

"BUT AS THEN . . . SO EVEN NOW"

TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING AND REPRODUCTION OF

PAUL'S ALLEGORY IN

GALATIANS 4:21-31

WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ROLE OF

HISTORY AND GENERAL REVELATION IN THE

INTERPRETIVE PROCESS

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INTRODUCTION

On March 26, 1997, the world was shocked to learn of the mass suicide of thirty-nine followers of the Heaven's Gate religious cult. News reports told us of how the group understood that the arrival of the Hale-Bopp comet in the earth's northwest skies was an omen that an alien group had arrived to take the earthlings to their next level of existence. Their spaceship was disguised by following in the wake of the comet. Later reports noted how the group understood death as passing from one level of existence to a higher one.

Subsequent news stories dealt with the comparison of this cult and their beliefs with other religious groups and their beliefs. Even Nightline, on March 31, 1997, drew out the comparison with Mormonism and Christianity and its celebration of Easter.

I mention all of this simply to draw attention to the role of general revelation in understanding truth, especially its relationship to special revelation. If the Magi of Matthew 2 were following "Messiah's star", what made their pursuit authentic and real and the pursuit of the Hale-Bopp comet by the Heaven's Gate cult unauthentic and unreal? Is general revelation of value in understanding special revelation? Or, is general revelation just as liable to lead astray and therefore of no value at all in "getting meaning" (hermeneutics)?

One of the more perplexing uses of the Old Testament in our New Testament canon is what Paul does in Galatians 4:21-31, where he treats the text and events of the Pentateuch in an "allegorical" way. Several questions have vexed the Church since Paul's

day. What is it that Paul does? That is, from the standpoint of hermeneutics or interpretation, is Paul resorting to that form of allegory practiced first by the Greeks in their interpretation of their literature, and then by the Jews in their interpretation of their Bible? Or, is it something else? The second major question is equally important. Is Paul a model for subsequent Christian interpretation? That is, should we today follow Paul's example in interpreting the Old Testament, or even the New Testament? The third question follows on the first two. How does this passage inform us of the role that general revelation, including history, has in discovering the meaning of Scripture? There are lesser questions which need to be addressed in the course of discussing this use of the Old Testament, but they reinforce the three greater ones above.

The following discussion is an expansion of a study submitted as a paper to the Northwest Section of the ETS in March, 1997.¹ In that study I present a detailed exegesis of Galatians 4:21-31, and a review of the various ways, past and present, that the "allegory" has been interpreted. Those matters form parts one and two of this study. In part three of this study I expand on the interpretation of Paul's idea of allegory and deliberately relate the whole study to the larger question of how general revelation, particularly history, is used to get meaning, to aid interpretation of the text. I believe that Paul's "allegory" helps us to understand more broadly the relationship of hermeneutics and general revelation.

The aim of this study is to look again at Paul's example, especially in light of those discoveries in literary studies which may help our understanding. I have in mind here such considerations as (1) the meaning of meaning, linguistics, and literary theory, (2) the role of world view, (3) a more intense involvement of the Holy Spirit in the interpretative process, and (4) issues raised by postmodern concerns in the interpretation of literature. Some of these matters I have discussed elsewhere in a more general way.² In this study I seek to apply them in a more concentrated way to a particular passage of Scripture. Finally, I wish to relate the entire study to the matter of general revelation and the role of history in helping to understand the text. What value does Paul place on general revelation, and should we do the same?

In this study, I am not going to address in detail other passages of Scripture, nor am I going to trace the history of interpretation in the Church, especially as it relates to allegory, nor am I seeking to engage exhaustively contemporary discussion of allegory as it relates to the larger issue of hermeneutics. As a more modest goal, I want to bring to bear on the text in question the four matters mentioned in the preceding paragraph. I will then discuss the role of history in hermeneutics.

It will be helpful to state a bit more about each of these matters. When I refer to (1) the "meaning of meaning" I mean such things as meaning (the broad concept to cover much

¹See J. De Young, "*But As Then . . . So Even Now*": *Toward An Understanding of Paul's Allegory in Galatians 4:21-31*," a paper presented to the Northwest Region, The Evangelical Theological Society, Tacoma, WA, March 8, 1997.

²See J. De Young and S. Hurty, *Beyond the Obvious: Discover the Deeper Meaning of Scripture* (Gresham, Or.: Vision House, 1995).

of the following), sense (the single idea being said about the referent), referent (what is spoken about), intention (what determines the referent a word is to have), and significance (which changes; the application or what relates the meaning to some person or circumstance; etc.).³ Usually a literal hermeneutic makes quite a distinction between meaning (including the concepts of sense, referent, and intention, determined by the author) and significance (determined by the reader), putting application in this latter category.⁴

More recently even some of the very proponents of these distinctions have revised their ideas in light of the divine and human authorship of Scripture, nearer and later fulfillment of prophecy, intrinsic genre (canonical interpretation), and such matters. Erickson, Glenny, Bock, Poythress, and Hirsch are several among many who have revised such distinctions.⁵ All of these matters need to be brought to bear on how we should interpret what Paul does regarding his "allegory" in Galatians 4. As Paul draws on his Bible, does he give in his text the meaning, the significance, or the application; or do the more recent ideas discussed above better represent what Paul is doing? Or, are these categories anachronistic for him? Is Paul doing something altogether different?

What do we mean by (2) world view? How does it come into consideration? We mean that there is a way of looking at reality, at truth, at the moral or good that affects everything we do and believe. World view is a concept which incorporates everything,

³W. Kaiser and M. Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 34-45.

⁴See E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale, 1957), 8. So also Kaiser and Silva, *Hermeneutics*, 41; R. Stein, *Playing by the Rules* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 38-46.

⁵M. Erickson, *Evangelical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 14ff., 31-32, suggests the erasing of the distinctions so that meaning may include both the original signification and the later significance, with both original and future persons and situations included in the intention, which he would redefine as affirmation or assertion. W. E. Glenny, "The Divine Meaning of Scripture: Explanations and Limitations," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 38/4 (Dec., 1995) 481-500, finds that meaning (for the Bible, at least) is multidimensional: it includes the three aspects of the original signification (following Erickson, and refers to the literary content) of the text; the *sensus plenior* or canonical level of meaning (the divine meaning); and the significance of the text as the hearer or reader makes application. V. Poythress, "Divine Meaning of Scripture," *WTJ* 48 (1986): 278-79, argues that since God could foresee all legitimate applications of the text, these applications enter into God's meaning at the outset of dual-authored Scripture. This seems to be supported by what Paul says (in Galatians 3:8) as to how Genesis 12:3 came to be written.

Even Hirsch in "Meaning and Significance Reinterpreted," *Critical Inquiry* 11 (Dec., 1984), 202, 225, has made such concessions about non-biblical texts. He asserts that meanings with a future directed intention may have many different future fulfillments as long as these can be subsumed by the original intention-concept. He describes this as a major change in his understanding about meaning. Yet even in his earlier work (*Validity*, 86, 88), he laid the foundation for that with which biblical interpreters are struggling, especially under the rubric of a canonical approach to interpretation. He affirmed his concept of "intrinsic genre" by which the whole context impacts the meaning of any particular text, a hermeneutical principle widely-held. With regard to Scripture, the only one who knew the context of the canon as a whole, even while Moses, David, Paul, John, etc., were writing, was God the divine Author. Thus his meaning would be greater than that of any of the human authors.

including our culture, language, theology, and hermeneutics. Thus hermeneutics or interpretation is determined by world view.⁶ What Paul does in Galatians 4 in his interpretation of his Bible has been affected by and determined by his world view.

What does a deliberate attention given to the (3) Holy Spirit's role in interpretation mean? Is the Holy Spirit necessary for interpretation, for understanding meaning, or does he only assist in applying Scripture?⁷ Was the Spirit necessary for how Paul interpreted his Bible, or discovered his "allegory"? How did this work?

Finally, we have mentioned the need to take a new look at Paul's words in Galatians 4 in light of (4) the concerns of constructive postmodernism⁸ relative to the interpretation of literature. Postmodernism puts stress on the role of the reader in formulating meaning; it asks questions of the text as the vehicle to get meaning; it rejects objective meaning but steers a middle course between objectivity and subjectivity; it views interpretation as the process of interpreting interpretations rather than truth; and it places emphasis on the community as the focus of interpretation.⁹ Postmodern literary studies are giving renewed attention to the significance of allegory. Do these matters enable us to understand better what Paul does in his use of the Old Testament in Galatians 4, and what we should do?

The pursuit of linguistics and literary theory also compels us to consider their impact for understanding Paul. Investigating what we understand by the linguistic sign raises significant concerns that find their parallel in postmodernism. When such linguistic concerns are applied to Scripture they suggest that there is greater need to depend on the Holy Spirit for understanding in the interpretive process.¹⁰ This study brings together

⁶See *Beyond the Obvious*, chapters 3, 4. There we have explained a biblical world view as comprising existential reality (the particular experience or meaning of a given text at a particular point in time, and is limited, temporary, etc.), essential reality (the eternal, abiding reality reflecting our position in Christ and the divine principle or meaning of the text), and actualization (the process of the abiding reality becoming ours in the here and now). This world view is expressed in life and in Scripture as the Kingdom (as both transcendent and immanent, as both rule and relationship). It is "here, but not yet." The world view of the Kingdom forms, for us, the center of Scripture and of life.

⁷See our discussion of this debated matter elsewhere in *Beyond the Obvious*, chap. 6.

⁸See such sources on postmodernism as J. Miller, "The Emerging Postmodern World," in *Postmodern Theology: Christian Faith in a Pluralistic World*, ed. F. Burnham (New York: Harper, 1989), 1-19; M. Erickson, *Interpretation*, 99-114; D. Dockery, ed., *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement* (Wheaton: Victor, 1995); E. V. McKnight, *Postmodern Use of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 27-62; N. Murphy and J. McLendon, "Distinguishing Modern and Postmodern Theologies," *Modern Theology* 5:3 (April 1989):191-214; D. Griffin, Wm. Beardslee, J. Holland, *Varieties of Postmodern Theology* (Albany: CUNY, 1989), 1-7; and others. We have discussed some of these matters in our *Beyond the Obvious*, Appendix A.

⁹See the helpful ideas in Erickson, *Interpretation*, 99ff.

¹⁰See G. Galloway, "The Efficacy of Propositionalism: The Challenge of Philosophical Linguistics and Literary Theory to Evangelical Theology." Ph.D. dissertation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, May, 1996, 188-194, 261-269.

virtually all four avenues of pursuing our understanding of what Paul is doing in Galatians 4.

There are related questions to our study. How does Paul avoid total subjectivity in his treatment of the text? What roles do such matters as Paul's concept of community, sanctification, and history play in his approach? Can these act as corollaries and checks on subjectivity?

PART ONE

"BUT AS THEN"

THE INTERPRETATION OF WHAT PAUL DOES

Our first concern is to answer the question, What is it that Paul does in Galatians 4:21-31? Is Paul's approach allegory or something else? If it is allegory, how does it compare with other allegorical approaches?

An Analysis of the Text

To deal adequately with these questions we must first attend to interpreting the passage and seek to uncover its meaning. The following discussion seeks to do this, although to be exhaustive is beyond the scope of this study.

An overview of the passage may fall into the following parts: the introduction (vv. 21); the historical illustration or example itself (vv. 22-23); the interpretation of the illustration (vv. 24-27); the application (vv. 28-31).¹¹

In verse 21 Paul asks his readers whether they who wish to be under law hear or understand¹² what the law says. He invites his readers to respond. Certainly they felt that they understood the significance of living under law, but with strong sarcasm Paul challenges their understanding. His readers have not succumbed to the legalists; they have not apparently yielded to circumcision (cf. 5:2). The anarthrous form, "law," refers to a legalistic system or institution; the articular form, "the law," refers to the Mosaic

¹¹From notes by S. Toussaint, "Galatians," Dallas Theological Seminary, 93ff.

¹²Commentaries on Galatians will be cited by author only. The verb here means "understand"; see Ellicott, 94. This supports the idea that the allegory arises in Paul's own mind, or in the words of Old Testament text. But taking the word to mean hear in the sense of read, then it could well mean that the passage was forced on Paul from the outside, either as a reply to an argument used in Galatia by his opponents, or employed in a letter sent by the churches to Paul. See Wm. Ramsay, 431.

legislation or the Old Testament.¹³ We may translate verse 21 as: "You who desire to be under the law system, you are understanding what the Old Testament says, aren't you?"

Verses 22-23 contain the illustration or example from the Old Testament. Paul appeals to the history of Abraham and his sons as recorded in Scripture. Whether we call this "illustration" or "example" or "pattern" reflects our basic view of what constitutes an allegory or a type or whatever else Paul is doing.

The *gar* is explanatory: it interprets the Old Testament for those who supposedly were trying to understand it.

There are two contrasts about Abraham's two sons in these two verses. Verse 22 sets forth the first contrast: one son had a bondwoman as a mother, the other had a free mother. Verse 23 introduces the second contrast with an adversative particle, namely "but", to mark the transition from an emphasis on the two mothers to the two sons. The contrast in this verse is between "after flesh" and "through promise." The emphasis is on the natural birth of Ishmael in contrast to the supernatural birth of Isaac through the means of promise.¹⁴ The perfect passive, "has been born," indicates that the results of both births still continue, and may point to the present existence of both kinds of children--perhaps in a spiritual sense.¹⁵

The interpretation of the example or illustration is given in verses 24-27. The *hatina*, an indefinite relative pronoun, classifies its antecedents (the preceding things) into a particular group, such as "which class of things." The idea is that whatever is said of this narrative may be said of other narratives of the same character.¹⁶ This observation, coupled with others below, suggest that what Paul does here may be done again, and perhaps, again and again in reading the Old Testament.

The greatest problem of this whole passage is the meaning and significance of the term *allegoroumena*. It occurs only here in the New Testament. It comes from the root words *allos* ("another") and *agoreuo* ("to speak"). Thus it means "to express or explain one thing under the image of another."¹⁷ So the verb has two basic meanings: to speak allegorically or to interpret allegorically,¹⁸ and the voice is significant.¹⁹

¹³See Burton, 252; Eadie, 358.

¹⁴Ellicott, 94.

¹⁵Burton, 253; Bruce, 217.

¹⁶Hogg and Vine, 218-219; Lightfoot, 180.

¹⁷Ellicott, 93. St. Thomas Aquinas defines the term as derived from *alos* (alien) and *goge* (a leading). One thing is said and something else is understood; it is a leading to a different understanding (137). He finds the source of allegory in the mystical meaning of Scripture which is that signification by which the words signify something (the literal or historical sense), which something further signifies other things (the mystical sense). The mystical sense can cover the three senses of the allegorical, moral, and the anagogical (heavenly sense). Respectively, light may be corporeal (literal), Christ, inflamed in heart, and glory (138).

Several features help us to clarify the meaning here among the possible options as I see them. There are two general views, with sub-categories to each. (1) "To speak allegorically" may mean that (a) the writer of the Old Testament spoke allegorically; there is no literal sense, or at least this is unimportant. Yet the footnotes show that this idea is contrary to Philo's understanding of allegory²⁰ and that of early church fathers who find God's intention to be crucial. The present periphrastic (the present of *estin* with the present passive participle *allegoroumena*) using the passive voice implies that the Old Testament narrative is being acted upon, and suggests that (b) the Old Testament writer is being acted on by God, as he writes his literal sense. (2) The second view affirms that the Old Testament is now being spoken or interpreted allegorically by Paul under the Spirit's guidance (or by Judaizers²¹); and (a) he creates this meaning; or (b) he discovers the meaning which God placed in the text alongside the literal. Views (1) (a) and (2) (a) mean that the "allegory" comes from the human author/interpreter; views (1) (b) and (2) (b) mean that the divine author gave alongside the literal meaning an "allegorical" meaning.

I am inclined to view (2) (b), in light of the following: the biblical conviction that God is the active partner in the writing of Scripture, the human the passive one (2 Peter 1:21); and that God sometimes intends meaning in the Old Testament of which the human

See L. Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, trans. D. Madvig (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 7, n. 26.

¹⁸Burton, 256; Eadie, 359; Lightfoot, 180; Longenecker, 208.

¹⁹A. Hanson, *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 92ff., critiques the entry in Liddell and Scott (99). The active would mean "to allegorize," the passive "to be spoken allegorically." A third sense, "to speak figuratively or metaphorically," also occurs. The active idea, "to interpret allegorically," does not occur till the first century A.D., and mainly in Philo where it has the meaning, "to find a philosophical, moral, or spiritual meaning which is other than the literal meaning" (92). Then Hanson examines all of Philo's passive uses and concludes that the meaning is always "bears an allegorical sense," never "may be understood allegorically" (93). The point is that the passages were intended by God to be understood in an allegorical sense. This is the same idea Hanson finds in the four uses of the early church fathers: the meaning is not just "to be understood symbolically" but "to be expressed symbolically" (93). From all of this Hanson suggests as his definition, "these things are intended to convey a deeper meaning" (94).

So for Hanson and others the words suggest the divine intention of a deeper meaning in the text alongside the literal or historical meaning, and this is somewhat characteristic of what typology with its divine intention is. The history is not denied.

²⁰R. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 46, notes that Philo believed that the allegorical meaning was the "intended spiritual meaning."

²¹Bruce, 217, reads the phrase as "this is an allegory," or "these are allegorical entities." He cites the NIV: "these things may be taken figuratively." Calvin takes it similarly--that Paul gives it an allegorical interpretation; it is an allegory (135). He also calls it a type, a figurative representation, an application not different from the natural meaning, a "mystical interpretation . . . (*anagoge*)" which is "not inconsistent with the true and literal meaning, when a comparison was drawn between the Church and the family of Abraham" (136-37). It is "not a departure from the literal meaning" (136).

author is unaware (1 Peter 1:10-12), including his designing of correspondences because he controls all history.²² In addition, the concept of intrinsic genre, the meaning of the whole context, is part of the meaning of the particular passage. The Holy Spirit, foreseeing the later context of the completed canon and even the entire biblical world view, led the Old Testament writer to compose in such a way that his meaning includes this meaning.²³

Paul's point is that the contemporary situation enabled him to discover that these passages have a deeper or allegorical meaning. The persecution by the Judaizers brought about an allegorical interpretation of the Genesis narratives. The historical facts of the Old Testament are not denied. They have an "allegory" because of the situation of the church in Paul's day.²⁴ The qualitative *hatina* (cited above) also suggests that other Old Testament passages could be allegorized to support Paul's point, or to answer other questions arising from the Galatians' situation. Finally, Paul's use of Isaiah 54:1 supports this interpretation of what Paul is doing here (see below). Whether this passage is "allegory" or something else, such as typology, I discuss below.

Verse 24 continues by giving explanation of the "allegory," and this proceeds through verse 27. Verses 24-25 point to two covenants; verses 25-26 refer to two Jerusalems; verse 27 refers to an Old Testament text. In verse 24, the feminine *hautai* shows that the antecedent is the two mothers; it is they who "represent"²⁵ two covenants. And while there are two covenants, Paul only discusses one, the Mosaic law (although the New covenant is implicit in verse 26). Paul's point is that the law from Mount Sinai engenders bondage. Just as Hagar mothered a slave, so the law gives birth to slaves. The children inherit the condition of their mother.²⁶ Bond-mother leads to bond-children.

The discussion of the two Jerusalems in verses 25-26 begins with the present Jerusalem and then the heavenly Jerusalem. There is a textual and interpretive problem in verse 25. The exclusion of *Hagar* is supported by P46, codex aleph, and others²⁷; but most

²²In either (1) (b) or (2) (b) there is the existence of deeper meaning due to the Spirit's intention in the past or the present (as in typology). Longenecker, 210, supports (2) (a) because he sees Paul's use here as *ad hominem*--responding in kind to some treatment of the story by the Judaizers. Fung, 206, seems to support the view I've chosen when he writes of Paul's words that he "proceeds to bring out their spiritual meaning. He is not expounding the meaning of the Old Testament passage as intended by the original writer; he is speaking of the meaning conveyed to him by the passage as it stands." I discuss more of this below.

²³For an extended discussion of the impact of intrinsic genre on Scripture, see S. Hurty and J. De Young, "Hirsch Is Right: There Is Deeper Meaning in Scripture," a paper presented to the Evangelical Theological Society, Philadelphia, PA., Nov. 16, 1995.

²⁴So the view of Toussaint, "Notes," 94.

²⁵Here and in v. 25 the forms of *eimi* have the meaning "represent" rather than "are." See Bruce, 218-19.

²⁶Eadie, 364. We would say: "Like mother, like son." While the law itself was not a slave, it was the source of bondage (note Gal. 4:3, 7). This line of inheritance (from mother to son) characterizes Greek and Roman custom, including that of Galatia, but Semitic custom was not such (Ramsay, 434).

²⁷So Lightfoot, 180, 192-93; Ridderbos, 177-78; Hogg and Vine, 221.

accept the inclusion of *Hagar*, supported by codices A, B, D, etc. With the latter view come two options. Hagar may be the literal name of Mount Sinai, hence: "Now Hagar is (or, means) Mount Sinai in Arabia, i.e., among the Arabians."²⁸ This interpretation rests on etymology, that Hagar in Arabic and Sinai in Hebrew both mean "stone." Yet this view is doubtful. It is also difficult to believe that Paul's point based in Arabic and Hebrew would appeal to Galatians.²⁹ It is doubtful that the Arabians knew Sinai as Hagar.³⁰

The other option is to take Hagar as representing Mount Sinai in Arabia.³¹ The following *sustoichei* means to stand in the same row or file with others.³² So Hagar, the covenant of the law, Sinai, and Jerusalem all stand in the same row; they correspond. They all represent the law which holds people in bondage. Paul includes "Jerusalem" because it takes the place of Sinai as the center of all that the law and the whole legal system of Judaism represented including bondage (note 4:3, 7). While at the time of Paul's writing Israel was literally under bondage to Rome (note: "is in bondage with her children"), Paul is thinking primarily, if not exclusively, of spiritual bondage.³³

The "Jerusalem above"³⁴ contrasts the "present Jerusalem" and is said by Paul to be free and "the mother of us all" already (v. 26).³⁵ Like Sarah, this Jerusalem is free and has free children. The freedom is freedom from laws and ordinances and freedom to perform the good.

Paul has a problem in the history of Abraham and his wives and sons. For Isaac begat Jews, Ishmael begat Gentiles. Apparently Paul's opponents had used this division to

²⁸Ellicott, 96.

²⁹Eadie, 366-367; Lightfoot, 196-98; Ridderbos, 177-78.

³⁰Ellicott, 96-97. Yet Hanson, *Studies*, 95-96, goes with this view: "The name Hagar signifies Mount Sinai in Arabia." It is a common rabbinic practice to bring similar word roots together, even to use each letter of a word to represent a separate word.

³¹Hamilton, 47; Hogg and Vine, 220-21; Ridderbos, 178; Bruce, 219-20. The neuter article is problematic. Most take it as referring to Hagar but it could refer to "covenant" and so the clause would read: "Now the covenant represents Mount Hagar-Sinai" or "Hagar, Mount Sinai." This is further discussed below.

³²Lightfoot, 181.

³³Hogg and Vine, 221-22.

³⁴Elsewhere, the "heavenly Jerusalem": Heb. 11:10, 16; 12:22; 13:14; Phil. 3:20; Rev. 3:12; 21:2, 9, 10; cf. Ps. 46:4-7; 48:1, 2; 87:1-3. It is not spatially above but is the community of the new covenant (Bruce, 220-21). Paul is here consistent in his eschatology: the consummation is not yet but Christians already live in the new era (Hanson, *Studies*, 97). Yet Fung, 210, says that Paul combines both the temporal and the spatial: the Jerusalem to come (in the eschatological future) and the one already existing in heaven means that it is already here in the form of "a heavenly, spiritual Jerusalem." I call it the essential reality.

³⁵The idea of Jerusalem having children occurs also in Matt. 23:37 and Luke 19:44. It derives from Psalm 87:5; 2 Esdras 10:7; Isa. 49:20f.; 54:1-13. It is the counterpart of Sarah (Bruce, 221).

their advantage. To refute them Paul simply inverted the interpretation, so that Gentiles by faith descend from Abraham, and the Jews without faith descend from Ishmael. This must have infuriated the adversaries.³⁶ So the divine interpretation of history, not history itself, is the crucial matter.

Verse 27 is a quote of Isaiah 54:1. This is significant for the whole discussion. In the context of Isaiah, the prophet pictures Israel or Jerusalem through three stages: the woman having a husband was Israel/Jerusalem before captivity; the woman who is sterile or barren is Israel/Jerusalem in exile; the woman who bears many more children is Israel/Jerusalem in restored blessing, ultimately in the time of millennial blessing. The rabbis specified this as the history of Jerusalem,³⁷ and so probably should we. Paul takes this prophecy and applies it to the time of the heavenly Jerusalem (bountiful), as compared to an earlier time of Israelite blessing under the Kings and Prophets (although partial) and now subordinate to Gentile forces (sterility). The interesting thing is that Paul would say that the time of many children has begun, for the believers are even now the children of the "mother of us all" and outnumber the Jews.³⁸ They already belong to the New Jerusalem (cf. Heb. 12:22ff.). So for a while promise was superceded inappropriately by law, but now that is reversed. Promise and faith are fruitful, law and works are barren.³⁹ The suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 would "justify many", including the Gentiles, in keeping with the fruitfulness of 54:1.

But, as Toussaint and others remark, there also seems to be a "deeper meaning."⁴⁰ Paul uses this passage to describe the condition of Sarah when she was barren and Hagar had Abraham as her husband. The subsequent situation of Sarah and Abraham and their descendents, who lived by faith in God's promise, would outshine that of the way of Hagar and hers. Paul finds in the prophecy a double,⁴¹ if not triple, illustration.

So actually Isaiah 54:1 has meaning for each stage of redemptive or divine history: for Abraham and Sarah, for Isaiah and a believing remnant, for the Galatians joined to

³⁶This is similar to Paul's argument in Romans 4:1-12. Abraham is the father of both the circumcision and the uncircumcision when both come by faith. Apart from faith, he is the father of neither.

³⁷Several rabbinical sources are cited in Longenecker, 215.

³⁸So Bruce, 222. By Paul, there was already a gospel interpretation for Isaiah 40-66, including chap. 54; and there was pre-Christian precedent in the Qumran texts for taking the chapters as pointing to a restored Israel in a new age. Philo's treatment of Isa. 54:1 as an ethical allegory of the history of the soul involving vices and virtues is "an aberration from the main line of biblical interpretation," Bruce observes (223).

The text of Isaiah 54:1 was apparently a subject of dispute between Christians and Jews in the second century (Hanson, *Studies*, 97).

³⁹See Hogg and Vine, 225-26.

⁴⁰Toussaint, "Notes," 96. Indeed, Isaiah himself may have intended this other level of meaning.

⁴¹Fung, 211; Burton, 264; Guthrie, 125.

Christ by faith, for believers today as a continuation of what was true for the Galatians, and for those living at the consummation of the present era. Isaiah is the key to Galatians 4.

The application of Paul's discourse is presented in verses 28-31 where Paul makes three comparisons. In verse 28 Paul compares the birth of Isaac to that of Christians. The particle *de* functions as a consequential connective ("so").⁴² The preposition *kata* with the accusative here means "like, after the manner of," which is a refinement of the idea of norm or standard.⁴³ The term *epangelias* is probably an ablative of means and expresses the means whereby the readers became children (cf. Rom. 9:8).⁴⁴ It is parallel to the use of *dia* in verse 23: "through promise." As Isaac was a child by means of promise, so the Galatians⁴⁵ are. Both births are consequent upon divine intervention. The birth of Isaac is an example, a type, of the birth of a believer. The construction of the verse without articles reinforces this comparison.

Verse 29 compares the persecution of Isaac by Ishmael with the persecution of believers by the Judaizers (cf. 1 Thess. 2:15). He probably also includes the subsequent history of the boys and their descendants, since there is no specific word in the account of the boyhood of such persecution.⁴⁶ Rabbinic exegesis had much to say about this.⁴⁷ The *alla*, usually adversative, may perhaps be only logically transitional ("and") here, but this is doubtful.⁴⁸ In this verse Paul uses the phrase, "after Spirit," instead of "after promise," for the Spirit operates by promise and not by law or after the flesh. This explains how the children of faith are born. This substitution of "Spirit" for "promise" shows that the Spirit is both the promise of God (cf. 3:2, 3, 5, 14; 4:6) and the One who accomplishes the promise by giving the birth; He is the means or agent (comparing verses 28 and 29).⁴⁹ Both Isaac and the Galatians are born again, born after the Spirit.

⁴²R. Longenecker, "Graphic Illustrations of a Believer's New Life in Christ: Galatians 4:21-31," *Review and Expositor*, 91 (1994): 195.

⁴³Burton, 265.

⁴⁴Eadie, 371; Ellicott, 99; Hamilton, 48; Hogg and Vine, 226; Ridderbos, 180.

⁴⁵Probably "you are" is to be read rather than "we are." The "you" points to the Galatians as the true sons and daughters of Abraham.

⁴⁶The imperfect "used to persecute" supports this extension of the persecution.

⁴⁷Rabbinical interpretation sought to link this rivalry with the inheritance (Gen. 22:1) or the playing of the two sons in Gen. 21:9 (cf. Jub. 17:4), even finding idolatry, foreign cultic behavior, sexual immorality, or bloodshed in the passage in light of other texts--see Bruce, 223-24; Hanson, *Studies*, 82-83, 98f.; and Longenecker, "Illustrations," 196.

⁴⁸Longenecker, "Illustrations," 195-196, and others, support the transitional idea. Yet A. Perriman, "The Rhetorical Strategy of Galatians 4:21--5:1," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 65:1 (1993): 32-33, believes that the adversative idea is real, to signal that the transition from the explanation to the application is in v. 29, not v. 28, so that v. 28 goes with v. 27 (note the presence of *de* in v. 28). This seems quite persuasive.

⁴⁹See S. Williams, "Promise in Galatians: A Reading of Paul's Reading of Scripture," *JBL* 107/4 (1988): 711ff., who argues that in Galatians the promise of the Spirit is the Spirit who begets sons for Abraham and

It seems that the words at the beginning of the verse, "but as then," and those at the end, "so even now," serve as brackets (an *inclusio* of sorts?). It seems that they affirm that Paul is not resorting to classical allegory by denying or obviating the historical record and finding special, spiritual meaning in its place; indeed he assumes it to be as given in Genesis. It is just as historical as the persecution that the Galatians are experiencing. For Paul the text provides the key for explaining the present circumstances; and it is not just the key, but the pattern of it. What Paul does in this verse is a summary of what he does throughout the whole passage of verses 21-31. The "so even now" points to the entire present era. Those seeking to be saved by faith and to live by promise will suffer at the hands of those seeking these things by law and works, just as Christ and Paul, until the end.⁵⁰ While the two phrases mean "then and now," rather than "here, but not yet," it seems the phrases nevertheless reflect Paul's "fundamental understanding of eschatological fulfillment."⁵¹ The "Jerusalem above" is both here, and not yet.

Verse 30 is the second comparison. The action of Abraham based on a word from God (Genesis 21:10) is compared with what the Galatians ought to do--based in Paul's interpretation as another word from God. "But what does the Scripture say?" are actually Sarah's words, but God commanded Abraham to follow Sarah's wish in this regard.⁵² Sarah's words become God's judgment for Abraham and now for the Galatians. It isn't just what Scripture records that is important but what it affirms or says.⁵³ The *ou me* as an emphatic negation used here with the future indicative rather than the more usual aorist subjunctive⁵⁴ brings a strong emphasis: it is not just a prophecy but an assurance of the purpose of God. Faith alone, not faith and works, is the way of blessing. Both sons could not be heir to the promise.

Verse 31 is a summary and conclusion of verses 21-30. The "therefore" or "so" suggests that in some way Genesis 21:10 proves the truth of this statement.⁵⁵ The verse is also a bridge to the next section where the concept of freedom is expanded.⁵⁶ This verse

who begets the world for Christ. So the promise of many sons for Abraham and the promise of the world are both, as well, God's promise of the Spirit (719). Hogg and Vine, 227, suggest that "spirit" here is "by supernatural power" in contrast to "by natural power" as the meaning of "after flesh." But while this is true, it seems best to keep the Holy Spirit more directly in view.

⁵⁰Hogg and Vine, 228

⁵¹Longenecker, "Illustrations," 196.

⁵²The question is not just rhetorical in the usual sense (with the meaning, "the Scripture says", as in Rom. 4:3; 11:2), for the answer follows immediately in the form of a text of Scripture (so Bruce observes, 224).

⁵³Bruce, 225.

⁵⁴Blass-Debrunner, 184, says that this construction is not too greatly different from the aorist subjunctive.

⁵⁵So Hanson, *Studies*, 99.

brings us back to verse 22 where the two women were introduced and their respective seed. The word, "brothers," implies all believers and their reception of the promise by faith.⁵⁷ The use of the article in this verse is instructive. The lack of an article with *paidiskēs* expresses nature or quality; any person in bondage. There may be many slaves, including that contemporary with Paul. But the article with *eleutheras* signifies identity: there is but one free woman. In a sense this is a claim for the exclusiveness or uniqueness of the gospel.

PART TWO

Explanations of the Passage

In the history of the Church interpreters have used several explanations to describe what Paul does in Galatians 4:21-31. The rise of literary criticism and postmodernism have added to the number. The following is an attempt to categorize these explanations and briefly evaluate them.

1. The typology as "allegory" approach.

Is it allegory that Paul demonstrates here, or typology? This is, and has been, the focus of much hermeneutical discussion of this passage. The predominant way of handling Paul's "allegory" has sought to distance it from real or actual allegory, in spite of the fact that Paul uses the unique term, "being allegorized." This view insists that Paul treats the history of Genesis as actual event. This is the view of many in the early church, such as Theodore of Mopsuestia,⁵⁸ Chrysostom, and the Antiochian school. A detailed discussion here will facilitate and clarify the discussion of the other, related views.

L. Goppelt and A. Hanson well represent the view that Paul in Galatians 4 is actually giving a typology, not an allegory.⁵⁹ Goppelt gives the distinctives of types and typology, and shows the contrasts with allegory. For him typology is "the method of biblical interpretation that is characteristic of the NT."⁶⁰ Paul probably was the first to use

⁵⁶In fact, 5:1 may well be the summary and application of the preceding "allegory," even from all of 2:14 on (so Bruce, 226, suggests).

⁵⁷The "we are" of v. 31 suggests that "we are" should be read in v. 28 as well, but "you are" then becomes the harder reading there and should probably be preferred.

⁵⁸This insistence that Paul is basing his "allegory" on the occurrence of historical, actual events is strongly made by Theodore of Mopsuestia, "Commentary on Galatians 4:22-31," in *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, trans. and ed. K. Froehlich (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 96-97.

⁵⁹Others holding this view include F. F. Bruce; T. George; E. E. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1957), 130;

⁶⁰Goppelt, *Typos*, 4.

the term "type" with the sense of the "prefiguring of the future in a prior history."⁶¹ Typology involves those "divinely ordained representations or types of future realities that will be even greater and more complete."^{62 63}

Philo comes close to typology on rare occasions, such as in the interpretation of the creation and the test given to Adam and Eve in the garden. The tree of life "signifies reverence for God," and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil "signifies moral prudence." The woman and her husband yield to temptation from the serpent, "a fit symbol of pleasure."⁶⁴ At this point Philo writes: "These are no mythical fictions, such as poets

⁶¹Ibid. Goppelt shows that neither Greek usage before Paul, including Philo and the LXX, nor usage of equivalents in the Old Testament, really had this meaning. Lampe and Woollcombe, *Typology*, 41-42, agree, noting that historical typology came into existence with Christianity and was determined, as both a method of writing and as a method of exegesis, by the character of prophecy (see also 49). Yet Goppelt points out that the NT is not bound by *typos* terminology, but uses, for example, in Heb. 9:9 and 11:19, *parabole*, with the same meaning as *typos*, and in Gal. 4:24 Paul uses *allegoroumena*. See pp. 4-5.

⁶²Goppelt, 18. He seems to allow for two kinds of typology, that having this "heightening" and that which is merely "a repetition of the type," which can be called "typology only in certain instances and in a limited way," including those instances where "the interpreter does not view the connection between the two as being foreordained in some way, but as being accidental or deliberately contrived (a parabolic action is not a type of the event that it represents)" (p. 18). He earlier described F. Torm (*Hermeneutik*) as differentiating a typological exegesis "when the author intends to say that the OT writer had a clear conception of the future antitypes" (e.g., Matt. 11:14), and a typological approach "when they intend to say, that it is God who wanted to use the OT prototype to prepare men to understand the future fulfillment" (e.g., the application of Ps. 69 to Jesus). Torm, p. 224ff., in Goppelt, 16). Goppelt seems to be making the distinction similar to what we have made elsewhere between what the human author intended and what God intended. At times God's intention seems to exceed that of the human author, and represents essential reality versus existential or a particular reality--realities based in a biblical world view. See De Young and Hurty, *Beyond the Obvious*, chs. 3, 4, 5.

While we do not embrace all that Goppelt writes on typology, we think that he is generally representative and perhaps most thorough in his discussion. From reading elsewhere, we would cite four necessary characteristics of types: heightening, correspondence, predictiveness, and historicity. Even these are given various definitions or distinctions.

Lampe and Woollcombe, *Typology*, 40, define typological exegesis as "the search for linkages between events, persons or things within the historical framework of revelation, whereas allegorism is the search for a secondary and hidden meaning underlying the primary and obvious meaning of a narrative," and this secondary sense does not necessarily have any connection with the historical framework of the narrative.

⁶³See discussions of typology and allegory in the standard and newer works on biblical hermeneutics, and in such sources as W. Kaiser, *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New*; E. E. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*; R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament*; D. Baker, *Two Testaments: One Bible*; S. L. Johnson, *The Old Testament in the New*; G. W. H. Lampe and K. J. Woollcombe, *Essays on Typology*; F. F. Bruce, *The Time Is Fulfilled*; J. S. Frey, *The Scripture Types: A Course of Lectures*; A. T. Hanson, *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology*; R. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*.

⁶⁴Philo, *On the Creation (De Opificio Mundi)*, 156, trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge: Harvard, rep. 1971), 124-125.

and sophists delight in, but modes of making ideas visible, bidding us resort to allegorical interpretation guided in our renderings by what lies beneath the surface."⁶⁵

Yet Philo does not actually engage in typological interpretation, according to Goppelt.⁶⁶ While Philo is familiar with and upholds the literal meaning of the text as the record of actual events, and that the literal sense of the Law must be fulfilled,⁶⁷ the allegorical meaning is the proper meaning of Scripture. In many passages he excludes the literal meaning, but never the allegorical. He never uses typology. The allegorical meaning is to the literal meaning what the soul is to the body. The human author intended this double meaning and the two stand side by side without contradiction. Allegory is discovered by the "laws of allegory", but these are never explicitly defined. He is guided by certain principles that he, the Greek allegorists, and Hellenistic Jews before him would embrace: allegorization is necessary when Scripture says something unworthy or incorrect of God (mostly anthropomorphisms), when the literal meaning is absurd or contradictory, or when the allegory provides a richer meaning.⁶⁸ How to discover allegory is never articulated, but two practices are regularly followed: symbolism and etymology. Yet in the end it is Philo's philosophy and the fact that the Scripture is inspired, and requires an inspired person such as Philo to interpret it, that are the decisive factors in his exposition.

There is no typology in Philo because of Philo's philosophy toward history. Scripture is not a record of history, redemptive or otherwise, but is a manual for a philosophy of life. As Goppelt writes: "Philo knows of no direct rule by God in history. Consequently, his system has no place for eschatology."⁶⁹ Whereas Scripture and rabbinics deal with the tension between the present and future manifestations of God's rule in history, in Philo "the tension is between the lower, visible world and the higher, invisible world."⁷⁰

⁶⁵Ibid., 157. Note that the meaning below the surface meaning, not the surface meaning, is the guide to allegorical interpretation.

⁶⁶Goppelt, *Typos*, 48-50.

⁶⁷See the summary in Goppelt, 42-48, along with the insights of several interpreters of Philo.

⁶⁸Lampe and Woollcombe, *Typology*, 51, identify two forms of allegory: positive, "the object of which is to elucidate the undersenses of the myths," and negative, "the object of which is to defend morally offensive passages."

⁶⁹Ibid., 50-51.

⁷⁰Ibid., 51. Instructive here are Philo's words about the meaning of creation. On Genesis 2:1 Philo interprets the words, "And the heaven and the earth and all their world were completed," as: "He had already told of the creation of the mind and sense-perception; he now fully sets forth the consummation of both. He does not say that either the individual mind or the particular sense-perception have reached completion, but that the originals have done so, that of mind and that of sense-perception. For using symbolical language he calls the mind heaven, since heaven is the abode of natures discerned only by mind, but sense-perception he calls earth, because sense-perception possesses a composition of a more earthly and body-like sort. 'World,' in a case of mind, means all incorporeal things, things discerned by mind alone: in the case of sense-perception it denotes things in bodily form and generally whatever sense perceives." Philo, *Allegorical Interpretation*, 1.

Philo's philosophy is permeated by "the Platonic viewpoint in which the visible, perceptible world is the expression and copy of a transcendent world of ideas."⁷¹ God first created the immaterial world which contains the ideas, patterns, or archetypes of all that is in the visible world. The true, intellectual man is a copy of the world of ideas. God is the pattern for the Logos and the Logos is the pattern for the rational soul in man. The ability to see is to enter the world of ideas.

Philo's philosophy explains his allegorization. As Goppelt notes: "The quest for the allegorical meaning is, to a certain degree, an attempt to advance from the visible copies to the original."⁷² He continues: "Consequently, for Philo allegorizing is the same as advancing from the visible world to the higher world of ideas, from the types . . . to the prototypes. . . . Moreover, a few of his statements suggest that he views the direct literal meaning as the humble means of expression and the allegorical meaning as the corresponding higher intelligible reality--the idea, which is the only true reality."⁷³ So two realities lie side by side in the text.

Goppelt notes how this kind of typology differs from biblical typology.⁷⁴ (1) There is often a rejection of the historicity of the text. God has merely inspired the written text in order to express higher truths through them. (2) One is to interpret, not on the horizontal-temporal plane, but on the vertical-spatial. "The higher antitypes do not belong to the last days, which will break into time at the end, but to a higher, invisible world that stands unchanging above the events of this world."⁷⁵ *The little concern for history in the future corresponds to the little concern for history in the past.*

Goppelt concludes this section by noting the implications for theology. He writes: "Philo's allegorizing is in harmony with a theology that does not take seriously the reality of God in history and in creation nor the historicity of revelation and consequently, makes Scripture a collection of oracles addressed to this world from above. It is not based on the biblical view of God and the world, but on Platonism."⁷⁶ The crucial place of world view is undeniable here.⁷⁷

⁷¹Goppelt, *Typos*, 51.

⁷²Ibid., 51-52.

⁷³Ibid., 52.

⁷⁴Ibid., 52.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷For another example of how world view affects interpretation and leads to allegorization, see D. McCartney, "Literal and Allegorical Interpretation in Origen's *Contra Celsum* " *WTJ* 48 (1986): 281-301. He points to many of Origen's rules of interpretation, and concludes that Origen steers a middle course between the philosophical allegorism of Philo and the Valentinians and the typology of the earlier

What does Paul do in Galatians 4? This view decides that clearly it is not allegory of the Philonic sort, a philosophical allegory coming from a Platonic world view. Goppelt is a bit ambiguous here, for he says that the typological interpretation of Galatians 4 "in some respects passes over into allegory."⁷⁸ He points to verse 25a where Paul develops his interpretation by means of etymology and to Paul's own terminology (*allegoroumena*) in verse 24.⁷⁹ But Goppelt observes that only certain features "come close to being allegorical interpretation as we conceive of it."⁸⁰ He points to Paul's "typological comparison of the historical facts" and Paul's being "in accord with the original meaning of the passage."⁸¹ So Goppelt concludes that Paul's "allegorizing" here simply "means that this is an instance in which the interpretation goes beyond the literal meaning. The interpretation is not allegorical, in the proper sense of the word; rather, it is typological throughout."⁸²

Hanson is quite helpful here as well. After examining a dozen and a half scholars, including Luther and Calvin (who take it as allegory),⁸³ he goes on to define the deeper meaning as more like typology than allegory because Paul cannot get away from the content of Scripture, the history: it is what happened to Hagar and Sarah that really matters, not any message which they symbolized. The typological event "is as real as the event which it typifies."⁸⁴ He doesn't say that the original meaning can be dispensed with; rather it is important and necessary for him on which to build his entire theological scheme. Yet besides the historical significance of the events at the time, they "also bear a deeper, more ultimate meaning. This is typology, not allegory."⁸⁵

apologists. As divine and inspired, Scripture had to have a spiritual meaning, just as the Greeks believed about their literature. Origen generally used allegorical interpretation in addition to, and not as a substitute for, literal exegesis. With this assessment agree Lampe and Woolcombe, *Typology*, 57ff.

⁷⁸Goppelt, 139. See also 224.

⁷⁹Ibid., 139-140. Yet this may not be an example of etymology (see the exegesis above).

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Ibid., 139-140.

⁸²Ibid., 140. So Goppelt qualifies his description of this as allegory, as he would 1 Corinthians 10:1-11. But he apparently would find two other passages (1 Cor. 5:6-8; 9:8-10) more similar to allegory. See 139, n. 40. Significantly (I think), Goppelt suggests that typology may have had "an effect on the threefold division of the *sensus mysticus* by the later divines" (5, n. 15).

Bruce also labels it typology rather than allegory, along with 1 Corinthians 5:7; 10:1-11; but he identifies 1 Corinthians 9:8-10 as "non-typological allegory" (217).

⁸³Hanson, *Studies*, 102-103; Calvin, 135-37; Luther, 423ff.

⁸⁴Ibid., 151. He adds: ". . . the events in Israel's history had full reality for those who took part in them, but were *recorded* for our benefit. They did not take place for our benefit, and Paul never says they did" (italics his).

⁸⁵Ibid, 102. He doubts that there is an example of allegory any where in Paul, including 1 Corinthians 9:9ff. (159ff.). Hanson also recognizes the impact of rabbinics on Paul as seen in this passage, as in verse

Hanson makes it clear that this is also unlike allegory because there are not two meanings involved. As typology there is a "double significance," a "deeper meaning" alongside the literal meaning, or a "deeper significance" beside the "literal significance." There is a "double sense," a "deeper meaning," to the one meaning.⁸⁶ It is not double meaning.

This approach to explaining Paul is quite satisfactory and traditional. Clearly typology is a Pauline practice. Yet Paul uses "allegory" not "typology" to describe his interpretation, and the character of what he does seems to reflect allegory as much as typology.⁸⁷

2. The Alexandrian allegory approach.

There have been many who believe that Paul is setting forth an allegory in these verses, either creating it or replying to one fashioned by others. Sometimes this is understood to be just like the Alexandrian allegory of his day. Paul is following the manner of the times and it is "apt enough for the kind of audience he is addressing."⁸⁸ It may not be convincing to us, and we may even think it illegitimate, but it was effective for its time. Besides, it doesn't invalidate Paul's basic contention that Christianity is good news through Christ for all from all those things which would enslave them. This was the view of Origen, the Alexandrian school, Calvin, apparently, and Luther, and others.⁸⁹

3. The Palestinian allegory approach.

29. So while Paul's theology is not rabbinic, his methods entirely are (102). He also recognizes that Paul may be ignoring the original intention (103) (I think he here means the human author's intention).

⁸⁶Idid., 156, 94. This parallels our distinction of essential and existential meaning, as discussed in *Beyond the Obvious*.

⁸⁷Betz, 239-240, apparently would come here, for he holds that Galatians 4:21-31 is a mixture of allegory (which takes concrete matters as the surface appearance of underlying deeper philosophical or theological truths) and typology (which interprets historical material as prototypes or fulfillments of persons, events, or institutions in a context of salvation history). He understands (14-15) the genre of Galatians to be an "apologetic letter" of the Greeks and Romans, which genre goes back to Socrates' invention in the fourth century B.C. As such the epistle is divided rhetorically as follows: an epistolary prescript (1:1-5), exordium (introduction, 1:6-11), narratio (statement of facts, 1:12-2:14), propositio (summary and transition to arguments, 2:15-21), probatio (proofs in six arguments, 3:1-4:31, with 4:21-31 being the last proof), exhortatio (exhortation or parenthesis, 5:1-6:10), and conclusio (epistolary postscript, 6:11-18). Betz believes that this section is not Paul's weakest (because of the ambiguity of allegory) but most effective argument because it is indirect and calls upon the reader to discover and own the meaning and truth for himself/herself. In verse 31 Paul joins the readers in rendering the judgment of their convictions (240).

⁸⁸W. Neil, *The Letter of Paul to the Galatians* (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), 71, 73.

⁸⁹So K. Thomas, "Covenant in Relation to Hagar and Ishmael in Galatians," *The Bible Translator* 37 (Oct. 1986): 445-46; so also Wm. Ramsay, St. Thomas Aquinas, etc.

Others who hold that Paul is following an allegorical approach distance themselves from Alexandrian allegory and its supporters. C. K. Barrett, R. P. C. Hanson, and R. Longenecker, with many others, believe that it is "explicitly and undisguisedly allegorical."⁹⁰ They take this view because they find Paul's use here not like the allegory of Alexandria but like that of Palestinian allegorical exegesis in general and then-current Jewish treatments of the Hagar-Sarah story in particular. So the attempt of Goppelt and others to set Paul apart from Alexandrian (Philonic) allegory misses the point that Paul may be practicing a Palestinian form of allegory. This form means that Paul is not trying to "emancipate" the meaning of the passage from its historical content. Rather he takes the typology and distorts it in an "unconvincing but highly Rabbinic fashion into allegory."⁹¹ Some who advocate this approach suggest that Paul is actually replying to the Judaizers' allegorical use of Genesis and replying in kind. Longenecker bases this on the strong polemical *ad hominem* nature of Paul's words.⁹²

In light of the preceding discussion under "typology as allegory" and the extant evidence of rabbinic allegory⁹³ this approach has much more to commend it than the preceding two approaches. It takes Paul at his own word ("allegory") and allows Paul's usage and external evidence to clarify what he means.

4. The analogy approach.

Another related approach distances itself from both typology and allegory and determines that Paul's hermeneutic is that of analogy.⁹⁴ This approach is based on the observation that the divine intention belonging to typology seems to be lacking in Galatians 4, and Paul's honoring the history involved puts the passage outside the realm of allegory. As an "extreme case of analogy," the basic idea is that because God has created all things there will be "similarities in creation on all its levels."⁹⁵ This approach affirms four things.⁹⁶ (1) Paul's starting point is the historicity of Genesis. (2) Paul goes "beyond the

⁹⁰Longenecker, "Illustrations," 194. See R. P. C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture* (London: SCM, 1959), 80. Goppelt, *Typos*, 31f., acknowledges that Palestinian Judaism interpreted Scripture "almost exclusively" by a careful, restrained symbolical and allegorical interpretation of biblical history. There is little typology until one comes to the sphere of eschatology where much occurs. See also Longenecker, *Exegesis*, 47-48.

⁹¹Longenecker, "Illustrations," 209, citing R. Hanson, 82. The latter asserts that Paul uses allegory as an aid to typology (82-83). This reinforces the similarity of Paul's allegory to typology.

⁹²Longenecker, "Illustrations," 191ff., and his commentary, 209-211. T. George (334) seems to endorse this view, as apparently do Lampe and Woolcombe, *Typology*, 42 (but they point out that it is an "allegorism of the historical kind") (42).

⁹³Longenecker cites more than six pages of rabbinic and Jewish allegory (200-206).

⁹⁴Fung, 217ff., takes this view following the lead of H. L. Ellison, and Bruce to a lesser extent. The discussion above follows Fung's explanation.

⁹⁵Ibid., 218, citing Ellison.

historical to the hidden and underlying meaning." Yet he seems to be "merely drawing out the spiritual principles underlying the actual events, so that the deeper, spiritual meaning is in full harmony with, although additional to, the historical meaning." (3) Paul's central point of reference is the Christ-event, faith in Christ, and this precludes all fanciful and capricious exegesis. Paul is living in the time of fulfillment and the "true sense of the OT may now be seen." (4) "The argument which Paul employs here does not determine his view, but only confirms an understanding already reached in some other way." The correspondences already exist in the history in the text and the readers' history.

This approach notes that this kind of Old Testament exegesis is not generally characteristic of Paul, and this suggests that Paul is responding to a similar kind of argument used by the Judaizers (an idea common to other approaches above.) Paul "brings out the spiritual meaning of the text apart from its literal, historical sense."⁹⁷

This approach has much to commend it, in attempting to follow Paul's own terminology and to recognize the differences from typology and allegory. It respects the special nature of Scripture with its divine authorship and recognizes the divinely-designed "similarities" (correspondences?) in all creation, including history. It also affirms implicitly a restraint in finding this kind of approach elsewhere in Scripture.

5. A postmodern literary approach.

Interestingly, there is renewed attention given to allegory in recent literary studies, especially that prompted by postmodern concerns. In ancient rhetorical theory "the persuasive force of allegorical interpretations was a subject of considerable controversy," writes E. Castelli,⁹⁸ and this continues today. Allegory seeks to persuade its hearer or reader to "reimagine the meanings of a text or tradition," to refigure the familiar.⁹⁹ Seeking to produce the real, hidden meaning, allegory as translation comes about by three interpretative operations, including "the schematicizing or reduction of the original text or tradition; the (often implicit) assertion of an essential connection between the two planes of meaning that constitute the allegory; and the elimination of alternative meanings."¹⁰⁰ Castelli shows that all three of these are at work in Galatians 4, with the contrasting stark oppositions pointing to an integral dualism in both the structure and content.

The new appreciation for allegory in postmodernism allows for other observations about the interpretation of Galatians 4:21-31. Indeed, any interpretation may be nothing more than allegory--a way of saying something else. As a way of reading, allegory is a

⁹⁶Ibid. The quotes are from Fung.

⁹⁷Ibid., 220.

⁹⁸E. Castelli, "Allegories of Hagar: Reading Galatians 4:21-31 with Postmodern Feminist Eyes," in *The New Literary Criticism and the Bible*, ed. E. McKnight and E. Malbon (Valley Forge: Trinity, 1994), 230.

⁹⁹Ibid., 230-31.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 231-32.

form of translation. Both translation and allegory are characterized by violence, critique, creation and movement, abandonment, refiguration, and transformation, among other things,¹⁰¹ and these appear in Galatians 4. There is an essential bond of meaning between the surface signifier and the hidden referent. Dualism, clearly seen in Galatians 4, is at the heart of allegory. Allegory also produces a new authority within the interpretation, and this authority can effect cultural critique and revision. In Paul's "allegory," the inversion disposes the reigning interpretation and sets up a new and authoritative version, a new way of viewing the world.¹⁰² I draw the attention of the reader to this last idea, world view, to which I will return.

Somewhat along the same lines, S. Fowl writes of allegory and interpretive power in Galatians, including 4:21-31. He follows R. Hays' approach to Galatians and other portions where he finds that (1) Paul's "interpretive strategies are ecclesiocentric rather than christocentric" (Paul reads Scripture not to see Christ but to vision the Church); and that (2) Paul reads Scripture "in the light of his experience of the Spirit rather than the other way around."¹⁰³ Fowl's first claim is that Galatians 3-4 is allegorical throughout (not just 4:21-31) by defining allegory more broadly as interpretations that "either explicitly or implicitly counter conventional views about a text . . ." ¹⁰⁴ By providing the deeper or spiritual or "true" meaning of a passage this kind of allegory is not just an unconventional way of interpreting but a counterconventional way. When such a reading becomes successful it becomes conventional and no longer allegorical. This broader kind of allegory accounts well and charitably for Philo, Clement, and even Paul. Fowl and others who embrace this kind of allegory suggest that the former emphasis on history as distinguishing typology from allegory begins to blur if typology is distinguished "by its propensity for representing the latent sense of a text as *temporarily posterior* to its manifest sense" (italics his).¹⁰⁵ Hence the distinguishing of typology from allegory may not be as compelling as it seems.

Fowl's second claim is that the preceding kind of allegorical reading involves an exercise of interpretive power. This is a form of rhetorical power because it makes the claim that there is something obscure, inadequate, or misleading about a conventional interpretation. This power is related to Paul's character. In addition, the most important act of power is Paul's "insistence that the story of Abraham should be read in the context of

¹⁰¹Ibid., 238.

¹⁰²Ibid., 240-44. Interestingly, this power of allegory has modern counterparts. The story of Hagar has become an allegory for African American women's experience and feminism, and among fundamentalist Muslim women in Egypt gender activists have taken up the name Hagar as part of a movement for the empowerment of women (see pp. 244-46).

¹⁰³S. Fowl, "Who Can Read Abraham's Story? Allegory and Interpretive Power in Galatians," *JSNT* 55 (1994): 77.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 79.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 81, n. 8. He seems to be saying that in typology the antitype is later in time than the type, and this can be said of the broad kind of allegory.

the Galatians' experience of the Spirit."¹⁰⁶ The hermeneutical standard the Galatians should use to confirm Paul's interpretation is their experience of the Spirit (Gal. 3:1-5). This experience guides their interpretation of Scripture and not the other way around, and appears in 4:21-31 (esp. v. 29).

Fowl's final claim is that the autobiographical material in chapters 1-2 functions in part, at least, to support Paul's exercise of interpretive power in chapters 3-4. He presupposes a community who will recognize him as a person of character who will exercise his interpretive power wisely.

Another aspect of a postmodern approach deals with the semantic sign and philosophical linguistics in getting meaning. Recent work suggests that interpretation involves a triadic rather than a dyadic approach to linguistics. This asserts that meaning proceeds from the concept or idea or object through an interpretant who takes the idea and, from his range of words, formulates his conception of it in a sign or word (rather than going directly from the idea to the sign).¹⁰⁷ For Scripture, this means that the person who receives revelation formulates it in words in his own mind and writes them under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (giving normative revelation), and the person who interprets revelation formulates the words of interpretation under the Spirit's guidance (which is not normative revelation). In Galatians 4, Paul is giving us his formulation of the contrasts, and his formulation is shaped by biblical history and interpretation existing prior to him. As interpreters, we must be guided by the Spirit in understanding.

The foregoing has reflected several concerns of postmodernism. These include the idea of interpretation being the interpretation of other interpretations, rather than objective truth; the subjectivity associated with allegorical interpretation and the work of the Spirit; and the role of community in validating the interpretation (which is assumed from the beginning, verse 21: "Tell me, you (plural) who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says?"; note also "Now you, brothers," verse 28; and "Therefore, brothers, we . . .", verse 31). This approach employs new concepts regarding the meaning of meaning and the significance of interpretive power. These concerns help us to think more clearly and critically about cherished ideas of interpretation in general, and allegory and typology in particular. They may even correct the abuses of higher criticism.¹⁰⁸ This

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 79.

¹⁰⁷Galloway, "Efficacy of Propositionalism," 188-194, 261-69.

¹⁰⁸Interestingly, Lampe and Woollcombe, *Typology*, 14ff., point out that it was the rise of modern critical study that broke the continuity which had existed between the modern reader and his medieval and early Christian predecessors. Until then the Bible was viewed as a unity and a passage was valuable primarily for its application to Christ and to Christians. Certain principles of interpretation could be applied uniformly throughout its various parts. But historical and literary criticism took the opposite view that one must recover the original meaning of the text and to set the various documents in their proper context in history. The new emphasis upon the diversity of Scripture tended to overthrow the foundations of typology and allegory, and prophetic exegesis was discredited. But now there is a rise of interest again in typology. And it is interesting to note how some of the interests of a conservative postmodernism coincide with the failure of modern criticism to satisfy biblical interpretation.

view has no difficulty in accepting the allegorical nature of what Paul does, nor do the following views. Yet by defining allegory so broadly, even as "translation," we may lose distinctives historically learned and this impinges on the question of reality: Did the events actually happen, will they happen, this way?

In summary, Paul's approach is compatible with certain concerns of postmodernism. The latter provides a threshold for a fuller understanding of Paul.

6. An intertextuality approach.

Many have pointed to the inversion that occurs in Paul's "allegory." Indeed, the Galatians who for the most part may have been Gentiles rather than Jews are deliberately called "children of promise after Isaac," leaving the implication that the Jewish legalists were "children of law and bondage after Ishmael"--an idea that the Jewish legalists would vehemently reject. As Bruce observes, Paul has turned the interpretation of the Old Testament text on its head. It is "a forcible inversion of the analogy which is unparalleled elsewhere in Paul."¹⁰⁹ In other words, Paul has taken a historical record which the Galatian legalists may have used in support of their case and refuted it by inverting it and showing that the proper interpretation supported the gospel of grace.¹¹⁰ Isaac's physical descendants may have been the Jews, and Ishmael's the Gentiles, but Isaac's true, spiritual descendants are those of faith, promise, and Spirit--both Jews and Gentiles. Physical descendancy means nothing.

This matter of inversion may well be part of the key to understanding what "allegory" means to Paul.¹¹¹ Studies using an intertextual approach (also called metalepsis) focus on the quotation of Isaiah 54:1 (in Gal. 4:27) to discover how the new interpretive context (formed by bringing Isaiah and Galatians together), the intertextual space, contributes to Paul's inversion. The figurative effect of the intertextual space "can lie in the unstated or suppressed (transumed) points of resonance between the two texts."¹¹² The idea is that it is "Isaiah's metaphorical linkage of Abraham and Sarah with an eschatologically restored Jerusalem that warrants Paul's use of Isa. 54:1"¹¹³ By itself the quote doesn't appear to further the claim that believing Jews and Gentiles are Abraham's heirs. How is the Jerusalem above barren like Sarah? How did she become "our mother"? By

¹⁰⁹Bruce, 218.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹As K. Thomas, "Covenant in Relation to Hagar and Ishmael in Galatians," *The Bible Translator*, 37 (Oct. 1986): 445-46, observes, the intent of the allegory is not to denigrate Hagar and Ishmael. The reversal is "a warning not to read an interpretation based on tradition back into a text," in this case the Arabs or Muslim back into the passage.

¹¹²This is the focus of the study by K. Jobes, "Jerusalem, Our Mother: Metalepsis and Intertextuality in Galatians 4:21-31," *WTJ* 55 (1993): 299-320. The quote is from 305.

¹¹³Jobes, "Jerusalem," 305, quoting R. B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale, 1989), 120.

identifying some of the unstated points of resonance echoing between Galatians and Isaiah explains how Paul uses the quote and how it becomes the basis of his reversal in verse 28.

It is Isaiah who transforms the theme of barrenness as an indication of God's past faithfulness to a proclamation of a future manifestation of God's power. Karen Jobes shows that Isaiah in transforming narrative history into prophetic proclamation also transforms Sarah's motherhood into a wider reference, enlarges the female personification of capital cities such as Jerusalem as both barren and fruitful (Isa. 1:4, 21, 26), and introduces the concept of a miraculous birth (the resurrection of Christ; Isa. 26:17-19) as a demonstration of God's power. By his analogy of Sarah and Jerusalem Isaiah transforms the sense of the covenant, the seed, and the inheritance. The resurrection means that Isaiah's vision of a rejoicing Jerusalem and a transformed seed of Abraham has been realized. He also introduces the Holy Spirit as defining the future seed of the mother-city (Isa. 44:1-3). With this understanding of Isaiah, Paul is able to cite Isaiah 54:1 in verse 27 to connect the reference to Jerusalem above as "our mother" in verse 26 with verse 28 ("But you, brothers, are children of promise like Isaac").

So the inversion is derived from Isaiah, and this explains several things.¹¹⁴ (1) The contrasts connected with Sarah are deliberately not completed, because Paul is comparing the old covenant not with the new covenant but with the older covenant made with Abraham as proclaimed by Isaiah. (2) What Paul is doing in his "allegory" is not an arbitrary allegorical assignment of various meanings but it flows from his understanding of Isaiah 54:1. His "allegory" goes "beyond the traditional historical understanding of these women" by transforming the story "from narrative history to (realized) prophetic proclamation just as Isaiah did."¹¹⁵ (3) Paul was correcting an errant hermeneutic which sought to get the Galatians circumcized by applying Genesis 21 directly to the Galatians' situation without first going through Isaiah's intervening, transforming revelation and without reference to the resurrection of Christ. The "radical reversal effected in Gal 4:21-31 pivots on the resurrection of Jesus Christ."¹¹⁶

Whatever the merits of the particulars in the preceding discussion of Paul's inversion, this view argues that Paul's "allegory" and inversion is an interpretation that derives from Isaiah. This explains the reason why the quote occurs here, and gives a different perspective on Paul's "allegory" and how to define it relative to typology. It also means that Paul's primary source for interpretation is not rabbinical discussion but Scripture itself--the words of God, not men. For Paul the "allegory" is not extraneous to the meaning of the text, but intrinsic to it. Paul derives the "deeper" meaning from a broad, careful reading of Isaiah, and this has implications for reproducing what Paul does.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 315-18. That the Galatians should have understood all of this is based on the assumption that Paul earlier taught them this. This also explains why there seems to be so much missing on reading this passage in Galatians.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 318.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

7. A rhetorical approach.

In an approach somewhat similar to the intertextual approach with its concentration on the place of the Old Testament quote, Perriman has concentrated on the quotation of Genesis 21:10 about the casting out of the bondwoman and her son as the key to Paul's "allegory." He would fix the use of Isaiah 54:1 as explaining verse 26 (how Jerusalem could be "mother of us all") and being applied in verse 28 (the believers of Galatia as those "after Isaac" are the children promised the barren one in Isaiah 54:1). Hence verses 24-28 belong together, and the application begins with verse 29, not verse 28 (as I outlined the passage in the exegesis above). Perriman believes that many have misconstrued Paul's argumentative strategy as an argument from historical descent--an argument either chosen or forced on him. Instead, Paul's allegory is meant to show the covenantal applicability of the command to "throw out the bondwoman and her son" to the Galatian situation. In his "allegory," Paul is not irresponsible nor unintelligent but pursues a deliberate and provocative rhetorical device.¹¹⁷

Perriman holds that the development of Paul's argument derives from verse 30, the quote of Genesis 21:10. This quote is the only one from the law, from the Abrahamic narrative, to answer the question of verse 21, "Do you not hear the law?" It is introduced with the heavy formula, "What does the Scripture say?" It carries several of the motifs from 3:1-4:11. Finally, it gives succinct expression to Paul's concern that the readers embrace freedom (cf. 5:1).¹¹⁸

If this is so, then important corollaries occur.¹¹⁹ It casts doubt on the view that Paul is refuting Judaizing allegorization for the issue is not one of physical descent from Isaac but of separation from the Judaizers; and it is doubtful that there is a polemic involved over the issues of circumcision and the law, for both Isaac and Ishmael were circumcized and the story has no immediate connection with the giving of the law--for descent would exclude the Gentiles whether they kept the law or not. In addition, the separation called for in verse 30, the point of the whole passage, is not part of the contrasts (except perhaps implicitly) of verses 22-23 but descent, whether literal or allegorical, is. Finally, verses 22-23 must be considered as explicating the grounds for the proper understanding of the Genesis quotation.

Perriman points to the perfect tense of *gegenetai* (v. 23), the omission of the names Hagar and Sarah (v. 22), and the present participle (v. 24) as all supporting the idea that verse 24 points back to verses 21-23 as well as forward, and witnesses to Paul's rewriting of Scripture to rhetorically reshape it. The "allegory" belongs not to the original text but to his restatement of it to emphasize the covenants.¹²⁰ So "the one from Mount

¹¹⁷Perriman, "Rhetorical Strategy," 27-42.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 32-33.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 33f.

¹²⁰Ibid., 34.

Sinai" is not a literal identification of Hagar but refers to the covenant from there and is "allegorically associating" the covenant with Hagar (v. 24). The present participle ("the one bearing") has the covenant, not Hagar, as the subject. So Hagar literally and the covenant metaphorically "give birth to slavery."¹²¹ Paul intentionally inverts the historical record to use it as a rhetorical device like metaphor to break down the old ways of interpretation based on the flesh and old covenant and to set forth a new set of rules based on covenant.¹²² Perimann takes the grammar of verse 25 as the "Hagar-Sinai mountain" (or, "Hagar-Mount Sinai") and suggests that Paul intends there to be not a direct connection with the present Jerusalem but a symbolical one with Arabia; but there is an analogical connection with Jerusalem for she is also in slavery with her children.¹²³ The quote from Isaiah 54:1 which in its original context referred to the past and the future Jerusalem mediates rhetorically if not logically between verse 26 (the Jerusalem above) and verse 28 (like Isaac believers are children of a promise). The "casting out of the bondwoman and her son" refers not to the Judaizers or the Jews but to the Sinaitic covenant and the tradition of enslavement. Paul intends that the whole passage is meant to show how Paul wants Genesis 21:10 to be interpreted and to give the grounds for applying it to the readers' situation.¹²⁴

Part of Perriman's summary and conclusion is worth citing here.¹²⁵

. . . the determinative allusion to Scripture in this passage is not the paraphrase of vv. 22-23 but the quotation of v. 30. This point is crucial because it makes it clear that the "allegorization" in the passage serves an argument not for descent . . . but for exclusion--that those who are children of a promise should reject the Sinaitic covenant and its implications. Hagar, the Sinaitic covenant, and the present Jerusalem can be lined up together not because of any historical or geographical connection but because they all in one way or another . . . "give birth into slavery". Similarly, Isaac, the covenant of promise, and the Jerusalem above correspond not by virtue of any external relationship but because they have to do with freedom. And whatever the particular historical circumstances may be, freedom must always "cast out" slavery.

The purpose of the passage leading up to v. 30, therefore, is to demonstrate i) the covenantal implications of the contrast between the enslaved woman and child and the free woman and child; and ii) what we might call the "typological", or perhaps better symbolic, applicability of Gn. 21:10 to the contemporary situation. . . . When Paul says in v. 24 *hatina estin allegoroumena*, he is referring not directly to Scripture but to his summary restatement of the story of Abraham and his two

¹²¹Ibid., 35.

¹²²Ibid., 36.

¹²³Ibid., 37-39.

¹²⁴Ibid., 40-41.

¹²⁵Ibid., 41-42.

wives in vv. 22-23. In this restatement the historical figures involved have already moved into the background and attention has shifted towards the underlying covenantal antithesis. Paul is aware that in order to maintain what he sees to be a continuity at this covenantal level (slavery versus freedom) between the OT situation and that of the Galatians he must perpetrate a historical solecism. But this solecism or impertinence has an important rhetorical function inasmuch as it brings about within the context of his argument the breakdown of a conventional understanding, just as the 'semantic impertinence' of metaphor within the context of the particular discourse abolishes conventional meaning: out of the breakdown emerges new understanding.

Paul's logic, then, cannot be simply assimilated to standard contemporary categories, such as rabbinic allegorization. Paul is "not allegorizing after the manner of either Philo or the rabbis because the allegorical details serve only to make explicit . . . what has already emerged in his paraphrase of the OT story."¹²⁶

While raising some concerns, this approach has much to commend it. It puts a proper emphasis on separation rather than descent, upon the internal rather than the external thrust of the passage, and upon the central place of the Old Testament text (Genesis 21:10) rather than the external Judaizers as forming the meaning of the text. This approach is beneficial for suggesting that Paul does something which is unlike any form of allegory, and for seeking to explain the function of the inversion that Paul makes.

8. The world view approach.

Finally, I offer another explanation of what Paul does in Galatians 4. I appeal to the role that world view plays in the discovery of meaning (hermeneutics). This approach utilizes several points from the other approaches but gives emphasis to world view as the unifying and justifying factor for the approach Paul uses. In summary, Paul is filled with and led by the concept of reality which the Old Testament has: alongside the particular experience, the temporal or existential, reality, there is an essential reality that belongs to the eternal realm. Both realities are good and embraced, but the existential is giving place to, is being actualized in, the essential.¹²⁷ The concept of the Kingdom, as both rule (transcendent) and relationship (immanent), is one way by which this paradigm of reality is expressed throughout the Bible. The Kingdom is being actualized; it is both "here, but not yet."

Applying the world view approach to Galatians 4 means that Paul discovers in the texts about Abraham and Sarah, Hagar, and several others (including Isaiah) a deeper meaning or sense (not a double meaning) which transcends the particular sense. There are

¹²⁶Ibid., 42.

¹²⁷This paradigm is like the common model which sets forth our state and standing in Christ. "Existential" is not to be confused with, nor is it derived from, "existentialist" as Bultmann and others use it. They deliberately distinguish the latter from the former.

two levels in the one meaning. The meaning is one, but complex. This approach affirms the historical sense as controlling and foundational. It also explains the correspondences Paul finds, the meaning as developing which he finds in Isaiah, the reference to the "Jerusalem above" (reflecting the Kingdom as "at hand" as Jesus and the apostles affirmed), the inversion of the history, and the principle embodied in the words of Genesis 21:10 ("Cast out the bondwoman . . .") which makes it perennially contemporary. The words of 4:29, "But as then . . . so even now," capture well the historical sense in conjunction with the essential, deeper sense.

There are certain corollaries that accompany such a process of interpretation, which appear in this passage and in its immediate context. These include the role of the Spirit as guide to such meaning (note 3:1-5, 14; 4:6, 29; 5:16, 18; etc.); an approach to spirituality that affirms the place of the emotive and volitive along with the cognitive (that is, in addition to the cognitive understanding of the histories--Abraham's and the Galatians'--involved in the passage, there are several emotive and volitional appeals: verses 21, 27, 28, 30); the role of the community (note the appeals to the community in 4:21, 29, 30, 31), and the role of history (both Paul's appeal to the biblical history of Genesis and Isaiah, and his appeal to the Galatians' history).

The chief contribution of the world view approach is its emphasis on world view which represents biblical (Paul's) theology and hermeneutical practice. It is a form of the hermeneutical circle which makes the final determiner of meaning the text, the whole canon, and God's perspective of reality.

Summary: Defining Paul's "Allegory"

In summary, the above newer explanations of Paul's hermeneutic in Galatians 4 suggest new and interesting aspects to the question of Paul's usage. There is considerable overlap. The intertextual approach speaks also of allegory and analogy, and is a literary approach. All of the approaches are rhetorical, at least in part. Especially commendable are those which find explanation from within Scripture--how the quotes of Isaiah and Genesis affect and impact meaning in Galatians. They also reinforce the value of allegory as an interpretive approach. Time will tell whether any one of them will prevail over the standard explanations.

In a very real sense, one decides the question of what Paul's hermeneutic is here by one's understanding of what allegory is and what typology is.¹²⁸ Many interpreters make the contrast with "standard" allegory, such as found in Philo, and decide that Paul does not do allegory anywhere.¹²⁹ Yet if we are to be biblicists, as Paul was, it seems that we should

¹²⁸Another alternative is to see a true allegory in vv. 24-27, because what happened to Sarah and Hagar is not the point but what they stand for. Yet even here the concern is not for abstract philosophical or ethical principles but for illuminating the "eschatological situation of the contemporary church" (Hanson, *Studies*, 288, n. 11, citing the views of Ulonska and Muller).

¹²⁹Hanson, *Studies*, 159, defines allegory as "interpreting a text in a sense which completely ignores its original meaning, or in a sense whose connection with its original meaning is purely arbitrary." Yet

follow Paul's terminology ("being allegorized") and seek to understand his approach using whatever literary approaches are available, for the following reasons: (1) it avoids the pitfalls of reading our world view (what we think allegory should or should not be) into Paul's use; (2) it lets Paul's world view prevail; (3) it allows the distinctiveness of Paul and the New Testament to prevail. Like the uniqueness of gospel as a literary genre, Paul's "allegory" in Galatians is a unique literary form. It is neither typology,¹³⁰ nor a form of allegory known to us from other literature. The inversion confirms its uniqueness.

Let's consider another method for defining Paul's use--by identifying the features present. There is appeal to the historical account of Abraham, discovery of meaning that seems to go beyond the surface of the text, inversion of meaning, various correspondences (note the supply of "represents"), and an emphasis on the contemporizing of the text. Indeed, the latter seems to be the focus in each of the last four verses (e.g., verse 28 affirms: "Now, you, brothers, are children of promise after Isaac"). Even verse 26 begins this with the words, "The Jerusalem above is free, which is [the] mother of us [all]." In verse 29 contemporizing is virtually asserted in the words: "But as then . . . so even now." And the whole passage begins with a contemporizing concern: "Tell me, you who wish to be under law, do you not understand the law?" All of these matters suggest that contemporizing is the major feature of Paul's "allegorizing." In contrast to Philo who because of his Platonic world view related the narrative primarily to the world of ideas, Paul's world view involving the actualization of the reality of the Kingdom (the "Jerusalem above") led him to relate to his contemporaries' problems and how to live in this world. So I suggest that for Paul allegory is a contemporizing of the biblical text by means of the application or actualization of the essential sense or meaning of the text--the meaning which transcends the historical setting known to the human author. This contemporizing emphasis is more general than typology, or at least from biblically-specified types, which

Lampe and Woolcombe, *Typology*, 42, say that Paul is doing allegorical exegesis, not typological exegesis, but it is a "historical" allegorism.

¹³⁰The pertinent question is: If Paul is practicing a typology of the first order (where God ordains a meaning unknown to the human author), why does he employ the term meaning "to be spoken allegorically" and not a form of "typology"? There are several considerations. (1) The New Testament does not show a consistent terminology (cf. "parable" in Hebrews). (2) As Paul invents the basic New Testament definition of "type" and "typology" in the New Testament, he may well invent a term here in Galatians 4. (3) None of the other terms including "type" have easy verbal equivalents; only "allegory" has a verbal equivalent in "to allegorize." (4) The concept of world view may help. If the world view of Greek allegorists included the notion that the sacred mythical writings about their gods could be allegorized to show their supernatural inspiration, Paul may be mimicking this procedure, while at the same time doing so sarcastically, since he embraces the historical meaning and they did not. (5) The other terms, such as type, suggest that the divine meaning was inherent to the circumstances then. The typological meaning arose in the history then. In Paul's "allegory" the present history or circumstances give rise to the typological or allegorical meaning. It is a meaning that God intended all along (at least in the sense that all legitimate applications of truth are part of the meaning God intends), but it could not be articulated ("spoken") until present history allowed for it. (6) Paul's "allegory" seems to be much more contemporary, fluid, and open, inviting ongoing development. (7) Paul's "allegory" consists almost exclusively of contrasts for depicting the "antitypes"; that is, they are fulfillments in the form of contrasts or opposites (old covenant--new covenant; bondwoman--free woman; slave--free; Mount Sinai--Mount Zion; present Jerusalem--heavenly Jerusalem; etc.).

emphasize correspondence. Paul's "allegory" begins with questions raised out of the situation of his readers, and it is these that are the vehicles for discovering meaning. Types seem to begin in the text. So the point of beginning is perhaps the key.¹³¹ The allegory arises from the contemporary needs of the readers; types arise from theological "needs" or patterns of the text; both have the effect of showing Christ to be the fulfillment of the Old. In this sense this form of allegory is closely related to what we call application, though "allegory" is without the semantic distancing which the term "application" usually carries.

It may be that the distinctive of Paul's treatment here is its "surprise" element, in light of the inversion of the history mentioned above.¹³² It flows from messianic or eschatological fulfillment, or christology--the vantage point of the Kingdom being actualized. The end has begun in Christ and he sets all things in new perspective for every scribe of the law (cf. Matt. 13:52).

So we end up with the following features of biblical "allegory." There is appreciation for the historicity of the text; correspondences in the form of contrasts drawn from a breadth of biblical and nonbiblical history; biblical inversion of the meaning; contemporization.

Perhaps all that Paul is doing here is demonstrating how any Christian can go beyond biblically designated types and find additional meaning. This would be a second level of typology--that lacking canonical authority. This concern leads to the next section.

PART THREE

"SO EVEN NOW"

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PAUL'S ALLEGORY FOR

¹³¹Interestingly, Bruce (217) seems to have (unwittingly?) suggested this when he says that Paul "has in mind that form of allegory which is commonly called typology: a narrative from OT history is interpreted in terms of the new covenant, or (to put it the other way round) an aspect of the new covenant is presented in terms of an OT narrative." So a type moves from text (the OT) to the NT or contemporary meaning; allegory of the form in Gal. 4 moves from the contemporary need or new covenant era (I would say, from the actualizing of the Kingdom as both here and not yet) to the text of the OT. Paul's "allegory" is akin to the broader definition of a type as a pattern, example.

¹³²As Bruce, 218-219, says, Paul "inverts the exegesis" of the Jews and that which he would have followed in earlier days. To the Jews "this exegesis must have seemed preposterous" but Paul learned from his personal experience that the gospel for Jews and Gentiles is the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham; the law was no such fulfillment and had a validity (which then did not modify the earlier promise) until the promise was fulfilled in Christ (219). This "inversion of history" leads others to call this a deeper or spiritual meaning.

Since such inversion is unparalleled elsewhere, then do we have here a distinctive of biblical "allegory", paralleling the fact that here Paul's terminology ("allegory") is also unparalleled? Ephesians 4:7 may be another such inversion when Paul cites the LXX of Psalm 68:18. Here the LXX translated the Hebrew "received" into "gave" in the Greek.

CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATION

The preceding has sought to understand what Paul is doing in his "allegory." In this section I wish to address two matters, which above I gave as the second and third major questions which I ask of Paul's allegory in Galatians 4:21-31.

THE REPRODUCTION OF PAUL'S APPROACH

The second major question with which I am concerned is: Is Paul a model for us? Are we able to do with Scripture what Paul does, and should we?¹³³ If we answer, "yes," to both aspects of this question, we are in effect saying that "allegory" here is a method of exegesis, not just a method of writing in the Scripture.¹³⁴

To answer this question, several considerations are necessary. (1) We must determine the literary form with which we are dealing. Those who discover typology¹³⁵ or analogy in Galatians 4 would be open to reproducing his approach, especially those who view typology as application and as a method of exegesis. This is also true for all who see only application in Paul's entire use of Scripture here. All those advocating the more recent approaches (postmodern, intertextual, rhetorical, and world view) which affirm whatever Paul is doing would also lean toward reproducing Paul's approach. Those who find here allegory of either kind would be disposed not to reproduce Paul. (2) We must consider whether Paul here explicitly or implicitly encourages Christians to follow his approach. While such explicitness is lacking, there is implicit support for following his use of Scripture in the two questions (verses 21, 30) he asks: "Do you not understand the Law?" "What does the Scripture say?" Also verse 30 ("Cast out the bondwoman and her son") implies that the application of Genesis 21 would fit any situation where the correspondences are similar; they do not have to be identical. Finally, the words of verse 29, "But as then . . . so even now," are a typological sort of argument,¹³⁶ however one reads (as a typology or as an allegory or as something else) the passage as a whole. The words not only suggest the ongoing relevance of Scripture, but they provide an example of

¹³³Much discussion has centered on this question. One of the most articulate and persuasive positions is the view that, while we may reproduce Paul's literal approach to interpreting Scripture, we cannot reproduce Paul's peshar, midrash, and allegorical approaches because they require an inspiration which the ordinary believer lacks. This is the view represented by Longenecker, *Exegesis*, 218-20. But if this is not allegory but typology or something else it seems that Longenecker's view is not applicable.

¹³⁴The distinction of Lampe and Woollcombe, *Typology*, 39-40.

¹³⁵Goppelt, *Typos*, 237, seems to support reproduction when he says that we should "give serious consideration to this method of interpretation," and "apply it in a manner appropriate to our own thought forms . . ."

¹³⁶Perriman, "Rhetorical Strategy," 32.

biblical hermeneutics--how to get meaning from the text; and of exegesis--how to get from the text to the contemporary meaning. Even Paul's citation of Isaiah suggests that Paul's interpretation agrees with Isaiah's interpretation of Genesis, such that the Galatians would approve of his hermeneutic. If Paul's interpretation actually arises in Isaiah, then reproducing Paul is simply a matter of a careful reading of the Old Testament. (3) We must consider whether Paul elsewhere or the Apostles or Jesus invite us to follow them in their use of Scripture. It seems that we do indeed have such an invitation.¹³⁷ However, if Paul does something unique or special here (note his "inversion" and his term "allegory"), then this argument is qualified. (4) Finally, we must consider the authority of our reproduction of Paul's method, if we engage in it. His "allegory" in Galatians is inspired and normative; our reproduction is not inspired and limited in the scope of its authority. Only as our interpretations match more closely what God intends do they gain authority, but we cannot and will not ever know this to be normative authority. Of course, the same should be said of any and all interpretation of Scripture.

There are other concerns to consider in this matter of reproducing Paul here. One concerns the resources available to enable us to reproduce Paul should we find this to be encouraged. We are able to do what Paul does because what Paul does requires no special training, training which is secular.¹³⁸ It requires only that we read Scripture, here the Old Testament, with the same approach or world view that Paul did, and indeed as all the early pillars of the Church did, following Jesus' leading.

In addition to reading Scripture according to its world view, we have a second resource for following Paul in his interpretation of the Old. This is the work of the Holy Spirit as the interpreter and teacher of truth. As Paul had the Spirit, so he affirms that believers possess the same Spirit. Everything in their Christian walk is to be characterized by the Holy Spirit and his continual work among them (see 3:3-5; 5:16-25). Even in this passage Paul is conscious of the fact that those who belong to Isaac as children of promise are born according to the Spirit (4:28-29), just as Isaac was born by the Spirit, the Spirit of promise (3:14). If this is the case, then believers are to be led by the Holy Spirit in their interpretation of Scripture.¹³⁹

These two resources for interpretation, a biblical world view and the Holy Spirit, are, of course, to be fully intergrated. That is, a biblical world view gives significant place to the realm and role of the Spirit; and the Spirit guides us and empowers us to think and act according to a biblical world view.

¹³⁷While it is beyond the scope of this study to demonstrate this, such passages as Luke 24, Acts 17:10-12 give such encouragement, explicitly or implicitly.

¹³⁸This is not to exclude such training as in the rabbinics, as Paul had, and other areas attendant to biblical instruction.

¹³⁹See such passages as John 14:26; 16:13-15; 1 John 2:27; 1 Corinthians 2:12-14. We deal with this extensively in *Beyond the Obvious*, chapter 6; and in J. De Young, "The Holy Spirit--The Divine Exegete: How Are We Able to Hear Him?" Paper presented to the Evangelical Theological Society, November 22, 1996, Jackson, MI.

These two resources are otherwise related to hermeneutics or interpretation. They not only are those matters which empower or enable us to follow Paul, but they also compel us to do so. This reinforces the question, Should we follow Paul? For world view influences, yea virtually determines, interpretation; and the Spirit working through all the tools of interpretation at our disposal is our only sure guide to right interpretation. Since he was the active partner in inscripturation, and the human the passive partner, so he is the active partner in interpretation, and the human interpreter is the passive one. It is a divine-human product with which we deal. Only the Spirit, not any human author, could know the entire canon and its meaning, the intrinsic genre, which imparts meaning to all the individual parts. It takes all of the spiritual graces and spiritual disciplines at our disposal to begin to interpret, to read rightly, Scripture--to hear the voice of the Spirit.

Yet, in addition to these resources, there are specific matters in our passage which argue for our following Paul in his example of "allegorical" use. First, the lists of contrasts Paul sets forth between the way of law and the way of promise is incomplete and begs for completion. These must be understood if the comparison is to be made.¹⁴⁰ From the text we can draw the set of contrasts that belong to the law, but the contrasting pairs are incomplete, as the following chart shows.

law	(promise)
the Law	(the Promise?)
son of the bond woman	son of the free woman
according to flesh	through promise
covenant from Sinai	covenant (new) (from Zion?)
born for slavery	(born for freedom)
Hagar	(Sarah)
Mt. Sinai in Arabia	(Mt. Zion in heaven?)
present Jerusalem (their mother)	Jerusalem above, our mother
children enslaved	(free children)
having a husband	sterile
few children	many more children
(children of slavery)	children of promise
(after Ishmael)	after Isaac
born after flesh	born after Spirit
as then	so even now
bondwoman and her son	free woman and her son
(lack of inheritance)	inheritance
children of the bondwoman	children of the free woman
Jew	Christian (Gentile or Jew)

It is evident that Paul has given more in the list under law than in the column under promise (i.e., there are twice as many "missing" contrasts in the second column as compared with the first), but the "missing" contrasts in the second column, as well in the first, are easily supplied for the most part. Since we are able to complete the lists, it is

¹⁴⁰As Hanson, *Studies*, 94, observes .

appropriate to say that neither list is incomplete. We are able to fill in the lists by adapting our thinking to the biblical world view (including its history and Kingdom reality). Paul's lists beg to be filled in, to recognize the completeness that is inherently present. *We do "allegory."*

To the extent that the supplied elements are self-evident, they are just as authoritative as the stated contrasts that Paul gives. This has implications for our interpretation of other portions.

We might continue Paul's contrasts with additions such as the following (and we may even be able to construct other contrasts from Scripture):

no Holy Spirit	Holy Spirit in believers
earth	heaven
temporal	eternal ¹⁴¹
cast out	resided at home

Another observation is that the contrasts begin with verses 21-23, before Paul apparently begins his "allegory" in verse 24. Yet the elements before and after verse 24 are of the same nature. This should lead us to use caution in distinguishing the nature of what Paul does before verse 24 as compared to the verses afterward, as though one is not "allegory" and the other is.¹⁴²

In summary, can we, or should we, follow Paul's hermeneutic here? It seems that there are three positions. (1) We may not reproduce the method when it is *ad hominem*, a form of allegory written in response to the allegory of the Judaizers, arbitrarily constructed.¹⁴³ (2) We may not reproduce it because it is a form of typology which is non-historical or arbitrarily composed. Yet I think enough has been said above to show that this is not the case in Galatians 4. (3) We may reproduce it because it is a form of interpretation which, like typology, is anchored in history.¹⁴⁴ This liberates those who

¹⁴¹Paul's use here is similar to Jesus' use of this text as recorded in John 8:35. There the Pharisees and anyone who does sin are identified as slaves of sin. They are likened to the "slave who does not abide in the house forever. The son abides for ever." This supports the idea that Paul and the other apostles learned their use of Scripture from Jesus.

¹⁴²The view of some as cited above.

¹⁴³Longenecker, "Illustrations," 191, 194-97, would say that we cannot follow Paul here for what Paul is doing is following an *ad hominem* argument in his allegory in response to the allegory by which the Judaizers had treated the same story. So this may not be his own preferred exegetical methodology. As hints of the *ad hominem* nature of Paul's use Longenecker points to the use of "it is written" in v. 22 to introduce, not a text of Scripture, but the scriptural arguments of his opponents; and to the fact that none of the principals are named as the story begins, and "Sarah" and "Ishmael" never appear (193).

¹⁴⁴Lampe and Woolcombe, *Typology*, 29-38, take this view. There is a unity of thought (world view?); Christ is viewed as the unifying center; and there is a pattern of real correspondences in historical events due to divine activity.

would be reticent to reproduce a Philonic kind of allegory but not typology.¹⁴⁵ In addition, to follow Paul's lead in finding the kind of additional meaning he does means that we discover not some arbitrary, noncontextual meaning but that we read Scripture in its canonical context, having a special awareness of how later prophets and the psalmist have transformed (inverted?) the law or Torah (as an intertextual approach affirms). In a word, we read Scripture in light of the biblical world view.

Paul's hermeneutic in Galatians 4 is an example, even from the most conservative standards of interpretation, of a legitimate use of the Old Testament. His approach is not the only model for legitimate uses of the Old Testament, but it is a compelling, creative, and fruitful one. It opens the door for discovering similar readings of narrative literature.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵Regarding whether we can reproduce Paul's method here, it does not matter when the deeper meaning is discovered. It is similar to the question of whether we can find additional types to those identified in Scripture or not. Both Scripture's types and ours are in Scripture supplied by the Spirit at the time of writing; it is simply a question of when they are identified and the degree of authority they have (those identified by the text are inspired and carry normative authority; ours are not inspired and have limited authority). Our contemporary questions allow us to see Scripture anew, to discover the total interpretation of a text.

This really does not apply to interpreting the New Testament, for therein the revelation is complete or fulfilled. There cannot be further types or "allegories" to be discovered.

¹⁴⁶I take opportunity here to compare what I've written in this study with the approach to the Old Testament that my co-author and I have taken in *Beyond the Obvious : Discover the Deeper Meaning of Scripture*. What we advocate is a reading of the Old Testament in light of its world view as expressed in the Kingdom (defined as rule and relationship) center. This is very similar to the typology of Paul in Galatians 4. Yet it avoids the errors of two faulty kinds of typology identified by Lampe and Woollcombe, *Typology*, 30ff. The first is that which rests on a quasi-Platonic doctrine of the relation of the literal sense of Scripture to eternal spiritual reality concealed beneath the literal sense, seeking to discover the real truth, the essential meaning, in preference to the intention of the original author, and treating the Bible as a collection of oracles of the Holy Spirit. This kind of typology is the foundation for that type of allegory which is moralistic and could be applied to non-biblical literature. In our approach, we hold the literal sense as all-important in determining the bounds of the deeper meaning; there can be no deeper meaning apart from the literal sense and actual historical fulfillment.

The second erroneous kind of typology is that which is akin to that allegory which is unhistorical and seeks correspondence not between the past and the future, the foreshadowing and the fulfillment, but rather the earthly and the heavenly, the shadow and the reality. It disregards historical verisimilitude, the original intention of the author, and the meaning of events within the context of history. In our approach, the essential meaning is tied to the actualization of the Kingdom, the "here but not yet" paradigm of reality.

So, it is our perspective that our approach is very similar to what Paul does in Galatians 4, identified perhaps as a hybrid of typology and allegory. The correspondences have to be present; there is the essential place of history; the Spirit guides us in recovering what he put there in the beginning; it is a contemporizing of Scripture; there may be inversion; and there is no resorting to symbolism and/or etymology to get meaning. Finally, the approach does not see deeper meaning as a second or double meaning, but as part of the one total meaning or interpretation of the text. It is comparable to the idea of Rambach that the one meaning of Scripture has both a literal and a mystical sense (see J. Sailhamer, *Introduction to Old Testament Theology : A Canonical Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 231-32. All of this takes place within the confines of a biblical world view which is both the enabler and the limiter to all meaning

"As it was formerly . . . so even now" encourages us once more to read the Old Testament profitably and prophetably.¹⁴⁷

THE ROLE OF HISTORY IN HERMENEUTICS

I now turn to the third major question mentioned at the beginning. What role does history and general revelation play in interpretation, in hermeneutics? In light of what I've written above, it is obvious that I view history as having a significant role to play in "getting meaning from the text." Galatians is especially helpful, moreover, for there are several histories involved in the interpretation of this text. All of them add understanding to Paul's meaning.¹⁴⁸ More significantly, the later histories clarify the full meaning of the initial history recorded in the text of Genesis.

Yet this is not a view shared by all. The issue of the role of general revelation, particularly history, in biblical interpretation has received severe criticism from some quarters. It has been argued that meaning in the text should come solely from the words of the text, not from the events they describe. That is, the history in the text alone is inspired; any use of external history to "get meaning," to interpret, violates the special nature of Scripture as the inspired word of God and is just as liable to lead the interpreter astray as to help him. Historical background, external sources for word studies, archaeology, etc., may have an apologetical or illustrative value, but they cannot and should not be used to provide

found. It is the explicit embracing of a biblical world view as a hermeneutical tool which is our special contribution.

In our world view approach there are also significant differences from Philo's kind of allegory. He makes the literal sense the mode of making ideas visible, bidding us to resort to allegory as guided by what lies beneath the surface; we give full place to the value of the literal sense. He has no eschatology; ours is deeply involved in eschatological (the Kingdom) actualization. He sets in contrast the physical world and the world of ideas; we contrast the earthly and the eternal, heavenly world--of which the physical glorified is part. He depreciates history and exalts ideas; we fully appreciate history and God's past, present, and future manifestations in it. He takes Plato's world view; we take the Bible's. He dispenses with the original, literal meaning; we link intrinsically any deeper meaning in the Old Testament to the literal. He has no incarnation; we believe in Jesus as the God-man.

¹⁴⁷Recognizing that "prophet" in the general sense basically means teacher, interpreter, encourager, etc.--a spokesperson for God--a forthteller more so than a foreteller. Every believer exercises the former functions.

¹⁴⁸I assume throughout this study that history is part of general revelation. The account of God's providence in history and the witness of the conscience are regularly viewed as part of general revelation, as accompanying the witness from the physical creation. Paul links together the witness of the physical creation and the history of the nations. For the nations of people, God "determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live" (Acts 17:26). See C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority* (Waco: Word Books, 1976), I:337-343, etc.; and J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. H. Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), Book I, chapter V, 50-63.

meaning. The grammatical-historical approach is better understood as the grammatical approach which utilizes the history within the text.¹⁴⁹

My view is that Paul's allegory in Galatians 4 provides a paradigm or model of the role of history in interpretation. Paul gets meaning, not from the words of the text, but from the events in and out of the text. I make several observations.

(1) There are at least three historical sources from which Paul draws meaning or aid to meaning. (a) First, there is the history in the text of the Old Testament. These events actually occurred and have been divinely interpreted. While this is quite simple to observe, the whole discussion above about the meaning of allegory hinged significantly on whether or not the things Paul says about people and places and events in the Old Testament actually occurred. This is a crucial issue.

(b) There is more. How did the prophetic part of the narrative arise after all? Indeed, how did the narrative get written? While Moses, Isaiah, and others down through time used various sources, including written portions, some of the content came by their own personal observation of the times, from their understanding of what God was doing in history. Does not 2 Peter 1:20-21 validate this? Peter says:

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

I understand this passage as speaking to the issue of the origin of Scripture, not just prophecy. It relates that the prophet observed the signs of the times and, moved by the Spirit, spoke in a normatively authoritative way about the past, present, and future. He was interpreting his history. Even 1 Peter 1:10-12 suggests similar thoughts when Peter refers to how prophets were "trying to find out the times and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow." He does not say that they were only reading the history within Scripture.

So there is history not only in the text of Paul's sources but also outside his sources. Just as an Old Testament speaker and writer, Paul draws on both histories in Galatians 4. Nowhere in the Old Testament are we told that there is a connection between Hagar and Mount Sinai in Arabia (v. 25),¹⁵⁰ but Paul says there is. The Old Testament text says

¹⁴⁹See Sailhamer, *Introduction*, 36-85; J. Sailhamer, "1 Chronicles 21:1--A Study in Inter-Biblical Interpretation," *Trinity Journal* 10 NS (1989): 33-48; J. Sailhamer, "Exegesis of the OT As a Text," in W. Kaiser, Jr. (ed.), *A Tribute to Gleason Archer: Essays on the OT* (Chicago: Moody, 1986): 279-296; J. Sailhamer, "The Role of History in Biblical Interpretation?" a paper presented to the study group on hermeneutics, Evangelical Theological Society, Santa Clara, CA., Nov. 20, 1997; R. Lubeck, "Literal-Grammatical-Historical Interpretation: A Reappraisal," a paper presented to the Evangelical Theological Society, Chicago, IL., Nov., 1994; Stein, *Playing By the Rules*.

¹⁵⁰See my earlier study and the exegesis of this difficult verse.

nothing about Ishmael's "persecution" of Isaac, but the history then and subsequent history makes Paul's statement reliable.¹⁵¹

(c) In addition, Paul relates past and present histories when he says (v. 29): "As then . . . so now." The past history of the persecution which Ishmael and his descendants exacted on Isaac and his descendants, both as that which began in the record of Scripture and that which continued on beyond Scripture, including throughout the intertestamental period, Paul could draw upon. Yet in Paul's own present history, and that of the Galatians', the persecution was still going on. The present history helped validate, explain, clarify, and interpret the meaning of the text of the Old Testament. So much so is this the case, that Paul can cite Genesis 21:10 as pertinent for the present persecutors: "Cast them out" are his words to the Galatians. This is the biblical message for their history.

So we have at least three histories for understanding Galatians 4. The history in the text of the Old Testament. The history outside the text that continued through time to validate the meaning of the text. Finally, the history of Paul and his contemporary Galatians validated the text. When we factor in the fact that now we stand in a history two thousand years later than Paul, and observe that Ishmael's descendants, both the physical (the Arabs and Jordanians) and the spiritual (in and out of the Church, including the Jewish opponents of Christians), continue to persecute and trouble Christians, then the Word continues to be validated or made more sure by our history. So several histories validate Scripture, i.e., give it additional, fuller, deeper levels of meaning.

We have, I think, a parallel to Galatians 4 in 2 Peter 1, in the passage before that cited above (vv. 20-21). Peter recounts the scene of the Transfiguration and emphasizes the fact that he was an eye witness. Then he concludes (v. 19): "And we have the word of the prophets made more sure . . ." The history of the Transfiguration helped to clarify, explain, give meaning to, make more certain, the prophecy about the glory of Christ. Without the transfiguration, the prophecy was not reliable in the sense of its lack of clarity.

(2) Yet is Galatians 4 and its allegory a unique case? Does allegory make this a special case? I think not. For what has been said here characterizes typology as well. Indeed, one of the chief traits of a type is correspondence: one history (usually in the text) corresponds with another, later one, usually within the New Testament era. The idea of correspondence is affirming that God is in control of all history, and brings to pass later events to explain earlier ones. Indeed, all types receive their correct and complete import and meaning only from their antitypes. We do not understand the correct and full meaning of Abraham's offering of Isaac, of Abraham's seed, of the tabernacle, of Melchizedek, of Adam's sin, of Israel's transgressions in the desert, of the brass serpent on a pole in the desert (to cite but a few events, persons, and things), except from the history of Christ and His people. Later history or events give greater meaning to and validates the earlier history recorded in words.

¹⁵¹See the discussion above (notes 46-47).

(3) It is a regular thing for Jesus and His apostles to appeal to the history of their listeners (readers), both in and out of the Scripture, both past and present. Sometimes, the contemporary history is used to explain earlier Scripture. For example, in the Gospel of Matthew, the reader finds many instances of these appeals. (a) The visit of the Magi is occasioned by their seeing "His star in the East" (2:1ff.). (b) Jesus appeals to what the disciples of John "hear and see" to determine if Jesus is the "coming one" (11:2ff.) prophesied by Moses. (c) He appeals to what His listeners "see" (3x: vv. 7, 8, 9) to identify John as the fulfiller of Malachi 3:1. (d) To justify His disciples' eating grain on the Sabbath Jesus appeals to Scripture about David and the priests (12:3-5). (e) To interpret what is lawful to do on the Sabbath Jesus appeals to the common experience of doing good--rescuing a sheep. So He heals others (12:10-11). (f) Jesus heals to fulfill Isaiah 42:1-4. (g) Jesus' healing identifies Him as the Son of David and demonstrates that He does works by the Spirit of God and that the Kingdom is present (12:22-28). (h) The only sign given to the Pharisees is that of Jonah and Jesus' being in the grave for three days (12:38-40). (i) He appeals to the men of Nineveh and the Queen of the South who will condemn the unbelievers (12:41-42). (j) As He does elsewhere, in the parables of chapter 13, Jesus draws upon the physical realm to teach spiritual truth and to interpret or apply Isaiah 6. (k) On the basis of the reports of miracles by Jesus, Herod believes that He is John the Baptist (14:1-12). (l) In 16:1-4, reference is made to a "sign from heaven," to *interpreting* "the signs of the times," and the "sign of Jonah." In v. 17, Jesus appeals to special revelation, what is revealed by His Father in heaven, for Peter's knowing that He is the Christ, the Son of God. So general and special revelation are brought together.¹⁵² (m) The identification of John as Elijah is based on what John had done (17:10-13). (n) To understand the idea of greatness in the Kingdom Jesus appeals to the humility of children (18:1-5). (o) In chapter 21, there are several appeals to the fulfillment of prophecy in the events of Jesus' last week: getting a colt (1-5); entering Jerusalem (6-9); cleansing the temple (12-13); and children's praise (14-17). In addition, John's baptism is identified as from either heaven or earth (25), and the people consider Jesus to be a prophet (46). (p) Jesus says the understanding of Daniel is dependent on contemporary events: "When you see . . . the abomination . . . spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand--" (24:15). (q) The resurrection is proof that Jesus' promise of an empty tomb is sure (28:6, 62-66).

In the Gospel of Luke, we have the special case of Jesus' appeal to contemporary events to teach spiritual truth consonant with the Scriptures known to them. Both Pilate's slaughter of the Galileans and the fall of the tower of Siloam, which killed eighteen, does not prove that those who died were worse sinners or more guilty than those who lived (13:1-5).

¹⁵²The implication of Jesus' appeal to "signs of the times" is that the events are revelatory. "Signs" are mentioned about forty-six times and are important for identifying the true work of God in Christ and in the Apostles, and as indicative of the Messianic age (although counterfeiting signs are also possible). Signs of the contemporary era (i.e., events) signal His birth (Luke 2:12), the time of His return (21:7, 11, 25), His identification as Messiah (11:16, 29, 30; John 20:30), and the presence of His Kingdom (Acts 2:19, 22, 43; 4:30; 5:12; 7:36; 8:13; 14:3; Rom. 15:19; 1 Cor. 14:22; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:4).

So what has been said about Paul's use in Galatians 4 can be extended generally to the use of the Old Testament in the New. It is especially appropriate for prophecy, both that in the Old and that in the New. The only way that people of the New Testament era recognize the fulfillment of Scripture is by means of a wonderful congruence of the prophetic pronouncement or material and its fulfillment in the New; that is, the histories of each "come together." So also we will recognize the fulfillment of prophecy only when our history interprets what has happened before. As one "lay" definition of prophecy has it: "prophecy is history before its time."

I suggest that even the narrative history of the Old Testament text, or any other genre of the text for that matter, in light of the preceding discussion, receives complete meaning only by the later history found in the New Testament and found in the era since then. It is a common biblical world view that links it all together.

(4) The matter of context supports the use of history for interpretation. All of us agree that context is perhaps the most crucial factor in determining meaning. Context includes not only the immediate sentence but the paragraph, chapter, whole book, whole Testament, and whole canon. Even beyond this, the entire world view of the writer impacts his meaning. Now when the Holy Spirit led people to write, He alone knew the entire context of the past and present and future (Hirsch's intrinsic genre),¹⁵³ including the history yet to come. Did not all of this (in the form of later events) enter into the words and thus the meaning of what the writer wrote under inspiration? Did it not all impact meaning?

Galatians 3:8 is especially instructive here. Paul virtually asserts directly that later events (justification of the Gentiles, as based in the death of Christ) determine the meaning and understanding of an earlier promise to Abraham. He writes: "The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you.'" Clearly, the meaning of "blessed" (in Gen. 12:3) was not fathomed until Jesus came and died and provided justification for all, Jews and Gentiles. So also Paul's argument (3:16, 29) about the "seed" of Abraham being a singular word, and meaning Christ and His line, uses event to define earlier spoken words (Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:5; 17:7; 24:7).

(5) The use of the Septuagint (LXX) by the New Testament supports the use of history in getting meaning. The New Testament writers prefer the use of the Greek translation over the Hebrew text in their citations of the Old Testament. While the LXX is a very good translation for the most part and faithfully represents the Hebrew, it is only the Hebrew that is fully authoritative as inspired. Does not the use of the Greek text represent a willingness by the New Testament to use the world view of the LXX? Do not the words, however slightly they may vary from the meaning of the Hebrew, represent a different history and communicate however slightly a different though adequate sense of the Hebrew? Does this not argue that the New Testament was willing to use a history outside the words of the text? Does not the Greek text on occasion help us to interpret better the meaning of the Hebrew? Does not the use of the Greek text help us to understand better

¹⁵³See n. 5 where intrinsic genre is discussed.

the meaning of the New Testament? Yet the LXX represents a history outside the Hebrew text.

(6) What of comparative philology? The great breakthrough for understanding the Greek of the New Testament, according to A. T. Robertson, came when the Greek of the New Testament was compared with other languages, such as Sanskrit. Have not these other languages with their histories impacted the meaning of the New Testament words? Have not other sources of vernacular Koine, such as papyri, inscriptions, histories, etc., impacted the meaning of the words in the New? Does this not represent a broader history?

(7) In addition to the phenomena of Scripture showing that history is used to reveal divine truth and to interpret Scripture, there are statements of Scripture that directly incorporate events, even extra-biblical teaching, to explain biblical statements. In addition to the texts from Galatians 3 cited above, Acts 17:22ff. is especially instructive. Paul, in his meeting with the Athenians, affirms at least two significant things about the role of general revelation, particularly history. History, he says, has the purpose of leading people to seek and perhaps reach out and find God (17:27). In addition, general revelation or history in the form of the written literature of a people is used to interpret or validate biblical revelation. In 17:27b, Paul affirms that God may be found because "he is not far from each one of us." This is no doubt an allusion to Psalm 145:18 and Jeremiah 23:23 (just as Ps. 146:6; Isa. 42:5 [2x]; 1 Kings 8:27; Ps. 50:12; Deut. 32:8; Isa. 55:6 were alluded to in 17:24-27a). Yet at this point Paul, instead of citing the Old Testament, cites heathen writers. He cites Epimenides for the words, "In him we live and are moved and have our being"; and Cleanthes and Aratus for "We are his offspring."¹⁵⁴ Paul cites heathen poets to explain (note the double use of *gar*) his claim of God's immanence derived from the Old Testament.

Yet there is more. After citing the heathen poets to explain an obvious allusion to the Old Testament, he then alludes to Isaiah 40:18-20 and 44:10-17 as explaining the consequence: if people are the offspring of God, then the divine being cannot be captured by a physical image of gold, silver, or stone. In other words, Paul uses Scriptural ideas to make clear the implications the heathen poets suggest. So within the scope of two verses Paul uses interchangeably special revelation and general revelation to explain the meaning of the other.

Why can history play such roles (to lead people to seek God and to explain biblical truth)? Because God has determined the history for all nations of peoples (17:26), both

¹⁵⁴See E. M. Blaiklock, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Historical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 145-146.

with respect to their times and their borders.¹⁵⁵ God is the author of all truth, and Paul fearlessly discovered it wherever he could.¹⁵⁶

(8) To deny to general revelation a significant role in hermeneutics, in getting meaning, to deny that events impact the meaning of words, is to deny the contribution that general revelation makes to our knowledge of God. It is to deny the parallel and interrelationship between general and special revelation. Either one by itself is unable to give us adequate knowledge of God.¹⁵⁷

(9) The chief argument against ahistorical interpretation is a sober one. An ahistorical approach makes it impossible for us to practice the hermeneutic of the Scriptural authors and speakers. They are able to use external history to illumine the text, but we cannot.¹⁵⁸ As others have noted, we claim to follow their theology, but we disavow the

¹⁵⁵Such an example could be multiplied many times. In the Old Testament, God intervened directly to destroy the cities of the plain including Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18, 19), and to determine the boundaries and times of Israel's neighbors (e.g., Lev. 18, 20; Deut. 2:20-23).

¹⁵⁶See also Titus 1:12-13 where Paul cites a heathen prophet as speaking the truth. Other writers of Scripture do similarly. Chronicles repeatedly uses sources to expand, clarify, and to interpret the history of Kings, sometimes incorporating material not found in the text. The Book of Jasher is used as a source of Israel's history (Josh. 10:13; 2 Sam. 1:18; perhaps 1 Kings 8:12, 53). In Jude 14-15, Jude cites 1 Enoch, a pseudepigraphal book, as having explained the destiny of ungodly men about whom he was writing; he explicitly puts the time as the coming of the Lord with his saints.

¹⁵⁷See Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, I:337-343, etc. There is a "continuing revelation" of God both in the external world or creation, including the human body and history, and in the internal world of the soul and conscience. While the knowledge of God is logically prior, and the knowledge of the self and the knowledge of creation are dependent upon the knowledge of God, still all three knowledges are interrelated (342). Also, a person does not know God in "total independence of nature any more than he knows him in total independence of the self" (342). Both "in the soul of man and in the space-time world as a whole, God is perpetually revealing himself and his purposes" (343). For the most part, Henry is here summarizing Calvin (*Institutes*, Book I, chapter V). Calvin speaks of the creation as "a kind of mirror, in which we may behold God, though otherwise invisible" (*Institutes*, 51). Calvin believed that all the attributes of God can be known in general revelation, according to Henry (*God, Revelation and Authority*, 339-343).

Note the implications of the preceding. To discount the ability of history or general revelation to aid interpretation is to deny the total ways by which God reveals Himself. General revelation and special revelation are interdependent. To deny a place to general revelation is to reject part of God's ongoing revelation. In addition, note that it is "ongoing revelation." This implies that something may be revealed today or tomorrow in the creation or history which has not been revealed before, and this means that our interpretation of the text may be opened up by the "new" revelation in ways hitherto unknown. The consequence of this is to affirm that there is a sense in which Scripture also is "ongoing revelation"--new understanding, new truth, is being revealed. Is this not in accord with 1 Corinthians 2:12-14 and the promises of the Spirit's teaching in John 14-16; 1 John 2:26-27?

¹⁵⁸It will not do, I think, to appeal to the fact that the biblical writers and Jesus were inspired when they use extra-biblical history to explain prophecy, etc., but we are not inspired. All interpretation which we do is fallible, whether it appeals solely to history within the text or history external to the text.

very hermeneutic which they used to discover and communicate the theology which we have embraced.

Can we practice a hermeneutic which fails to match that of Scripture without suffering the consequences of troubled consciences--troubled that what we believe theologically may and need not be hermeneutically "defensible"--at least for us?

Whatever we call the biblical hermeneutic, it seems we are compelled to practice it. How else will we know the fulfillment of prophecy, if we reject the hermeneutic which brought us the prophecy?

Is not the ahistorical approach inherently dualistic? While it affirms the unsurpassed value of the history in the text, it spurns the history outside the text, as far as contributing to meaning is concerned. While it embraces the Author of the text, it spurns the Author of history.

CONCLUSION

This study has sought to consider again Paul's allegory in Galatians 4, the meaning of allegory and its use, and the role of event or history in the interpretation of Scripture. In part one, I did an exegesis of the text. In part two, I considered eight explanations of Paul's allegory and suggested how to define it. In part three, I considered the matters of whether we can reproduce Paul's allegorical method and the role of history in interpretation. It seems that the newer approaches to "allegory" contribute to our understanding of what Paul is doing in Galatians 4 and make us a bit less fearful in following his lead in this use of Scripture.

Paul's allegory is informed by his total world view, which is consonant with Scripture's world view. His allegory consists of several features. They include appreciation for the historicity of the text; correspondences in the form of contrasts drawn from a breadth of biblical and nonbiblical history; inversion of the biblical meaning; and contemporization. The last feature gives rise to the others: the Galatians' situation calls forth the allegory. It takes the form of an answer to a question asked of the text. In finding additional meaning in the words of the text, Paul is informed by the subsequent events in the history of the descendants, both physical and spiritual, of Ishmael and Isaac. Paul uses events to understand the words.

We can appeal to our history to explain the meaning of the text. If we can know, understand, and interpret God by His on-going revelation in creation and history, so also we can know, understand, and interpret His word by His on-going revelation in creation and history.¹⁵⁹ This is most certainly true of the fulfillment of prophecy should we see it being fulfilled in our era.

¹⁵⁹There are other points that argue against the view that denies to history a role in interpretation. (1) To draw such a dichotomy between event and word, as the opponents to the use of history to explain the text do, is unnecessary. Words refer to events, and events are known by words. Words themselves represent a

history. Words have a field of meaning. Only the signs (words) of the text are infallible; our understanding of what they mean is fallible. So nothing more certain is gained by a non-historical approach; indeed, something of meaning may be lost. (2) The narrow approach cannot appeal to a statement within the text which affirms the position. Instead, it appeals to arguments from the history of biblical interpretation. The view rests on an extra-biblical platform. (3) The approach often confuses, it seems, the *historical* with *historical criticism*. (4) The approach effectively prohibits the practice of researching the history of words as part of the process of exegesis. What will we do with unique words (the *hapax legomena*) of the text? It also prohibits the construction of Greek grammar and syntax for biblical Greek which would include an appeal to the language situation outside the text. (5) If one appeals to rabbinical methods of interpretation to interpret the text, is this not using extra-biblical materials and history to interpret the text?