

Galatians 4:21 – 5:1

²¹Tell me, you who desire to be subject to the law, will you not listen to the law? ²²For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and the other by a free woman. ²³One, the child of the slave, was born according to the flesh; the other, the child of the free woman, was born through the promise. ²⁴Now this is an allegory: these women are two covenants. One woman, in fact, is Hagar, from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery. ²⁵Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. ²⁶But the other woman corresponds to the Jerusalem above; she is free, and she is our mother. ²⁷For it is written, "Rejoice, you childless one, you who bear no children, burst into song and shout, you who endure no birth pangs; for the children of the desolate woman are more numerous than the children of the one who is married." ²⁸Now you, my friends, are children of the promise, like Isaac. ²⁹But just as at that time the child who was born according to the flesh persecuted the child who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. ³⁰But what does the scripture say? "Drive out the slave and her child; for the child of the slave will not share the inheritance with the child of the free woman."³¹So then, friends, we are children, not of the slave but of the free woman.

5 For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

There were those around who were saying that those who desired to follow Jesus had to fulfil the requirements of Judaism with all the practices that went along with that.

So we find Paul putting forward an argument regarding the distinction between being born of flesh and born of the Spirit; how those born of flesh persecute those born of the Spirit, from the beginning of the people of God with the two sons of Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael.

So Paul wants the Galatian Christians to understand that the freedom offered in Christ, when we are born of the Spirit, supersedes the way of law and legalism.

It was for freedom that Christ has set us free
No longer to be subject to a yoke of slavery
So we're rejoicing in God's victory
Our hearts responding to His love.

As we sing in song, "Jesus we celebrate your victory" written by John Gibson,

Most people want to live in freedom with a level of self-determination. The conflict in Ukraine shows the determination of the Ukrainian people to live in the freedom of being part of a self-determining nation and not ruled by an outside people.

In the time of Jesus the "outsiders" of Rome governed the land he lived in. He lived amongst people looking for an earthly Messiah, an earthly liberator, one who would bring political freedom to the nation.

Political freedom, if such a reality can exist, is only ever going to be temporary due to the nature of fallen humanity.

Jesus came as a Messiah for spiritual freedom, a freedom from the power of sin and guilt; a freedom that would bring a new relationship into being with the God of eternity.

For those who belong to Christ we live in that different freedom, a freedom of grace not law, a freedom to follow the way of Christ, or not, but knowing that to live fulfilled is to live in obedience to the will and purpose of God. A freedom to live in relationship not by earned merit but by the grace offered to us in Jesus.