

The Son of the Bondwoman

Part 2

November 23, 2008

1). We are continuing this week with our series on the son of the bondwoman. Let's begin with our Scripture reading—

Galatians 4:22-31

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.

2). Let's review what we have learned so far:

- The birth of Ishmael and Isaac were in respect of God's promise to Abraham of a land and an inheritance.
- Ishmael was born first *...apart from faith*. Abraham acted in conjunction with a woman from Egypt in order to bring about God's promise of a son on his own terms, rather than wait for the Lord's hand in it. This is what our scripture calls 'born according to the flesh.'
- Then Isaac was born second... *through the work of the Spirit*. His conception was a sovereign act of God, as God worked in Abraham's wife Sarah to bring fruit out of barrenness. This is the son of promise. Isaac is the one 'of promise' not only because he was promised to Abraham and Sarah, but also because he was the one who would receive the promises – 'In Isaac your seed shall be called' (Genesis 21:12).
- It is interesting to note God's perspective on this in Genesis 22—

Genesis 22:2

Then He said, "Take now your son, **your only son** Isaac,

- According to God’s perspective, in relation to the promise of the inheritance, Abraham only had one son – Isaac. This was the son ‘born according to the Spirit’. As it says in Galatians—

Galatians 4:30

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."

- These two half brothers began in conflict (for one would inherit the promises; the other would not) and they continued in conflict—

Genesis 21:8-9

8 And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned. 9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham **mocking**.

3). The descendants of Ishmael and the descendants of Isaac maintain a rivalry throughout the Scriptures, with the focus of that rivalry always being the land of promise and the inheritance.

- The descendants of Ishmael became quite numerous and they inhabited much of the outlying geography surrounding the land of promise. There was constant animosity between the nation of Israel and these other pagan nations.
- And even to this day we see this conflict. It is currently measured out in blood, death and misery as we see the Palestinians (descendants of Ishmael) and the current nation of Israel (descendants of Isaac and Jacob) war with one another in Gaza – as they battle over whose right it is to occupy the land that was promised to Abraham.
- And as we realize what is at the heart of the Middle East crisis—a battle over a land that was promised as an inheritance, we would know that it cannot be truly understood through political filters. It can only be understood spiritually. And as such, it can only be solved through *spiritually*.

4). Now, you and I can see in this conflict a dramatic parallel with ourselves. A parallel that must be understood if we are to be victorious.

- Note what the scripture says in relation to us –

Ephesians 1:11

In Him [Christ] also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, 12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. 13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

1Peter 1:3-5

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Galatians 4:28

Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise.

5). Let's also remember what Jesus said to Nicodemus –

John 3:3-7

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

- We were all born of the flesh, as a result of natural pro-creation. It was an act apart from faith which resulted in us being born in the likeness of Adam—

Ephesians 2:1-5

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)...

- And we (all Christians) have been 'born again' or 'born from above' by a sovereign act of God, by the work of His Spirit, through faith.
- That which was born first, the man of the flesh... *just as Ishmael...* will have no inheritance with that which is born second, the man of the Spirit, typified by Isaac.
- We have then two half brothers, occupying the same territory in conflict with each other with an inheritance at stake.
 - All Christians have these same two sides within them (*the man of flesh, the firstborn, the soul VS the man of spirit, the second born, the spirit*) in conflict with one another—*with an inheritance at stake*.
- The man of the flesh is bound to this world – 'according to the prince of the power of the air', but the man of the Spirit is looking to the world to come and is led by the Spirit.

The first birth is associated with death and the second birth with life. The firstborn receives nothing in relation to the promise; the second born does.

- This is further typified for us in the sons of Isaac, Esau and Jacob.

Genesis 25:27

So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents.

- We have studied this at length over the few months, as we saw that Esau, the firstborn son of Isaac, forfeited his rights of the firstborn in order to satisfy his flesh. In this we learned about how God sets aside the first in order to establish the second (a doctrine taught over and over throughout the Scriptures). Esau's grandson was Amalek; from whom came a nation that was the first to come up against the nation of Israel. These Amalekites also typify for us the flesh...that which wars against the spirit.

6). Paul writes about this inward conflict of the flesh vs. the spirit in the Book of Romans—

Romans 7:21-25

21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

- Did you notice where the warring occurs? There is a "law in my members"—the law of sin, according to the flesh—warring against the "law of my mind"—that which is focused on the spirit. WITH HIS MIND HE SERVES THE LAW OF GOD....WITH HIS FLESH, HE SERVES SIN.

Continuing with the passage—

Romans 8:1-4

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

- In order to be victorious in this battle we must, as Paul directs, walk according to the spirit. This can only be done "in Christ Jesus," who made us free by condemning sin in the flesh.

- So how do we walk in the spirit, thereby putting to death the flesh? Paul goes on to say—

Romans 8:5-8

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

- *It is about SETTING OUR MINDS ON THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT.* This is where and *how* victory is found...in the mind. The mind is the seat of our free will, isn't it? It is where our choices are formulated and executed. Our mind controls our actions, but *more importantly* our actions emanate out of our thoughts. So that is why we absolutely **MUST** be spiritually minded. We absolutely **MUST** read, understand, and **REMEMBER** the Scriptures so that our mind can focus on the Word of God, which is Spirit, life, and truth.
- Do you remember our series on Worship when we studied the passage in John where Jesus makes this statement?—
-

John 4:23

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

- The **TRUE** worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. Worship, we found out, is not a style of song that we sing, but is a lifestyle choice of faithful obedience to the Word of God in humble submission to our Master as His bondservant. In order to truly be in line with His will we must live our lives according to the spirit and according to the truth. Do you know what the truth is? Do you know the truth as it is found in the Scriptures?
- And as we would seek to worship in spirit (walk according to the spirit—one and the same thing), so we must seek to pattern ourselves after Christ. Christ provides the model for the nature and character of God—who is Spirit—that we are to follow.

Galatians 2:20

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

- Look closely at this Galatians scripture...we see the death of self (death of the firstborn according to the flesh) then the "self" being replaced by Christ.
THIS IS ALL ABOUT THE MINDSET!

... and this is done through faith (BELIEF) in the Son of God.

- We must understand that there is a war going on inside of each of us—the flesh vs. the spirit. And although God has assured our victory in Christ Jesus, for many Christians this will not be the reality. And if we are feeling particularly confident right now let us remember what scripture admonishes –

1Corinthians 10:12

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

- Nothing in the flesh can please God, because things in the realm of the flesh take place apart from faith and we know from the Book of Hebrews –

Hebrews 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please Him...

And

Romans 10:17

Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

- And we also know from Romans—

Romans 4:13

For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

- We will not be heir of anything apart from faith.

7). Paul also says it this way—

Galatians 5:16-21

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

- Knowing this, why is it still a struggle for us? If we go back to our original type picture in Genesis, we will find the answer.

Genesis 21:8-11

So the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned. 9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing. 10 Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac." 11 And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son.

- Many Christians love the works of the flesh; and sometimes we can think that our old, sin, nature is really a good guy – he may be a bit off at times, but once you get to know him, he's not that bad. **This is a lie.**

Romans 7:18

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells.

John 6:63

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing.

- Our old man, the man of the flesh, is not our friend. He is a suicide bomber. And many of us have allowed him to detonate in our lives and we are still living with the consequences.
- We need to cast out the son of the bondwoman.

8). What does Romans 8 say?

Romans 8:13-17

For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

- Our being *born again* places us (as a result of our second birth) as a child of God....but we will only be a joint heir with Christ if we suffer with Him. Suffering with Him means

to put do death the deeds of the flesh, which means that we cast out the son of the bondwoman.

And this is how we do it—

Romans 12:2

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

- *BE TRANSFORMED.* **CAST OUT THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN.**

1Corinthians 15:31

I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

- '*I die daily...*' – **CAST OUT THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN.**

1Corinthians 9:27

But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

- '*I discipline my body...*' – **CAST OUT THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN.**

Mark 8:36

"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"

- 'For what would it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul...' – **CAST OUT THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN.**