

Stand Fast in Liberty

Galatians 5:1–12 (Galatians at a Gallup)

Grace Chapel

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INTRODUCTION

REVIEW (Galatians 1:1–4:31)

Amazingly, amateur legalists pulled Galatians from the grace gospel revealed to Paul (a former legalist). Thus, Paul did not learn the gospel from men, not even from the apostles (ch. 1). Instead, the great heroes to the legalists (Peter, James, & John) see Paul as an equal, with Peter even accepting Paul's rebuke for shunning Gentiles (ch. 2). Tho divine signs persuaded these believers about Christ & they received the Spirit [as a seal], legalists tricked them that the Law was also needed; but all law-keepers are under a death-curse, which death curse Christ removed from all believers & gave life (3:1–14). God unilaterally confirmed the Covenant to Abraham & his [linear] Seed, so it cannot be altered, but God temporarily added the Law to display sin as sin until Christ made believers alive, (specifically) faith in Christ rendered the Galatian believers God's children (blessed through the Abrahamic Covenant), rendering all racial, gender, or life-station distinctions secondary (3:15–29) Israel lacked authority as a minor heir under the Law as a babysitter (despite promises that it will be the world's key nation), until Christ redeemed both Jews & Gentiles, making all believers sons & heirs (4:1–7), but (unlike Israel) the Galatians were once pagan polytheists, but now as believers who have known God, enslavement to human rules risks loss of reward (4:8–11), so they should resume mutual fellowship with Paul, (4:12–15), who labors again for these whose wandering and animosity distresses him (4:16–20). Would-be legalists should observe that not all sons of Abraham are free, as two covenants; Law (pictured by Hagar) and the Abrahamic (pictured by Sarah) show that enslaved legalists will persecute those with liberty until the legalists are expelled (4:21–31).

BACKGROUND

Background on the people in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13)

16 Men of Israel, & you who fear God

26 sons of the family of Abraham . . . those among you who fear God

42 Jews . . . Gentiles

43 Jews and devout proselytes

Proselytes = circumcised Law adherents; God-fearers = uncirc. Law adherents

Background on Circumcision

60+% of American male infants are circumcised each year (about 1¼ million per year)

Few male infant circumcisions for Gentiles in the U.S. are for religious reasons

For Jews, circumcision predates the Law Genesis 17:9–14

Sign of Abrahamic Covenant for all generations of Israel

Paul was willing to circumcise Timothy (son of Gk father, Jewish mother)

Acts 16:1–3

Paul was unwilling to circumcise Titus (son of Greek parents)

Galatians 2:1–3

This is an area of liberty for parents (and for men, in general terms)

5:1 Gentile believers should live as ones Christ liberated, rather than enslaved to Law

5:2 [Specifically, Gentile believers who live as ones Christ liberated] should not submit to [religious] circumcision because Christ + Law does not profit

Circumcision (viewed as key part of the Law by legalists)

God imposed circumcision upon Israel, not upon Gentiles (esp. those far from Israel)

Does 5:2 deal with receiving everlasting life or with Christian conduct?

Generalizing Paul's point for us

5:3 [Religious] circumcision obligates [a Gentile] to keep the whole Law

Circumcision was the legalists' *hook*

Modern legalists also have *hooks*

5:4 Legalists become alienated from Christ [because] they fall from grace [to legalism]

They have become estranged from Christ

Is Paul saying that they lack eternal life or that they lack fellowship?

Efforts at law-justification

Do they seek to be justified for receiving life or for living the Christian life?

They have fallen from grace

Is this a loss of everlasting life or a critique of living by the power of legalism?

The semantics of *fall from* _____

5:5 The reason they have fallen from grace [to legalism] is because they no longer by the HS eagerly wait by faith for the hope of righteousness [in Christ's presence]

Paul includes himself among those who *eagerly await* (*apekdechomai*)

Paul's uses this term only re prophetic events (Rom 8:19, 23, 25; 1 Cor 1:7; Phil 3:20)

Galatians has already spoken of a prophetic event (being delivered into Christ's presence)

Gal 1:4 is groundwork for Paul's amazement that they abandoned grace

Do-it-yourself righteousness

Is Paul's point: *righteousness by faith?* or *wait by faith?*

Young's Literal Translation: *for we by the Spirit, by faith, a hope of righteousness do wait for*

5:6 [In light of their future transformation unto righteousness in Christ's presence] neither circumcision nor uncircumcision accomplishes [rewardable righteousness], but faith working through love [accomplishes rewardable righteousness]

Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision (cf. Galatians 3:28)

Circumcision and non-circumcision were non-issues in becoming Abraham's seed

They are non-issues in regard to rewards inheritance also

What does *faith working* mean?

Is it contradictory? No

Are works a component of faith? No

What does *faith working through love* mean?

CONCLUSION AND APPLICATION

