

## Children of Promise

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Text: **Gal. 4:28-31**

**Gal 4:28** Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

**Psalms 2:7** I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

**Psalms 2:8** Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* **the heathen** *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession.

I put these two portions of God's Word together because they have meaning related to each other, and for us Gentile believers, they relate to how it is that we are part of the family of God.

In the Galatian message, the statement is simply that we who are believers in Christ are the children of promise.

In the Psalms statement, God has said to Christ in prophecy that He would give people out of the heathen nations to Him as part of His inheritance. We Gentiles who believe are proof of that.

But, today, I want us to look a little deeper into Paul's message, because it contains a critical piece of information about the difference between true children of promise and other folks who seem to have a connection to God as children of promise. This difference is essential to know, because the difference is actually a roadmap for humanity to know how they can become part of God's family - the children of promise.

I. **Gal. 4:28** - First, what is the notable thing about children of promise? It is, that for them to become children of God is beyond likelihood and beyond the manipulations of human ingenuity or human devices. (No wonder John wrote in **1John. 3:1**, "**Behold** what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God...").

- Ishmael was born into the house of Abraham as a result of manipulations by Sarah, and consent of Abraham to participate in a carnal solution
- Isaac was born of Abraham and Sarah when all fleshly capability to manipulate was gone
- Children of promise are never the result of human manipulations, nor human solutions
  - ▶ When you can describe a way to become a child of God by describing something you can do (invite Jesus into your heart, walk the line, live a perfect life (who can?), pray through until you force God to accept you [Jacob was already a believer when he wrestled with the angel at Bethel]), then that is human manipulation, human solutions.

II. **Gal. 4:29** But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, even so *it is* now.

- First note that both of these were of the household of Abraham. If we let Abraham represent the outward evidence of people that follow God, as it should, we can begin to get a picture of the differences between the two; that is the differences between the child of promise and the child of human manipulation and human invented solutions.
- The two are described as one “born after the flesh” and the other “born after the Spirit”
  - ▶ Can you see that this is a great description of two different kinds of religious people? One has entered into a relationship with God as a result of God keeping His promise to Christ by saving that person. The other has entered into a relationship with God that has been concocted by a set of fleshly, or human, rules (again: invite Jesus into your heart, walk the line, pray through until you force God to accept you, live the perfect life, don’t sin, etc.; the idea being that this pathway will earn you the place to be in God’s family).
- Religious people who stand where Ishmael stands in this illustration that Paul has made will give the children of promise a hard time (remember that both, in outward appearance, are of the household of faith; since Abraham represents that household of faith).
  - ▶ A lot of the persecution of Isaac by Ishmael was kind of secretive. Ishmael hated Isaac...he still does today...(many of the so-called Arab people are the descendants of the Ishmaelites). Now, we aren’t allowed a lot of insight into this persecution by what is revealed to us in the bible. In fact, the kind of behavior that Paul defines as persecution was only mentioned once in the account of that family’s life: **Gen. 21:9** And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.
  - ▶ Illustrate: have you ever noticed how the school bully can get away with tormenting his victims at school; so much of what he does is secretive, sly, carefully planned.
  - ▶ Illustrate: We see a great example of the persecution (of children of promise by children of human devices, human manipulation) in the friction that was cultivated and kept alive by the Pharisees against Jesus and His followers. It was a band of religious zealots - in fact, people who claimed to be the children of promise, who demanded that Pilate crucify Jesus
  - ▶ Illustrate: it was the non-Baptist religious world which outlawed the Baptists in the Old World. It was the non-Baptist religious world which put approximately 50 million Baptists to death during what is known as the Dark Ages...all in the name of God.

III. **Gal. 4:30** Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her

son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

- Let's understand this in context of what Paul is writing about.
  - ▶ He is addressing Galatian Christians; he has just explained to them what the historical allegory is. That is, the son of Abraham and Sarah represents the spiritual child of grace, the child of faith, the child of promise. The son of Abraham and Hagar represents the supposedly spiritual child of human manipulation, the child of human devices.
  - ▶ The first thing this verse re-emphasizes is that religious people who claim connection to the faith that makes them children of promise, but have gotten there through human invention, will not be heirs of God with the true children of promise (“...the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.”)
  - ▶ The second thing it teaches is that we are not to embrace as part of the household of God the person who claims an inheritance with God based on human devices (“Cast out the bondwoman and her son....”)
  - ▶ This does not mean we are to refuse any communication or refuse to extend a hand to religious people who make their stand on human devices, but rather we are not to fall into the trap of thinking or treating them as though they are OK with God. If we do this, we do them an injustice, and it will hamstring our message to them about the need for the complete saving power of a Savior who, single-handedly, did all that was necessary for us to become children of promise.

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

- Paul's conclusion is that when believers are tempted to think about works as a possible framework for becoming accepted of the Lord, we need to think again. To depend on works, on any human invention is to become a child of the bondwoman...people who do it are, as the allegory teaches, placed into a condition of slavery to those human inventions.
- Rather, we who are born again by the Spirit of God, is an act of God in which He keeps His promise to His Son; we are the children of the freewoman. That is, according to the allegory, we are born into the household of promise by the express design and act of God and by that we are made free from any set of human-made rules or means for achieving this.