



A Study of Galatians Chapter 5

1 Stand firm therefore in the freedom with which Mashiach has made us free, and do not again be entangled with a yoke of slavery. Freedom in Messiah is freedom from the slavery of sin. Yeshua said: 34 “Amen, amen I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.” 36 “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed! (John 8:34b; 36 TLV). Sha’ul told the Galatians (and us) to stand firm in the freedom from sin which they received through trusting in Yeshua. He used similar language to the Corinthian congregation: 17 “Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Ruach Adonai is, there is freedom” (2Corinthians 3:17 TLV). Freedom is freedom from the “law of sin and death.” 1 “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Messiah Yeshua. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Messiah Yeshua has set you free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:1-2 TLV). The law of sin and death is the law which controls those who do not know Yeshua. They are sinners whose fleshly life apart from ADONAI leads to spiritual death: 6 “For the mindset of the flesh is death, but the mindset of the Ruach is life and shalom. 7 For the mindset of the flesh is hostile toward God, for it does not submit itself to the law of God—for it cannot” (Romans 8:6-7 TLV). The implication is that those who have the mindset of the Ruach is “life and shalom” and that one with this mindset submits himself to the law of G-d.

We also have to address what almost every commentary about Galatians 5:1 says, that Sha’ul was teaching that the *Torah* and the keeping of laws had been done away with. We’ve covered this idea and rejected it several times already in our earlier chapters of Galatians. Sha’ul and the other disciples kept, that is, were obedient to *Torah*. There is a large amount of Scriptural evidence to show that as true. What they did not keep after trusting in Yeshua was the Oral Torah. What is the “yoke of slavery to which he referred?” In its simplest meaning, it is slavery to sin, being symbolically yoked as in a team of oxen, a person yoked to sinful deeds. It is being harnessed in a yoke with sin, a yoke which this person cannot escape. We also have to consider the yoke of slavery as being yoked to the additional laws placed upon the Jews by the Oral Torah. In an earlier chapter, we have pointed to Shimon Kefa’s comment in Acts 15: 10 “Why then do you put God to the test by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples—which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear” (Acts 15:10 TLV)? This could not have referred to the written *Torah* because the disciples in their Acts 15 ruling encouraged the new Gentile believers in Yeshua to learn *Torah*: 21 “For Moses from ancient generations has had in every city those who proclaim him, since he is read in all the synagogues every Shabbat” (Acts 15:21 TLV).

2 Henei (behold), I Sha’ul say to you, that if you undergo b’rit milah, Mashiach shall be of no use to you (*B’rit Milah* is a code word referring to becoming a Jewish proselyte. The person doing this would have been required to not only keep written *Torah*, but also Oral Torah. Salvation by faith in Yeshua was of no use to one attempting to gain salvation through works.).

3 And I am a witness again to every man undergoing b’rit milah that he must obey the whole Torah (All those who converted to Judaism, those who became proselytes, were required to obey the whole *Torah* which consisted of two *Torahs*, the Oral and the written. The difference for us is that we don’t have to be obedient to any laws for salvation. It is a free gift from Yeshua and has no strings attached. But, after we have trusted Yeshua, as His faithful followers, His *talmidim*, we want to serve Him. We do this by being obedient to Him.).

4 Mashiach has become of no use for those of you who are justified by the Torah; you no longer are under grace (If you trust in obeying the laws of the *Torah* for justification before ADONAI, you are no longer under grace. Why? Because you have replaced faith in Messiah with dead works.).

5 For we wait through the *Ruach* for the hope of righteousness by trust (The *Ruach*, the Spirit, has placed in us faith to believe that through our trusting faith in Yeshua, we have been declared righteous and have the promise of eternal life.).

6 For in *Yeshua HaMashiach*, neither *b'rit milah* nor the lack of it brings about anything; only trust working through love (We must remember that *Sha'ul* was speaking to Gentiles. For the Galatians, and Gentiles today, circumcision has nothing to do with salvation. The same is true for Jews. Circumcision has no bearing on their salvation through trusting in Yeshua. But, it is commanded by ADONAI for male Jews and circumcision is the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant through which they are promised *eretz Yisra'el*, the Land of Israel. *Sha'ul's* point was that circumcision has nothing at all to do with salvation through Yeshua. But, as we've already noted, *b'rit milah* is also a code word for conversion to Judaism. Neither physical circumcision nor becoming a Jewish proselyte was a requirement for the Galatian's salvation, even though some men were attempting to convince them that they were. For those who attempted it, it was an effort to obtain righteousness through what could be called works righteousness. But, Scripture is clear, righteousness cannot be obtained by any form of works or obedience to laws. 20 "For no human, on the basis of Torah observance, will be set right in His sight—for through the Torah comes awareness of sin" [Romans 3:20 TLV].).

7 You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth (*Sha'ul* likened the Messianic life to a race: 24 *Don't you know that in a stadium the runners all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win* (1Corinthians 9:24 TLV)! This is also an exhortation to each of us today that we would run the race of our life with Yeshua just as deliberately and with just as much energy as we would use if we were running in an actual foot race. Apparently, the Galatians had stopped running the race in the way that they did when they were originally called. Who hindered you; who caused this change? Most likely, it was the Messianic Jews who were encouraging them to become proselytes, to convert to Judaism.) ?

8 That desire did not come from Him who called you (Yeshua did not create the desire in the Galatians to convert to Judaism.).

9 A little *chametz* (leaven) leavens the whole lump (We think of leaven as being symbolic of sin, but actually, there is no Scripture in either the *Tanakh* or *Ketuvim Sh'lachim* which states that leaven is sin. But, it is implied and *Sha'ul* implied it to the congregation at Corinth: 8 "*Therefore let us celebrate the feast not with old hametz, the hametz of malice and wickedness, but with unleavened bread—the matzah of sincerity and truth*" (1Corinthians 5:8 TLV). In saying "feast," he was referring to the Passover and described the old leaven as malice and wickedness as opposed to the unleavened *matzah* of sincerity and truth. Malice and wickedness are certainly sin and even though it is not directly stated in Scripture, traditionally we think of leaven as being mbolic of sin. The reference here to leaven seems to refer to the sinful attempt of the "perverters" to influence the Galatians. Just a small amount of that kind of leaven will leaven all of the dough, that is, will spread throughout all of the Galatians.).

10 I have faith in you through ADONAI that you will not be otherwise minded. And he that is troubling you, whoever he is, will bear his judgment (*Sha'ul* was speaking in faith when he said this. He said that he had faith in the Galatians that they would respond to the truth which he originally presented to them. And, those Messianic Jews who were trying to get them to change would be judged by ADONAI.).

11 And I brothers, if I still teach *b'rit milah* (*Sha'ul* was saying to his brother Galatians: if, if I still teach that a person must convert to Judaism to those who have trusted in Yeshua... *B'rit milah* referred to full conversion to Judaism and we know that *Sha'ul* was definitely not teaching it as necessary for salvation for Gentiles.), **why am I still being persecuted** (Why did he continue to be misunderstood throughout the body of Yeshua's Messianic Jewish followers. Some, apparently had accused him of teaching that Gentiles *should be* subject to the same requirements as Jews and needed to convert to Judaism. But, even though some were accusing him of that, they were still persecuting him. But, at a later time, we see that he was accused by Jews of changing the requirements for Jews as well. Acts 21:21 describes that situation. The general population of Jews had believed that he taught Jews not to follow *Torah* and that circumcision for Jewish boys was not necessary. Of course, that was completely untrue and to prove it, *Sha'ul* paid for the Temple sacrifices for four men with regard to their Nazirite vows.)? **Then the stumbling block of the stake** (The Greek *stauros* refers to an upright stake. It could have a crossbeam like a cross. The death of a man as a sacrifice for sin on a stake was a stumbling block. 23

.. “but we proclaim Messiah crucified—a stumbling block to Jewish people and foolishness to Gentile people,..” [1Corinthians 1:23 TLV].) **has been set aside** (“Then, the stumbling block of the stake has been set aside:” If Sha’ul had actually been teaching that Gentiles should be required to become Jewish proselytes in order to be saved, then Yeshua’s death on the stake would have meant nothing.).

12 I wish that those who are disturbing you would cut themselves off (Those were very strong words and they reflect the extent of Sha’ul’s disagreement with the “perverters.” The Greek word *apokoptó* means to cut off; to emasculate. Sha’ul wished that they would castrate themselves. We think of him as being almost perfect, but he was still a human just as we are. I feel certain that he repented of this statement when he thought about it later.)!

13 For you, achim (brothers), have been called to freedom, but do not use freedom as an advantage to do as you please, but through love serve one another (The true message of the Good News is a message of freedom from sin and freedom from any requirements added to the salvation message. Sha’ul asked the Galatians not to take advantage of that freedom from additional requirements for salvation, but to continue in the *Torah* requirements of loving their neighbor as themselves and the good works of service which that brings.).

14 For the entire Torah is fulfilled (accomplished or carried out) **in one word** (one verse); **in this, You shall love your neighbor as yourself** (Hebrew: *V’ahavta l’re’acha kamocha: You shall love your neighbor as yourself* [Leviticus 19:18]. Yeshua has told us that this is the second greatest commandment in the *Torah* [Matthew 22:36-40; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 10:27]. Sha’ul seemed to be saying, if we love our neighbor as ourselves, we will already have first loved ADONAI, a powerful love which causes us to walk in His will.).

15 But if you bite and devour one another, be careful that you are not consumed by one another (Don’t stoop to the level of animals through factionalism and divisions within the Messianic body. This kind of activity leads to a reduction in the effectiveness of a person or a group and they run the risk of completely destroying their witness because of the hostility of their dealings with others.).

16 Thus I say: Walk in the Ruach (Spirit), and you will not succumb to the lust of the flesh (Walking in the Spirit is to be led by the Spirit. The Galatians were not to allow themselves to be guided by their carnal, their fleshly, minds. The desires of the unregenerate mind which we characterize as “the lust of the flesh,” are in opposition to walking in and being guided by the Spirit.).

17 For the basar (flesh) is opposed to the Ruach and the Ruach is against the basar (The carnal man as expressed in fleshly desires is in opposition, struggles against, the will of ADONAI’s Spirit.) **And these are opposed to each other so that you do not do what you desire to do** (The pull of our flesh is strong and it is difficult to resist our own will. Yeshua pointed this out to his disciples: 41 “Keep watching and praying, so that you won’t enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” [Matthew 26:41 TLV]. Sha’ul himself, may have also faced this: 24 “Miserable man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God—it is through Messiah Yeshua our Lord! So then, with my mind I myself serve the Torah of God; but with my flesh, I serve the law of sin” [Romans 7:24-25 TLV].).

18 But if you are led by the Ruach, you are not under the Torah (If you have trusted in Yeshua, you are being led by the Spirit and are not seeking salvation through the keeping of Laws. You are not under the *Chukim* of the *Torah*, the “works of the Law;” trying to keep *Torah* for salvation).

19 And the works of the flesh are well known (The works of the flesh are those things done by the carnal man, the man giving in to his fleshly desires. Those works are sin. Those used in the Tree of Life version are listed for comparison.). **They are: sexual immorality** (TLV- sexual immorality. The Greek word is *porneia* meaning fornication. This has the meaning of “selling off” or departing from sexual purity. This, according to our understanding of *Torah* as described in the *Tanakh*, would include adultery, sex between unmarried persons and homosexual relations.), **impurity** (TLV- impurity. The Greek word is *akatharsia* meaning uncleanness. It appears to be referring to “ritual uncleanness,” the uncleanness described in *Torah* which prevented one from entering the Temple for worship. Don’t forget that at the time that this was written, the Temple was still standing, and as far as Sha’ul was concerned, *mitzvot* regarding Temple worship were still in effect. This same word, *akatharsia*, is used in the LXX, the Septuagint, the *Tanakh* written in Greek, in several places to refer to “ritual uncleanness:” 5 “But if she bears a female child, then she will be unclean for two weeks, as in her niddah, and she is to wait in the blood of purification for 66 days” [Leviticus 12:5 TLV]. As we’ve shown earlier, Sha’ul continued to follow *Torah* regulations with regard to the Temple as long as it stood. If that is, in fact, the meaning

of impurity, that type of impurity would not be applicable to us today.), **indecency** (TLV- indecency. The Greek word is *aselgeia* meaning licentiousness or lewdness, something shocking to public decency. This could include sexually suggestive dress, behavior or speech.),

20 idolatry (Greek: *eidólolatria* meaning the worship of an image or an idol; the worship of something created by man. This was specifically directed to the Galatians because of their former worship of false gods. There is no direct Scriptural evidence that Jews were worshipping false deities during this time period, but they did have a past history of worshipping *Ba'al* and others.), **sorcery** (TLV- witchcraft. The Greek is *pharmakeia* meaning the use of medicines, drugs or spells. The modern term referring to potions being used to invoke spells is witchcraft. The word sorcery refers to the use of magic to attempt to influence events through supernatural means.), **enmities** (TLV- hostility. The Greek is *echthrai*, plural, meaning enmities or hostilities. This would include multiple episodes of ill will or hatred toward another.), **strife** (TLV- strife. The Greek is *eris* meaning strife. This refers to being contentious or having a readiness to quarrel with others.), **jealousy** (The TLV uses jealousy. The Greek is *zelos* meaning zealousness. In this usage, it can mean rivalry or emotion boiling over; an extreme sense of competition leading to jealousy. Interestingly, the prefix “ze” can also be used in a positive way and the same word, *zelos*, can be used for zeal or enthusiasm in the positive pursuit of an objective.), **rage** (TLV- rage. The Greek is *thymoi* meaning passion or wrath. Wrath is defined as outbursts of anger, rage or fury. Fits of rage), **selfish ambition** (TLV- selfish ambition. The Greek is *eritheiai* meaning rivalry or ambition; selfish rivalry.), **dissensions** (TLV- dissension. The Greek is *dichostasai* meaning standing apart or division or incitement to rebel. It is used in the plural.), **factions** (TLV- factions. The Greek is *haireseis* meaning a self-chosen opinion or discord; sects or factions against the truth),

21 envies (TLV- envy. The Greek is *phthonoi* meaning envy. A grudge or spite. It is used in the plural. Desires which seek to hurt or annoy someone.), **drunkenness** (TLV- drunkenness. The Greek is *methai* meaning drunkenness; drunk on spirits.), **revelry** (TLV- carousing. The Greek is *kōmoi* meaning revel; a riotous drunken party.), **and the like, of which I forewarn you, even as I have warned you in the past; that those of you who practice** (Practice is translated from the Greek- *prassontes*, meaning, “to do,” not just once, but to do again and again.) **such things shall not inherit the reign of Elohim** (It is very important that we understand that *Sha'ul* did not say *poieō*, do, as in do “once.” In saying, *prassontes*, he was referring to those who willfully continue to practice these sins. Their continued sinning is an indication that their hearts, their spirits, have not been regenerated and upon their death they will not be a part of ADONAI’s Kingdom. But, G-d alone, is their judge regarding this.).

22 But the fruit of the Ruach (positive attributes brought about by living in accord with the Holy Spirit) is **ahavah** (Greek- *agape*; love or goodwill centering in moral preference or divine love. This is the word used by Yeshua the first two times that He asked *Shimon Kefa* if he loved Him in John 21. This is the type of love which believers are to have toward each other, deep friendship, but is also the love between a husband and a wife. Yeshua gave his disciples a new commandment: 34 “*I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, so also you must love one another.* 35 *By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*” [John 13:34-35 TLV]. It was no accident that *Sha'ul* listed this attribute first. He was speaking about love for the Father and our Messiah, but also for our neighbor; the first and second greatest commandments. But, Yeshua gave those of us who follow Him an even greater call to love; not just as ourselves, but with the level of love which He has for us.), **simcha** (Greek- *chara*. Joy, gladness or delight.), **shalom** (Greek- *eiréné*. Peace, quietness or rest. *Shalom* as defined from the CJB is: peace, tranquility, safety, wellbeing, welfare, health, contentment, success, comfort, wholeness and integrity.), **savlanut** (Greek- *makrothumia*. Patience, long-suffering or forbearance. To bear or to suffer; being patient.), **nedivut** (Greek- *chrēstotēs*. Kindness, goodness or uprightness.), **chesed** (Greek- *agathosune*. Goodness, especially in personal quality. *Chesed* in Hebrew thought-loving kindness; goodness), **ne'emanut** (Greek- *pistis*. Faithfulness primarily as an attribute, but including faith which itself leads to faithfulness.),

23 adinut (Greek- *prautes*. Gentleness or meekness.), **shlitah atzmit** (Greek- *egkrateia*. Self-control or self-restraint.), **against these the Torah does not stand** (The *Torah* does not condemn the behavior represented in these attributes. They are represented as fruit because fruit has to develop and grow to maturity. It does not come

immediately and does not come from legalistically following rules. The fruit of the spirit grows from walking in the Spirit with faith expressed as faithfulness.).

24 And those who are of Yeshua HaMashiach have put their flesh with its passions and desires to death on the stake (Those in Messiah have put their carnality, their human desire to control their lives, to death on a spiritual execution stake, a cross, by executing their desire to sin and they have expelled the "works of the flesh" from their lives.).

25 If we live by the Ruach let us also follow (Let us stay in line with *Torah*, stay on the narrow path, and not stray from the straightway of the *Ruach Kodesh*.) **the Ruach.**

26 Do not become boastful, provoking one another and envying one another (This is another reminder against pride, jealousy and factionalism.).

Synopsis Chapter 5

Sha'ul began by encouraging the Galatians to remain faithful to the commitment which they had made to Yeshua and to not go back to a life of sin. The "yoke of slavery" could also have been a reference to returning to the temptation of converting to Judaism which would require keeping the Oral Torah. In the same vein, he referred to undergoing circumcision, another code word for converting to Judaism with the requirement that they must keep the whole *Torah*. He emphasized that if they sought *Torah* obedience for justification before ADONAI, they would remove themselves from the grace of Yeshua. It is not through works, but through ADONAI's spirit that they have the hope of salvation through faith. For those in Yeshua, circumcision has nothing to do with salvation. It is arrived at only by faith in love.

As a group, the Galatians were being faithful in running the race of life in Yeshua, but someone has hindered them. But, that desire to abandon the Good News did not come from Yeshua. A little bit of leaven, a departure from the truth from these other persons, will spread throughout your whole group.

But, *Sha'ul* believed that the Galatians would not depart from the truth and that those men, the actual individuals, would be judged by ADONAI. Reminding them that they are brothers, he lets them know that he was being persecuted for something which he did not do, but if he was actually teaching that circumcision was required, then Yeshua's death on the stake would mean nothing. *Sha'ul*'s frustration showed as he wished that those men causing the problem would castrate themselves.

He reminded the Galatians that the Good News is a call to freedom from not only sin, but also from legalism, and that freedom is a call to serve each other in love. That is true because "love your neighbor as yourself" summarizes the entire *Torah* which calls us to service. But, if they continue to argue and be in disagreement, they will run the risk of completely destroying their relationships. However, if they walk according the leading of the Holy Spirit, they will not be tempted to return to their fleshly desires. Spirit and flesh are opposed to each other. The flesh tempts us to do what we do not want to do. But, if we are led by the Spirit, we are not under the legalism of attempting to be righteous before ADONAI through the keeping of Laws.

The things which those who are carnal do, who are fleshly do, are well known. They are sexual sins, ritual uncleanness, indecency, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy,, rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envies and drunkenness and similar things. Those who continue to do these things without sincere repentance after they have trusted Yeshua will not be a part of ADONAI's Kingdom.

But, the fruit of the Spirit, the good characteristics which grow through a life of walking in the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. While the *Torah* opposes the works of the carnal man, it does not speak negatively about the fruit of the Spirit. And, those of you who have trusted Yeshua have put your fleshly desires to death on Yeshua's execution stake. If we live by the Spirit, let's not depart from the way being shown us by the Spirit. So, don't become boastful about your spiritual life, boasting which can lead to pride, to jealousy and to division among you.