

Children of Promise, Not Bondage

Galatians 4:21-31 (NKJV)

²¹ Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? ²² For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. ²³ But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, ²⁴ which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— ²⁵ for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children— ²⁶ but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. ²⁷ For it is written: "Rejoice, O barren, *You* who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband." ²⁸ Now we, brethren, as Isaac *was*, are children of promise. ²⁹ But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him *who was born* according to the Spirit, even so *it is* now. ³⁰ Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." ³¹ So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

I. The Bondage of Human Effort Produces Slavery - Galatians 4:21-25

A. Hagar Represents the Covenant of Law and Bondage - Galatians 4:22-24

Genesis 16:1-2 (NKJV) "Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. So Sarai said to Abram, 'See now, the Lord has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her.'"

Acts 15:10 (NKJV) "Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"

B. The Flesh Cannot Produce Spiritual Freedom - Galatians 4:23

Isaiah 64:6 (NKJV) "But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags."

Romans 8:8 (NKJV) "So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

II. The Promise of God Produces Freedom - Galatians 4:26-28

A. Sarah Represents God's Covenant of Grace - Galatians 4:26-27

Genesis 17:19 (NKJV) "Then God said: 'No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him.'" This is the very passage Paul quotes in Galatians 4.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV) "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

B. Believers Are Children of Promise - Galatians 4:28

Genesis 21:1-2 (NKJV) "And the Lord visited Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age."

Romans 9:8 (NKJV) "That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed."

2 Corinthians 1:20 (NKJV) "For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen."

III. The Freedom of Grace Must Be Embraced - Galatians 4:29-31

A. The Children of Promise Will Face Opposition - Galatians 4:29-30

Genesis 21:9 (NKJV) "And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing."

John 15:20 (NKJV) "If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you."

2 Timothy 3:12 (NKJV) "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."

B. Believers Must Live in Their Freedom in Christ - Galatians 4:31

Psalms 119:45 (NKJV) "And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Your precepts."

Ezekiel 36:26-27 (NKJV) "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you... and cause you to walk in My statutes."

Romans 8:1-2 (NKJV) "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus... For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."

Questions for Personal Reflection

1. Am I trusting completely in Christ's finished work for my salvation, or am I relying on my own efforts to gain God's approval?
2. What areas of legalism, guilt, or spiritual self-reliance still need to be surrendered to God's grace?
3. How can I live more fully as a child of promise and freedom rather than a servant living under bondage?