A quill pen is positioned in the upper left, resting in a clear glass inkwell. The background is a dark, textured wooden surface. A scroll of parchment is unrolled across the middle, with the text 'Coming to grips with a very misconstrued book' written on it in a cursive script. The parchment has a yellowish, aged appearance with some staining and frayed edges.

Galatians Unveiled

Coming to grips with a very
misconstrued book

A YRM PUBLICATION



Without a doubt the most misinterpreted book in all of the Bible is Shaul's (Paul's) letter to the Galatians. It has been hailed as the Magna Carta of Christian freedom, with "freedom" meaning freedom from Biblical law.

Through the centuries Protestants have erroneously assumed that this book eradicated all Old Testament laws, even though Paul contradicts that notion in the book itself and in other books he wrote to other assemblies. To understand this letter correctly it is paramount that we know the reason that Paul was writing to these people of central Turkey known as the Galatians.

When we read New Testament letters like Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians, and Galatians, we are reading personal mail. There was a reason Paul wrote each of these letters and it was primarily to resolve problems endemic to the respective groups.

Why Not Tell the Other Assemblies Also?

A key question that must be asked before we delve into the book is: if Paul were in the process of abolishing all Old Testament law in his epistle to the Galatians, why did he not inform the other assemblies of this monumental, history-making disclosure? Why in his other letters like Hebrews and Romans does he contradict the notion that the law is obsolete?

In passages like Romans 3:31 he gives 100 percent support for the law: "Do we then make void the law through faith? Elohim forbid: yea, we establish the law." He writes in Hebrews 8 that the law is to be in our hearts. And in Acts 24:14 he offers this plain and clear position statement: "But this I confess unto you, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the Elohim of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets."

Some of his statements had been mistaken by Jews in his day and thought to be heretical, yet he assured them (and us) that he was not against the law or prophets (Old Testament). On the contrary, he was a lawkeeper himself. In Acts 25:7-8 he stood before those falsely accusing him, "And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove. While

he answered for himself, ‘Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all.’”

In Acts 21:24 Paul was told to prove to the doubting Jews that he was still law observant by taking part in purification rites: “Them take, and purify yourself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning you, are nothing; but that you yourself also walk orderly, and keep the law.”

Truth Comes with Obedience

Some may ask, how can we presume to know the truth of Galatians if clerics have been debating the book for centuries? One advantage the True Worshiper has is that he comes properly prepared. Psalm 111:10 says, “The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments.” Those who are obedient to His laws will have a proper understanding of Yahweh’s Word, while the reverse is also true: those who snub His commandments will be misled when it comes to His truths.

Paradoxically, those who argue against obedience are arguing against proper understanding itself and therefore are working at cross purposes to truth, according to Psalm 111:10. His Spirit teaches us of His ways, Ezekiel 36:26-27. If you truly desire to know truth you need His Spirit, and that means obedience to the law because the Spirit is given specifically to those who obey, Acts 5:32. If you want to understand the Scriptures correctly, seek out a teacher who obeys the commandments and you will be much more likely to hear the truth. The requirement of a true prophet is to teach Yahweh’s commandments, according to Deuteronomy 13. Proper teaching does not reject the law either; on the contrary, the law is central to right instruction.

Five Problematic Areas in the Epistle

Let’s focus on the controversial passages in the Book of Galatians. There are five areas in Galatians that are usually used in an effort say that the law is no longer necessary under the New Covenant.

Notice first in 1:11-12 that Paul authenticates his own teachings by explaining that they were given not by man but by Yahshua Himself. Some reject his writings as uninspired, but here the apostle himself verifies their authenticity, which is something you don't find in other books of the Bible — self-certification! To believe it was necessary to authenticate His letter Paul must have anticipated some misconceptions about what he was teaching.

We come to the first area of contention in chapter 2.

Galatians 2:16: “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Yahshua the Messiah, even we have believed in Yahshua the Messiah, that we might be justified by the faith of Messiah, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” This verse seems to contradict what Paul says about justification and the law in Romans 2:13: “For not the hearers of the law are just before Elohim, but the doers of the law shall be justified.” Is Paul confused or is the translation vague?

An understanding of the Greek clears up the mystery and sets forth a remarkable truth that corrects mainstream doctrine. An understanding of the Greek helps: “A man is not justified by (Greek *ek* — out of) works of law but [ean me, except] through faith in Messiah.” The Greek ***Emphatic Diaglott*** literally reads, “And knowing that a man is not justified by works of law, except on account of Faith of Messiah Yahshua.”

This verse goes to the whole issue of whether one can be justified by works. Paul says it can't be done outside the context of faith in Yahshua. As important as works are to salvation, they must go hand-in-hand with faith. Far from negating works, Paul confirms them. It is our works that will determine our judgment and rewards, Revelation 22:12.

2:17-18: “But if, while we seek to be justified by Messiah, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Messiah the minister of sin? Elohim forbid. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.” Once we commit our lives to Yahweh we must not return to sin. But if we do sin it is not Yahshua advocating

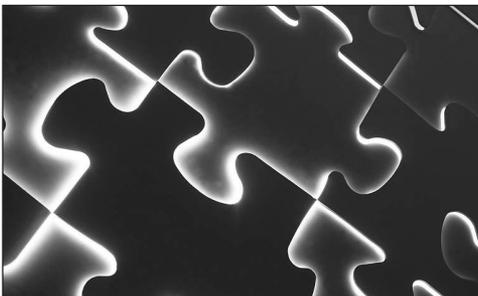
it, Paul says. Note that in Paul’s discussion sin is still possible. In 1John 3:4 sin is defined as the transgression of the law — so the law is obviously still in effect. Romans 7:7 says we would not know sin except by the law.

Verse 19: “For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto Elohim.” By being law-observant, we are dead to the law, meaning free from the law’s penalties through obedience. Paul is simply saying that if I am a law-abiding citizen I have no fear of going to jail for such violations as stealing or killing. Being law abiding I don’t fall under that punishment. Note that this condition of being “dead to the law” comes “through the law” itself and not from an abolished law.

Verse 20: “I am impaled with Messiah: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Messiah lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of Elohim, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Yahshua living in us brings about true righteousness of character and conduct as we put to death our old ways of sinful lawlessness.

This is not a vicarious “righteousness of Messiah” imputed to us. The traditional, mainstream claim is that Yahshua kept the law for you because you can’t keep it yourself. That notion contradicts the many Scriptures in the New Testament that command us to obey the laws of Yahweh. The Dake Annotated Reference Bible (KJV) lists some 1,050 commands and laws operating in the New Testament. Yahshua died for us but He doesn’t live for us, He lives in us. With Him in us, we can obey.

Chapter 3’s Puzzling Passages



Galatians 3:10 says, “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” This is an indictment of the

Jews of Paul’s day who were keeping the law solely for justification purposes, including sacrifices and circumcision. Following a lot of do’s and don’ts cannot lead to justification apart from Yahshua. The law by itself cannot justify you. Without faith in Yahshua seeking justification by law alone is futile (v. 11).

12: “And the law is not of faith: but, the man that does them shall live in them.” *The Twentieth Century New Testament* (TCNT) translates the passage: “But the Law is not based on faith; no, its words are—‘Those who practice these precepts will find Life through them.’”

13-14: “Messiah has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Yahshua the Messiah; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” The TCNT renders it clearer than the King James, “[Messiah] ransomed us from the curse pronounced in the law...” Yahshua paid the death penalty that the law imposes for disobedience (“the curse”), and He opened the way through the New Covenant for gentiles to have the covenant blessings as well.

15: “Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man’s covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannuls, or adds thereto.” Paul explains that once even a human covenant is made, you can’t add to it or take from it. You can’t pile on more requirements beyond what you agreed to. This is what the Jews were trying to do in Galatia with their added, man-made ritual law.

16-18: “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He says not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to your seed, which is Messiah. And this I say, that the covenant, that was



confirmed before of Yahweh in Messiah, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but Elohim gave it to Abraham by promise.” Yahweh made a covenant with Abraham that involved Abraham’s seed, referring to Yahshua. And that covenant did not originate from the law but by special promise.

19: “Wherefore then serves the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.” The traditional view says that the law that was added was the whole package of Old Testament laws, including the Ten Commandments. Yahshua came to end those laws, many believe, except perhaps those repeated in the New Testament.

The word “added” here does not mean to add a new arrangement as it does in verse 15 (Greek word *epidiatassomai*). “Added” in verse 19 (*prosthemi*) means to put alongside or join with. Why is this significant?

In verse 29 Paul says that the covenant made with Abraham was a promise that did not hinge on the law, or else it would be by works — something Abraham could possibly achieve on his own. Abraham was already law-observant, and that is one reason Yahweh chose to make a covenant with him, Genesis 26:5. Now when Yahweh extended the covenant to Israel the law was placed alongside the covenant as central to the covenant’s conditions (Deut. 4:31).

Israel was not obedient as Abraham and therefore they needed the details of the law included in their covenant with Yahweh. The law served as a guide for them to ensure that they knew what transgression was and what Yahweh expected.

3:21-25: “Is the law then against the promises of Yahweh? Yahweh forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Yahshua the Messiah might be given to them that believe. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Messiah, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under

a schoolmaster.”

The Old Covenant is superseded today by the New Covenant, Hebrews 9, but that does not mean the laws are replaced also. The law is not the covenant; the law represents only the terms of the covenant. The terms of the New Covenant still involve obedience to the law, with the law written in our hearts and minds just as it was supposed to be with Israel, Hebrews 8:10; Deuteronomy 6:6; 30:11-14. The trouble was, Israel’s hearts were hard and they resisted obedience as some do today.

“Schoolmaster” in Greek is *paidagogos* and refers to a trustworthy slave who had charge of the boys in a family, guiding them in their



formative years into making right choices. Once the youths matured they would make their own decisions guided by what they had been taught in childhood and therefore no

longer needed a schoolmaster constantly prodding them. The law is our guide in the same way. Once mature in Messiah we no longer need the constant reminding of the law, having already learned what constitutes obedience to Yahweh through His laws.

The prophet Ezekiel foretold a time when the stony heart would be taken from people and a soft heart would replace it so that “they may walk in My statutes and keep my ordinances, and do them,” 11:19-20.

Putting the law in a soft, pliable heart results in an obedient believer. Many today have stony, rebellious hearts, refusing to acknowledge that the law is still in effect in the New Testament. They don’t accept that the law is the standard that measures their behavior today and that will judge them tomorrow.

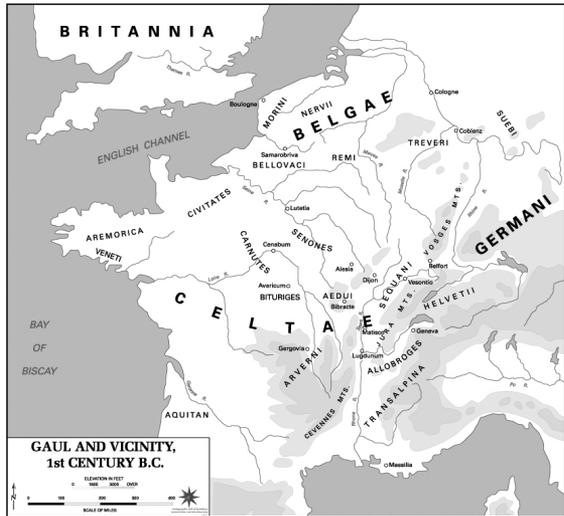
After confirming the necessity of the law coupled with faith, Paul zeroes in on a new aspect of the Galatian problem.

Backsliding into Paganism

In Galatians chapter 4 Paul addresses another issue problematic with the people themselves. The name Galatia comes from the people who lived there, formerly Gauls who migrated from northwest Europe. The people who made up the various tribes were called Galli by the Romans and Galatai or Keltoi by the Greeks, terms meaning barbarian. It is from the Greek *Keltoi* that Celt is derived.

The *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* says under “Origin of the Name ‘Galatia,’” : “The name was introduced into Asia after 278-277 BC, when a large body of migrating Gauls (*Galatai* in Greek) crossed over from Europe at the invitation of Nikomedes, king of Bithynia... The Galatai soon adopted the country religion, alongside of their own; the latter they retained at least as late as the 2nd century after [Messiah], but it was politically important for them to maintain and exercise the powers of the old priesthood...” “Galatia,” p. 1154.

The Gauls, who came from France and Belgium, were of the Celtic religion. Their high priests were the Druids. These were Babylonian pagans in every sense, who contributed heavily to the modern holiday of Christmas with its fertility rites and tree worship, as well as Halloween and other heathen observances that are so much a part of our culture today.



4:3: “Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.” “Children” equates to those ignorant of Yahweh. Paul is dealing with a people here who had come out of a past steeped in spiritual blindness and falsity.

He portrays these Galatians by reminding them in verse 8 that

they previously did not know Yahweh and in ignorance they had served idols. Then in verse 9 he asks, “But now, after that you have known Elohim, or rather are known of Elohim, how turn you again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto you desire again to be in bondage?” They had a problem with slipping back to their old idolatry.

In verses 10-11 he says, “You observe days, and months and times and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.” Many think Paul was reproofing them for keeping the Biblical Feasts here. But the context proves that they were actually leaving the Biblical worship they had recently been taught and going back to their former, pagan worship. The only thing these former pagans could possibly go back to was their old false gods. They were certainly not “turning again” to Biblical Feasts that they never knew before.

The Book of Galatians is instruction not just to the people of Galatia, but a warning against the pagan rites that are alive and well today. It deals with two problems: the people’s desire to return to their pagan past as well as the influence of certain Jews who were trying to get the new converts to convert to Judaism before they could enter the faith of Yahshua. This latter issue is addressed again in chapter 5.

In 5:1-6 the concern was physical circumcision as practiced by the traditional Jews: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Messiah has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if you be circumcised, Messiah shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Messiah is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; you are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Yahshua Messiah neither circumcision avails any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love.”

Here again we see how the issue of works alone as symbolized by physical circumcision contrasts with faith in Yahshua and how faith puts life and meaning into works. Without Yahshua one is obligated to do all the law, including the whole system of animal sacrifices, which Yahshua replaced by the death sacrifice of Himself.

Paul: Champion of Lawkeeping

Popular teaching sees Paul as the titleholder in bringing a new, lawless religion to the New Testament. As we have seen, the Book of Galatians has been mistaught and grossly distorted to make it appear that Paul was anti-law. Paul explicitly said he did not do away with the law but taught it and followed it, Acts 28:23. Yet, people still don't believe him.

Paul was first of all a Jew, a Pharisee, and if there was anyone who upheld to the law standard as no other, he was the one. This is a man who adhered to the law so much that he:

- circumcised Timothy in Acts 16:3;
- went regularly to the synagogue on the Sabbath where the law was being taught, Acts 17:2;
- said in verse 21 that he must by all means keep the Feast of Tabernacles, an Old Testament law;
- rushed to Jerusalem in Acts 20:16 to observe the Feast of Weeks, another Old Testament law;
- said plainly in Acts 21:24 that he kept the law, and he proved it by purifying himself with the Jews at the Temple.

This is the same man who told the Roman governor Festus that he “had done nothing against the Torah to which the Jews hold, nor against the temple, Acts 25:8.

Yes, the very one who in Acts 28:17 said he had done nothing against the customs of his fathers, and in verse 23 proceeded to teach the law of Moses from morning to evening.

Paul upheld the law because he believed that the “commandment is holy, just, and good,” and said so in Romans 7:12 — maintaining in verse 1 that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives.

How can anyone say that this Apostle was out to destroy the law? We find contradiction after contradiction to that false belief all through Paul's letters. We find instead one of the most powerful orators and most influential of Apostles upholding the law in every book he wrote, including the Book of Galatians.

Harmless fun? Think again...

Woe unto them that call evil good, and
and good evil; that put darkness
for light, and light for darkness;
that put bitter for sweet, and
sweet for bitter! *Isaiah 5:20*



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