

Galatians 4:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. Paul applies the allegory directly. "Now we" (hēmeis de, ἡμεῖς δέ)—we believers, both Jewish and Gentile Christians. "Brethren" (adelphoi, ἀδελφοί)—fellow believers. "As Isaac was" (kata Isaak, κατὰ Ἰσαάκ)—according to the pattern of Isaac, in the same category as Isaac. "Are the children of promise" (epangelias tekna esmen, ἐπαγγελίας τέκνα ἐσμέν)—we are promise-children, not flesh-children.

Our spiritual identity corresponds to Isaac: born by supernatural divine power in fulfillment of divine promise, received through faith when natural possibility was dead. We're not Ishmael-type (born of human effort, natural ability, works of flesh). Our birth into God's family came through believing God's promise of salvation in Christ, accomplished by the Spirit's regenerating power. This is true of every Christian, regardless of ethnic background. Law-observers are Ishmael's children; faith-believers are Isaac's children. The Judaizers had it backwards: they thought circumcision made them Isaac's children. Paul shows faith alone does.

Historical Context

Paul's identification of Christians with Isaac rather than Ishmael was revolutionary. Jews saw themselves as Isaac's children through physical descent from Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. Paul insists spiritual descent (faith-pattern) supersedes physical descent. Believers share Isaac's birth-type (miraculous, promised, supernatural) regardless of ethnic background. This democratized covenant

membership and challenged Jewish exclusivism. It also challenged Gentile reliance on external rituals (circumcision) rather than internal faith.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does identifying yourself as an 'Isaac'—a child of promise born by supernatural divine power—shape your self-understanding?
2. In what ways do you sometimes revert to 'Ishmael' patterns, trusting human effort rather than divine promise?
3. What would change if you fully embraced your identity as a supernatural miracle of grace, not a natural achievement of religious effort?

Interlinear Text

ἡμεῖς	δέ	ἀδελφοί	κατὰ	Ἰσαὰκ	ἐπαγγελίας	τέκνα
we	Now	brethren	as	Isaac	of promise	the children
G2249	G1161	G80	G2596	G2464	G1860	G5043

ἐσμέν
are
G2070

Additional Cross-References

Galatians 4:23 (Covenant): But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.

Galatians 3:29 (Covenant): And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Acts 3:25 (Covenant): Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org