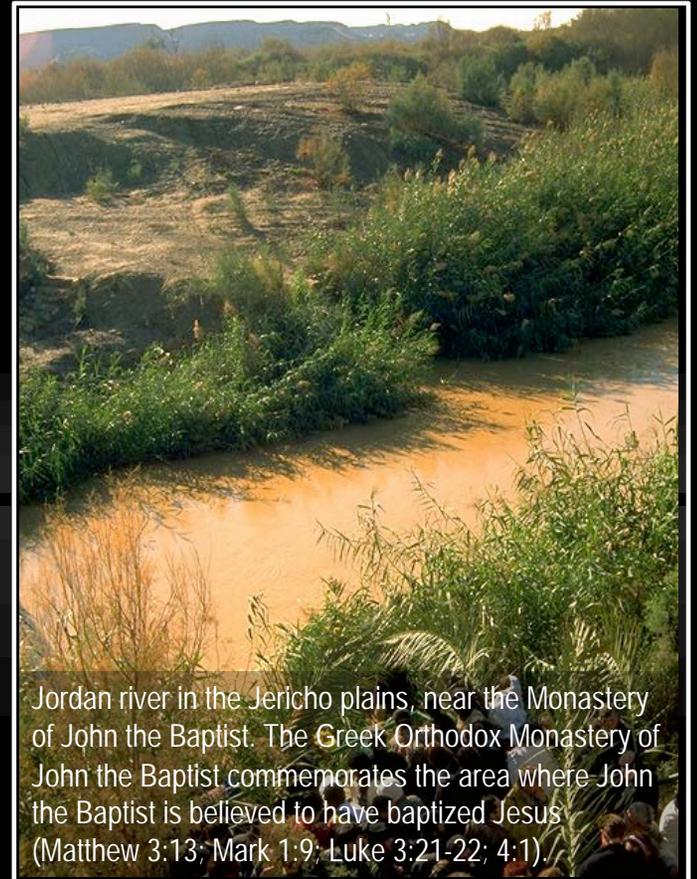
- Abraham was defined by his faith in God's plan to make a multicultural kingdom.
- Those who share this faith are the true children of Abraham.
- The Torah comes with a curse, the curse of exile.
- Jesus, as the faithful Jewish Messiah, lived out the mission of Israel and bore the curse on the cross. As the new Israel. He's the "one seed" of Abraham, through whom we become children of Abraham and receive the blessing of Abraham, the Holy Spirit.

Gal 3:19-4:11

- The Torah was given because of "transgressions" (unclear in Galatians).
- Torah served as a guardian for the Jews, much like elemental principles for the Gentiles.
- The time of the Torah is over. God's people have reached maturity in our union with Christ. The result is a new people without group privileges adopted as sons and daughters.

Paul's View of Baptism

3:26 So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷ for all of you who were **baptized into** Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.



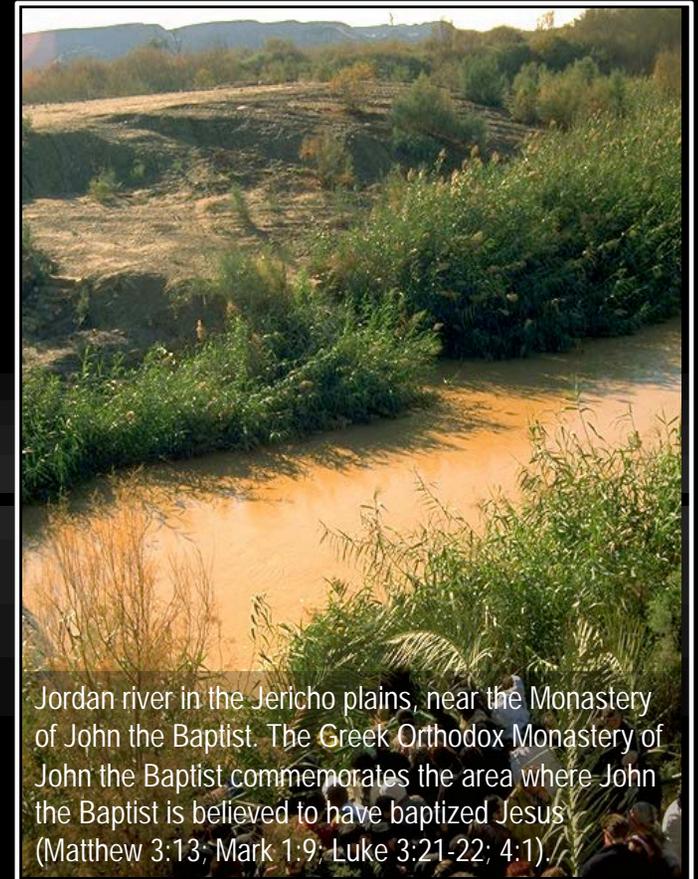
Paul's View of Baptism

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• Rom 6:3–4 Or don't you know that all of us who were **baptized into** Christ Jesus were **baptized into** his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

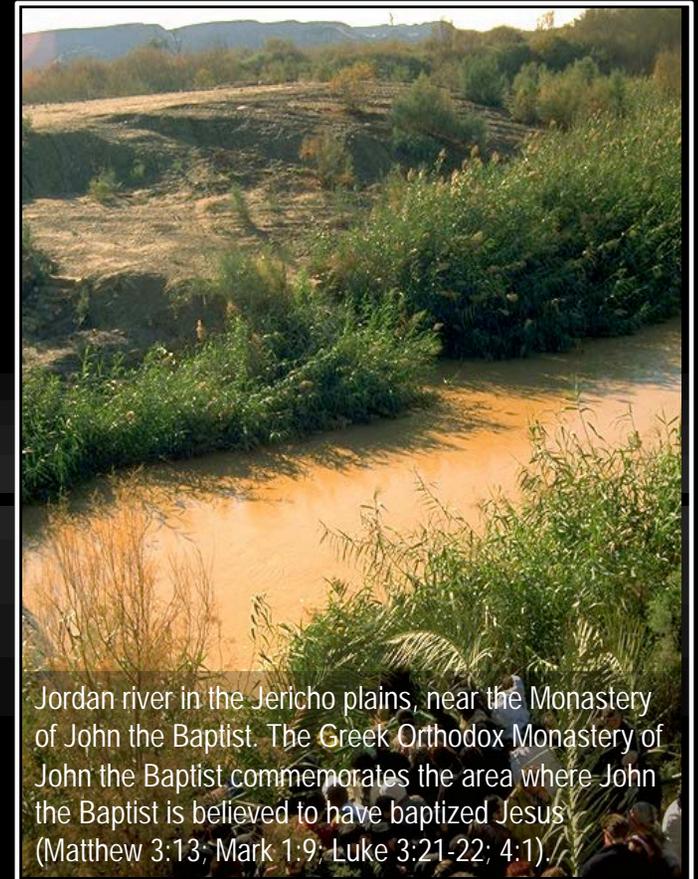
• 1 Cor 12:13 For we were all **baptized** by one Spirit **so as to form** one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

• 1 Cor 10:1–2 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all **baptized into Moses** in the cloud and in the sea.



Other NT Views of Baptism

- *Matt. 3:11* “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.
- *John 1:24-25* Now the Pharisees who had been sent questioned him, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”
- *1Pet. 3:20–21* to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,



Jordan river in the Jericho plains, near the Monastery of John the Baptist. The Greek Orthodox Monastery of John the Baptist commemorates the area where John the Baptist is believed to have baptized Jesus (Matthew 3:13; Mark 1:9; Luke 3:21-22; 4:1).

“Baptism” in the Old Testament

- Genesis 1:1-2 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.
- 1:6-8 And God said, “Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.” So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. God called the vault “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.
- 1:9-10 And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.



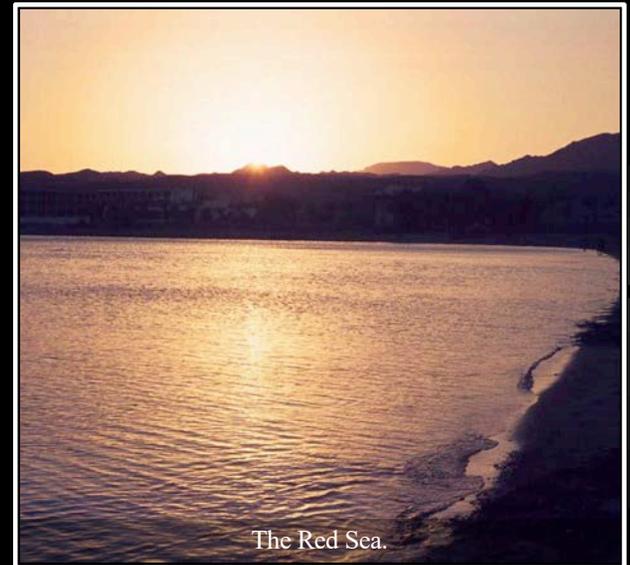
“Baptism” in the Old Testament

- Genesis 7:18-19 The **waters** rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the **water**. They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered.
- 8:1 But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a **wind** over the earth, and the **waters** receded.



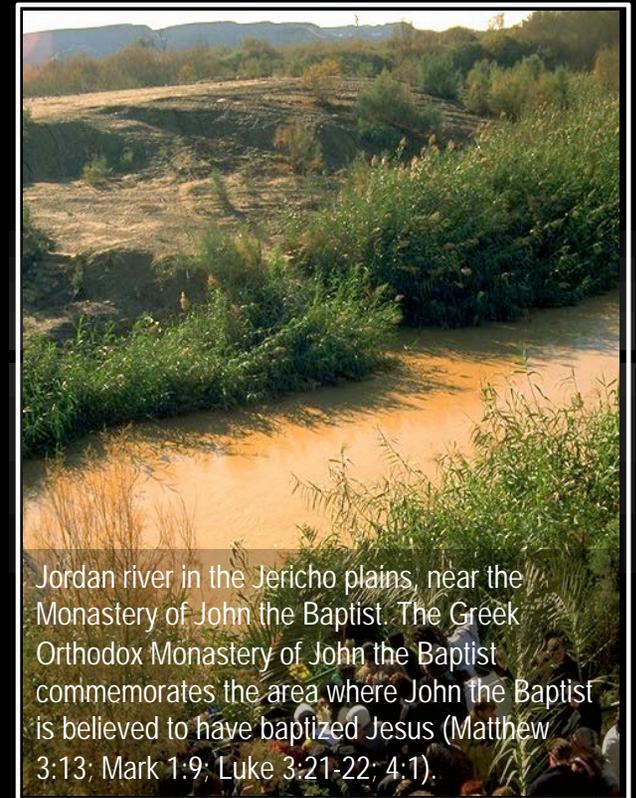
“Baptism” in the Old Testament

- *Exodus 14:21-22* Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east **wind** and turned it into dry land. The **waters** were divided, and the Israelites went through the sea on **dry ground**, with a wall of **water** on their right and on their left.
- *Isaiah 63:11-12* Then his people recalled the days of old, the days of Moses and his people—where is he who brought them through the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he who set his **Holy Spirit** among them, who sent his glorious arm of power to be at Moses’ right hand, who divided the **waters** before them, to gain for himself everlasting renown,



“Baptism” in the Old Testament

Joshua 3:14 So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them. ¹⁵ Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the **water's** edge, ¹⁶ the **water** from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the **water** flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea) was completely cut off. So the people crossed over opposite Jericho. ¹⁷ The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stopped in the middle of the Jordan and stood on dry ground, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on **dry ground**.

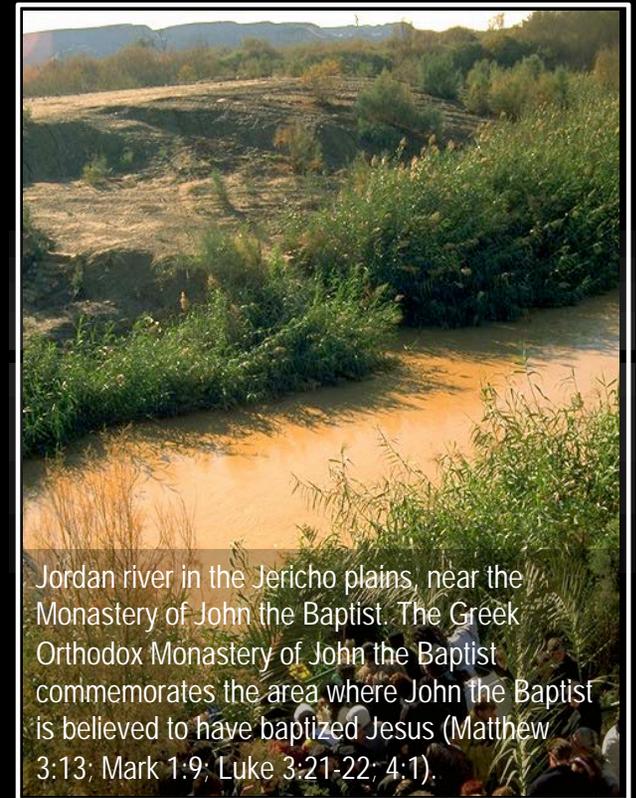


“Baptism” in the Old Testament

A Summary

In the Old Testament, there is a repeated literary motif of water split open and dry ground appearing. This dry ground is essential for life.

- Creation: God conquers the forces of chaos to produce space for human life.
- Flood: God destroys human sin to create moral space for human society.
- Exodus: God destroys of the forces of oppression to bring freedom for his people.
- Joshua: God brings his people into the land of his promise, the first step in the creation of a new nation.

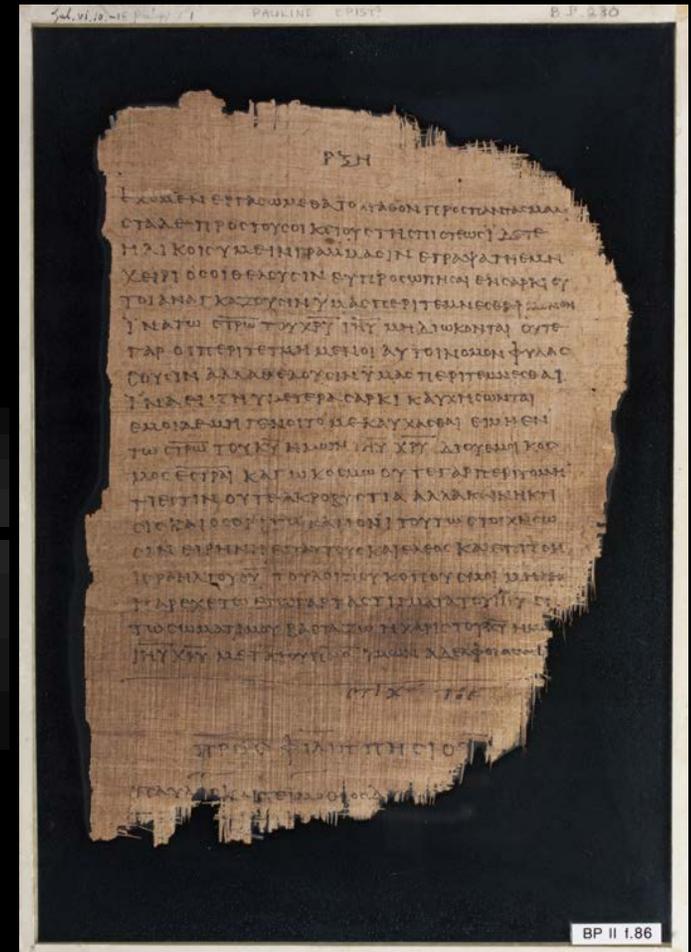


Jordan river in the Jericho plains, near the Monastery of John the Baptist. The Greek Orthodox Monastery of John the Baptist commemorates the area where John the Baptist is believed to have baptized Jesus (Matthew 3:13; Mark 1:9; Luke 3:21-22; 4:1).



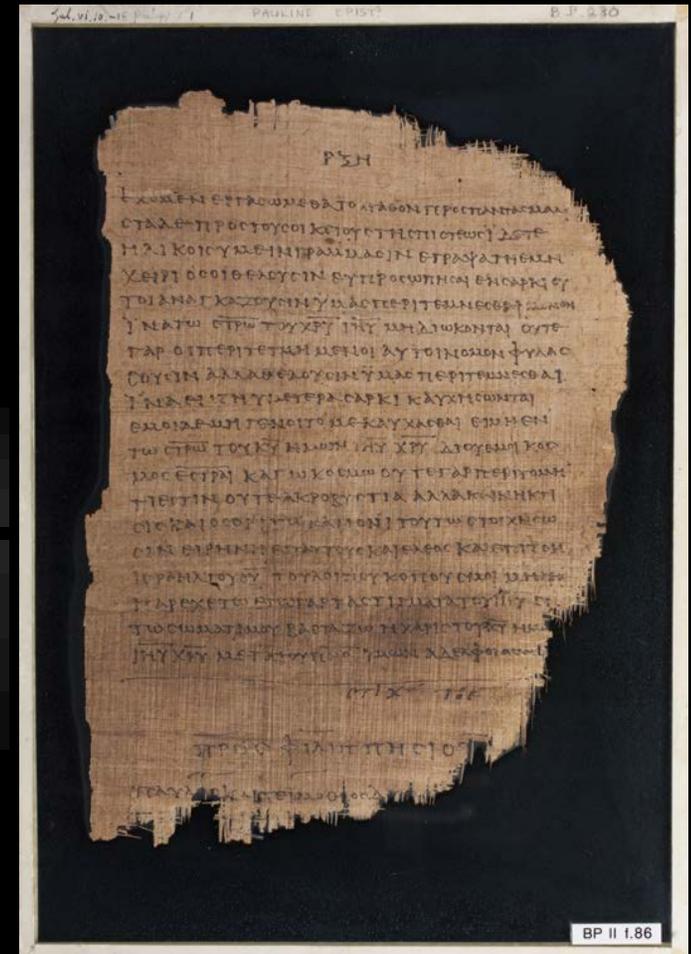
Galatians 4:12-16

¹² I plead with you, brothers and sisters, become like me, for I became like you. You did me no wrong. ¹³ As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you, ¹⁴ and even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. ¹⁵ Where, then, is your blessing of me now? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. ¹⁶ Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?



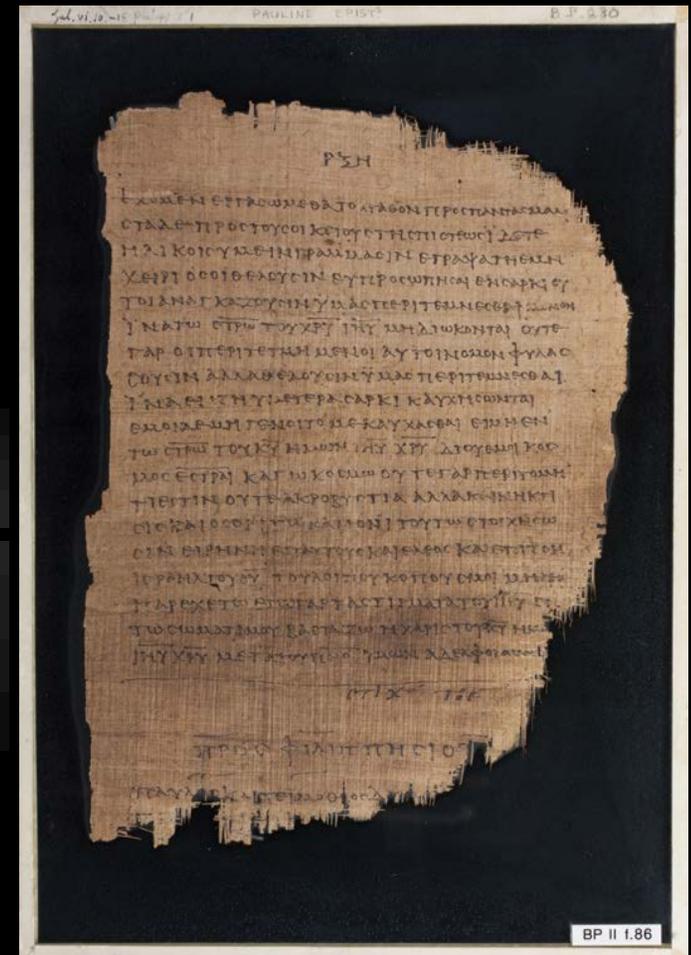
Galatians 4:17-20

17 Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may have zeal for them. 18 It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always, not just when I am with you. 19 My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, 20 how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!



Sarah and Hagar

21 Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. 23 His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a divine promise.



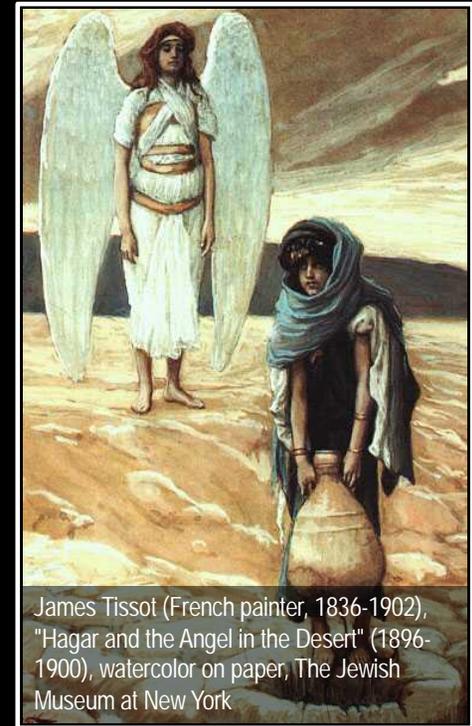
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The Story of Sarah and Hagar (Gen 16)

¹ Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; ² so she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said.

³ So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. ⁴ He slept with Hagar, and she conceived. When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress.

⁵ Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my slave in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you and me."



James Tissot (French painter, 1836-1902), "Hagar and the Angel in the Desert" (1896-1900), watercolor on paper, The Jewish Museum at New York

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The Story of Sarah and Hagar (Gen 16)

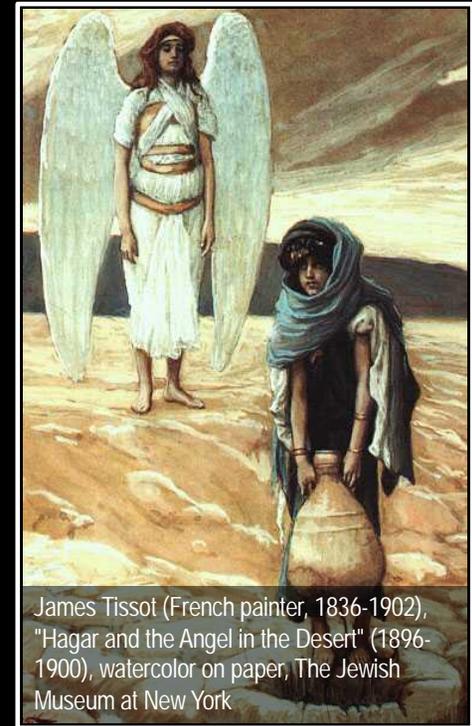
⁶ “Your slave is in your hands,” Abram said. “Do with her whatever you think best.” Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.

⁷ The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. 8 And he said, “Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?”

“I’m running away from my mistress Sarai,” she answered.

⁹ Then the angel of the LORD told her, “Go back to your mistress and submit to her.” ¹⁰ The angel added, “I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count.” ...

¹⁵ So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne. ¹⁶ Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.



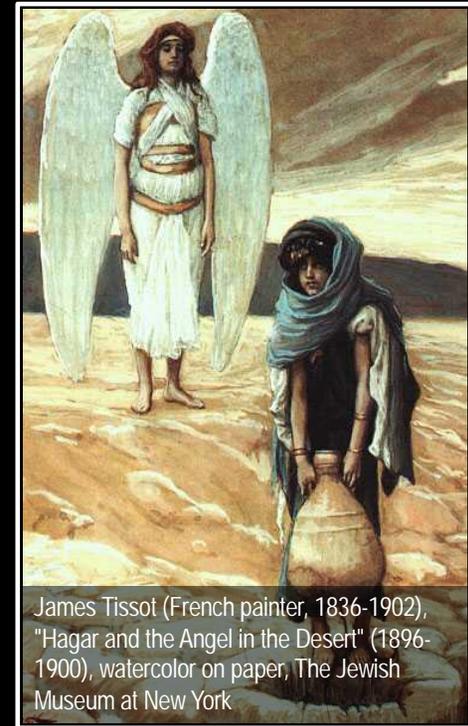
James Tissot (French painter, 1836-1902), "Hagar and the Angel in the Desert" (1896-1900), watercolor on paper, The Jewish Museum at New York

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The Story of Sarah and Hagar (Gen 17:15-21)

¹⁵ God also said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. ¹⁶ I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.”
¹⁷ Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, “Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?” ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, “If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!”
¹⁹ Then God said, “Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. ²⁰ And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation.
²¹ But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year.”



James Tissot (French painter, 1836-1902), "Hagar and the Angel in the Desert" (1896-1900), watercolor on paper, The Jewish Museum at New York

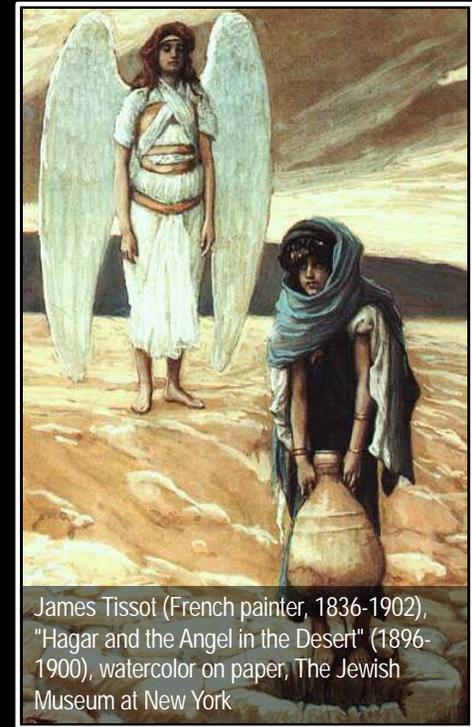
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The Story of Sarah and Hagar (Gen 21:1-21)

¹ Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. ² Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. ³ Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him. ⁴ When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him. ⁵ Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

⁶ Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me." ⁷ And she added, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."



James Tissot (French painter, 1836-1902), "Hagar and the Angel in the Desert" (1896-1900), watercolor on paper, The Jewish Museum at New York

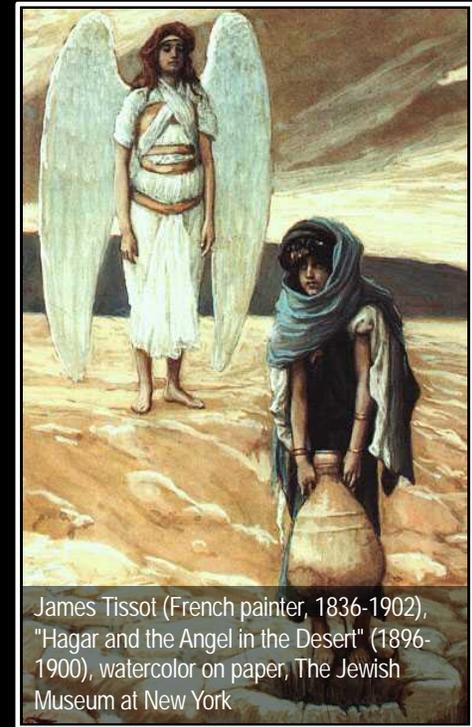
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The Story of Sarah and Hagar (Gen 21:1-21)

⁸ The child grew and was weaned, and on the day Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast. ⁹ But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking, ¹⁰ and she said to Abraham, “Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac.”

¹¹ The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son. ¹² But God said to him, “Do not be so distressed about the boy and your slave woman. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned. ¹³ I will make the son of the slave into a nation also, because he is your offspring.”

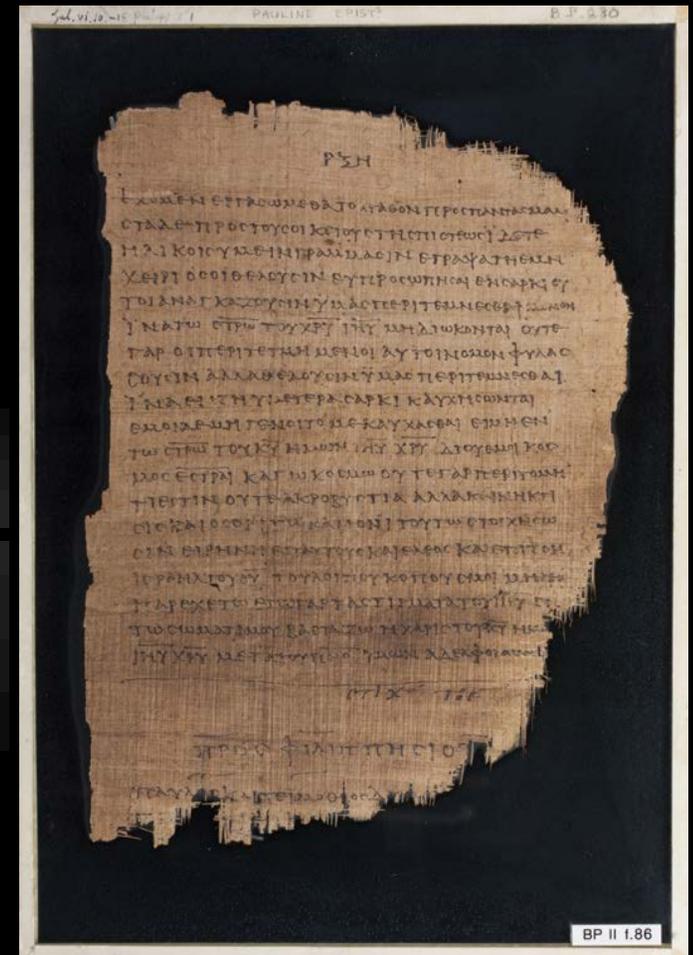


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Sarah and Hagar

²¹ Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? ²² For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. ²³ His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a divine promise.



Sarah and Hagar

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Hagar	Sarah
Slave Woman	Free Woman
Flesh	Divine Promise

Sarah and Hagar

²⁴ These things are being taken figuratively: The women represent two covenants. One **covenant is from Mount Sinai** and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. ²⁵ Now Hagar stands for **Mount Sinai in Arabia** and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. ²⁶ But the **Jerusalem that is above** is free, and she is our mother. ²⁷ For it is written: “Be glad, **barren woman**, you who never bore a child; shout for joy and cry aloud, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of **the desolate woman than of her who has a husband.**”

Hagar	Sarah
Slave Woman	Free Woman
Flesh	Divine Promise
Mosaic Covenant	(Abrahamic Covenant)
Mount Sinai (Arabia)	Jerusalem above
Married Woman	Barren Woman

Sarah and Hagar

²⁸ Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise. ²⁹ At that time the son born according to the flesh persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. ³⁰ But what does Scripture say? “Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman’s son.” ³¹ Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

Hagar	Sarah
Slave Woman	Free Woman
Flesh	Divine Promise
Mosaic Covenant	Abrahamic Covenant
Mount Sinai (Arabia)	Jerusalem above
Married Woman (Ishmael)	Barren Woman Isaac
(The Outsiders)	Galatians
Persecutor	Persecuted

Sarah and Hagar

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Persecutor	Persecuted

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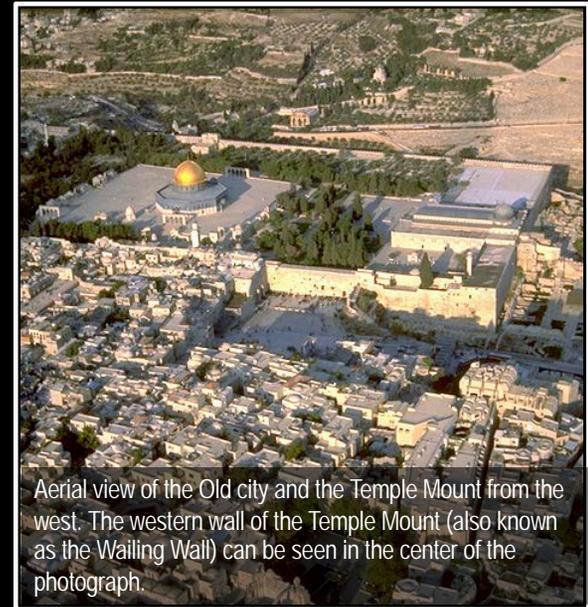
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The Jerusalem Above

⁸ You have given command to build a temple on your holy mountain, and an altar in the city of your habitation, **a copy of the holy tent that you prepared from the beginning** (Wisdom of Solomon 9:8)

³ This building now built in your midst is not that which is revealed with Me, **that which prepared beforehand here from the time when I took counsel to make Paradise**, and showed Adam before he sinned, but when he transgressed the commandment it was removed from him, as also Paradise. ⁴ And after these things **I showed it to My servant Abraham** by night among the portions of the victims. ⁵ And again **also I showed it to Moses on Mount Sinai when I showed to the likeness of the tabernacle and all its vessels.**

⁶ And now, behold, it is preserved with Me, as Paradise. ⁷ Go, therefore, and do as I command you.'] (2 Baruch 4:3-7)



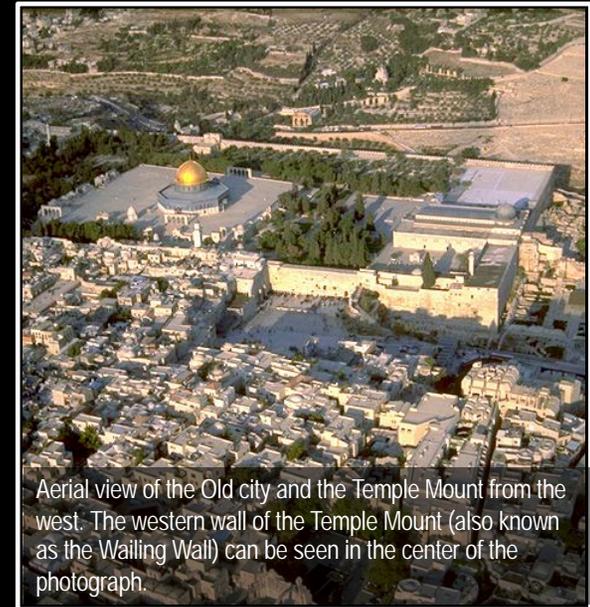
Aerial view of the Old city and the Temple Mount from the west. The western wall of the Temple Mount (also known as the Wailing Wall) can be seen in the center of the photograph.

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The Jerusalem Above

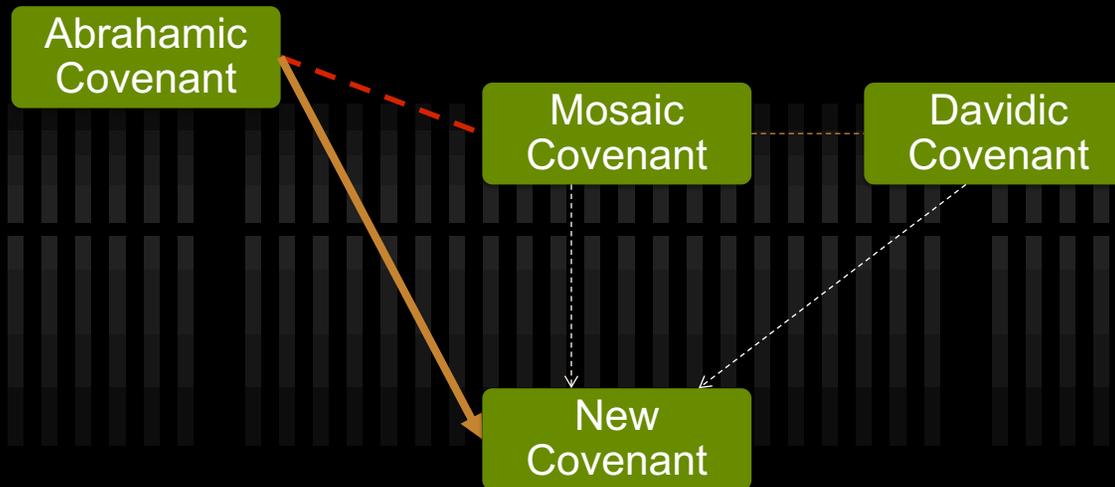
¹² The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, **the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God**; and I will also write on them my new name (Rev 3:12).

² I saw the Holy City, **the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God**, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God (Rev 21:2-3).



Aerial view of the Old city and the Temple Mount from the west. The western wall of the Temple Mount (also known as the Wailing Wall) can be seen in the center of the photograph.

Paul's Understanding of Covenants

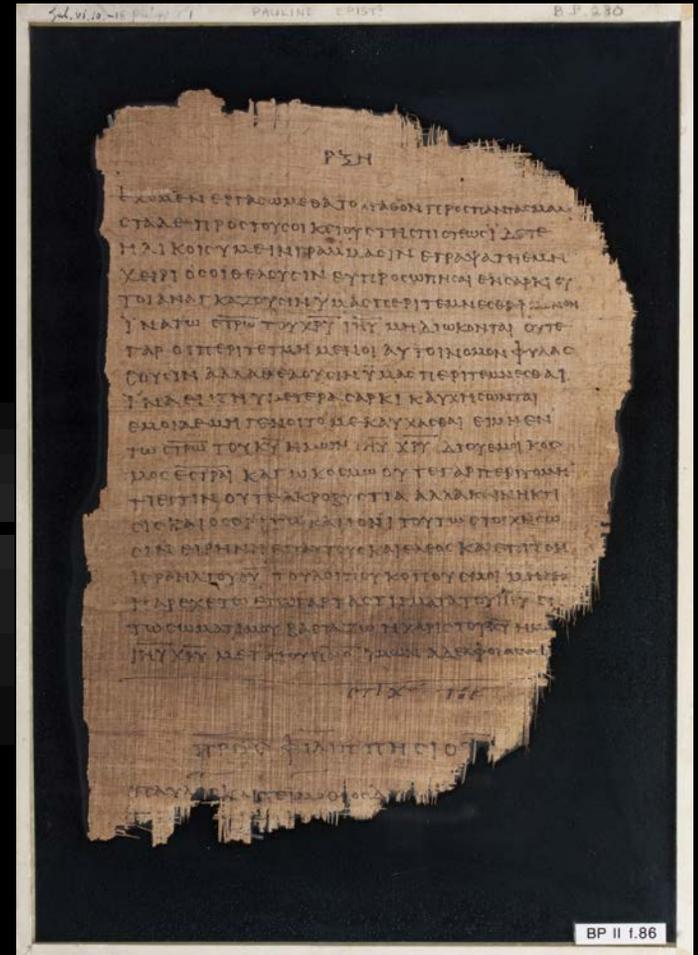




A Conversation (Gal. 4:12-4:31)

Paul: Look, being united with Christ means we're one family. You took care of me when I got sick. I am now going to take care of you. I am going to suffer (like a mother giving birth) until you guys figure this out.

Those guys are trying to break up the family. They're all gung-ho about this Torah thing but they don't care what it's doing to us as a community. But if you want to do the Torah, let's read the Torah:

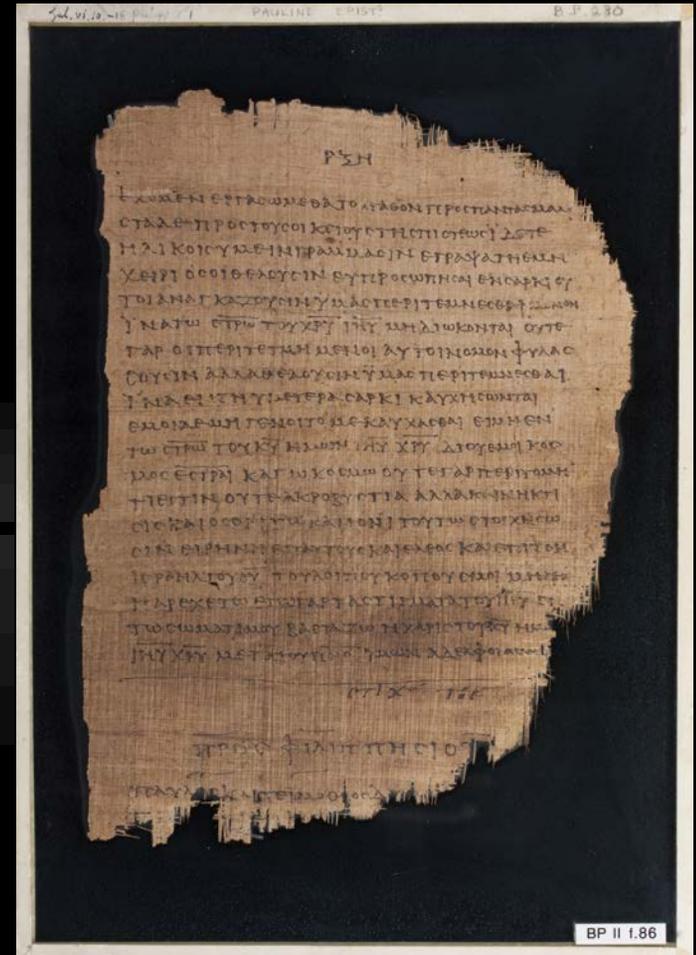


A Conversation (Gal. 4:12-4:31)

Paul: Who are the true children of Abraham?
Abraham had two wives: Sarah and Hagar.
Two sons: Ishmael and Isaac. Both were
fathered by Abraham; both were circumcised.
Yet one is the true child, the other is not.

So, what's the difference between the two?

- Promise vs. human effort
- Freedom vs. slavery
- The barren one vs. the fertile one.





A Conversation (Gal. 5:1-12)

Galatians: OK, but what's the big deal, Paul? Why are you getting so upset? What's wrong with a little circumcision? What's wrong with observing Sabbath? No harm no foul, right?

Paul: Jesus the Messiah has ushered in this new age of freedom and Spirit. Circumcision is not just any ol' thing; it signals your desire to return to the guardianship of the Torah. This is not simply adding one little thing to the gospel, this is a rejection of the grace of Jesus Christ. Indeed, the nature of grace is such that when you add anything to grace (creating new requirements), you destroy grace. It becomes a different gospel. These people who pervert the gospel should be emasculated.

