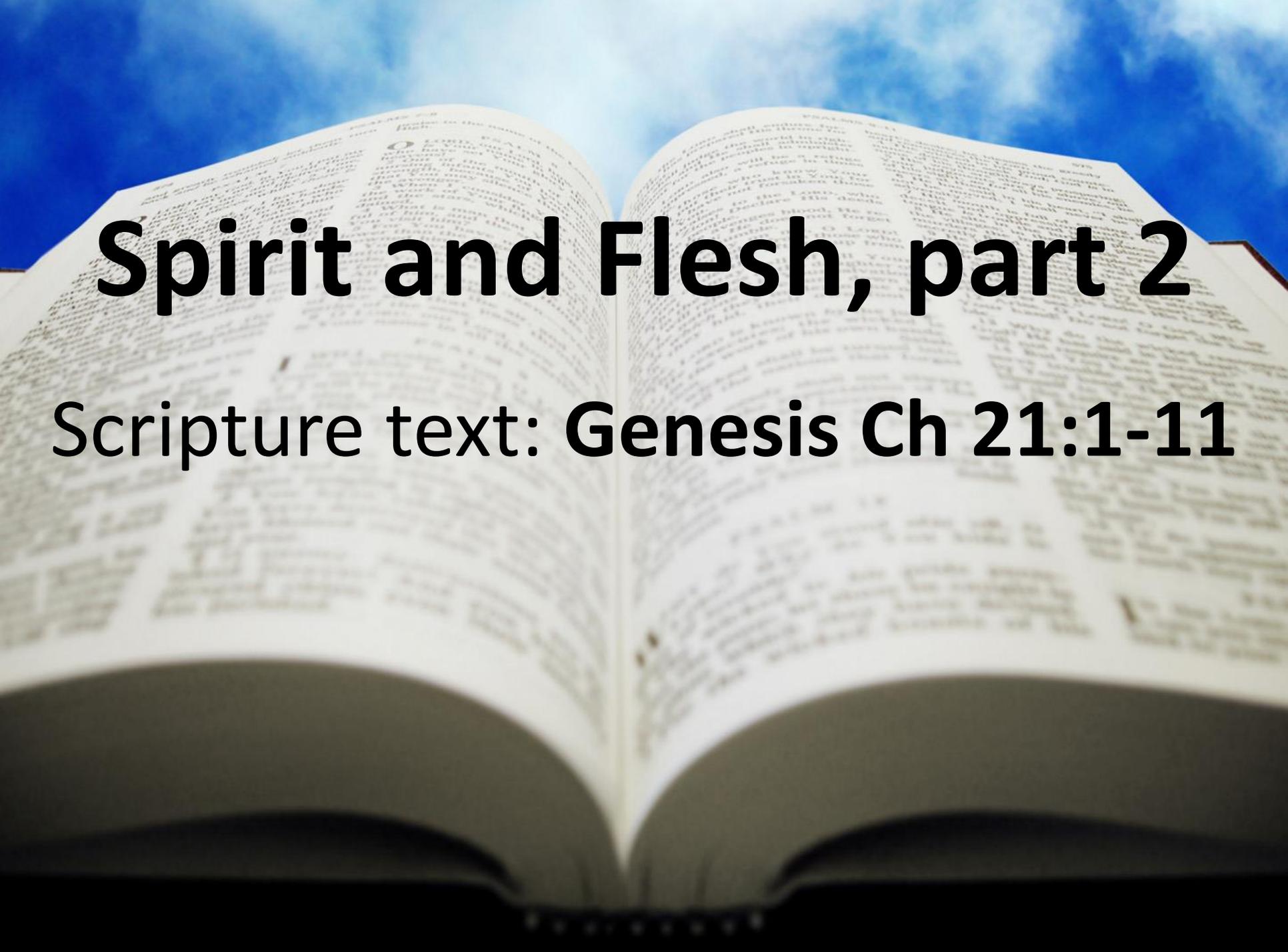


Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church  
We're glad you're here!



An open book is shown from a low angle, with its pages fanning out. The text on the pages is mostly illegible due to a shallow depth of field. The book is set against a bright blue sky with wispy white clouds. Overlaid on the center of the book is the title 'Spirit and Flesh, part 2' in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. Below the title, the text 'Scripture text: Genesis Ch 21:1-11' is also overlaid in a slightly smaller, bold, black sans-serif font.

# **Spirit and Flesh, part 2**

**Scripture text: Genesis Ch 21:1-11**

**A third fact is obvious: Hagar was never supposed to bear a child. The Law cannot give what only Jesus Christ can give: life (Gal. 3:21), righteousness (2:21), the Holy Spirit (3:2), or an eternal inheritance (3:18). All of these blessings come only “by grace [Sarah] ... through faith [Abraham]” (Eph. 2:8–9).**

**Ephesians 2:8-9** For by grace you have been saved through faith. **And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works,** so that no one may boast.

**This leads to a fourth fact:** Hagar gave **birth to a slave**. If you decide to live under the Law, then you become a child of Hagar, a slave; **for the Law produces bondage and not freedom**. The first doctrinal battle the church had to fight was on this very issue; and it was decided that sinners are saved **wholly by grace, apart from keeping the Law of Moses** (Acts 15:1–32). Legalists in the church today are turning sons into slaves and replacing freedom with slavery (Gal. 4:1–11); yet, **God calls us to freedom!**  
(5:1)

**Act 15:1-2** But some men came down from Judea and **were teaching** the brothers, "**Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.**" And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were **appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question.**

**Act 15:19-22** Therefore my judgment is that **we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God**, but should write to them **to abstain from the things polluted by idols**, and from **sexual immorality**, and **from what has been strangled**, and **from blood**. For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues." **Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders**, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers,

**Galatians 4:28-5:1** Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now. But what does the Scripture say? **"Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman."** So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman. **For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.**

**Hagar was cast out.** There was no compromise: **She was cast out completely and permanently and took Ishmael with her.** Instead of subduing the flesh, the Law arouses the flesh (Rom. 7:7–12) because **“the strength of sin is the Law”** (1 Cor. 15:56). Believers don’t need to put themselves under some kind of religious law in order to become Christlike, for they are already complete and full in Christ (Col. 2:8–23) and have **the Holy Spirit to enable them to overcome sin** (Rom. 8:1–4).

**Romans 7:7-11** What then shall we say? **That the law is sin? By no means!** Yet if it had not been for the law, **I would not have known sin.** For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "**You shall not covet.**" But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For **apart from the law, sin lies dead.** I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, **sin came alive and I died.** The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. **For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.**

**1 Corinthians 15:54-58** When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "**Death is swallowed up in victory.**" "**O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?**" **The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.** But thanks be to God, who **gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.** Therefore, my beloved brothers, **be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,** knowing that in the Lord your labor is **not in vain.**

**Colossians 2:11-14** In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, **by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ**, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also **raised with him through faith** in the **powerful working of God**, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.** This he set aside, **nailing it to the cross.**

**Romans 8:1-4** There is therefore **now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.** For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, **in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**

**Finally, Hagar never married again.** God gave His Law to the Jewish nation only and never gave it to the Gentiles or to the church. **Nine of the Ten Commandments are quoted in the Epistles as applying to believers today, and we should obey them;** but we are not commanded to obey the ceremonial laws that were given only to Israel (see Rom. 13:8–10). Paul affirms **that it is love that fulfills the Law.** When we love God and love one another, **we want to obey God; and in the Spirit's power, we do what is right.**

**Romans 13:8-10** Owe no one anything, **except to love each other**, for the **one who loves another has fulfilled the law**. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: **"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."** Love does no wrong to a neighbor; **therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.**

**Before leaving this section**, we should notice that there is a “**lawful use of the Law**”. While the Law cannot save us or sanctify us, **it does reveal the holiness of God and the awfulness of sin**. The ceremonial part of the Law illustrates the person and work of Jesus Christ. **The Law is a mirror that helps us see our sins**, but you do not wash your face in the mirror! It is also a mirror that reveals the glory of Jesus Christ; and as we meditate on Him, we can be transformed to become more like Him. **Any religious system that leads you into bondage is not magnifying the New Testament Gospel of the grace of God.**

**1 Timothy 1:8-11** Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but **for the lawless and disobedient**, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is **contrary to sound doctrine**, in accordance with **the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.**

**James 1:21-25** Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and **receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.** But **be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is **like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.** For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who **looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.**

**2 Corinthians 3:14-18** But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, **because only through Christ is it taken away.** Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. **Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.** And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.**

**John 8:31-36** So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, **"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."** They answered him, **"We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?"** Jesus answered them, **"Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."**

## God and Hagar: promise and provision (Gen. 21:12–21)

It was “grievous” (21:11–12) for Abraham to say good-bye to his son, but this was God’s command, and **he had to obey**. Little did he realize that his obedience was **preparation for an even greater test** when he would have to put Isaac on the altar. The word translated “grievous” means “**to shake violently,**” like curtains blowing in the wind. Abraham was deeply moved within and perhaps somewhat displeased at this turn of events.

However, **God did not abandon Hagar and Ishmael**; for Ishmael was the son of Abraham, God's friend (21:13). If Ishmael and Hagar had any bad feelings toward Abraham, they were certainly in the wrong; everything God did for them was because of His faithfulness to Abraham. **The Lord reaffirmed His promise that Ishmael would become a great nation** (21:13, 18; 17:20), and **He kept His promise** (25:12–16). The Arab world is a force to be reckoned with today, and **it all began with Ishmael**.

**Genesis 21:12-13** But God said to Abraham, "Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, **for through Isaac shall your offspring be named.** And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, **because he is your offspring.**"

**Genesis 21:18** Up! Lift up the boy, and hold him fast with your hand, **for I will make him into a great nation.**"

**Genesis 25:16-18** These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names, by their villages and by their encampments, twelve princes according to their tribes. (These are the years of the life of Ishmael: 137 years. He breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people.) They settled from Havilah to Shur, which is opposite Egypt in the direction of Assyria. **He settled over against all his kinsmen.**

In spite of the pictures in some Sunday School papers and Bible story books, Ishmael was a teenager and not a child when this event took place. The word translated “child” can refer to a fetus (Ex. 21:22), newborn children (1:17–18), young children (1 Kings 17:21–23), or even young adults (12:8–14; Dan. 1:4ff).

In this case, it refers to a boy at least fifteen years old.

Ishmael and Hagar got lost in the wilderness, their water ran out, and **they gave up in despair**. This experience was quite different from the time Hagar first met God in the wilderness (Gen. 16:7ff). Sixteen years before, she had found a fountain of water; but now she saw no hope at all. **Apparently Hagar had forgotten the promises God** had made concerning her son; but Ishmael must have remembered them, for he called on the Lord for help. God heard the lad's cries and rescued them both for Abraham's sake.

**Genesis 16:8-12** And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai." The angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her." The angel of the LORD also said to her, "**I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude.**" And the angel of the LORD said to her, "Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. **You shall call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has listened to your affliction. He shall be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen.**"

So often in the trials of life **we fail to see the divine provisions God has made for us, and we forget the promises** He has made to us. We open our hands to receive what we think we need **instead of asking Him to open our eyes to see what we already have.**

The answer to most problems is close at hand, if only we have eyes to see (John 6:1–13; 21:1–6).

**John 6:5-9** Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" **He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do.** Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, **"There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?"**

**John 21:4-7** Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. **Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?"** They answered him, "No." He said to them, **"Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some."** So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, **"It is the Lord!"** When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea.

**Hagar is certainly a picture of the needy multitudes in the world today: wandering, weary, thirsty, blind, and giving up in despair. How we need to tell them the good news that the water of life is available and the well is not far away! (John 4:10–14; 7:37–39)**

**God is kind and gracious to all who call on Him, because of His beloved Son, Jesus Christ.**

**John 4:10-14** Jesus answered her, "**If you knew the gift of God**, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. **Where do you get that living water?** Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." Jesus said to her, "**Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.** The water that I will give him will become in him **a spring of water welling up to eternal life.**"

**John 7:37-40** On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. When they heard these words, some of the people said, "This really is the Prophet."