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Freedom in Messiah is Based on Favor 5: 1-6

Freedom in Messiah is based of favor DIG: What is at stake here in verses 1-4? What does Paul mean by "a yoke of slavery?" Since merely keeping a set of rules isn't a relationship with God, what does Paul say about that in verse 6? What is the difference between justification and sanctification? How are we to show our dependency in ADONAI?

REFLECT: How much of a difference does your certain future hope make in your life now? What "spiritual yardstick" does your Messianic synagogue or church use to see who measures up? How does it compare with verse 6? How have you seen our freedom in Messiah abused? How is verse 6 an antidote to those who think their freedom in Messiah gives them the freedom to do anything they want to do? How do you know you are saved?

Paul urges the Gentile Galatians to hold on to the freedom from legalism which Yeshua Messiah had bought for them by His blood on the cross. Furthermore, he argued that Jewish status and circumcision are irrelevant with regard to salvation.

It is for freedom that **Messiah set us free- so stand firm** and receive it**.** It's your choice. **And do not be burdened by a yoke of slavery** to legalism **again,** or think that's going to give you a right standing before **God (5:1).** It's as if **Paul** was saying, "Don't go back to legalism because you will be worse off than you were to start with. Therefore, **Messiah set us free** in two ways. First, **He set us free** from the power of sin. We are sinners by nature and sinners by choice. But now, because of **His** sacrifice on the cross, we have a choice. Now because of the indwelling of **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** we can say no to sin. But second, **Yeshua** has liberated us from legalism. If you think that your salvation is based on what you do, you have a problem. Because you can never do enough. And there is always that voice in the back of your head telling you that you're no good.

In Judaism, the **yoke of** mitzvot (a general principle for living seen in

Deuteronomy 11:22; Second Kings 17:37; Proverbs 6:20; Matthew 26:10; Mark 14:6) is regarded as a joy to bear. So if **the Torah** is **based on trust and faithfulness (3:5)**, then, as **Yeshua** put it : **My yoke, the yoke** of obedience to **the Torah's** true meaning (**to see link click Af – The Torah of Righteousness**), as upheld by **Messiah Himself** (see the commentary on **Exodus Du – Do Not Think That I Have Come to Abolish the Torah**), **is easy** (because it is based on **faith** alone)**, and My burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30). The yoke** of mitzvot becomes **slavery** only when **the Torah** is perverted into legalism (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ei – The Oral Law**), as the Judaizers (see **Ag – Who Were the Judaizers?**) would have **the Galatian Gentiles** do.

When **Paul** wrote, a proselyte of the covenant (see the commentary on **Acts Bb – An Ethiopian Asks about Isaiah 53: the third level were Proselytes of the Covenant**) had to (1) immerse himself in a *mikveh* for ritual purification, (2) offer a sacrifice at the Temple (a requirement which ended when the Temple was destroyed) and, if a man, (3) be circumcised. In other words, circumcision is part of an initiation rite which makes a **Gentile** part of the Jewish community. At that point he ceases to be a **Gentile**, becomes a Jew and voluntarily obligates himself to do everything a Jew is expected to do. And what is a Jew expected to do? Obey **the 613 commandments** of **the Torah**. In fact, at his initiation, a **Gentile** convert to Judaism commits to obey **the Torah** even before he fully understands what his commitment means.[126]

It is for freedom that **Messiah set us free- so stand firm, and do not be burdened by a yoke of slavery** to legalism **again (5:1).** This one verse could be a summary statement for what **Paul** is about to say in **Chapters 5** and **6**, but could also be a concluding statement for what **he** has just said in **Chapters 3** and **4**. This going back to **a yoke of slavery** is especially true for people who at one time had been trying to live up to **the 613 commandments of Moses**, but had been **freed** from that impossible task, but while intellectually, they know they are **set-free**, nevertheless, in practice, **they** find themselves in **slavery**. This is especially true of Jewish believers who come from Orthodox backgrounds. Even after accepting **Messiah** as their **Lord** and **Savior**, some still feel obligated to continue keeping the various kosher dietary commandments, festivals, fasts, and things of that nature. Now, Jews have the freedom in **Messiah** to do those things if they want, but it is a whole different story if one feels obligated to do so. The one who thinks those things are mandatory, would still be entangled in **a yoke of slavery**. **Gentiles** can have the same issue (see **Ak – The Hebrew Roots Movement: A Different Gospel**).[127]

Then **the apostle** turns to those **Gentile** believers who had been deceived (see **Bf – O Foolish Galatians, Who has Cast a Spell on You**), and says: **Listen – I, Paul, tell you that,** hypothetically, **if you let yourselves be circumcised,** thinking you will be justified**, Messiah will be of no benefit to you (5:2)** because **grace** and legalism are mutually exclusive (see **Bq – Abraham had Two Sons, Ishma'el by the Slave Woman and Isaac by the Free Woman**)**.** The Judaizers added **circumcision** to **the gospel** for **Gentiles**. **They** felt that **Gentiles** could be justified by means of **the Torah**, which is **a different gospel (1:6).** Those **Gentiles** should have known that the power of **the Ruach ha-Kodesh** came to **them** on the basis of **faith**, not deeds. In the Dispensation of **Torah**, **the Ruach** came upon believers in order that they might perform a certain service for **God**, and then left them when that service was completed. **He** did not indwell them for the purpose of sanctification (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Kz – Your Word Is Truth**). **Paul** had taught **the Galatians** that **God's grace** guaranteed **their** eternal security (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ms – The Eternal Security of the Believer**), and so **they** understood that **he** was speaking of **their** life-long experience as believers, not **their** justification, or **their** standing before **ADONAI**.[128]

Again, I testify to every man who lets himself be circumcised, that he is obligated to keep all 613 commandments of the Torah (Galatians 5:3). It's as if **Paul** were saying to those **Gentile** believers, "Go home and read all of **Leviticus** and all of **Deuteronomy** and see if that's the way you want to live your life." This verse continues the argument of **verse 2**. Not only would **the Galatians** lose the effectiveness of **the Ruach** in the living of **their** daily lives, but **they** would be assuming the burden of the entire **613 commandments of Moshe**. **For whoever keeps the whole Torah, but stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all (James 2:10).** Hence, **Paul** warned them that acceptance of circumcision would be, in principle, acceptance of legalism. The fact that **Paul** had to explain this to them implies that the Judaizers had not done so. Because **Ha'Shem's** standard was so obviously impossible to attain, the truth of **Deuteronomy 27:26** should have driven every Jew to seek **His** mercy: **Cursed is the one who does not uphold the words of the Torah by doing them.**

There are three areas that we are said to be **free** from perfectly keeping **the 613 commandments of Moshe**. First, we are free from **the curse of the Torah (3:10** and **13)**; secondly, we are **free** from being **saved** by **the Torah (3:11-12)**; and thirdly, here, we are **free** from any obligation to obey any of the **613**

commandments of the Torah. You cannot keep part of **the 613 commandments**, you must keep *all* of **them**. And not only keep all of them, but keep all of them *perfectly*. If you break one, you're broken **them** all. **For whoever keeps the whole Torah, but stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of** violating **the whole Torah** and under **a curse (James 2:10)**.

You who are trying to be justified by Torah (Galatians 5:15; Leviticus 19:18) have been cut off from Messiah; you have fallen away from grace (5:4). This verse does not mean that they would lose their salvation. In **Chapters 5** and **6 Paul** deals with the practical application of living out the life of a believer (see **Br – The Practical Argument: The Effects of Liberty**). So, when **Paul** says: **You have fallen from grace,** it answers a question. And the question is not **grace** and **Torah**, but **grace** or **Torah**. In other words, the one who is now a believer and is undergoing a process of sanctification, can operate in one of two spheres. He can operate in the sphere of **faith**, or he can operate in the sphere of legalism. In both **Romans** and **Galatians Paul** has emphasized the fact that our sanctification is accomplished by means of **faith**. Legalism cannot **justify** us or sanctify us. When we are adopted into the family of **God**, we have a choice. We can operate in the sphere of **faith** and enter into the stream of blessing that **YHVH** has set up in this world for those who obey **His** Word. When we do this, our spiritual lives are going to generally go better and we will be blessed. However, there are those who choose to operate in the sphere of legalism, entering the stream of cursing because it is an impossible task. **People like this** try to live life on **their** own terms and **their** spiritual lives will generally not go well without the power of **the Ruach ha-Kodesh**. [129] There is a highway of **grace**, with the ditch of license on one side and the ditch of legalism on the other. Those **Galatian** believers had veered off the highway of **grace** into the ditch of legalism. **They** are still **saved**, but not living a victorious life of a believer.

For through the Ruach, by faith, we, the true believers, **eagerly wait for the hoped-for righteousness** that is based on **His grace (5:5).** The Judaizers **hoped-for righteousness** was based on adding imperfect and worthless deeds of **the Torah** in a vain attempt to complete the perfect and priceless work of **Messiah** on the cross, which they assumed to be incomplete and imperfect. Believers already possess the complete, imputed **righteousness** of justification, but the yet-incomplete **righteousness** of **glorification** in heaven still awaits us. **For I consider the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us . . . the creation itself will be**

set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of the children of God (Romans 8:18 and 21). Here, **Paul** mentions three characteristics of the godly life, the life that continues to live by **grace** through which salvation was received (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Bw – What God Does For Us at the Moment of Faith**). First of all, it is a life lived **through the Ruach** rather than through the flesh. Second, it is a life by **faith** rather than deeds. And third, it is a life lived in patient **waiting** and **hope** rather than in the anxious uncertainty of the bondage of legalism.

For in Messiah Yeshua, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any meaning, so far as being accepted by **God.** One is not going to be **saved** because he is **circumcised**, and one is not going to be condemned because he is not **circumcised**. Nothing that is either done or not done in the flesh makes any difference in one's relationship to **ADONAI**. The outward is totally unimportant and worthless, except as it genuinely reflects inner **righteousness**.

Life **in the Ruach** is not static and inactive, **but what matters is trust and faithfulness expressing itself through good deeds** done in **love (5:6)**, not the flesh working through self-effort. Believers are **created in Messiah Yeshua for good deeds, which God prepared beforehand so we might walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).** But our **good deeds** are a product of our **faith**, not a substitute for it. **Good deeds** are not the purpose of our **faith**, but the result of our **faith**. Therefore, we **walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good deed, and growing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all the power of His glorious might (Colossians 1:10-11a).**

The story is told of an aspiring artist who was commissioned to fashion a large sculpture for a famous museum. At last he had the opportunity to create the masterpiece he had long dreamed of. After laboring over the work for many years, he saw it grow not only in shape, but in beauty. But when it was finished, he discovered, to his horror, that it was much too large to be taken out of a window or door and that the cost of tearing down part of the building in order to remove it was prohibitive. His masterpiece was forever a captive to the room in which it was made. This is the fate of all human effort to work oneself to heaven. Nothing a person does to earn **God's** favor can leave the room of this earth where one's self-made **good deeds** are created.[130]

How do you know that you are **saved**? Is it because you *feel* **saved**? There are

those who think that if **God** doesn't split that ceiling and knock their sock off with a lightning bolt then they won't believe that they are **saved**. Friend, feelings are the caboose of your **faith,** not the engine. The way we know that we're **saved** is because **ADONAI promised** it, and you believed in that **promise** (see **Bl – The Promises were Spoken to Abraham and to His Seed**). **For, "Everyone who calls upon the name of ADONAI shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). For God so loved the world that He sent His one and only Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).** We are **saved** by **grace** alone, through **faith** alone, in **Messiah** alone.

*Dear Holy Heavenly **Father**, We love **You**! Thank **You** that the door to Heaven is not opened on the basis of someone's works, but rather on the basis of **Christ's** work as **the Lamb of God (John 1:29)** sacrificed in our place (**Leviticus 1:4**), bearing our punishment for sin **(Hebrews 9:26). For by grace you have saved through faith. And this is not from yourselves – it is the gift of God. It is not based on deeds, so that no one may boost. (Ephesians 2:8-9).***

Pr**aise **You** and thank **You** dear **Father** for giving us **Your Son** as our sin offering and then clothing us in **His** righteousness. **He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21).

***Your** Awesome, Magnificent Love causes us to desire to respond back with our love and so we offer you ourselves – our time, thoughts, finances, relationships and all that we have. We loving desire to please **You** with all we have and are – for **Your** eternal glory. In the name of **Your** Holy **Son** and the power of **His** resurrection. Amen*