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Paulos's letter to the assemblies in

Galatia

Introduction

At the time when the preaching of the good message about Yeshua began to spread and it started being accepted by non-Jews, an important question arose: whether or not it's necessary for a person wanting to accept the message to also obey the Law of Mosheh. Paulos argues that it's not necessary because it's by faith that we can receive life from the messiah, and it's by faith that a person is considered guiltless in God's eyes. But there among the groups of believers in Galasya (a province of Rome in Asia Minor, now part of modern Turkey), there were people who disagreed with Paulos and believed that it's still necessary for a follower of Yeshua to obey all of Mosheh's laws in order to become righteous in God's sight.

In *Paulos's letter to the assemblies in Galatia*, he wrote so that people who had started to follow deviant teachings might return to the true faith. He began this by explaining the reasons that he himself became a missionary. He showed that his becoming a missionary wasn't because he was selected by the people, but that God himself spoke to him, and what's more, he was specifically sent by God to the non-Jews. As a result of that, he strove to ensure that people understood that there's only one way to restore our relationship with God, and that's through faith in God's son.

Nearer the end of his letter, he answered those who say that it's wrong not to obey Mosheh's law. Paulos stated that he would be afraid to leave behind God's goodness and mercy just to become a slave of Mosheh's rules. Again he advised that it's necessary for them to listen to God's spirit so that they're changed and don't follow the sinful desires of their own bodies.

Main components of Paulos's letter

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Lighter type marks additions. Underscores join parts of a single source word.
Struck words are untranslated. The ◘ sign marks a verse with no text.
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Readers' Version

1:1 This letter is from Paulos, **one** of Yeshua's (Jesus'; Grk. Yesus') ambassadors, not chosen by people or any human desire, but **chosen** directly by **Yeshua the messiah** and **God** the father who raised Yeshua from the dead. **2** On behalf of all the believers here, I'm writing to the assemblies of believers in Galatia.

3 May you all experience the grace and peace that comes from **God** the father and our **master Yeshua the messiah**, **4** the one who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from this present, evil age, according to **God** our father's desire— **5** our father who'll be praised even through future ages. That's how it is.

There's only one good message

6 I'm astounded that you people have so quickly replaced the good message that you heard from the **one** who called you to the **messiah's** grace. You've replaced it with another narrative **7** which is not at all another good message, but rather comes from those who are confusing you and wanting to alter the actual good message about the **messiah**. **8** Even if either we ourselves or even a messenger from heaven were to preach a different 'good message' which disagrees with the good message that we first preached to you, then they should be cursed. **9** As we've previously said, and even now say it again: if anyone preaches a 'good message' to you that's different from what you already heard, let that person be cursed.

10 Am I trying to please and persuade people or **God**? If I was still trying to please people, I wouldn't be worthy to be **one of the messiah's** slaves.

Paulos was commissioned directly by God

11 I'm letting you know, brothers and sisters, that the good message I proclaimed didn't just come from human ideas. **12** It didn't come from my ideas, nor was I taught it by some other person, but it was revealed to me by **Yeshua (Jesus; Grk. Yesus) the messiah**.

13 Brothers and sisters, you've heard **about** my previous behaviour, when as a strict Yehudi (Jew), I was extreme in persecuting the assembly **of God's** people, and was trying to destroy them.[1] **14** I was progressing in Youdaismos quicker than many of my contemporaries, being so much more zealous in observing our ancient traditions.[2]

15 But God, who'd planned this from even before I was born, called me,[3] because of his grace, **16** so that he could reveal his son through me, and I could preach the good message to non-Jews. I didn't rush to get advice from others, **17** nor did I head to Yerushalem (Jerusalem) to consult with the ambassadors there that preceded me, but I went away to Arav and then later returned to Damesek (Damascus). **18** Then finally, after three years, I went to Yerushalem to get to know Kefa (Peter; Grk. Petros), and stayed with him for just over two weeks.[4] **19** I didn't meet any of the other ambassadors, other than Yeshua's brother, Ya'akov (James; Grk. Yakobos), **20** and what I'm writing to you, I'm writing with **God** watching, so I'm not lying.

21 Then I went into the regions of Aram (Syria) and Kilikia. **22** The assemblies back in Yehudah (Judea) that believe in **the messiah** didn't know me by sight, **23** but had only heard about me—that the person who'd once been persecuting them was now preaching the good message about the faith himself, **24** and they praised **God** because of what had happened to me.

The ambassadors accept Paulos and Barnabas

2:1 It was fourteen years later that I made the uphill trek to Yerushalem (Jerusalem)[5] with Barnabas, taking Titos along as well. **2** God had told me to go there, and I explained to the leaders there the good message that I'd been proclaiming to the non-Jews. I did it privately, to double-check that I wasn't somehow just acting vainly. **3** But not even Titos, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he's a Greek. **4** However, some false brothers were sneaked in to monitor the freedoms that we have in **the messiah**, **Yeshua** (Jesus; Grk. Yesus), and they wanted us to be enslaved to their traditions. **5** But we didn't submit to them even for one hour, so that the truth of the good message could continue amongst you.

6 And those people who were supposed leaders (although what they were didn't mean much to me, because **God** doesn't go by appearances)[6] didn't really contribute anything useful, as far as I could tell. **7** Instead, they saw that I've been entrusted with taking the good message to the non-Jews, just like Kefa (Peter; Grk. Petros) was entrusted to take it to the Yehudim (Jews), **8** because the same God who worked in Kefa to assign him to the Yehudim also worked in me to assign me to the non-Jews. **9** So, seeing the grace that God had shown towards me, Ya'akov (James; Grk. Yakobos) and Kefa and Yohan (John; Grk. Yoannes), the apparent pillars of the assemblies, accepted me and Barnabas as equals, so that we could go to the non-Jews and them to the Yehudim. **10** Also, they said that we need to keep helping the poor, but I was eager to do that anyway.

Paulos scolds Kefa

11 But when Kefa (Peter; Grk. Petros) came to Antiokeia, I had to oppose him to his face, because he'd messed up. **12** He'd been eating with non-Jews, but

1 **RV 1:13 · Cross-ref.** Acts 8:3; 22:4-5; 26:9-11.

2 **RV 1:14 · Cross-ref.** Acts 22:3.

3 **RV 1:15-16 · Cross-ref.** Acts 9:3-6; 22:6-10; 26:13-18.

4 **RV 1:18 · Cross-ref.** Acts 9:26-30.

5 **RV 2:1 · Cross-ref.** Acts 11:30; 15:2.

6 **RV 2:6 · Cross-ref.** Deu 10:17.

when Ya'akov (Jacob) and his companions arrived, he about-faced and started eating separately, because he was afraid of being criticised by the strict Yehudim (Jews). 13 The other Yehudim with him were also being hypocrites—so much so that even Barnabas joined their hypocrisy— 14 but when I saw that they weren't being honest with the truth of the good message, I had to say to Kefa in front of everybody, "If you Yehudim are living more like non-Jews, and not like strict Yehudim, how can you force non-Jews to obey all the Jewish traditions?"

You can't be saved by obeying rules

15 We follow Jewish laws, not other nations' customs, 16 but we know that we're not saved by following rules,[7] but only by faith **in Yeshua (Jesus; Grk. Yesus) the messiah**.[8] So we've believed in **Yeshua the messiah** so that we can be made guiltless by our faith **in the messiah**, and not by obeying all those rules, because none of those rules can ever make any person guiltless. 17 However, if we attempt to be made guiltless through **the messiah**, yet find that we're sinners, does that mean that **the messiah** is a servant to sin? That could never be so! 18 If I rebuild what I've already torn down, that would show me to be a law-breaker. 19 It was the law that showed me that I needed die to the idea of following the law, so that I could live to serve **God** instead. I was executed on a post along with **the messiah**,[9] 20 and I'm not living any more, but it's **the messiah** now living in me. The way that my body stays alive now is by living by faith in **God's** son—the **one** who loved me and allowed himself to be executed for me. 21 I'm not rejecting **God's** grace, because if the law could make me guiltless, that would mean that **the messiah** died unnecessarily.

3:1 You foolish Galatians, who tricked you into changing? You know that **Yeshua the messiah** was publicly known to have been executed by being nailed to a post.[10] 2 So I just want to ask you one thing: did you receive the **spirit** by obeying all the rules, or was it by faith when you heard? 3 So aren't you being foolish? Having begun **in the spirit**, now you people are focusing back on bodily discipline. 4 You vainly endured so many things—it was vain wasn't it? 5 So the one who gave the **spirit** to you and worked miracles among you, did all that come about from obeying the rules or by the faith that came from hearing the good message?

The spreading of Avraham's blessing

6 Avraham believed **in God** and was declared guiltless as a result.[11] 7 So now anyone who exercises faith is a descendant of Avraham.[12] 8 The writers of the scriptures foresaw that **God** was going to make non-Jews guiltless through faith when he promised to Avraham that all the nations would be blessed through him,[13] 9 so those who have faith that Yeshua (Jesus; Grk. Yesus) is the messiah will be blessed just as Avraham was blessed for believing God.

10 All those who strive to be saved by obeying the law are under a curse, because it's written that 'everyone is cursed who doesn't live by and fulfil everything that's been written down in the law scroll'.[14] 11 It's clear that the law can't make anyone guiltless in **God's** view, because it's written that 'those who are guiltless will live by faith'.[15] 12 And the law doesn't produce faith, but 'the person who obeys these things is the one who will live'.[16]

13 **The messiah** saved us from the law's curse by becoming the curse for our sake, because it's written, '**anyone** who's hung on a tree is cursed'.[17] 14 He paid the price for us so that the blessing for Avraham would also reach the non-Jews through **the messiah Yeshua** and we'd all be able to receive the **spirit** through faith.

The law didn't annul the promise

15 Brothers and sisters, consider our human ways: once an agreement has been accepted, one party can't just reject it or add conditions. 16 The promises were given to Avraham and to his offspring. It doesn't say 'offsprings (plural)' but is only referring to the **one** who's the **messiah**. 17 So what I'm telling you is that the agreement with Avraham that was previously ratified by **God** was not annulled 430 years later[18] when the law was given to Mosheh (Moses), and nor was the promise nullified, 18 because if the inheritance now came by obeying the law, then it could no longer be the result of the promise, but **God** had already granted it to Avraham via the promise.[19]

19 So what was the law for then? Because of sinfulness, it was added until the promised descendant would come. It was di-

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7 **RV 2:16 · Cross-ref.** Psa 143:2; Rom 3:20.

8 **RV 2:16 · Cross-ref.** Rom 3:22.

9 **RV 2:19 · Cross-ref.** Rom 6:1-11; 7:1-6.

10 **RV 3:1 · Cross-ref.** Jhn 20:25.

11 **RV 3:6 · Cross-ref.** Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3.

12 **RV 3:7 · Cross-ref.** Rom 4:16.

13 **RV 3:8 · Cross-ref.** Gen 12:3.

14 **RV 3:10 · Cross-ref.** Deu 27:26 (LXX).

15 **RV 3:11 · Cross-ref.** Hab 2:4.

16 **RV 3:12 · Cross-ref.** Lev 18:5.

17 **RV 3:13 · Cross-ref.** Deu 21:23.

18 **RV 3:17 · Cross-ref.** Exo 12:40.

19 **RV 3:18 · Cross-ref.** Rom 4:14.

rected through messengers and entrusted to Mosheh as a mediator. 20 You don't need a mediator if there's only one party involved, and **God** is one.

Coming of age for the inheritance

21 So does the law oppose **God's** promises? Certainly not, because if the law was able to give life, you could become guiltless by obeying the law. 22 The scriptures explain that everyone is imprisoned by sin so that by faith **in Yeshua (Jesus; Grk. Yesus) the messiah**, the promise could be granted to those who believe.

23 Before faith could come, we were guarded under the law—imprisoned so that faith could be revealed. 24 So the law was our tutor until **the messiah** came so that we could then be made guiltless by faith, 25 and now that we've come to faith, we're no longer under our tutor.

26 So you're all **God's** children through faith in **the messiah**, **Yeshua**, 27 because everyone who's been immersed to obey **the messiah** is now cloaked in **the messiah**. 28 So there's no Yehudi (Jew) or Greek, no slave or free person, no male or female, because you're all identified as being in **the messiah**, **Yeshua**. 29 And if you're in **the messiah**, then you're now Avraham's descendant, and so you're heirs of that promise.[20]

4:1 But as long as the heir is underage, he's no wealthier than a slave (even though he'll become the master), 2 but he's under guardians and managers until he reaches the age that his father specified. 3 That's how it is with us—when we were infants we were enslaved by this world's principles, 4 but at the appointed time, **God** sent his son down to be given birth to by a woman and to live under Mosheh's (Moses') law 5 so that he could buy back those enslaved under the law and they could now be adopted as children with an inheritance.[21]

6 So because you're now children, **God** sent his son's **spirit** down into our hearts as we call out, 'Father, father.' 7 Now you're no longer slaves, but children with full rights, and as children, heirs of **God's** promise.

Paulos's concerns about their faith

8 When you didn't know **God**, you served others who aren't really gods at all. 9 But now that you do know **God**, or rather now that **God** knows you, why would you turn back again to useless and inferior beliefs, to serve them all over again? 10 You people observe special holidays and certain months and seasons and years. 11 I worry that maybe I've wasted my time helping you.

12 I implore you to become like me, brothers and sisters, because I'm also just like you. You haven't wronged me in any way, 13 but you know that it was a result of my fleshly weakness that I originally preached the good message to you.[22] 14 Yet you didn't mock or despise me, brothers and sisters, for this trial of my flesh, but rather you received me as **God's** messenger like you might have received **the messiah Yeshua** (Jesus; Grk. Yesus) himself. 15 So where are your generous attitudes now? I know that back then, you would have almost dug your own eyes out to give them to me. 16 Have I now become your enemy just because I told you people the truth?

17 Those others have worked hard to try to win you over, but not for good reasons—they want to cut you off so that you'll be enthusiastic about them. 18 It's good to be enthusiastic about things that are always good, and not only at the times when I'm with you, brothers and sisters. 19 My dear ones, who I'm again labouring with in childbirth until **the messiah** becomes part of you, 20 I wanted to be there with you now, and to speak quite differently than this, because I'm puzzled about you.

The free line and the slaves

21 Are you people who are under the law telling me that you're not even hearing what the law is? 22 It's written in the scriptures that Avraham had two sons: one son with the slave girl Hagar,[23] and one with the free woman.[24] 23 The slave girl's son was born because of human actions, but in contrast, the free woman's son was a result of God's promise. 24 So if we use this as an illustration, there are two agreements: one is from Mt. Sinay which relates to Hagar and gives birth to enslaved people. 25 Hagar's Mt. Sinay is in Arav and corresponds to the present earthly Yerushalem (Jerusalem) in slavery along with her children. 26 However, the heavenly Yerushalem, which is our mother, is free, 27 because it's been written in the scriptures:

'Be glad barren woman,
you who have never borne a child.
Be bold and shout,
you who have never been in labour,
because the lonely woman now has many children,
even more than the woman with a husband.'[25]

28 And you, brothers and sisters, are children of the promise, like Yitshak (Isaac), 29 but back then the one born because of human actions persecuted the one born because

20 **RV 3:29 · Cross-ref.** Rom 4:13.

21 **RV 4:5-7 · Cross-ref.** Rom 8:15-17.

22 **RV 4:13 · Note** Scholars are unclear whether this might mean something like ill health, poor eyesight (see v15), or even a moral weakness, so we've left it as ambiguous in the translation as it is in the original.

23 **RV 4:22 · Cross-ref.** Gen 16:15.

24 **RV 4:22 · Cross-ref.** Gen 21:2.

25 **RV 4:27 · Cross-ref.** Isa 54:1.

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of the **spirit**,[26] and that's how it continues now. 30 But what do the scriptures say? 'Send away the slave girl and her son, because the slave girl's son won't be getting the inheritance alongside the free woman's son.'[27] 31 So, brothers and sisters, we're not descendants of the slave girl, but of the free woman.

Don't let the law destroy your faith

5:1 The **messiah** has freed us so we can have freedom, so stand firm and don't get entangled again in the burden of slavery.

2 What's more, I, Paulos would add that if you men got circumcised, then **the messiah** wouldn't be of any benefit. 3 I'll say it again clearly: every man who gets himself circumcised has put himself in debt to obeying all of the law. 4 You were released from **the messiah** when you moved to trusting in the law in order to be right with God—you fell away from grace at that point. 5 We who are in **the spirit** are eagerly waiting for the righteousness that we're expecting to receive by faith, 6 because in **the messiah Yeshua** (Jesus; Grk. Yesus), it's not circumcision that achieves anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith worked out through love.

7 You people were running the race so well—who held you back from believing the truth? 8 It wasn't the one who called you. 9 A little bit of yeast can make a whole loaf of bread rise.[28] 10 I'm trusting in **Yahweh** that you won't be thinking anything different from the truth. The one who'll bear the judgement is the one who's been confusing you, whoever that was.

11 But, brothers and sisters, if I was still preaching the Jewish rules, why would I still be being persecuted? If I was still preaching that, then talking about dying on a post wouldn't even be offensive. 12 I wish that the ones upsetting you people by suggesting cutting off bits would cut it all off.

13 Brothers and sisters, you were called into freedom. That doesn't mean that you should use the freedom to do whatever your minds desire, but rather, you should be serving each other in love, 14 because the entire law can be fulfilled by obeying one rule: Love your neighbour like yourself.[29] 15 But if you're snapping at and bullying each other, watch out, or else you'll destroy each other's faith.

Being led by God's spirit

16 I'll tell you: allow yourselves to be led **by the spirit**, and then your earthly desires won't triumph, 17 because our earthly desires oppose the **spirit**, and **the spirit** opposes our earthly desires—they oppose each other, so that's why you end up doing things that you didn't really want to do.[30] 18 But if you're being led **by the spirit** then you're not trying to earn your way to God by obeying all of Mosheh's (Moses') rules.

19 The actions that come from our earthly desires include: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hostility, strife, jealousies, rages, selfish ambitions, arguing, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, carousing, and other similar things which I've mentioned previously. And as I also said previously, the people that do these things won't be inheriting **God's** kingdom.

22 But the end result of having God's **spirit** is to show love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, 23 gentleness, and self-control—none of Mosheh's laws are against any of these! 24 And for **the messiah Yeshua's** (Jesus'; Grk. Yesus') apprentices, earthly desires need to be executed on a post, along with their passions and lusts. 25 If we're being led **by** God's **spirit** in our living, then we should also be aligning our values **by the spirit**. 26 We have to take care not to become conceited, not to provoke each other, and not to envy each other.

Helping each other

6:1 Brothers and sisters, if a person has been caught sinning, you spiritual people need to guide the person with a spirit of gentleness, at the same time looking at your own behaviour, in case you yourselves are also tempted. 2 Help those who are going through difficulties or pain, and in doing so you'll fulfil **the messiah's** law, 3 because anyone who supposes themself to be someone special, but isn't, is only deceiving themself. 4 Evaluate your own actions, but keep your boasts to yourself and don't tell others, 5 because each person must face up to their own issues.

6 Those who are being taught should share all their blessings with those who are teaching.

7 Don't be fooled—you can't get away with mocking **God**, because what you sow determines what you'll harvest. 8 Anyone who sows seed to feed their earthly desires will harvest earthly corruption, but anyone who sows **spiritual** seeds will harvest eternal life from the **spirit**. 9 Don't be discouraged from doing good things, because we'll have a good harvest in due course if we don't give up. 10 So then, as time allows it, we should be working towards good for everybody, and especially for fellow believers.

Paulos's final advice

11 Look how big these letters are when it's my own handwriting. 12 There's so many people that want to look good in earthly terms, and they're the ones trying to persuade you that you have to fulfil all of Mosheh's (Moses) rules—they don't want to be persecuted concerning **the messiah** dying on a post. 13 Even those who are circumcised don't obey all the rules, but they'd still like for your men to be circumcised so that they can claim them as followers. 14 As for me, may I never boast, except about our **master**

26 **RV 4:29 · Cross-ref.** Gen 21:9.

27 **RV 4:30 · Cross-ref.** Gen 21:10.

28 **RV 5:9 · Cross-ref.** 1Cor 5:6.

29 **RV 5:14 · Cross-ref.** Lev 19:18.

30 **RV 5:17 · Cross-ref.** Rom 7:15-23.

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Yeshua (Jesus; Grk. Yesus) **the messiah**, whose life was cut off on the post. Through him, it's like the entire world has been cut off from me, and I've been cut off from the world, **15** because obeying Mosheh's law is nothing, and not needing to obey it is nothing, but being a new creation is everything. **16** And everyone who follows that principle, may peace and mercy be on them and on **God's** Yisrael (Israel).

17 As for the other troubles, don't bother me with them, because I carry the marks on my body of someone who follows **Yeshua**.

18 May the grace from our **master Yeshua the messiah** be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. That's how I want it to be.

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