

Verse 5:1: 'Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free,'

He has made us free; it is an already accomplished fact. Our freedom is the consequence of our liberty. 'Stand fast therefore in the **liberty by which** Christ has made us free,'

Stand fast therefore... wherefore?... because of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ through which we, who believe, have been delivered from the judgment of our sin, from the penalty of our sin and we've been delivered from the law itself. Just as sin no longer has an enslaving hold on us, (we've been set free) so, too, the Law has no hold on us; in fact, over we Gentiles, the Law never had any hold whatsoever and, yet, so many Gentiles, and Jews, seek to take themselves under the suffocating bondage of the Law.

What did Jesus say? "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. ³⁵ And a slave does not abide in the house forever, **but a son abides forever.** ³⁶ Therefore if the Son makes **you free, you shall be free indeed.**' John 8:35 Remember, Paul said, we are adopted 'Sons of God' and fellow-heirs with Christ. We shall abide in the house, God's house, forever.

Our liberty and freedom are twofold: **we have been set free from** the bondage of sin and law and **we have been set free to** something: we've been set free into the freedom and glorious liberty of the children of God: '... creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption **into the glorious liberty of the children of God.**' Rom 8:18 Imagine a lovely meadow, freedom, in which stands a large iron cage. The unsaved man is in the cage which is his sin; he's a prisoner. When he believes the Gospel, the cage door is flung open; he is free. Sometimes, the free Christian can't handle such liberty so, for security, or because he is sinning, he willingly goes back into another cage which is the Law but the Law simply magnifies his sin as he tries to keep it.

Paul tells us to stand fast! Where else has he told us to stand? Remember when we studied Eph. 6: surrounding our armor of God, we are to stand firm: 'Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to **stand** against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to **stand.**' Remember, God will never tell us to do something but fail to give us the strength and ability to do it.

Verse 1b: 'and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.'

Where else have we heard something related to this? 'Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily entangles *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,' Heb 12:1

Being entangled in the bondage of legalism is just as serious as being entangled in the bondage of sin; in fact, legalism, seeking to be justified by our works is, in fact, sin. If God commands us to believe in His Son, to trust in the finished work of His Son, then failing to do so is outright rebellion; trusting in our own righteousness is rebellion against God and His true Salvation.

Jews in Judaism, Mormons in Mormonism, Catholics in Catholicism, Christians in '*I'm-good-enoughism*,' are all in rebellion against the only true God and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Any time we believe that our works and actions or our refusal to sin, in any way causes us to be more acceptable to God, that we gain favor with God through our works, then we are setting aside the person and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ; we are seeking to raise our own actions above His; we are discounting His finished work. That is the definition of, to despise, to think of or to treat someone, or something, as nothing. God said, 'But now the LORD says: 'Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed. 1 Sam 2: 30

The only one who is in right relationship and submission to God are those who understand that, '***In myself and in my works, I am deserving of only Hell; my only hope and security are in the finished work, the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and in His everlasting love for me.***'

It's always easy for us to become entangled in sin or self-righteousness.

Our real freedom and liberty is found only in our Sabbath rest, the Lord Jesus Christ: 'For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest... although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.... There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. ¹⁰ For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God *did* from His... Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest...' Heb 4

In the beginning, when God created the Heavens and the Earth, He rested on the 7th day. The Law, to Israel, commanded that the people rest on the 7th day, the Sabbath. Just as is the case with all the Law and Prophets, the command to rest on the Sabbath pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ and His rest into which every child of God is brought; it is an everlasting rest, an eternal Sabbath. The picture portrayed is of His finished work, from which He rested and now sits at the right hand of the Father, and our having ceased from our work as we sit with Him in Heavenly places; no longer can we imagine that our works are somehow combined with those of Jesus Christ. Our only work is to **believe on the Lord Jesus Christ**. Every other work, resulting in our eternal salvation, was accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ into Whose rest we now and forever are.

Our body, soul and spirit, our complete selves can rest in Him; our conscience is free and quiet because it no longer has to fear the wrath of God. This is our true liberty; God will never be angry with us; we will never be brought into His judgment; we will live eternally in His love, His grace, His mercy and His everlasting glory; we will share in all things over which the Lord Jesus Christ rules and reigns as we rule and reign with Him forever.

We are free from every law, from sin and death, from Satan's power, from Hell and from the Lake of Fire. We do, now and forever, live in the freedom and liberty of the children of God.

We are free! 'If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.'

Verse 2: 'Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.'

Most of we men, here, were circumcised as babies. That is not what Paul is referring to. These Gentiles, in the Roman Empire, had probably, all, never been circumcised as babies; back then, mostly only Jews were circumcised and that, in obedience to God's command to Abraham, which had been given as the sign of God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants. It was not commanded as a sign or avenue to righteousness in God's sight but rather, as the sign of membership in God's chosen people. That is, in fact, what made the teaching of the Judiazers so wrong. The Galatian Gentiles were being deceived into thinking that the sign of the Covenant, given to Abraham, was an avenue to righteousness and God's favor, something which was never taught by Paul or any other writer of Scripture.

Paul is saying, if you believe the false teachers, that your righteousness depends upon your works, whether it be circumcision or any works of the Law, then what Jesus Christ did on the Cross will not profit you, His work and righteousness will not be accounted to you, you will be accountable to God for all the Law and all your sin.

Now, of course, if someone did follow the false teachers and later came to his senses, certainly he could repent and trust wholly in Jesus Christ. They were and we are still, in this time of the Church, the time of God's grace and mercy poured out. The problem is that once someone goes to such an extent, being circumcised, his heart has been hardened through his rejection of the Holy Spirit's calling and drawing.

Remember, the people whom Paul is urging are like the group #2 to whom the writer of Hebrews wrote; they are believing but not born again yet; those in Hebrews were fearful of persecution from other Jews and Gentiles. These Galatians were fearful of the persons and teaching of the Judiazers... very similar.

Verse 3: And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.

If a person believes that any part of the Law is efficacious in satisfying God's wrath toward their sin, then he is liable to keep all the Law, every part, which no one could ever do except the Lord Jesus Christ. And, if one is then liable for keeping all the Law, he is also liable for all the curse of the Law.

Verse 4: 'You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt to* be justified by law; *you have fallen from grace.*'

God's grace, during this time of the Church, is being poured out on every person but not every person responds in faith and repentance. We saw that God grants repentance but not to everyone. Some have been

created as vessels of honor while others have been created as vessels of dishonor, fitted for destruction. God softens some while He hardens others. Not everyone filling pews are true believers; many are those who will be very surprised when Jesus Christ says to them, 'Depart from Me, I never knew you.'

'For the grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared to all men,' Titus 2:11

'In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;' 2 Tim 2:25

'But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor.' 2 Tim 2:20

'For he says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy. ¹⁷ For the scripture says unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. ¹⁸ Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens.... What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: ²³ And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,' Rom 9

'Not every one that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' Matt 7:21

John wrote: 'Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.' 1 John 2:18

These are the ones to whom Paul is writing, here: those who are inside Church, with the Church but not really of the Church. When they become so hardened that they no longer look to Jesus Christ for their forgiveness and freedom, believing that their own good works are sufficient unto their own forgiveness and salvation, they have removed themselves from God's Grace: they have fallen away from God's Grace.

It's important that we understand what God's Word really says regarding the sureness of our Election and of our Eternal Salvation, the fact that God did, in fact, choose and elect every one of His Children from the foundation of the World and that we are eternally secure in Him both now and forever.

There are a handful of verses which might seem to deny these facts but the preponderance of God's Word proves them beyond any doubt so it is important that we understand what those few verses are really saying.

Verse 5: 'For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.'

God's Holy Spirit assures our spirits of the truth of His Word so that we are able to patiently wait, in faith, for the hope of righteousness. What is the 'hope of righteousness?' Or, rather, Who is the hope of righteousness?

'For the grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared to all men, ¹² Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; ¹³ Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ;' Tit 2:11

'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. ³ And every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure.' 1 John 3:2

The Lord Jesus Christ and His appearing is our Blessed Hope and He is also the One Who is our Righteousness.

One of the Bible's Names for God is: **Jehovah Tsidkenu:** The Lord our Righteousness.

Obviously we are not, through the Spirit, *waiting* for hope; hope is ours, now, through the Spirit. We are waiting for the object of our hope to suddenly appear; knowing that He will appear at any instant is what gives

us the hope to continue on, even when the World and our Nation are falling apart.

Verse 6: 'For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.'

Being circumcised is useless in gaining favor with God; being uncircumcised is useless in gaining favor with God. Neither doing a work nor refraining from a work is efficacious in our salvation or our standing with God.

'For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

⁴ Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. ⁵ But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,' Rom 4:3

From the Garden to the time of Abel and onward, only faith in God and His Word have resulted in the righteousness of anyone. The only works to which God ever said, 'It is good,' were His own.

Verse 7: 'You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?'

Paul says, 'You were doing so well while I was with you; you received God's Word with eagerness. By faith you heard and obeyed His command to believe. But then, after I left, these wicked Judiazers came with their false righteousness of works and you have gone after them. No one stood in your way; no one forced you to believe their false teaching; why did you do it?'

Verse 8: ' This persuasion does not *come* from Him who calls you.'

It certainly was not God Who persuaded you to follow their deception. His Holy Spirit is the One Who leads you into truth. Jesus said, ' if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. ⁸ And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ of sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰ of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. ¹² "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. ¹³ However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; Satan, the father of lies, through these lying Judiazers is the one ultimately deceiving you.'

Verse 9: 'A little leaven leavens the whole lump.'

The Judiazers, falsely claiming to have come from James and the Jerusalem Church, probably came in quietly, being led, by Satan, to the first Galatian who could be picked off and deceived. That one then began to talk to his friends. Then, as the Judiazers began to be louder and more forceful, many became convinced that these were the ones who brought the real truth; 'Paul must have been mistaken. After all, he was just a scrawny little guy with those ugly oozing eyes while these others, why, they are so handsome and tall and commanding of respect. We don't want to miss out, to be left out; we want to go along with the crowd, don't we?'

A little bit of lies and deception spreads to the whole congregation. Remember, this letter is written to all the Galatians, not just a few.

Verse 10: 'I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.'

Paul is able to trust God with the souls of all those in Galatia; some of them, being deceived, will come to their senses upon hearing Paul's message of warning about the lies of the Judiazers while others, who were never really born again, will continue to turn away from the simple truth of the Gospel which they had learned from Paul when he first brought the Gospel to Galatia. But, eventually, the Judiazers will stand before God in judgment and condemnation.

Just like in Galatia, every church today is populated with three kinds of 'christians,' the same three to which the writer to the Hebrews also wrote: First, genuine believers; second, those who on the fence but not yet born again and finally, those who are just here for the coffee and donuts or to appear acceptable to others. Only God knows the heart of every person. The first time of dividing comes at each person's death; the next time of dividing will be at the Rapture and the last time of dividing will be at the Final Judgment.

The responsibility for every person's decision rests with God and with each person themselves... only.

You and I are only responsible for the salvation of our own selves.