

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 262 – September 19th – Galatians 5:2-12

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Galatians

Barrett, CK	<i>Freedom and Obligation</i> , SPCK, London 1985
Longenecker, Richard N	<i>Galatians</i> , Word Biblical Commentary Vol 41, Word Books, Dallas, 1990
Machen, J Gresham	<i>Notes on Galatians</i> , Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Philadelphia, 1973
Ramsay, WM	<i>Historical Commentary on the Galatians</i> , Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1899
Ridderbos, Herman N	<i>The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatians</i> , The New International Commentary on the New Testament, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1953

Verse 2

Ἴδε ἐγὼ Παῦλος λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐὰν περιτέμνησθε Χριστὸς ὑμᾶς οὐδὲν ὠφελήσει.

"ἴδε is properly the imperative of εἶδον ('see,' 'look,' 'perceive') and could easily be considered identical to ἰδου ('behold,' 'look'), but it came to function in rather a stereotyped fashion as an opening particle meaning something like 'you see' or 'mark my words' (cf. the use of ἴδετε in 6:11)." Longenecker

ἐὰν Conjunction ἐὰν if, even if, though

Implies that the Galatians were considering circumcision but had not yet been circumcised.

περιτέμνησθε Verb, pres pass subj, 2 pl

περιτεμνω circumcise

οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing;

οὐδεν not at all

ὠφελεω gain, profit, achieve, benefit

"For Gentiles to revert to the prescriptions of the Jewish law as a necessary form of Christian lifestyle is, in effect, to make Christianity legalistic rather than Christocentric, and so not to have Christ's guidance in one's life." Longenecker

Verse 3

μαρτύρομαι δὲ πάλιν παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ περιτεμνομένῳ ὅτι ὀφειλέτης ἐστὶν ὅλον τὸν νόμον ποιῆσαι.

πάλιν again, once more

Could be a reference back to things he taught when he was with them, though Longenecker thinks "here πάλιν probably has generally in mind what has just been said in v 2 and so calls attention to v 3 as a reinforcement of what was said there, much as πάλιν of 1:9 sets up a parallel between what is said in 1:8 and what is said in 1:9, with the latter reinforcing the former. For as Bruce points out: 'When he was with them there was probably no occasion to mention circumcision. The occasion to mention it had only recently arisen.'"

ὀφειλετης, ου m debtor, one indebted
ὅλος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire

Cf. Jas 2:10.

Verse 4

κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε, τῆς χάριτος ἐξεπέσατε.

κατηργήθητε Verb, aor pass indic, 2 pl

καταργεω render ineffective, cancel;

pass be cut off from, be released from

οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις

ἐν νόμῳ is either locative ('in the sphere of the law') or instrumental ('by law').

δικαιοω acquit, justify

The οἵτινες introduces an indefinite element – "any of you who would (seek to be) justified by means of the law ..."

ἐξεπέσατε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl ἐκπιτω
fall off, fall away, lose, fail

"The Judaisers must have assured the Galatians that in accepting supervision for their lives from the prescriptions of the Mosaic law they were not forsaking Christ or renouncing grace, but rather were completing their commitment to both. Paul, however, tells them just the opposite: commitment to Christ and commitment to legal prescriptions for righteousness, whether that righteousness is understood in forensic terms (i.e. 'justification') or ethical terms (i.e. 'lifestyle' and expression) are mutually exclusive; experientially, the one destroys the other." Longenecker

Verse 5

ἡμεῖς γὰρ πνεύματι ἐκ πίστεως ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης ἀπεκδεχόμεθα.

'For we by the Spirit through faith eagerly await the righteousness for which we hope.'

ἐλπίς, ἰδος f hope, ground of hope, what is hoped for
δικαιοσύνη, ης f righteousness, what is right, what God requires, justice
ἀπεκδεχομαι look for, wait for

Verse 6

ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ οὔτε περιτομή τι ἰσχύει οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη.

οὔτε not, nor (οὔτε ... οὔτε neither ... nor)
περιτομή, ης f circumcision, those circumcised, Jews
ἰσχυω be strong, be able, be sufficient

Here in the sense of being able to accomplish something

οὔτε not, nor (οὔτε ... οὔτε neither ... nor)
ἀκροβυστία, ας f uncircumcision, non-Jews

Longenecker says that vv5-6a are a concise summary of all that he has taught and 6b an additional thought, "though no less important because of that."

ἐνεργεω work, be at work (in)

"Anticipating the objection that freedom from the law leaves the life without moral dynamic, he answers in a brief phrase that faith begets love and through it becomes operative in conduct." Burton

Compare Romans 13:10 and 1 Corinthians 7:19. Faith's work of love corresponds to the requirements of God's law. See also vv 13 & 14 below.

Verse 7

Ἐτρέχετε καλῶς· τίς ὑμᾶς ἐνέκοπεν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ μὴ πειθεσθαι;

τρέχω run, exert oneself

Imperfect meaning 'you were running [well]'

ἐνέκοπεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἐγκοπτο
prevent, hinder, detain

In the context of a race suggests tripping or otherwise hindering a runner. Longenecker translates 'who cut in on you'.

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality; ἐν ἄ. truly
πειθεσθαι Verb, pres pass infin πειθω
persuade, convince; pass obey, listen to, be a follower of.

Continuous sense 'to be keeping you from obeying'.

Verse 8

ἡ πεισμονὴ οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς.

πεισμονη, ης f persuasion

Here alone in NT. Longenecker says that the sense is '[humanly] contrived persuasiveness.'

The mind set they now have is not the work of the Spirit.

Verse 9

μικρὰ ζύμη ὅλον τὸ φύραμα ζυμοῖ.

These exact words occur in 1 Cor 5:6, suggesting that Paul is quoting a proverbial saying, here applied to false theology pervading and perverting the Galatian churches.

ζυμη, ης f yeast
φύραμα, τος n lump
ζυμοω cause to rise

Verse 10

ἐγὼ πέποιθα εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν κυρίῳ ὅτι οὐδὲν ἄλλο φρονήσετε· ὁ δὲ ταρασσῶν ὑμᾶς βαστάσει τὸ κρίμα, ὅστις ἐὰν ᾗ.

πέποιθα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s πειθω perf act & pass trust, rely on, have confidence, be confident

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other
φρονεω think, have in mind

'I am confident in the Lord regarding you that you will take no other view'

"Paul ... found the basis for his hopes and the ground of his confidence not in the way the situation seemed to be working itself out but 'in the Lord' (for similar expressions of confidence 'in the Lord' see Rom 14:14; Phil 2:24; 2 Thess 3:4)." Longenecker

ταρασσω trouble, disturb, frighten, stir up

Here a generic singular.

βασταζω carry, bear, endure
ἐὰν Conjunction ἐαν if, even if, though

In Koine, ἐάν is often (as here) equivalent to ἄν indicating contingency. ἐάν ἢ 'whoever he might be'

ἦ Verb, pres subj, 3s εἶμι

Verse 11

ἐγὼ δέ, ἀδελφοί, εἰ περιτομὴν ἔτι κηρύσσω, τί ἔτι διώκομαι; ἄρα κατήργηται τὸ σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ.

περιτομή, ἡς f circumcision, those circumcised, Jews
κηρύσσω preach, proclaim

Suggests that the Judaizers were saying that Paul still advocated circumcision in his preaching elsewhere (as he had done before his conversion), though he had withheld it from the Galatians in order to win their approval (cf. 1:10).

ἔτι still, yet, moreover

διώκω persecute, seek after, pursue, follow

κατήργηται Verb, perf pass indic, 3s

καταργεῶ render ineffective, cancel, do away with

σκάνδαλον, οὐ n that which causes sin/offence, obstacle

σταυρός, οὐ m cross

"The phrase τὸ σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ ('the offence of the cross') is probably one that Paul coined himself (cf. 1 Cor 1:23), stemming from his own pre-Christian reactions as a Pharisaic Jew and encapsulating several essential features of his theology of the cross (cf. 3:1; 5:24; 6:12-14)." Longenecker

Verse 12

ὄφελον καὶ ἀποκόψονται οἱ ἀναστατοῦντες ὑμᾶς.

ὄφελον would that, I wish that

"The form ὄφελον probably arose as the first person singular second aorist of the verb ὀφείλω ('owe,' 'be indebted'), but came to be treated as a fixed term expressing a wish ('O that,' 'I would that') – an unattainable wish with an imperfect or aorist indicative verb, but a wish viewed as perhaps attainable with a future indicative verb. In Pauline usage the wish is always set in an ironic context (cf. 1 Cor 4:8; 2 Cor 11:1)." Longenecker

ἀποκοπῶ cut off, cut away; midd mutilate oneself

'O that they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves.'

"The crudest and rudest of all Paul's extant statements... Underling the sarcasm and crudity of the comment, however, is Paul's understanding of circumcision as purely a physical act without religious significance (cf. 5:6; 6:15), which when done for societal or physical reasons is acceptable but when done either to gain acceptance before God or to achieve a more acceptable lifestyle becomes simply bodily mutilation (cf. Phil 3:2)." Longenecker

ἀναστατοῶ agitate, unsettle, incite to revolt