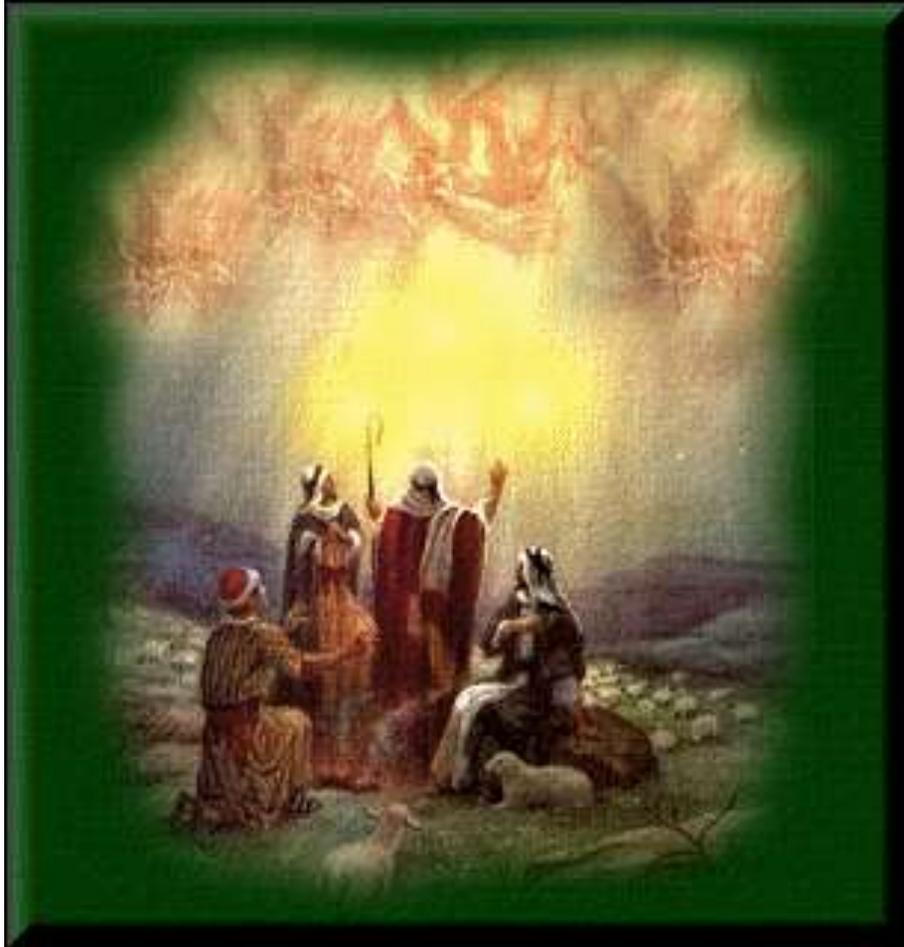


FREEDOM FROM HEAVEN



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BACKGROUND TO THE PASSAGE

Paul wrote the Book of Galatians to emphasize the fact that as Christians, we are no longer under the law but under grace. In a stroke of genius Paul visits an Old Testament example to illustrate his point and in doing so he identifies Heaven as a place that is free. God promised Abraham that he would have a son by his wife Sarah. As Abraham and Sarah aged and did not see the fulfillment of the promise they took the situation into their own hands. Sarah gave Hagar, her handmaid, to Abraham and she bore him a son who was named Ishmael. Later, as God promised, Sarah bore Abraham a son and his name was Isaac. Paul uses this illustration as an allegory, he compares Hagar and Sarah as representing two covenants—Hagar the Covenant of Law under bondage and Sarah the Covenant of Grace representing freedom. Hagar represents the Law given at Mt. Sinai and Sarah represents the Grace given through the death of Christ on the cross. Hagar represents the current Jerusalem which is in bondage and Sarah represents the New Jerusalem which is free. Jesus came to bring us a taste of what freedom in Heaven is like.

THE DOMINION

“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (Jn. 8:36). In this life most people live in freedom. They are not in slavery to another person. Yet they become slaves to other things—drugs, food, careers, possession, religion, relationships, etc. However, the freedom that Christ brings is a liberating power that gives the believer dominion.

THE DELIVERANCE

Paul said that the Jerusalem which is above is free. It is free from bondage to the Law (Rom. 7:6), it is freedom from bondage to sin (Rom. 8:2) and it is freedom from the bondage to death (Rom. 8:2).

THE DETERMINATION

All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any (1 Cor. 6:12). There are many things that it is alright for a believer to do. But if one is not careful, he might find himself in bondage to those things. Paul informs us here that even though it may be alright for him to do something, he was determined that nothing would bring him into bondage.

THE DEDICATION

The Dedication to Exercise Self-Control

The Apostle Paul dedicated himself to exercise self-control. “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last,

but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize” (1 Cor. 9:24-27 NIV).

The Dedication to Conquer Things that Seek to Enslave

“And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24)