

*Back in the Race—with Grace*  
**Galatians 5:1–12 (Galatians at a Gallup)**

Grace Chapel  
**INTRODUCTION**

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October 22, 2006

**REVIEW (Galatians 1:1–5:6)**

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). Gbels should live as ones Christ liberated, not as Law-slaves who submit to [religious] circumcision that have become alienated from Christ [because] they fell from grace [to legalism] because they no longer eagerly await righteousness [in Christ's presence], so circumcision has no relation to accomplishes [rewardable righteousness], but faith working through love [accomplishes it] (5:1–6)

## EXPOSITION

### 5:7 The Galatians started the Christian race well, but someone hindered them to no longer be truth-persuaded

The Galatian readers are believers: Otherwise, Paul could not say that they have run well

Who hindered you? The question is rhetorical; Paul does not ask for his name.

The idea of the rhetorical question is something like: *You let someone hinder you*

English Bibles *sometimes* translate *peithō* as *obey* (as they do in Galatians 5:7). However, its primary meaning (*persuade*) is correct here. Please observe that the last Greek of verse 7 refers to *being persuaded* and the first words of verse 8 refer to *persuasion*. The translators have focused on merely translating words in verse 7, rather than upon seeing that verse 8 carries on the same idea that verse 7 introduces.

*Hindered* is *ekopsen* (literal meaning: *to cut in, to make an incision*). We say, “He cut me off by *cutting in* to my lane.” A runner cutting in can cause another runner to stumble in a race.

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The superscripted numbers (in the literal translation below) tell the Greek word order. I adjusted the word order slightly for verse 7 to make better English. Other than the substitution of *obey* for *persuade* in verse 7, English versions have translated these verses well.

<i>Who</i>	hindered	you	not	by-the truth	<b>to be persuaded?</b>	(5:7)
<i>Tis</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>ekopsen</i> <sup>3</sup>	<i>humas</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>mē</i> <sup>6</sup>	<i>tē</i> <sup>4</sup> <i>alētheia</i> <sup>5</sup>	<u><i>peithesthai</i></u> <sup>7</sup> ?	
<b>The persuasion</b>	[is]	not	from	the one-calling	you	(5:8)
<i>Hē</i> <sup>1</sup>	<u><i>peismonē</i></u> <sup>2</sup>	<i>ouk</i> <sup>3</sup>	<i>ek</i> <sup>4</sup>	<i>tou</i> <sup>5</sup> <i>kalountos</i> <sup>6</sup>	<i>humas</i> <sup>7</sup>	
I	<b>am-persuaded</b>	toward	you	in	[the] Lord	(5:10)
<i>Egō</i> <sup>1</sup>	<u><i>pepoitha</i></u> <sup>2</sup>	<i>eis</i> <sup>3</sup>	<i>humas</i> <sup>4</sup>	<i>en</i> <sup>5</sup>	<i>Kuriō</i> <sup>6</sup>	

### 5:8 The persuasion [away from truth] does not come from the Lord who calls them

**5:9 [In light of the persuasion away from truth not coming from God] a seemingly small departure [from grace] distorts their view of grace: a little leaven affects the whole loaf**

A little leaven leavens the whole loaf into pseudo-grace (Passover imagery)

**5:10 Paul is persuaded that the Galatians will agree with him [on grace], but that the ringleader, no matter his identity, will face discipline**

Paul is persuaded that the Galatians will agree with him [on grace]

Paul is persuaded that the ringleader will face discipline

Paul does not specify whether the ringleader is a believer or whether he is an unbeliever

However, believers are more likely to introduce what seems innocent, a little leaven

Unbelievers are less likely to nuance the message carefully (*seemingly* fitting w/ Christ)

Therefore, the wording of my outline point favors the idea that this is a believer

*Whoever he might be*

Many interpret this phrase to mean that Paul did not know the ringleader's identity

Rather, Paul does not care how prestigious the man is: Discipline is coming.

Acts 14:23 has already occurred, so it is not impossible that a ringleader might be someone that Paul had ordained as an elder.

**5:11 (1) Persecution of Paul by legalists and (2) offensiveness of the cross prove that Paul no longer preaches circumcision [of Gentiles, which he preached as an unbeliever]**

Unproven allegations that Paul was guilty of inconsistent teaching

Paul's message about the crucified and resurrected Christ causes offense, so the legalists' argument does not make sense

In addition: Peter accepted Paul's rebuke & the apostles extended the right hand of fellowship. Thus, the charges that Paul taught inconsistently do not make sense

**5:12 The troublemakers should (figuratively speaking) have themselves neutered spiritually (impotent to produce converts)**

We understand Galatians 3:11 and 19 as figurative language: Human reproduction language is used to refer to spiritual truths, receiving everlasting life (v 11); rediscovering grace (v 19)

Likewise, self-mutilation by legalists would not accomplish Paul's great hope: He does not want legalists to multiply like rabbits by stealing away the Galatian believers (5:12)

**5:13 [Based on Paul's optimism that the Galatians will return to grace (tho leavened by a seemingly minor shift from grace) & that the untruthful troublemakers (who need spiritual neutering) will be disciplined (5:7-12)] Paul reminds them that God called them to liberty: not liberty to indulge the sin nature, but liberty to serve (thru love) as slaves each other**

They are not liberated to gratify the flesh

They are liberated to serve as slaves (*douleuō*) each other through love  
*doulos* = slave

**5:14 The proof that God called them to liberty to (thru love) be slaves to each other is that] loving neighbors to the degree as each loves himself fulfills what the Law required**

These Gentiles are not under Law, but loving their neighbor to the degree that they love themselves fulfills the (former) legal requirement that the Law imposed on Israel

**5:15 [By contrast with fulfilling what the Law required: loving neighbors as self] destruction of neighbors leads to destruction of self**