



### b. Shabbat 88a

*“And they took their places at the foot (תחתית) of the mountain” (Exod 19:17) – Said R’ Avdimi bar Chama bar Chasa: “It teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, turned the mountain over them like a tub, and said to them: ‘If you accept the Torah, well and good; and if not, there will be your burial.’”*

### Galatians 4:21-31

Tell me, you who want to be under Torah, do you not listen to the Torah? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman [Hagar] and one by the free woman [Sarah]. But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. This is **allegorically** speaking: for these are two covenants, one from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. For it is written, *“Rejoice, barren woman who does not bear; break forth and shout, you who are not in labor. For more are the children of the desolate Than of the one who has a husband.”* [Isaiah 54:1] And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. 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 also. But what does the Scripture say? *“Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman.”* [Genesis 21:10] So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.

αλληγορεω  
(*alleigoreo*)  
“allegory”

**4:21** Tell me, you who want to be under Torah, do you not listen to the Torah?

*“You Gentiles who want to take on the religion of Judaism, don’t you understand that the Torah discourages this?”*

**4:22** For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman [Hagar] and one by the free woman [Sarah].

There are two kinds of “ben Avraham”,  
i.e. two different types of Gentiles.

**4:23** But the son by the bondwoman [Hagar] was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman [Sarah] through the promise.

You can become a *ben Avraham* either through physical means (conversion) or spiritual means (faith).

**4:24-25** This is allegorically speaking: for these [two women] are two covenants...

**Galatians 3:17-18** *This is what I mean: the Torah, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. For if the inheritance comes by the Torah, it no longer comes by promise, but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.*

The covenant at Sinai does not replace the covenant with Abraham  
any more than Hagar can replace Sarah.

... one from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children...

Hagar's Children = Gentile believers who have taken on the religion of Judaism

**4:26** But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is **our** mother.

Sarah's Children = Jewish & Gentile believers who have placed their faith in Yeshua

**27** For it is written, "*Rejoice, barren woman who does not bear; break forth and shout, you who are not in labor. For more are the children of the desolate than of the one who has a husband.*" [Isaiah 54:1]

**4:28-29** And you **brothers**, like Isaac, are children of promise. 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 also.

People who are legalistic persecute people who are spiritual.

**4:30** But what does the Scripture say? "*Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman.*" [Genesis 21:10]

Those who do not live by faith in God's promise will be judged according to their conduct.

**4:31** So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.

Our source is God's faithfulness, not our own.

**b.Shabbat 88b** *And that is what Rava said: To those who are right-handed in their approach to Torah, and engage in its study with strength, good will, and sanctity, Torah is a **drug of life**, and to those who are left-handed in their approach to Torah, it is a **drug of death**.*

R' Adin Steinsaltz translation

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## RESOURCES:

### Verses 22-23

**Romans 4:11-12,16-17** He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of (A) all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, and to make him the father of (B) the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised...That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring – not only to the adherent of the Torah but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations” ...

### Verse 27

**Isaiah 54:1** “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 Adonai.

**Isaiah 53:12** Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

### Verse 30

**Genesis 21:8-10** And the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking. So she said to Abraham, “Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac.”

### Verses 28-29

**Midrash Rabbah (Barasheit 55:4)** – *Isaac and Ishmael were debating with each other. This one (Ishmael) said, “I am more beloved before God than you, for I was circumcised at the age of thirteen.” And that one (Isaac) said, “I am more beloved than you, for I was circumcised at the age of eight days, the prescribed time for circumcision. Ishmael elaborated to him, “I am nevertheless more beloved than you. And why do I say this? Because I had the ability to resist when told to submit to circumcision, yet I did not resist, whereas you were too young to resist.”*

“Paul compared those converts [to Judaism] to Ishmael, the son of Hagar, because there was nothing miraculous about the way that they entered the family of Abraham. They became sons of Abraham by physical means... Ishmael’s status, even as a son of Abraham, was that of a slave, so to speak. He was the son of a slave girl, second behind Isaac. His is second-class status.”

≈ D. Thomas Lancaster “The Holy Epistle to the Galatians”  
(Marshfield, MO: First Fruits of Zion, 2001) - pg. 223