

“Relationship Has Its Privileges” Galatians 4:21-31

1. What principles or observations from Galatians 4:21-31 and Pastor Walt’s message did you find to be helpful or insightful?

2. In a masterful stroke the apostle Paul turns to a scriptural illustration to conclude his theological defense of justification by faith. An Old Testament story from the life of Abraham enables Paul to review what he had already declared about contrasts between the Mosaic Law and grace... between works and faith. What did both John the Baptist and Jesus declare was not enough to guarantee spiritual blessing? (see Matthew 3:9; John 8:37-40)

3. Paul reminds the Galatians that Abraham had 2 sons: One son, _____, was born of _____, the free woman. The other son, _____, was born of _____, the slave woman. According to ancient law and custom the status of a mother affected the status of her son.
What would you say to someone who believes the way to God is by observance of certain rules?

4. A second contrast was made that involved the way in which the sons were conceived. Ishmael was born in the “ordinary way”, that is, in the course of nature. But Isaac was born as the result of a promise. How did Abraham first rely on his own ability rather than trust in the supernatural grace of God? How did God miraculously fulfill His promise to Abraham and Sarah (see Romans 4:18-21)?

5. Paul next uses the historical events surrounding the story of Abraham as an *allegory* (a symbolic illustration) to compare the conflict between Judaism and Christianity. First, Paul points to two covenants: the Abrahamic (grace) and the Mosaic (works). The Abrahamic Covenant was a gracious system represented by Sarah, which through its messianic promise brought forth children who are free. In contrast those under the legal Mosaic covenant were slaves. As Hagar brought forth a slave, so does the Law.
How can the most “religious” people be the furthest from freedom?
How would you describe a believer’s freedom in Christ?

6. Next, Paul points to 2 Jerusalems. Hagar stood for the first-century Jerusalem. This Jerusalem was in slavery to the Law and what ruling power?
Sarah, on the other hand, corresponds to the Jerusalem above...the heavenly city, which will one day come to earth (see Revelation 21:2).

What are you most looking forward to when you consider eternity and the promise of Heaven to those who believe in Christ?

When have you seen God do what seems impossible in your own life or in the lives of those around you?