

## **"Ye Are Severed From Christ"**

*"For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that, if you receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing. Yea, I testify again to every man that receiveth circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law, ye are fallen away from grace"* (Gal. 5:1-4). In chapter four Paul's allegory of Abraham's two sons it was shown that the mothers of Ishmael and Isaac (Hagar and Sarah), stood for two covenants. Hagar symbolized the covenant given at Sinai and Sarah standing for the new covenant (the Jerusalem that is above). He concluded his point when he said, *"Howbeit, what saith the Scriptures? Cast out the handmaid and her son for the son of the handmaid shall not inherit with the son of the freewoman. Wherefore brethren, we are not children of a handmaid, but of the freewoman"* (Gal. 4:30f). This is a clear indication that the covenant at Sinai, the law, had been removed.

The Galatian Christians had been set free from the bondage of idolatry and sin. By their infatuation with the law, they were in danger of becoming in bondage all over again -- in bondage to the law which formerly Jewish Christians had been enslaved to (Gal. 4:1-6f). Paul's warning is twofold in its nature -- two things would result from them accepting circumcision and the law: 1) accepting one part of the law made them debtors to keep the whole law and 2) acceptance of the law severed them from Christ.

Circumcision was first given to Abraham; then was an item in the law. Circumcision was practiced because thereby one was identified as part of the Covenant God had made with Abraham. Those who were not circumcised were *"cut off"* from the promises (Gen. 17:14). The same truth obtained when the law was given; those not circumcised were *"cut off"* from Israel (Ex. 12:48). Thus, Gentile Christians were urged by accept circumcision by those who still held to the law and Gentiles who did, did so on the basis that the law required it of them. Therefore if one accepted the dominion of law regarding circumcision, he was obligated to recognized the dominion of the Law in all its dictates. James wrote, *"Whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is become guilty of all"* (James 2:10). Not many people today desire to bind circumcision, but they want to have instrumental music in worship and lacking authority for it in the New Testament, they appeal to the law. They are guilty of the same error of those in the first century who accepted circumcision because the law required it. And, just as those who recognized the authority of the law regarding circumcision was obligated to recognize its authority in all things, so those who

recognize Old Testament authority for instrumental music are obligated to accept the Law's authority on all other matters. But when one does that, he gets more than he wants: Sabbath keeping, circumcision, everything which either the law enjoined or forbade!

If one accepts the law, he is then fallen from grace. Calvinists are hard pressed to explain these verses in Galatians five since the fifth point of Calvinism is a full denial of what these verses teach. These verses teach that those who accept circumcision were "*cut off from Christ;*" they were "*fallen from grace;*" two items (but really one) which Calvinists insist is impossible for the Christian to do. One cannot be "*cut off*" (severed) from something he was not first attached to. One cannot be "*cut off*" from Christ unless first he was attached to Christ. One cannot fall from something he was not first on. One cannot "*fall from grace*" unless first he was in grace. Paul's affirmation here are but two of many passages in the New Testament which teach that "a child of God can so sin, so as to be eternally lost."

Salvation is conditional. Man's will must act in response to God's instructions and since man has the right to accept God's grace before he is saved; he has the right to turn from that grace once he accepts it. The doctrine of "once saved, always saved" is a very comforting doctrine, but its comfort is false. The doctrine is neither rational, logical or scriptural. It is a denial of all God's warnings to the contrary. NEXT: "Neither Circumcision, Nor Uncircumcision."

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