

Galatians Conclusion

By Moshe Schwab

One of the things that we most certainly learned from our study of Galatians is that we are not to try to manufacture a belief system to our own satisfaction. In chapter one, most read that those who change the gospel message are cursed. It perhaps never occurs to them the Tanakh (Old Testament portion) says we are cursed for changing God's commandments (Deuteronomy 4:2).

The question we should be asking ourselves is what commandments were being changed. When Kefa (Peter) got up from eating with the Gentiles in Galatians chapter 2, it becomes obvious what the problem was.

Exodus 34:14-16 CJB says,

"Because you are not to bow down to any other god; since ADONAI - whose very name is Jealous - is a jealous God. Do not make a covenant with the people living in the land. It will cause you to go astray after their gods and sacrifice to their gods. Then they will invite you to join them in eating their sacrifices, and you will take their daughters as wives for your sons. Their daughters will prostitute themselves to their own gods and make your sons do the same!"

It is talking about not forming close relations with idolaters.¹ When Gentiles become believers, they are no longer idol worshippers. Nowhere in this verse does it say that they couldn't eat with Gentiles who became believers. It also does not say that Gentiles could not become believers in the true God.

The reason Kefa got up was because he was listening to those who were making commandments and stipulations that were keeping Gentiles from becoming believers. This was wrong according to Shaul (Paul). They were disobeying the Torah by adding inappropriate laws and they deserved the curse Shaul talked about in Galatians chapter 1. First in Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV it says, "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." And Deuteronomy 28:15 NKJV says, "But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all **these curses will come upon** you and overtake you." There was tension in the 1st century over how or whether Gentiles could become believers and some were even saying they couldn't become believers.

There were numerous problems with the belief system of the Jewish people in the 1st century. One of these was the imposed misapplied laws. Yeshua (Jesus) was against these misapplied man-made laws and it had been a problem for believers in the true God for generations and still is a problem for both Messianic Jews and Christians today. Yeshua quoted Isaiah 29:13 which was written some 600 years earlier and Yeshua said, "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." Matthew 15:9 NKJV. It is the same today, isn't it? Our modern belief systems in the Messiah Yeshua (Christ Jesus) take the scriptures out of their original context and they make up their own doctrines.

There are two extremes to believing in God. One is to make up commandments to keep people in line (instead of keeping the actual commandments). Another is for people to make up their own ways to follow God instead of keeping His commandments. For example, instead of making up commandments, some reduce God's commandments to let's say two commandments and then they apply those two commandments how they want to. So, they are making up their own way to follow God. The Bible says that is also wrong.

¹ In the ancient Middle-East it was customary to form a close relationship with those you ate with. So, it was wrong to eat with an idolater.

We are to keep all of God's commandments not just one or two of them. **All of God's commandments are God's commandments.** Yeshua said, "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." Matthew 22:40 NKJV. He did not say there are only two commandments, did He? Giving two answers was a way the rabbis would respond to a question. They often gave two answers to each question. Also note, the Bible says that loving God is keeping His commandments. "Therefore you shall love the Lord your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always;" Deuteronomy 11:1 NKJV. Yeshua said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments;" John 14:15 NKJV. He said the same thing because He is God. Rabbi Akiva summarized the Torah into one statement, "Love your fellow as yourself"- Rabbi Akiva says: "This is the great principal of the Torah."² Rabbi Hillel summarized the Torah into two statements, "That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. That is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation; go and learn."³ Yeshua and the rabbis were not annulling God's commandments, but giving short helps to keeping God's commandments.

Don't be a blind leader of the blind (Matthew 15:14). In order to be connected to God properly, we need to actually do what God wants us to do. We can listen to what people tell us to do or we can listen to what the Bible tells us. I'm not saying that commandments can't be applied correctly from God's commandments. That's how we ended up with some 1,050 commandments in the New Testament portion. They are valid applications of the Tanakh (Old Testament portion). For example, reveling in the time of Shaul (Paul) included idolatry and sexual sin. God says those things are wrong. Shaul doesn't mean we can't celebrate as some say. Those that say we can't have parties are taking the scriptures out of their original context (and misapplying them).

There is the temptation to become more connected to misapplied laws than to what the Bible says we are to do. That is because we easily form close bonds to ritual. Life is full of ritual and ritual is not all that bad. Some of it is good, but we must remember that **rituals are not commandments of God**, unless God instructs us to do the ritual. Some create commandments on top of God's commandments, in the hope they will keep us from disobeying a commandment. **They are not God's commandments** and some can be burdensome. Since Yeshua is God (Jeremiah 23:5-6; the word LORD or ADONAI is the exclusive word for God in verse 6, יהוה). He gave us the commandments at Mt. Sinai and He said in Matthew 11:28-30, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." The word yoke is a Jewish way of referring to God's commandments.⁴ Yeshua said that His commandments, God's commandments were easy.

Deuteronomy 30:11 CJB says "For this mitzvah which I am giving you today is not too hard for you, it is not beyond your reach." Mitzvah means commandment. The Hebrew word translated hard is the Hebrew word for difficult. God's commandments are not difficult. Some people have lied to us and told us that the 200 or so applicable commandments in the Tanakh (Old Testament portion) are difficult. Some teach that you can only walk so far from your bed before you put on a hat (kipah). Another commandment is to put on the right shoe first. What do these have to do with God? The Bible doesn't say we have to wear a hat or which shoe to put on first. Yeshua taught us not to make up relevant commandments.

² https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Akiba_ben_Joseph

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hillel_the_Elder

⁴ "The Jewish religion is not heavy on doctrine, nor does it have a credo that its followers must accept in order to be Jews in good standing. Leading a Jewish life, at least from the religious point of view, is to take on the "yoke of the mitzvot," the commandments. - <https://www.haaretz.com/jewish/.premium-jewish-beliefs-it-s-all-about-mitzvot-1.5323643>.

Then there are those who are rebellious in nature who don't want to follow God. They'll say they are following God, but they make up their own laws. They are not following God, but their own desires. Don't get locked into these wrong systems of belief. God says we will have to give an account for how we lived. "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life;" Galatians 6:7-8 NKJV.

God promises an amazing and wonderful everlasting life (Revelation 21:4, 9-21). Shaul said we will stand at the judgement seat, the Bema of the Messiah (2 Corinthians 5:10). Bema is the Greek word used in Jewish circles for where the Tanakh (Old Testament) is read. Yeshua will be judging us on the commandments He gave us.

In Galatians 2:14, Shaul (Paul) responds to the behavior of Kefa (Peter) when he got up from eating with the Gentiles. He uses a rational Jewish explanation and corrects them. We should understand in this verse that Shaul, Kefa, and other believers were living like Gentiles not in the sense they were not keeping the Torah. They were living like Gentiles in the sense they were not keeping the myriad (thousands) of misapplied laws and extra laws being practiced by other Jews at that time because the Messiah told them not to.

Yeshua said that some of these extra laws were absolutely wrong (see context of Matthew 15). We know that was going on because of the many references to the misapplied irrelevant laws when we take the letter to the Galatians in its proper context. Excluding the Gentiles from believing in the Messiah is very wrong and those that were saying the Gentiles couldn't become believers or **those who were adding misapplied laws** and keeping the Gentiles from being part of the family of believers are cursed (Galatians 1:6-9). I mention misapplied laws a lot, but that was an important and real problem, so be patient. Don't be disconnected from God by false teaching that can form a grip on you. Shaul taught we are not to make up endless misapplied laws, not to keep God's commandments without having faith in God, and also they were not to build another system of misapplied laws.

In Galatians 2:16, the key here in this verse is "no flesh shall be justified." The context from verse 14 is they weren't living as the Jews because they weren't keeping fleshy misapplied laws. We are not justified by these fleshy man-made laws. The Messiah told us **not to live by these misapplied man-made laws**; we should have faith in the Messiah Yeshua and listen to Him. Most likely when it says here to have faith in the Messiah, Shaul is saying to listen to what the Messiah Yeshua had to say about the misapplied man-made laws. Also, there was not only the problem of misapplied laws back then, but their focus could be on only doing laws and not having faith in God. We need to believe in God and follow His commandments⁵ and listen to what Yeshua said about the man-made laws.

In Galatians 2:18, Shaul goes on to warn us not to build again a system of misapplied laws; if they did, then he says they are transgressors. Shaul obviously talks about the misapplied laws in this verse. What did the Messiah tell them not to do? Don't practice the misapplied laws (Matthew 15:9). As we can see, Shaul is going back to the Torah where it says not to add or subtract from God's laws; that is what is sinful. Again, the Torah says, "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that

⁵ We need to keep God's commandments and have faith in God. Our faith pleases Him. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him;" Hebrews 11:6 NKJV.

you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you;" Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV. If righteousness come from observing man-made laws, then the Messiah came for no purpose.⁶

It is important to remember that Yeshua taught us misapplied laws made up by man are not binding commandments. We are to keep God's commandments. Yeshua said, "Don't think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets;" Matthew 5:17 CJB. The Torah and Prophets refers to the Tanakh, the Old Testament portion. Shaul (Paul) also said we are to keep God's commandments. "Does it follow that we abolish Torah by this trusting? Heaven forbid! On the contrary, we confirm Torah." Romans 3:31 CJB. People who think Shaul is saying the Torah has been done away with are not understanding what he wrote. Kefa say those who misunderstand Shaul are wrong and are headed for eternal destruction. Talking about Shaul's epistles in 2 Peter 3:16 NKJV, "All his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures." What didn't they learn? They didn't learn the Torah properly. There was no New Testament portion at the time.

Shaul made a strong **implied message** in Galatians 2:20 that we have been crucified with the Messiah, so put to death the wrongly applied laws. That is the context. Righteousness does not come through a religious system of misapplied man-made laws (Galatians 2:21). What did they learn when they received the Messiah? Did they receive the Holy Spirit by working for it (by keeping extra laws)? Are they made perfect by man-made laws ("by the flesh," Galatians 3:3)? They believed in the Messiah and God gave them the Holy Spirit.

Those that believe in the Messiah Yeshua are supposed to receive the Holy Spirit as their helper (Acts 2:38; John 14:26). The Holy Spirit helps us to live right (**instead of a myriad of misapplied man-made laws**). The Holy Spirit is good and it is important that we seek the Holy Spirit. "If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" Luke 11:11-13 NKJV.

The Holy Spirit teaches us good things: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control;" Galatians 5:22-23 NKJV. We are commanded to love others in the Torah (Leviticus 19:18). The Holy Spirit also teaches us to love and love can be very restoring. "And above all things have fervent love for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins.' Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God;" 1 Peter 4:8-10 KKJV.

We are to learn from the Holy Spirit and to use our gifts from the Holy Spirit. Galatians 3:5 tells us, those who serve us through the Holy Spirit, is it their works (like following a man-made religious system or mechanically following laws without faith) or do they hear from God and believe? What is the answer to Shaul's leading question? They believe and use the gifts of the Holy Spirit; they believe and do miracles and we are supposed to believe and use the gifts God has given us.

Shaul then talks about Abraham's faith. Abraham believed and lived right (was righteous). He was a believer before Isaac, Jacob, and Mount Sinai. So, we both Jew and Gentile (no matter who you are; Galatians 3:28) can believe in the Messiah and are to have faith and live right. Remember, the extra commandments excluding the Gentiles and putting extra stipulations on them were misapplied laws. A lot

⁶ The Messiah came to deliver mankind from these misapplied man-made laws and to rescue us from darkness.

of this letter is addressing this problem. One of those was adult circumcision which is very dangerous. The Torah teaches us to save lives and Yeshua taught the same (Luke 14:5). Some were improperly teaching adult circumcision and keeping Gentiles outside the family of believers. Shaul still taught male babies should be circumcised (Galatians 5:11). Circumcising adult males is wrong according to the Torah unless God tells you to get circumcised.⁷

These are Messianic times and we need to hear and enjoy what God has to say through the Holy Spirit. Hebrews 12:25 NKJV says, "See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven." Yeshua came from heaven and spoke to us (John 17:1-5) and we now have the Holy Spirit that speaks to us (from heaven). The work of the Holy Spirit can be amazing and can help us in so much of life. Perhaps one of the most important things that it does for us is so we can also have victory over the darkness of the world and the devil. Shaul says to Timothy, "That they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will;" 2 Timothy 2:26 NKJV.

God is powerful and can heal our disconnect to him. The word for save is the word to be rescued in the Tanakh (Old Testament portion). Romans 10:13 quotes Joel 2:32 NKJV, "And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." The word for saved is the Hebrew root malat which means to escape or deliver and is translated 47 times as escape and 33 times as deliver.⁸

We will escape the traps of the devil (2 Timothy 2:26); people's lives will turn around though Yeshua, "To open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me;" Acts 26:18 NKJV. We are able to escape darkness Shaul says, "You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness;" Ephesians 5:8-11 NKJV.

We escape so that we can be God's children of light who don't follow the unfruitful works of darkness; we keep God's commandments with the help of the Holy Spirit. Those unfruitful works of course are being disobedient to God's commandments, but they are also the wrongly applied man-made laws or our own ideas of how to follow God instead of keeping His commandments. God can define who He is because He is God and because He is God, He knows best how we should live.

Some say that Yeshua did not bring world peace, but **through the Messiah Yeshua, the world has heard about God's peace**. God brings peace, but it is not the same as the world's peace. The world wants its own peace and then they want to do things their own way; but doing things their own way will not bring peace because they don't follow the commandments of an all knowing and loving God. Yeshua said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid;" John 14:27 NKJV.

⁷ There was an important reason that Timothy got circumcised. Don't think for a minute that Shaul didn't ask God about it. "Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek;" Acts 16:3 NKJV. There is no reason for an adult male to be circumcised in our modern society. It is still dangerous. The Orthodox don't accept it anyway because it wasn't done on the 8th day and in their special ceremony.

⁸ "h4422. מָלַט mālat; a primitive root; properly, to be smooth, i. e. (by implication) to escape - [Strong's Enhanced Dictionary...](#) AV (95)- escape 47, deliver 33, save 5." It is translated most often to escape or deliver. We have been delivered from darkness by the Messiah Yeshua so we can live right (be righteous).

One of the ways God gives us peace is by keeping your ears open to the Holy Spirit especially when we are making important decisions or are in hard places. Shaul says in Galatians we don't want another system of misapplied laws. **Instead we have the Holy Spirit to help us.** When we started looking for a house, it perhaps made sense to live in a different location than what we chose, but I asked God specifically where we should live. It turned out that our home ended up being in a great location that kept our shopping and commute times low. That has been such a blessing to us. I'm glad we listened to God. The Holy Spirit has also saved my life on a number of occasions. The Holy Spirit is definitely important.

Of course, there are important areas of life we need to apply ourselves to. We need to change how we walk with God and look more to how He wants us to live. Perhaps the Holy Spirit has been telling us that we need to focus on keeping God's commandments in different areas of our life. Psalm 51:10 NKJV says, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." What a great prayer; don't we want a pure and clean heart and to be faithful to God? I do, how about you?

Reach out and put on what God wants you to. Stir up your life. Take some thought about how God wants you to live. Don't seek a worthless manufactured life. Stay in the light, don't run away from God. Let your life fit the pattern we are to live by. Take thought how you will live a healthy spiritual life. God's ways bring life and deliver what we need for life.

Deuteronomy 4:1-9 NKJV

"Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, **that you may live**, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers is giving you. You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you. Your eyes have seen what the Lord did at Baal Peor; for the Lord your God has destroyed from among you all the men who followed Baal of Peor. But you who held fast to the Lord your God are alive today, every one of you. Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the Lord my God commanded me, **that you should act according to them in the land** which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples **who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'** For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the Lord our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day? Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren."

God wants us to live it says. Some say the Tanakh is done away with. Don't they want to live? Keep God's commandments. Remember what happened to those who went after their own desires at Baal Peor? They died. This is a picture of what will happen to those in the final judgement who aren't faithful to God. Hold fast to all that God has told you to do and be careful to watch that you keep His commands.

Everyone will see how great a people you are with so much wisdom and understanding. Some say this is done away with; I hope not. We could sure use some wisdom on how to live. So be diligent to live right and teach your children and grandchildren to do what is right.

Look to God and not to the thrills and frills of worldly ways. Some of the things we do are not too bad, but don't be over consumed with them anyway. People can get so involved with things that they forget about God. Yochanan (John) said, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of

the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever;" 1 John 2:15-17 NKJV. Think over what you are focusing on in life and get with it spiritually. We can live under the stairs or go up the stairs into God's light. I am thinking, maybe that word God gave me was to tell us to stop living a poor spiritual life and seek more of God.

What do we look for in life? Doing things God's way is always better than trying to force our way through life. One way to live strips us of our goodness and its reward is the lake of fire. Revelation 20:14 NKJV. "Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." Shaul says in Galatians 5:19-21 NKJV, "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

He told them before and he is telling them again, those who do those things will end up in the lake of fire. Hebrews 12:14-15 NKJV says, "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, **without which no one will see the Lord**: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled." The words looking carefully means to beware.⁹ Yeshua said if we were faithful, He would not blot us out of the book of life. "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels;" Revelation 3:5 NKJV.¹⁰ The Jewish process of blotting out a name is to scratch out the name, and then scrape off the ink. That's what it means to blot out. **God will not** remove your name from the book of life if you are faithful.

There are different ways to live, but God's way gives us a better life through His commandments and the Holy Spirit. Another way to live is just to try to look good and we then measure our goodness. We will have to stand before God for what we did. "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment;" Hebrews 9:27 NKJV. Another way we may choose to live is by spreading out our life into everything we think is good. Just because we think it is a good cause though doesn't make something a good cause. Some think that supporting abortion is a good cause, it isn't.

Another way is to trust in God and live by His power and seek what is right. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man 's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil;" Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 NKJV.

⁹ g1983. ἐπισκοπέω episkopeō; from 1909 and 4648; to oversee; by implication, to beware:— look diligently. [Strong's Enhanced Dictionary](#).

¹⁰ The Bible says Israel was to remember Amelek and the evil he did, and blot out his name (Deuteronomy 25:17-19). The scribes would write his name, scratch out his name, and then scrape off the ink. That's what it means to blot out.