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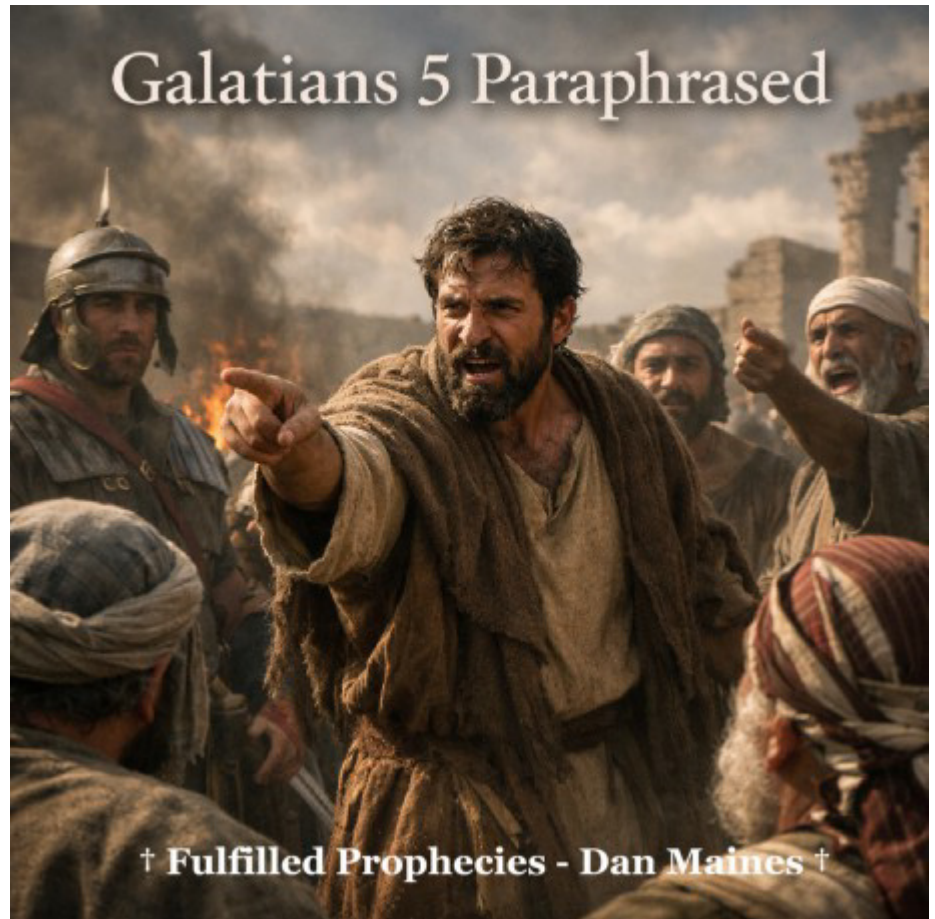
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Galatians 5 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Galatians 5 Paraphrased

Introduction

† The apostle Paul wrote Galatians to defend the freedom believers have in Christ and to confront those who tried to pull the church back under the Law of Moses.

† The conflict in Galatia was about whether Gentile believers had to be circumcised and keep the Law to be accepted by God. Paul makes it clear that righteousness comes through Christ, not through the Law.

† This chapter explains the difference between living under the

Law and living by the Spirit, showing the fruit that comes from true freedom in Christ.

Galatians 5:1

Christ set us free so we could live in freedom, so stand firm and do not let anyone put the yoke of slavery back on your neck again.

† Paul is warning believers not to return to the Law as a system of righteousness. The Law could expose sin but it could never remove it (Romans 3:20).

† The slavery Paul refers to is bondage to the Law, which demanded perfect obedience but could never give life (Galatians 3:21).

† Early Christian writer Irenaeus explained that Christ freed believers from the old yoke so they could serve God in liberty and truth.

Galatians 5:2

Listen carefully, if you receive circumcision as a requirement for righteousness, then Christ will bring you no benefit at all.

† Circumcision itself was not the issue, the problem was trusting in it for salvation instead of trusting Christ.

† Paul is confronting teachers who insisted Gentiles must become Jews to be saved.

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that the true circumcision is of the heart and not of the flesh.

Galatians 5:3

And I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision as a requirement, he is obligated to keep the entire Law.

† The Law cannot be kept partially. If someone chooses the Law as their path to righteousness, they must keep all of it perfectly (James 2:10).

† This exposes the impossibility of salvation through law

keeping.

† Tertullian noted that the Law was never meant to be a permanent path to righteousness but a tutor leading to Christ.

Galatians 5:4

You who are trying to be justified by the Law have been cut off from Christ, you have fallen away from grace.

† Falling from grace here means abandoning reliance on Christ and returning to the Law as a system of justification.

† Grace and Law cannot function together as the basis of righteousness (Romans 11:6).

† Irenaeus wrote that justification comes through faith in Christ alone, not through the works of the Law.

Galatians 5:5

But we through the Spirit by faith are waiting for the righteousness that we hope for.

† The righteousness believers wait for is the full vindication that comes through Christ.

† The Spirit is the guarantee that believers belong to the new covenant community (Ephesians 1:13-14).

† Eusebius wrote that the early church understood righteousness as something received through faith and confirmed by the Spirit.

Galatians 5:6

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, what matters is faith working through love.

† External identity markers such as circumcision have no value in determining righteousness.

† True faith always expresses itself through love toward others (1 John 3:18).

† Clement of Alexandria emphasized that love is the evidence of genuine faith.

Galatians 5:7

You were running well, who stepped in and stopped you from obeying the truth?

† Paul uses the imagery of a race to describe the Christian life.

† False teachers had disrupted the progress of the Galatian believers.

† Early church writers often used the race metaphor to describe perseverance in faith.

Galatians 5:8

This persuasion did not come from the one who called you.

† The doctrine of returning to the Law did not come from God but from human teachers.

† The gospel Paul preached came directly from Christ (Galatians 1:12).

† Irenaeus warned against teachers who tried to mix the gospel with human traditions.

Galatians 5:9

A little leaven spreads through the whole batch of dough.

† Paul uses leaven as a picture of false teaching that spreads and corrupts the entire church.

† Even a small amount of legalism can infect the entire message of grace.

† Tertullian used this verse to warn churches about allowing small doctrinal errors to spread.

Galatians 5:10

I am confident in the Lord that you will not accept any other view, but the one who is troubling you will bear the judgment he deserves.

† Paul expresses confidence that the Galatian believers will ultimately reject the false teaching.

† Those spreading false doctrine would face judgment for

misleading believers.

† Eusebius recorded many early church warnings against teachers who corrupted the gospel.

Galatians 5:11

But if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? If that were true, the offense of the cross would be removed.

† The cross is offensive because it declares that human effort cannot save.

† If Paul had preached circumcision, the Jewish opposition against him would have disappeared.

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that the cross exposes the futility of human righteousness.

Galatians 5:12

I wish those who are troubling you would go even further and remove themselves entirely.

† Paul uses sharp language to express how destructive the false teachers were to the church.

† His concern was protecting believers from doctrines that undermined the gospel.

† Tertullian wrote that strong warnings were sometimes necessary to guard the truth of the gospel.

Galatians 5:13

For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters, but do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, instead serve one another through love.

† Christian freedom is not permission to sin but freedom from the Law's condemnation.

† The proper use of freedom is loving service toward others.

† Irenaeus taught that true liberty expresses itself through love and obedience to God.

Galatians 5:14

For the entire Law is fulfilled in this one statement, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

† Love summarizes the moral intent of the Law (Romans 13:8-10).

† When believers love others, they fulfill what the Law pointed toward.

† Clement of Alexandria described love as the highest expression of God's will.

Galatians 5:15

But if you keep biting and devouring one another, watch out or you will destroy one another.

† Division and conflict within the church can destroy the community of believers.

† Legalistic debates often lead to hostility and division.

† Eusebius noted that unity was essential for the strength of the early church.

Galatians 5:16

But I say walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.

† Living by the Spirit means being guided by God's influence rather than sinful impulses.

† The Spirit produces transformation that the Law could never accomplish.

† Irenaeus wrote that the Spirit empowers believers to live in righteousness.

Galatians 5:17

For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit and the Spirit what is against the flesh, these are opposed to each other so you do not do what you want.

† Paul describes the internal struggle between sinful desire and spiritual transformation.

† This conflict shows the difference between life in Adam and life in Christ.

† Early Christian writers saw this verse as describing the ongoing moral struggle believers experience.

Galatians 5:18

But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the Law.

† Being led by the Spirit means believers are not under the condemnation of the Law.

† The Spirit accomplishes internally what the Law tried to enforce externally.

† Tertullian explained that the Spirit guides believers beyond the limitations of the Law.

Galatians 5:19

Now the works of the flesh are obvious, sexual immorality, impurity, uncontrolled desires,

† Paul begins listing behaviors that come from sinful nature.

† These actions reflect life separated from God's transforming work.

† Early church teachers warned believers that these practices destroy spiritual life.

Galatians 5:20

idolatry, sorcery, hatred, conflict, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, division, factions,

† These sins damage both the individual and the community.

† Many of these behaviors were common in the pagan world of the Roman Empire.

† Clement of Alexandria warned that such attitudes destroy unity in the church.

Galatians 5:21

envy, drunkenness, wild partying, and things like these, I warn you just as I warned you before, those who practice such things

will not inherit the kingdom of God.

† Paul warns that a lifestyle defined by these sins shows a person is not living under God's reign.

† The kingdom refers to God's covenant rule established through Christ.

† Early church writers emphasized repentance and transformation as marks of true faith.

Galatians 5:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

† The Spirit produces qualities that reflect God's character.

† These traits show evidence of a transformed life.

† Irenaeus described these virtues as the visible evidence of the Spirit's work.

Galatians 5:23

gentleness, self control, against such things there is no law.

† No law condemns these qualities because they represent the fulfillment of God's will.

† When the Spirit produces these traits, the purpose of the Law is fulfilled.

† Clement of Alexandria taught that these virtues are the marks of mature faith.

Galatians 5:24

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

† Believers identify with Christ's death and turn away from the rule of sinful desires.

† This is the transformation that comes through union with Christ (Romans 6:6).

† Early Christian teachers saw this verse as describing the death of the old life.

Galatians 5:25

If we live by the Spirit then we should also walk by the Spirit.

† Life in Christ must be demonstrated through daily conduct.

† The Spirit not only gives life but directs how believers live.

† Irenaeus taught that walking by the Spirit means reflecting Christ in everyday life.

Galatians 5:26

Let us not become arrogant, provoking one another, envying one another.

† Pride and rivalry destroy the unity of believers.

† The church is meant to reflect humility and mutual encouragement.

† Eusebius recorded that humility and unity were essential virtues in the early Christian communities.

Historical References

† Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* explained that believers are freed from the Law's condemnation through Christ.

† Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* taught that love and virtue are the true evidence of faith.

† Tertullian wrote that the Spirit leads believers beyond the limitations of the old covenant system.

† Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* recorded that early Christians saw the Spirit's fruit as proof of genuine faith.

How it applies to us today

† Christ has already fulfilled the Law and brought believers into freedom, so we must not return to legalistic systems that claim righteousness comes through rule keeping.

† The true evidence of faith is not external rituals but the fruit of the Spirit appearing in daily life.

† Living by the Spirit produces love, unity, and humility within the community of believers.

† From the fulfilled perspective we recognize that the old covenant system ended with Christ's work and the transition period leading to AD 70.

Q and A Appendix

Q: Why does Paul warn against circumcision in this chapter?

A: Because some teachers claimed circumcision was necessary for salvation, but Paul teaches that righteousness comes through faith in Christ alone (Galatians 2:16).

Q: What does falling from grace mean here?

A: It means abandoning reliance on Christ and turning back to the Law as the basis for righteousness (Romans 11:6).

Q: What does it mean to walk by the Spirit?

A: It means living under the guidance and influence of God's Spirit rather than the sinful desires of the flesh (Romans 8:14).

Q: What is the fruit of the Spirit?

A: The character qualities produced by God's Spirit in believers such as love, peace, patience, and self control (Galatians 5:22-23).

Q: Why does Paul warn about the works of the flesh?

A: Because a life defined by those practices shows a person is not living under God's rule (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

† Tertullian, Against Marcion

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

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