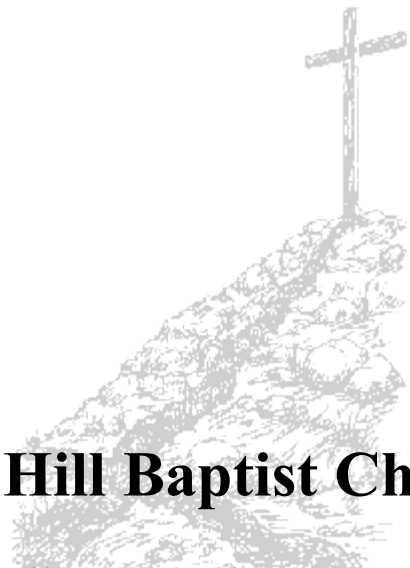


Cast Out The Bondwoman And Her Son Galatians 4:21-31



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FOCAL Read Responsively Galatians 4:21-31^{KJV} Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? (22) For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. (23) But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. (24) Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which engendereth to bondage, which is Hagar. (25) For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. (26) But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. (27) For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not; for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath a husband. (28) Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. (29) But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. (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. (31) So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

There is an old saying that has been in the Church that Jesus died for for many years. I do not know if you have heard it or not, but it's a good saying. It goes this way:

**On the Essentials, Unity
On the Non-Essentials, Liberty**

On Everything, Love

What is meant by this is that the Church - that is us - *must* be in unity on the *essentials of the Faith*, that is, on those things that are *clearly taught in Scripture*. There are other things in our world and all around us that are *non-essentials*, that is, so called *gray areas* in the Scripture. These are areas that are matter of opinion, traditions, your own *likes and dislikes* apart from the clear teaching of the Word of God. Jesus told the Pharisees:

Mark 7:6-7 ... Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. (7) Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

On the *gray areas*, the opinions and traditions that have crept into the Church independent of the clear teaching of the Word of God, we are to focus on **liberty**. Every believer, saved by faith in Christ, is **freed to serve Jesus**. Finally, *everything* we do must be bathed in love. **God is love (1 John 4:8)**, and God indwells the Christian. This is why the Bible says that:

Romans 5:5 ... the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

If you're a Christian, saved by faith in Christ, love bathes

all you do!

As the Apostle Paul wrote¹ the Galatian believers he wrote on one of the *greatest essentials of our faith*. This essential is debated time and time again, and has divided the Church that Jesus died for into a number of groups we call *denominations*. As Paul wrote, he left no question as to whether this point was debatable or not. This was not a debatable point, and never will be a debatable point.

Salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone.

Salvation is neither gained by works, nor lost by works.

Salvation is not retained by works.

In order to prove these truths the Apostle refers to the Law of God. He says:

FOCAL Galatians 4:21-24 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? (22) For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. (23) But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. (24)

Which things are an allegory²: for these

¹ under the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit. The New International Version of the Scripture states in **2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, (17) so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

² Present Passive Participle of G238, ἀλληγορέω, allēgoreō, *al-lay-gor-*

are the two covenants

The Apostle tells us that the account of Abraham in the writings of the Law have an application to the subject of salvation. Let's look at this teaching:

1. Abraham Had Two Sons

FOCAL Galatians 4:22-23 ... Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. (23) But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.

When God came to Abraham, this *father of faith* was a Gentile from a place called Ur of the Chaldees (ancient Babylon). God saved Abraham, and told him:

Genesis 12:1-2 KJVR ... Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: (2) And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

The heart of the covenant that God made with Abraham was that this man - childless and aging - would be a **great nation**. God would bring many children out of that

union between himself and his wife Sarah. God made a promise, God was going to keep that promise. So Abraham, obeying God, moved from his homeland to where the Lord led him.

Time passed, and no child came.

Sarah started to doubt God, so she called Abraham to her side and told him:

Genesis 16:2 ... the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

This sounded like a good idea to Abraham. Sarah had a slave, a beautiful Egyptian woman named Hagar. Why not go to Hagar and the *adopt* the child that she would have. After all, perhaps this was what God meant when He promised Abraham a *mighty lineage and nation*. Maybe Hagar was meant to bear his child. How often do we try to help God? Too often, dear friends, too often.

You don't have to be a prophet to see the handwriting on the wall. Abraham goes in to Hagar, she bears a child, and calls that boy *Ishmael*. Abraham is *eighty six* years old, and here is Ishmael - surely this is the son by which God would bless this dear saint. Yet it was not to be. Time passed, and Abraham turned *one hundred years old*. Still Sarah bears him no children. As a matter of fact, both Abraham as well as Sarah are *passed* their

eh'-o, From G243 and ἀγορεύω agoreō, (to *harangue* (compare G58); to *allegorize*. (The Greek word itself.): - be an allegory [the Greek word itself], a historical truth applied in a moral teaching context, (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries)

child bearing years. Abraham goes to God and says:

Genesis 17:18 ... O that Ishmael might live before thee!

"Dear God, will you not accept Ishmael as my heir? I'm getting old, and both I and Sarah are passed our child bearing years. Let me name Ishmael heir and be done with it!" God's answer was simple:

Genesis 17:19 ... Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

"Remember, Abraham, when I called you from Ur of the Chaldees? Well, the covenant I promised you *shall not* go through Ishmael, but through Isaac. You cannot earn My Promise - it is all of Grace. The child of the Covenant must be the child of Promise - it cannot be the child of Works, the child of my hands.

FOCAL Galatians 4:22-23 ... Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid³, the other by a freewoman. (23) But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.

³ G3814, παιδίσκη, paidiskē, *pahee-dis'-kay*, Feminine diminutive of G3816; a *girl*, that is, (specifically) a *female slave* or *servant*: - bondmaid (-woman), damsel, maid (-en).

Abraham had two sons. One son was born through faithlessness and human intervention, the other son was born of promise. One child was born by natural process - a fertile Abraham went in to a fertile Hagar. The other child was born by *supernatural process* - both Abraham and Sarah were well past child bearing years. One child was born and *adopted* into the family, whereas the other child was *born of blood* into the family. One child was born of a slave, whereas the other of the freeman.

2. The Firstborn of Flesh, Ishmael, Was Rejected By God

FOCAL Galatians 4:24 ... these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which engendereth to bondage, which is Hagar.

Ishmael was a child of a slave named Hagar. As a child of a slave, he would always be a slave. A slave is a person in bondage to another. Why was Ishmael a slave? Because his mother, Hagar, was a slave. She was an *Egyptian born servant of a Chaldean or Babylonian woman*. Since Hagar was a slave, the blood she shared with her child Ishmael was the blood of the slave.

It was the blood that made the difference.

The Bible tells us that *all* who are born into this world are born *dead in sin*. The blood that flows through our veins is the blood of the slave, not the blood of the freeman. The Apostle told the Ephesians:

Ephesians 2:1-3^{NIV} ... For you, **you were dead in your transgressions and sins, (2) in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.**

(3) All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

In our blood flows sin, a sin nature, and that blood itself makes us unfit for God's Heaven. When God saved Israel from Egyptian bondage *no Mosaic Law* was in place. Israel left Egypt following God in faith. By faith God took Israel across the Red Sea, and destroyed the Egyptian army in the waters. By faith God brought water out of the Rock. By faith God supplied Israel's needs. Yet Israel *rejected the faith that brings salvation*. They rejected the Grace of God. Only then did God give Israel the Law on Mount Sinai.

Ishmael is symbolic of the Law of God, given on Mount Sinai to a *disobedient people*, the Israelites. Ishmael was not the *promise nor the Grace* of God, but Ishmael was Abraham trying to *provide himself an heir*.

FOCAL Galatians 4:25 ... For **this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia**, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her

children.

Look at the statement, **this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia**. The Law was given to Israel before *she ever entered the Promised Land of Canaan*. The Law was given to Israel because *she rejected the Grace of God*. God allowed Abraham to have a child by Hagar, but God rejected that child as the child of promise. Ishmael was Abraham's firstborn son *in the flesh*, but he was rejected as the heir of God because *he was not of faith*. Look at the Scripture:

Genesis 17:20 **And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.**

Was there blessing in Ishmael? Absolutely! There are people who follow after God's Law and who are blessed because of it. God blessed Ishmael, God blessed the children of Mount Sinai, and He blesses these children even today. There are many *works based religions* in this present Age that have many, many adherents. There are the Roman Catholics, the followers of Islam, the Church of Christ, the Buddhists, the Hindus, the Mormons, the Jehovah's Witnesses, and so on. These religions all seem to prosper, so much so at times that we who believe in Jesus must wonder at it. However we must remember that *God promised to bless Ishmael*, and He did bless him. Just as the unbeliever who assembles with us may

be blessed by the power of God in this place, Ishmael was blessed because of his proximity to Abraham, God's chosen. In fact, outwardly you could tell no difference between Ishmael and Isaac. **Both children stayed with Abraham. Both children were blessed by God while on this earth. Both children became mighty nations. Both children were circumcised, and followed the rituals of religion.** And yet God told Abraham ..

Genesis 17:21 **But my covenant will I establish with Isaac**, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

What has God said? He has told us that the *child of works* cannot be the *child of promise*. God's Heavenly Jerusalem cannot be populated with the works of man - we cannot lay one brick to build its foundation or its walls.

FOCAL Galatians 4:25-26 ... For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. (26) **But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.**

The children of Hagar can never get any closer to God than Mount Sinai, but the children of God can get into that Heavenly Jerusalem. Why? Because the first - Ishmael - is of works, and is fleshly. The second - Isaac - is of faith, and therefore is spiritual. Abraham was married to Sarah, and God told him:

Genesis 21:12 ... **in Isaac shall thy seed be called.**

3. The Firstborn Of Faith, Isaac, Was Accepted of God

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

We who have believed in Jesus Christ unto salvation are the **children of promise**. The Scripture tells us:

Genesis 21:5-6 **And Abraham was a hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him. (6) And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me.**

Both Sarah and Abraham knew what a mighty and supernatural thing God had done when Isaac was born. Both Abraham and Sarah were old people, well passed their child bearing years. They were, dear friends, *infertile*, unable to do anything that would contribute to this pregnancy. This dear couple had to *believe in God*, to trust Him with all their hearts, and believe that He would do as He said. So it is with the children of salvation.

Ephesians 6:19 **And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,**

The Gospel of salvation is a *mystery*, something that even saved believers cannot explain to you. How do you explain love? You can explain it as an *acting out*, but you cannot truly explain it. How did Sarah have a child in her old age? Again, a mystery! A supernatural event sent from God to bring life where there was no life.

I tell you this: just as Abraham *could not* produce a child through Hagar that would satisfy the Lord, neither can you produce salvation by your own hands. Salvation is, itself, a *mystery*, a mysterious gift from God. You may be able to explain it theologically, but you cannot explain it experientially to anyone. Salvation cannot be secured with our own hands, no matter how well meaning we may be. We may be like **Uzzah**, who tried to steady the Ark of God with our hands:

2 Samuel 6:6-7 ... Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. (7) And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.

You cannot put your hand out and lay hold of God's provision. You cannot steady the Ark nor live well enough in your own power to satisfy God. Our works always fall short, unless they be *in Christ*. What God accepts is not the works of our hands, but faith in His promise. Jesus Christ died for your sins. God Himself came and, taking on Himself humanity, died a terrible

death for us. The Bible says:

Ephesians 2:4-5^{NIV} But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, (5) made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions it is by grace you have been saved.

It was by Grace that Abraham bore Isaac, and it is by Grace **that you have been saved**. Not **will be saved**, but **have** (present tense) **been saved**. If you have believed on Jesus Christ for salvation, then God has come into your lives. You are His *present possession*, a child of faith, a child of promise. Jesus has said to those who believe in Him:

John 10:27-30 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: (28) And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. (29) My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. (30) I and my Father are one.

If you are saved by faith in Christ you are **even now His Sheep**. As His sheep Jesus says **you hear His voice and follow Him**. As the Sheep of God **eternal life is yours** - it is your *present possession*, and you shall *never die*. You are in the hands of Christ, in the Covenant of God. You are the children of promise, and will ever be with

your Jesus in Heaven. You who are the children of promise are saved, not by your own hand, but by the hand of God. The Chinese have an interesting phrase for a miracle or the miraculous - they call it the *footsteps of God*. We can use this phrase at this point, because it is so very true. When man fell into sin, it was God's footsteps that promised salvation through the *seed of the woman* (Genesis 3:15). It was God's footsteps that promised Abraham a seed through Sarah. It was God's footsteps that took the seed of Isaac and made it into a mighty nation called Israel. It was God's footsteps that brought Jesus Christ into this life through a virgin called Mary. It was God's footsteps that allowed Jesus to walk amongst us, then one day go to the Cross and die for us. It was God's footsteps that caused Jesus to rise from the dead, ever living and making intercession for those who believe. It was God's footsteps that calls each and every believer to salvation.

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: (9) Not of works, lest any man should boast.

It is not the Ismael of Law, the Ishmael of Works that God finds acceptable. It is the Isaac of Faith, the Isaac of Promise, the Isaac that was miraculously born by the intervention of God that brings about salvation.

**4. Cast Out The Bondwoman And Her Son,
Neither Are Heirs of God!**

FOCAL Galatians 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.

Following her pregnancy Hagar began to *mock Sarah*. The Bible says:

Genesis 16:4 {Hagar} conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

This is the way of those who work their way to God, who feel that their works make them somehow *more acceptable* to the Lord. I have seen this many times. The self righteous attitude, the idea that they are better for they follow some ritual better, or do something better. Hagar was proud because she was able to bear a child - yet, why should she be proud? The Bible says:

Psalms 127:3 Lo, children are a heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

The fact that Hagar bore a child does not mean that she is *better* than Sarah. God withheld Sarah's child Isaac until both Abraham and Sarah were ready for that baby. How dare she mock Sarah? Because of this mocking Sarah, in a fit of rage, told Abraham in **Genesis 21:10-12** (and repeated below) :

FOCAL Galatians 4:30 ... Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

The son of the bondwoman *cannot* be heir with the son of the freewoman. Hagar mocked Sarah, and Ishmael, when he grew up, mocked Isaac. Those who attempt to work their way to God will always mock the children of the freewoman. They will tell us, "You know you must follow such a ritual, or you must show a certain emotion, or suppress another emotion, or be a certain way - else you are not saved. You must attend a certain Church. You must *not* worship God in your own way, but you *must* adopt my methods." What do we say to such hogwash? We say, as the Scripture says:

FOCAL Galatians 4:30 ... Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

Salvation is all of faith, or it is of nothing. Salvation comes by faith in God. As the Scripture says:

Romans 10:17 ... faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

We are to **cast out the bondwoman and her son**. The bondwoman is yet a slave to spiritual death, a slave to the things of this world, a slave to ritual. Yet it is the son

of the freewoman that is heir to the Kingdom of God. Just as Abraham's effort in producing Ishmael was useless to fulfill the Covenant of God, your effort in *working your way to God* is useless in gaining entrance into God's Heaven. **Cast out the bondwoman**. The Christian was *never* put under the Law, but the Law was given to a disobedient and unsaved people while *they were yet in Arabia*. They had not crossed the Jordan. Why then was the Law given? Not to be over us, like some monstrous creature ready to destroy, but the Law was put under our feet like a carpet to guide our walk. The Spirit of God tells us to avoid the sins of the flesh, for these things are unworthy of a child of faith (**Galatians 5:16-26**). The Law was given as a *schoolmaster* who existed to *lead us to Christ*. Now we who are saved are indwelt by God the Holy Spirit. We need not be under the Law, for we are under Grace. As the Scripture says:

Galatians 3:24-26 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. (25) But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. (26) For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Beloved, if you are saved **you are no longer under a schoolmaster**. You are indwelt by the Spirit of God, called to serve God *by faith and by faithfulness*. Jesus said:

John 8:35-36 ... the servant abideth not in the house forever: but the Son abideth ever. (36) If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

One day the Lord came to Abraham and told him to:

Genesis 22:2 Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

Abraham took his son - the son of Sarah - and headed toward that mountain. Isaac was the child of faith, a Grace Gift from God. Ishmael could not go on this trip, for Ishmael was the son of works, the son of Abraham's hand. God rejected Ishmael as the Covenant Child, and told Abraham to offer up Isaac. Isaac, that child of faith, went willingly with his father. He even lay down on the altar that day, willingly baring his breast to his father's knife. The child of promise serves his father. The Child of God serves his Father.

Are you saved? Follow God in you. Study His Word. Pray to Him daily in the Name of Jesus. Love others as Christ has shown you how. Lift up the Name of God in worship weekly. Do these things, not *to be saved*, but *because you are saved*. **Cast out the bondwoman and her son.** May God touch your hearts with these words.



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