

Galatians 4:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

Analysis

So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

Paul's triumphant conclusion to chapter 4. "So then" (dio, διό)—therefore, based on everything said. "Brethren" (adelphoi, ἀδελφοί)—fellow believers, emphasizing family identity. "We are not children of the bondwoman" (ouk esmen paidiskēs tekna, οὐκ ἐσμέν παιδίσκης τέκνα)—emphatic denial. We don't have slave-heritage through Hagar/law.

"But of the free" (alla tēs eleutheras, ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐλευθέρας)—strong adversative. We are children of the free woman, Sarah/promise/grace. Our spiritual genealogy is freedom, not slavery. Our mother is heavenly Jerusalem (4:26), our birth is by the Spirit (4:29), our inheritance is through promise (4:28). This identity statement prepares for chapter 5's exhortation to stand fast in freedom. Knowing who you are (free-born children of promise) determines how you live (in freedom, not slavery). Identity shapes practice.

Historical Context

This concluding verse summarizes Paul's argument from 3:1-4:31: believers are justified by faith apart from law-works, sons of God through faith in Christ, heirs according to promise, children of the free woman, citizens of heavenly Jerusalem. All this is gift received by faith, not achievement earned by works. The Judaizers' program would reverse this, making believers children of the bondwoman. Paul

has demolished their position using Scripture, experience, logic, and allegory. Now he'll turn to practical exhortation based on this theological foundation.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does knowing you're a free-born child of promise rather than a slave-born child of law change how you approach God daily?
2. What specific freedoms do you possess as a child of the free woman that you're not currently enjoying?
3. How should this identity as free-born children shape Christian community and relationships with other believers?

Interlinear Text

ἄρα,	ἀδελφοί	οὐκ	ἐσμέν	παιδίσκης	τέκνα	ἀλλὰ	τῆς
So then	brethren	not	we are	of the bondwoman	children	but	G3588
G686	G80	G3756	G2070	G3814	G5043	G235	

ἐλευθέρας
of the free
G1658

Additional Cross-References

John 8:36 (Parallel theme): If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Galatians 5:13 (Parallel theme): For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

Galatians 5:1 (Parallel theme): Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

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