

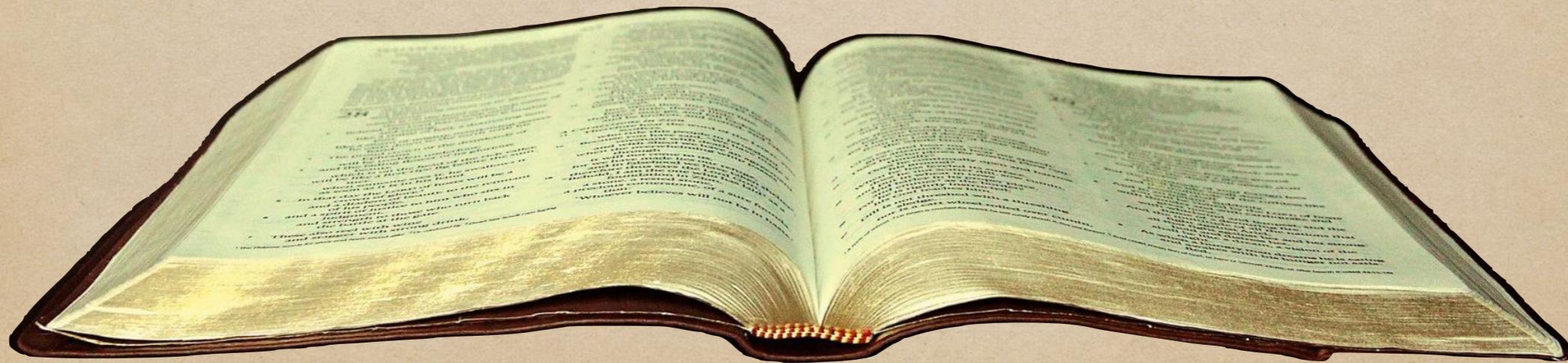


The Invasion of Legalism

Jan 11, 2026

Part 2

Galatians 5:10-12





- Our passage today puts us right in the middle of chapter five.
- Verses 10-12 can be seen as a **Parenthesis**, setting itself apart from the main flow of chapter five.

Galatians 5:10-12

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? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished.

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

- Paul deliberately pauses in his exhortation to the believers to insert these three verses.
- This pause is to address the disruptive influence of the Judaizers and legalists.
- By viewing Galatians five as a **Chiasm**, we can see these verses are intentionally isolated from the main flow of the passage.

-But first: what exactly is a Chiasm?

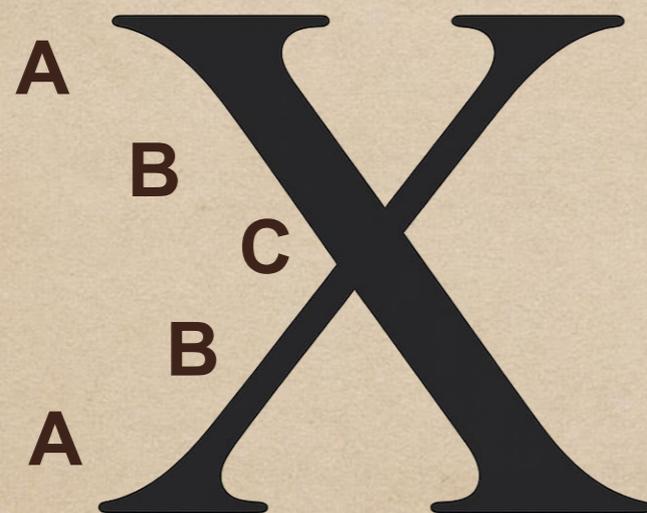


-A literary/rhetorical device where concepts or grammatical structures are presented in an initial order (A-B) and then repeated in reverse order (B-A), creating a mirrored, X-shaped pattern for emphasis or balance.

-WOW! We're going to need a definition that both Wayne and I can understand.

-A chiasm is when a sentence or story goes one way and then comes back the same way, matching the ideas in reverse.

-It is best visualized by the left-hand side of the Greek Letter Chi (X).



-We have Chiasms in Hebrew, Greek and even our English language.

-Chiasms are very prevalent and recognizable in Hebrew, but not so much in Greek.

-In Hebrew they are used extensively. Especially in the poetry sections of the writings and the prophets.

-Early Hebrew letters originated from pictographs put together with **no vowels** to make words. Here's an example from our Micah study:

Peace - Shalom

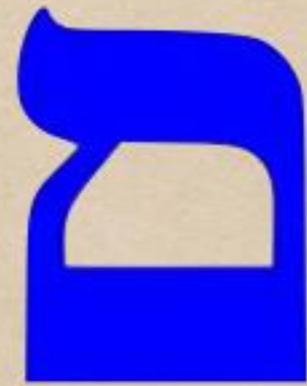


MEM

VAV

LAMED

SHIN



Flood - Tsunami

Nail - Hook

Shepherd's Staff

Teeth

Chaos & Confusion

Connected

Authority

Destroy

-To destroy the Authority connected with chaos and confusion, resulting in Peace-



-Understanding Hebrew, one not only relied on the meaning of the letters, without the vowels, but also the context, which included:

-Parallelisms - where a second line restates the first using different words. We see this all through the Psalms.

-Staircase or climatic progression - in which each line repeats part of the previous line and then adds something new.

-Chiasms – grouping ideas together to compliment each other.

-The Greek was such a precise language, these things were not necessary.

-The text relied on tenses, voices, and moods in the words themselves to convey meaning.

-The different methods used in Hebrew to convey the context was not needed in Greek.

-Although Paul wrote in Greek, being well versed in the Hebrew language he often used Chiasms in his epistles.

-Now that I have totally bored you, let's look at Galatians chapter five as a chiasm:



Chiastic Structure of Galatians 5

A. Freedom Declared (5:1)

It was for freedom that Christ set us free.

B. Law Produces Bondage (5:2–6)

If you receive circumcision; Christ will be of no benefit to you.

C. Walk Hindered (5:7–9)

You were running well; who hindered you.

PARENTHESIS: JUDAIZERS WARNED (5:10–12)

C. Walk Restored (5:13–18)

But through love serve one another.

B. Holy Spirit Produces the Fruit of the Spirit (5:19–23)

But I say, walk by the Spirit.

A. Freedom Practiced (5:24–26)

Flesh Crucified - Positional

Live by the Spirit. . . walk by the Spirit. - Conditional

X



-Considering this Chiasm, Paul's main objective in chapter five is to show that the Galatian's freedom is grounded in the Holy Spirit and not in a law-based living.

- Paul interrupts that objective to open the eyes of the believers to the logical ends of that false teaching.

-In verses 10-12 Paul turns from encouragement to warning, from shepherding the flock to warning about the wolves.

-These three verses can be divided into four sections:

I. Paul's Confidence in the Galatians (vs 10a)

II. Paul's Warning of Divine Judgment (vs 10b)

III. Paul's Defense Against Misrepresentation (vs 11)

IV. Paul's Severe Conclusion (vs 12)

I. Paul's Confidence in the Galatians (vs 10a)

-Before Paul turns their attention to the false teachers, he pauses to reassure the believers.

"I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view" (10a)

-Paul has not given up on these believers who have strayed away or have been “hindered from obeying the truth”.(vs 9)



“I have confidence in You”

-Confidence (πείθω - *peithō*) To persuade, convince, or trust.

-Paul is saying something closer to “I stand persuaded” or “I am firmly convinced” that you will adopt no other view.

-Paul qualifies this confidence: “I have confidence **“in the Lord”** concerning you”.

-The source of confidence is Christ’s ongoing work, not the Galatians performance.

-This can be seen in Paul’s address to the Philippians:

Phll 1:6 *For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*

-Is it possible that some believers will adopt another view?

–That answer is yes–

-So, what is meant by “**you will adopt no other view**”?

-This is not Lordship Salvation!



-One must compare scripture with scripture. Take the text out of its context and you're going to end up with a con-job.

-The phrase **“that you will adopt no other view”** must be understood considering what Paul has stated previously.

-Notice what Paul says throughout the book of Galatians:

1:6 **I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel....”**

3:3 **Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?**

4:9 **How is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?**

4:20 **I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I am perplexed about you. (*at a loss*)**

-Paul did not have confidence in the Galatians. He was perplexed about them.

-This sounds like a contradiction!



- The key to understanding this is found in the phrase, “in the Lord”.
- His confidence is knowing that they are ‘In Christ’. They have His righteousness, and the Holy Spirit’s indwelling them.
- Because of their standing “In Christ” Paul has confidence in their outcome.
- But **the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is.** (vs 10b)

II. Paul’s Warning of Divine Judgment (vs 10b)

- The false teacher is destined for the Judgment of God.
- If there is anything that God is severe on, it would be false teachers.
- False teachers are pronounced as accursed:

Gal 1:8,9 ⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! ⁹ As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

- Anyone, including apostles or angels, who proclaims a different gospel is placed under a divine curse.



-The issue here in Gal 1:8,9 is not minor error but gospel distortion; adding law-keeping to justification by faith.

-False teaching about justification is treated as spiritually lethal, not merely incorrect.

-For the unbeliever we are talking about eternal life. For the believer we are referencing the chastening of the Lord.

-The New Testament teaches that believers who teach unsound doctrine face a distinct and heightened form of divine judgment. Not condemnation, but a stricter evaluative judgment.

James 3:1 **Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.**

-Teachers, representing the Word of God to others, are held to a higher standard.

-James goes on to say our tongue is like the bit in a horse's mouth or the small rudder on a huge ship.

-If we are to teach, it is up to us to teach the Word of God accurately through the power of the Holy Spirit.



III. Paul's Defense Against Misrepresentation (vs 11)

But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished.

-According to the legalists and Judaizers Paul still preached circumcision. The Galatians just misunderstood what Paul was saying.

-After all Paul himself was circumcised and he had Timothy circumcised.

-verse 11 is a perfect example of Paul's use of sarcasm. It's not just irony but full-fledged sarcasm.

-Paul is saying, "If I am preaching circumcision (the Law) then why are they so set against me?". "Why are they running me down?." " Why are they maligning me if I am really in agreement with them?."

-He then says, "If this is so 'the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished'".

-And that is his whole point!

-The cross is a stumbling block. That's what people stumble over.



- It's hard for us to understand the concept of a free gift.
- People can't understand how God would just give us a relationship with Him without wanting anything in return.
- Don't I have to do something? Don't I have to earn it; gain God's approval?
- Don't I have to change my life or change my ways?
- Unfortunately, too many people teach that you must repent of your sins or change your life before you can be saved and that's just not true.
- The cross is a stumbling block because it is so simple.
- It is so simple that Christ paid it all and we don't have to do anything. We can't do anything and we can't add anything to it.
- Paul applies Isaiah's prophecy to Christ in Romans 9:32,33.

³² They stumbled over the stumbling stone, ³³ just as it is written, "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense,

-Because of the Mosaic Law, even considering the cross as free was unthinkable to the Jews.

1 Cor 1:23 But we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles, foolishness.



-As long as the cross stands alone it is an offense to the Jew but add anything to it and it suddenly becomes acceptable to them.

IV. Paul's Severe Conclusion (vs 12)

-This is where Paul's sarcasm really comes into play!

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

-It's been said that Galatians is a Mini-Romans. The difference?

-Paul wrote Romans to a group of believers that he had never met.

-He went into great detail to present the basic doctrine of Grace.

-Galatians was written to believers who had been taught this doctrine in person, and many were straying from it because of false teachers.

-Therefore, Paul spends much of Galatians warning those false teachers of judgment to come.

-Paul employs biting sarcasm here in verse 12, wishing that these false teachers would mutilate themselves.



-But what does “mutilate” actually mean?

-NASB - “mutilate”, NKJV - “cut themselves off”, NIV - “emasculate”, NRSV - “castrate themselves”

-mutilate (ἀποκόπτω - apokoptō) means simply to “cut off”.

-Applied literally, it means **physical** removal:

-In Mark 9:43 **If your hand causes you to sin “cut it off”.**

-Applied metaphorically, it means **relational** removal:

2 Cor 11:12 **I will also continue to do, that I may “cut off” the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity. . . NKJV**

-In Galatians it could refer to either mutilating that body part or separating those false teachers from the body of believers.

-The meaning must be determined by the context in Galatians.

-It could actually go either way.

1. To support removing the false teachers we have:

Gal 1:8 **“ . . .he is to be accursed.”**

Gal 4:30 **“Cast out the bondwoman and her son. . .”**



Gal 5:10 “but the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is.”

2. To support mutilating the body we have the direct context of circumcision.

-This emphasis is not that unusual considering there was a well-known cult that practiced these things:

-During the period in which Galatians was written (mid-first century AD), the most relevant cult known for ritual self-castration was the cult of Cybele, also called Magna Mater. This cult was native to Asia Minor and deeply embedded in the cultural world surrounding the Galatian churches.

-Cybele was viewed as a mother/fertility deity, associated with nature, renewal, and euphoric religious experiences.

-Worship emphasized physical acts as means of spiritual devotion.

-To the Galatians “cutting” language evoked the Cybele cult. The idea of religious mutilation for spirituality was not hypothetical but locally observable.

-One can see why Paul would make such a sarcastic statement.



-The context can support either of these views.

-The view of mutilating oneself may be the better interpretation because of the prevalence of circumcision in Galatians, but one must decide for themselves which is right.

-Both views support separation from the false teachers.

-What conclusions can be taken away from Galatians 5:1-12:

1. Stand firm in the freedom we have "In Christ". (5:1)

2. Keeping the Law destroys God's grace. (5:2-4)

3. The spiritual life operates by faith, not performance. (5:5,6)

4. False teaching destroys spiritual progress. (5:7-9)

5. Paul distinguishes the believers from false teachers. (5:10)

6. The cross remains offensive to those relying on human merit. (5:11)

7. There is judgment for false teachers, whether saved or unsaved. (5:12)

**Therefore, keep standing firm and do not be subject again
to a yoke of slavery.**



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