

to the churches of Galatia

#10, freedom, Gal 5:1-12

The last two lessons have been about bondage under the old covenant and freedom from the works of the law provided to those under the new covenant. This lesson describes Paul going after the teaching of physical circumcision and also correcting those who taught it.

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.

2 Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you.

3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.

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

[1.] v:1, a yoke of slavery, So that we are all on the same page, what is Paul referring to with this phrase?

[2.] v:2, circumcision, Write true or false after the following statements.

a) It's OK for anyone to be circumcised. _____

b) Circumcision is a problem if a Christian does it to keep the law. _____

c) All Christians are circumcised. _____

[3.] v:3, keep the whole Law. This teaching was previously stated in chapter 3. Review this chapter and jot down the references to the pertinent verses.

[4.] v:4, seeking to be justified by law; From the following, choose the phrases that best describe this time in Galatia.

a) All were truly born again, but now some have gone back to the old covenant.

b) Some liked to fellowship with the Christians but, in their hearts, really felt they needed to keep the law.

c) Some liked to fellowship with the Christians but never trusted Christ.

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v:4, severed from Christ, fallen from grace. The Gr. word severed means “to be separated”. The word for “fallen” means “to lose ones grasp on something”. Paul’s clear meaning is that any attempt to be justified by the law is to reject salvation by grace alone through faith alone. Those once exposed to the gracious truth of the gospel , who then turn their backs on Christ (Heb 6:4-6) and seek to be justified by the law are separated from Christ and lose all prospects of God’s gracious salvation. Their desertion of Christ and the gospel only proves that their faith was never genuine (cf Luke 8:13-14, I Jn 2:19).

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5 For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.

6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

7 You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth? 8 This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you. 9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough.

[5.] v:5, hope of righteousness, **Back in v:4 we read that those, who practiced the old covenant, did so to become justified (made righteous). When did those who live by faith become righteous?**

[6.] v:6, For in Christ, **From this verse, what is important and what doesn’t mean a thing?**

[7.] v:7, You were running well; **Paul often used examples from the Olympics. Regarding Christianity, what did he mean by this statement?**

[8.] v:8, Him who calls you. **Who does this refer to?**

[9.] v:9, A little leaven, **What do you conclude about a teensy-weensy bit of law in Christianity?**

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10 I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is.

11 But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted?

11b Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished. **Cephas used the truth of the stumbling block in his first letter (I Pet 2:6-8). He referenced some old testament passages which are:** Isa 28:16, Therefore thus says the Lord God, " Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed. **And:** Ps 118:22, The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone. **And:** Isa 8:14-15, "Then He shall become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, And a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 15 "Many will stumble over them, Then they will fall and be broken; They will even be snared and caught."

[10.] v:10, will bear his judgment, What kind of judgment are we talking about here?

[11.] v:11, if I still preach circumcision, So it seems Paul was being accused! But, how do we know that his accusers knew he didn't preach circumcision?

[12.] Isa 28:16, A costly cornerstone, From Eph 2:20, Who is this cornerstone?

[13.] Ps 118:22, The stone which the builders rejected, From Acts 4:10-11, who were the builders?

[14.] Isa 8:14, a rock to stumble over, From I Cor 1:23, who stumbles over the preaching of Christ crucified?

[15.] Is the cross and Christ crucified an old covenant or new covenant teaching?

[16.] Is circumcision, performed in the flesh by human hands, an old covenant or new covenant teaching?

[17.] Gal 5:11b, If Paul still taught circumcision would it enhance or abolish Christ crucified?

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

ὄφελον και αποκοψονται
I would that indeed will cut themselves off

[18.] v:12, mutilate themselves. Looking at the Gr., why or why wouldn't you conclude that Paul was soft on physical circumcision?

NOTES