

Freedom in Christ from the Law

Paul turns from his primarily theological arguments for the truth that salvation is by grace through faith alone, to the practical aspects of this important teaching on the gospel. He brings the Galatians a defense of Christian Freedom.

1. A Life Free from Slavery. 5:1-12

In the face of those who try to enslave them- either through subjecting them to the Mosaic Law and rites or the license to sin- the apostle states that they must stand firm. Refuse to cave in to those who would take them from the life of freedom and grace that they have received.

1 Corinthians 16:13 Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong.

a. Turning to the Mosaic law for salvation ruins grace. Vs. 2

The Judaic teaching was that circumcision, and adherence to other aspects of the law was necessary for salvation. It was adding works to faith.

b. Turning to the Mosaic law for salvation makes a person a debtor. Vs. 3

The law is a unit. If one chooses to try to be saved that way, they must be perfect in every aspect- and no one can be- only Jesus was perfect while under the law. Ironically if salvation were based on works, it would make God a debtor to us. (Romans 4:1-8)

c. Turning to the Law for salvation and life is to fall away from grace. Vs. 4-6

The law is not intended for those who are in Christ. It is for lawbreakers. 1 Tim. 1:8-11
“The Word of God condemns unsparingly all attempts to put the Christian believer “under the law” The Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul gave to the church the book of Galatians for the very purpose of dealing with the heresy. Read the epistle over and over, carefully noting the precise error with which the writer deals. It is not a total rejection of the gospel of God’s grace and a turning back to a total legalism. It is rather the error of saying that the Christian life, having begun by simple faith in Christ, must thereafter continue under the law of some part of it.” See Gal.3:2-3 Alva J. McClain Law and Grace Titus 2:11-12

d. Turning to the law for salvation hinders spiritual progress. Vs. 7-10

Circumcision or any other rite or good deed is simply a sign of our relationship with God, not the relationship itself. Genesis 17:11

The only thing that is important is faith- expressed in love (the sum of the law- Matthew 22:36-40).

In other words, our faith will result in love for God and our neighbor. It is proof of our relationship with God, not the relationship itself. (1 John 4:7-9, 5:1-5)

The Galatians had someone come in and cause them to break stride in their walk with God. They were led astray from a Christ centered gospel to a self-centered gospel by trying to live the Christian life not by grace through faith but by self-effort. This kind of teaching can permeate and ruin everything!

Paul is confident that they will not leave the true path. True believers will persevere to the end. John 10:27-28 And those who are trying to deceive the people of God will be punished by the LORD.

e. Turning to the Law of Salvation removes the conviction the cross brings. Vs. 11-12

In a works salvation there is really no need for the cross, and in fact the cross is an offense to those who think they can be saved by the law.

The cross is an offense to the sinner- for it points to their need for a savior.

Paul feels so strongly about this, he wishes the false teachers would be unable to reproduce- in any way!

Adding human works to the work of Christ on the Cross is to rob it of its meaning.

Salvation by grace through faith must be defended, and we must stand firm in the freedom that we have been granted in Christ.