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By Dan Maines

Galatians 5

Galatians 5:1

It was for freedom that Christ set us free, therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

† Paul declares the central theme: freedom in Christ.

† The Law was slavery, Christ is liberty.

† Josephus (Wars 5.1.1) recorded the yoke of bondage the Jews carried in their zeal for the Law, a contrast to Paul's

freedom.

Galatians 5:2-3

Look! I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is obligated to keep the whole Law.

† To embrace circumcision as required is to reject Christ.

† Law demands total obedience, which no man can fulfill.

† Philo (On the Migration of Abraham 92) spoke of the burden of circumcision, making Paul's warning sharper.

Galatians 5:4

You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law, you have fallen from grace.

† Seeking justification by Law cuts one off from Christ.

† To fall from grace is to abandon the only true salvation.

Galatians 5:5-6

For we, through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

† Righteousness is by faith through the Spirit.

† Love is the expression of true faith, not ritual.

† Ignatius (Letter to the Smyrnaeans 6) also stressed faith working in love, not empty ritual.

Galatians 5:7-8

You were running well, who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you.

† False persuasion interrupted their faithful walk.

† Deception comes from men, not from God.

Galatians 5:9

A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough.

† False teaching spreads corruption throughout the body.

† Josephus (Antiquities 13.10.6) described how small factions led to widespread corruption in Israel, paralleling Paul's point.

Galatians 5:10-11

I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view, but the one who is disturbing you will bear the punishment, whoever he is. But as for me, brothers and sisters, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been eliminated.

† Paul trusts God will preserve the faithful.

† His persecution proves he did not preach circumcision.

† Tertullian (Against Marcion 5.3) noted the offense of the cross as central to Paul's message.

Galatians 5:12

I wish that those who are troubling you would even emasculate themselves.

† Paul uses harsh irony, showing the danger of false teachers.

† His statement underscores the seriousness of their distortion of the gospel.

Galatians 5:13-14

For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters, only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

† Freedom is not license for sin but liberty to serve.

† Love fulfills the Law.

† The Dead Sea Scrolls (CD 2.14-16) contrasted selfishness

with covenant love, which Paul applies in Christ.

Galatians 5:15

But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

† Division destroys the body of Christ.

† Paul warns against internal strife within the church.

Galatians 5:16-18

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the desire of the flesh is against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, for these are in opposition to one another, in order to keep you from doing whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

† Walking in the Spirit conquers the flesh.

† Being led by the Spirit removes one from the bondage of the Law.

† Origen (On Romans 5.1.4) explained that true freedom is being led by the Spirit, not enslaved by desires.

Galatians 5:19-21

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: sexual immorality, impurity, indecent behavior, idolatry, witchcraft, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

† Paul lists the works of the flesh, destructive to those enslaved by sin.

† These are contrary to life in the Spirit and disqualify from the kingdom.

† Josephus (Wars 4.6.3) recorded the immorality and factionalism in Jerusalem before its fall, evidence of works of

the flesh.

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, against such things there is no law.

† The Spirit produces true fruit that fulfills God's will.

† Against these things, no Law is needed.

† Clement of Rome (1 Clement 49) extolled love as the root of all virtues.

Galatians 5:24-25

Now those who belong to Christ Jesus crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let's follow the Spirit as well.

† Believers crucify the flesh through union with Christ.

† Living by the Spirit demands walking in the Spirit.

Galatians 5:26

Let's not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

† Pride destroys unity and quenches the Spirit.

† Humility and love maintain the fruit of the Spirit.

How it applies to us today

† Galatians 5 shows that freedom in Christ must not be abused.

† The flesh produces destruction, but the Spirit produces fruit.

† True faith is expressed in love, which fulfills the Law.

† In the fulfilled kingdom, we walk by the Spirit, bearing fruit that no Law can condemn.

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

Source Index

† Josephus, Wars 5.1.1 - yoke of bondage

† Philo, On the Migration of Abraham 92 - burden of circumcision

† Ignatius, Letter to the Smyrnaeans 6 - faith working through love

† Josephus, Antiquities 13.10.6 - corruption spreading like leaven

† Tertullian, Against Marcion 5.3 - offense of the cross

† Dead Sea Scrolls, CD 2.14-16 - covenant love contrasted with selfishness

† Origen, On Romans 5.1.4 - freedom in the Spirit

† Josephus, Wars 4.6.3 - immorality and factions in Jerusalem

† Clement of Rome, 1 Clement 49 - love as root of virtues

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