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May I Never Boast, Except in the Cross of our Lord Yeshua 6: 14-18

May I never boast, except in the cross our Lord Yeshua DIG: How did the Judaizers and Paul view the cross differently? How had the world been crucified to Paul? Why did neither circumcision nor uncircumcision mean nothing? What matters? What principle did Paul want the churches that he had planted to follow? Who, in Paul's mind, is the "true Isra'el of God?" How has that phrase been misrepresented today? How did Paul bear the mark of Yeshua on his body?

REFLECT: How does verse 14 thrill you? How does it challenge you? In which areas of your life are you knowing the shalom of living by the gospel? In which areas of your life are you forfeiting this peace by living for the world's approval? If you had to sum up the message of the whole book of Galatians in a few words, what would you say?

Paul closes his letter with a subscription in his own hand and establishes a halachic ruling for his disciples by explaining the difference between the true Jewish believers, the true Isra'el of God, opposed to the false Jewish teachers, the Judaizers.

In contrast to **the Judaizers** who glorified in human achievement and self-effort as a means to salvation, **Paul boasted in solely the cross of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah.** To **the Judaizers the cross** was an object of shame; for **Paul** it was the object of glory. **They** gloried in **the flesh**; **he** gloried in **the Savior**.

Through Him the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world (6:14). The **world** of which **Paul** speaks here is the world **he** knew before **he** was saved, the world of **Philippians 3:4-6**, **his Jewish** ancestry, **his** Pharisaic traditions, **his** zeal to keep the 613 commandments of Moshe, in short, **the world** in which **he** had lived. To all this now **he** was dead. **Crucified.** **He** had been separated from it by **the cross of the Lord Yeshua**. It had no more appeal to **him** nor influence upon **him**.¹⁸⁰

Then **Paul** gave the reason for glorying **in the cross of Messiah**. For neither **circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything - but only** accepting **Yeshua Messiah** as our **Lord** and **Savior** by faith alone, thus becoming a **new creation (6:15)**. He was not dismissing being **Jewish**, nor was **he** saying that there is no such thing as being **Jewish**, nor did **he** mean that distinctions between **Jews** and **Gentiles** do not matter, nor did he imply that **Isra'el** is irrelevant now. But **ADONAI** does not show favorites when it comes to judging our souls. The only thing that matters is being a **new creation**. **Therefore, if anyone is in Messiah, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new (Second Corinthians 5:17).**

To be **in Messiah** is to be a **new creation**. This **new creation** is brought about by **the Ruach ha-Kodesh, the Agent of rebirth (Titus 3:5)** and the **Giver of divine birth (John 3:3, 6-8)**. **God's new creation** began at the moment of salvation (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click Bw - What God Does for Us at the Moment of Faith**), and will one day be carried out on a universal scale (**Revelation 21:4-5**). The old life of slavery to sin and self **have passed away (Second Corinthians 5:16; Romans 6:6-14; Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:9)**. The **new** life of devotion to **Messiah** means that one has **new** attitudes and **new** actions (**Second Corinthians 5:14-15; Romans 6:4; Ephesians 4:23 to 5:2**).¹⁸¹

This ruling was supposed to be **halachah** for **Paul's** congregations: **Now as many as live by this rule** (Greek: *kanon*, meaning *principle*) of faith in **Messiah - shalom and mercy on the Gentile believers** who understand the simple gospel of faith-plus-nothing **and on the Jewish believers** who believe likewise, **even the true Isra'el of God (6:16)**. The principle here is **the cross of Messiah** and all that goes with it in the B'rit Chadashah, including, of course, the ministry of **the Ruach ha-Kodesh** which is so much in evidence in this last section of **Galatians**. Therefore, those who order **their** lives by **the Ruach's** control, constitute **the true Isra'el of God**, those who are the spiritual as well as the physical descendants of **Abraham (3:7)**, and are heirs of promise rather than legalism (**Galatians 3:18**). **They** are the real **Jews, the true Isra'el** of faith, like those referred to in **Romans 2:28-29 and 9:6-7**.¹⁸²

Unfortunately, the phrase **the Isra'el of God** has been misrepresented by Replacement theology that the Church is the new **Isra'el**, which has replaced **the Jews**, the so-called "Old **Isra'el**," and are therefore now no longer **God's** people. But neither this verse nor any other part of the B'rit Chadashah teaches this false and antisemitic doctrine (see **Ak - The Hebrew Roots Movement: A Different Gospel**).

In a final warning, **Paul** says: **From now on let no one make trouble for me, for I bear on my body the permanent mark of Yeshua (6:17).** The word **mark** is from the Greek word *stigmata*, which has many uses. Slaves in the Phrygian temples, which **the Galatians** were familiar, were attached for life to the service of the temple, were branded with the name of the deity. The name was the *stigmata* or **mark**. In **Paul's** day there were four different groups that **God** put marks on their bodies: soldiers put the name of their generals as a mark of allegiance; slaves had marks of ownership; criminals had their crime stamped upon their skin; and worshipers had the **mark** of the deity they followed branded on their skin. **Paul** qualified in all four categories because we are told **he** was a soldier for **the Lord**, a slave of **Messiah**, for **his** gospel of faith-plus-nothing **he** was treated as a criminal, and **he** worshiped **the Son of God, Yeshua Messiah**.¹⁸³

How and where did **he** get those **marks**? **Whatever anyone else dares to boast about . . . I dare also. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the descendants of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Messiah? I am more so - I speak like I'm out of my mind - in labors much more, in prisons much more, in beatings more brutal, near death often. Five times from the Jewish leaders I received forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned (Second Corinthians 11:21b-25a).** **Paul** was an old man before **his** time, partly because of the sufferings **he** endured at the hands of **his** enemies, **the Judaizers**. **He** asks that the situation in **the Galatian** churches not be repeated. The sufferings which **he** endured for the sake of **the Lord Yeshua** and the gospel of **grace**, should deter **the Galatians** from adding more sufferings to the ones **he** had already suffered. That is why **he** sought to save **his** beloved **Galatians**, and the Church of **Messiah** for that matter, from a spiritual catastrophe, the evil effects of works righteousness would bring on the cause of **Messiah**.¹⁸⁴

In **his** closing benediction, **Paul** makes a final declaration of **grace** over legalism, faith over deeds, the internal over the external: **The grace of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen (6:18).**

In *The Holy War*, the English writer John Bunyan (1628-1688) provides a dramatic closing scene between Emmanuel (**Messiah**) and residents of the town of Mansoul (you and me). Emmanuel has helped beat the Diabolonians (Satan's army), and now he stands in the town square telling them how to stay free from Satan's clutches.

Emmanuel says, "I have loved you, Mansoul. I bought you for a price; a price not of corruptible things, as of silver and gold, but a price of blood, my own blood, which I spilled

freely to make you mine, and to reconcile you to my father.

“And I stood by you in your backsliding, when you were unfaithful, though you did not know I was there. It was I who made your way dark and bitter. It was I who put Mr. Godly-Fear to work. It was I who stirred up Conscience and Understand and Will. It was I who made you seek me, and in finding me, find your own health and happiness.”

“Nothing can hurt you but sin; nothing can grieve me but sin; nothing can make you fall before your foes but sin; beware of sin, my Mansoul.”

“I have taught you to watch, to fight, to pay, and to make war against your foes; so not I command you to believe that my love is constant to you.”

“I have taught you to watch, to fight, to pray, and to make war against your foes; so now I command you to believe that my love is *constant* to you.”

“O my Mansoul, how I have set my heart, my love upon you!”

“Show me you love - and hold fast - until I take you to my father’s kingdom where there is no more sorrow, no grief, no pain . . . where you shall never be afraid again . . .”

As Emmanuel rides away in his chariot, Conscience, Understanding and Will discuss the future and how they will have to be alert to keep the Diabolonians at bay. Unless they depend completely on King Shaddai (**the Father**), Emmanuel (**the Son**), and the Lord High Secretary (**the Ruach ha-Kodesh**) they will fail and fall into enemy hands.

“Is this way better than the freedom you had before?” asks Understanding, referring back to the days before Emmanuel had come into their lives.

“The freedom we had before was like . . .” Will struggled for words, “like birds flying through broken windows in-and-out of a deserted house . . . flying aimlessly going nowhere.”

“Do you love him because you have to?” Understanding probing was gentle; their talk was to reiterate their faith, and in their talking they strengthened each other.

“I do not *have* to love him,” said Will. “I am free. He has always left me free to do as I please.”

“Then?”

“I love him because I want to.” Will said simply. “And I can never love him enough.”

This is essentially the message of **Paul’s** letter to the **Galatian** believers and to the believers of every age . . . the message that, because we have trusted in **Him, Messiah** has set us free. ¹⁸⁵