

# St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians

## Study Guide

### Greeting/Introduction

Galatians 1:1-5

#### Textual Questions

[verse 1]

Who is Paul? Acts 9ff; **Acts 26:2-18**

What is 'an apostle'? Matthew 10:16; Matthew 11:10; **Acts 26:2-18**

What does Paul mean when he writes, "not from men nor through men"? John 15:16, 19

What does Paul mean when he writes, "but through Jesus Christ and God our Father who raised Him from the dead? (see 1:1 of Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians; Ephesians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus)

Which Jesus does Paul refer too here? See the New Testament Gospels

What does Paul presuppose about Jesus? Revelation 1:18

What is the origin of Paul's apostleship? From where did it come?

[verse 2]

Who were those with Paul?

'Brothers' refer to whom, specifically?

How does Paul know that there is a congregation/church in Galatia? Acts 13:4-14:28

#### <sup>1</sup>Paul's First Missionary Journey

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<sup>1</sup> Map from Concordia Self-Study Bible, p1683

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[verse 3]

How does Paul greet the church in Galatia?

What is 'grace'? Romans 4:

What is 'peace'? John 16:33; Romans 5

From where do these come? (Who gives them?)

What is the relation between God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ? John 10:38; 17:11, 21

[verse 4]

For what did the Lord Christ give Himself?

For what purpose did He deliver us?

Why does Paul call the present age 'evil'?

According to what did the Lord Christ give Himself to deliver us?

[verse 5]

To whom is the glory?

Is a generic deity referred to here?

### Practical Considerations

Do apostles still exist today? How do we know?

How does God work today, 'immediately' or 'mediately' (through means)?

How do we know if one is from God? How do we know if one is not?

How do we 'evaluate' parachurch ministries (i.e. Promise Keepers, Campus Crusade for Christ, other Christian entities not affiliated with a certain church body, 'pan-Christian'/multi-denominational, 'non-denominational churches)?

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## No Other Gospel

Galatians 1:6-10

### Textual Questions

[verses 6-7]

Why is St. Paul 'amazed'?

What is the connection between 'the one calling' and the 'one Gospel'?

What does a 'turning away' from the Gospel indicate? A turning away from whom? To what?

What is the Gospel? Romans 1:16; 3:21-24; 5:12-21; John 3:16

[verse 8-9]

What does St. Paul place upon any, even angels, who preach 'another gospel'?

What had the Galatians received from Paul? To what were other 'gospels' to be compared/contrasted to?

[verse 10]

How is this verse related to the preceding verses? What is the connection? From whom does Paul derive His preaching? From man or God? What's the difference?

Whom does Paul seek to please?

What does it mean to be a slave of Christ? Acts 5:29

### Practical Considerations

Why is the Gospel so important? Is the Gospel just a matter of words? Acts 4:12; Romans 5

How is the Gospel different from the Law? Romans 6:23

Is the Law necessary? Is the Law necessary for salvation?

How are Law and Gospel to be distinguished? What is the result if Law and Gospel are not distinguished? How is the Gospel perverted or changed?

Is condemnation and calling down 'anathema' on any and all who preach 'another gospel' unloving or unchristian? What about doctrine? Why or why not? Jeremiah 23:28; 1 Peter 4:11; 1 Corinthians 1:22-24

What is the difference between 'pleasing God' and 'pleasing men'? How will these demonstrate themselves in preaching, living, etc.? (i.e. What effect does either have on the content of the preaching? Does it?)

### Catechetical Review

Review the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed & Meaning and the meaning to the Third Article. How do these highlight the Gospel?

Review Commandments 1-3 & Petitions 1-3 of the Lord's Prayer. What do these say about God's Word and His Gospel?

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## The Gospel & St. Paul

Galatians 1:11-24

### Textual Considerations

[11-12]

Is the Gospel of God made by man? Is it a teaching of men?  
How did Paul receive the Gospel?

[13-17]

What was Paul like before conversion? What did he do? Acts 7:55-8:3; 26:4-11; Philippians 3:4-6

What did Paul think he was doing? Acts 26:9

Who set Paul apart 'from his mother's womb'? What does this mean?

Note: God's foreknowledge

Two births (physical, spiritual [John 3:3-6])

What was Paul like after conversion?

Compare and contrast Paul before and after conversion:

Zeal    The Church    Judaism

[18-24]

In verse 20, Paul says, "what I am writing to you is no lie" (NIV). Why would Paul emphasize that what he says is true? What might this say about those to whom he was writing? Had they doubt about Paul and his apostleship?

From persecution to preaching the faith. What was the reaction of those who heard this report?

### Practical Considerations

How do we receive the Gospel?

How is it that some believe the Gospel and some don't?

Is there a difference between thinking that one is doing right and actually doing right? Is it possible for one to be deceived by what one is doing? How does one know?

What effect does Christ's Gospel have on the hearer?

How does faith show itself? James 2:14-18

What is the litmus test that one is a Christian? Works or faith? Galatians 2:16

What are reactions to nonChristians becoming Christians? Why are we hesitant to declare that one is of Christ who has committed heinous crimes (i.e. Jeffrey Dahmer, others)? Should this be so?

### Catechetical Review

The Second Commandment & Meaning - God's Name

The Third Article of the Apostles' Creed & its Meaning

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## St. Paul, the Gospel, and the other Apostles

Galatians 2:1-10

[1-2]

For a background of St. Paul after His conversion up to Galatians 2,1:

Galatians 1:18-21

Acts 9:20-30; 11:25-30; 12:25-14:28 (Paul's first missionary journey)

Acts 15 (The Jerusalem Council)

According to the NKJV, Paul 'communicated' to those in Jerusalem the gospel which he preached (Greek, 'laid before', 'declared'). In other words, he made known to the other apostles and leaders what he was preaching. How was this a 'good thing'? What is the result of declaring the content of one's teaching? Unity? Disunity? With whom?

[3-5]

Who was Titus? See the epistle (letter) of Paul bearing his name; Titus 1:4-5

Why was Titus not compelled to be circumcised? (For the covenant of circumcision, see Genesis 17); Colossians 2:16-23; Galatians 5:6

What (who) is (are) meant by 'false brethren'? How are these 'false brethren' identified? By what? How are they known today? How does one distinguish between 'true' and 'false' brethren? Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 11:18-19; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 1:13. What was the intent of the false brethren in v4?

What is 'our liberty which we have in Christ'? Galatians 5:1-6. Do 'our freedoms' in Christ ever 'cross' the line and become sin? When or when not? Romans 14. When is it appropriate to demonstrate our Christian freedoms? (i.e. color of wine, mode of baptism, making the sign of the cross, worship day)

When it comes to Christian freedom, what is at stake? How is this related to practice? Matthew 7:17-18; 12:33

[6-10]

Even though Paul went to the uncircumcised and Peter to the circumcised, did they have different gospels? A different God?

How many gospels are there and how many Gods? Galatians 1:6-10; 1 Corinthians 12:3-13; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Titus 2:5. What does this reveal about today's religions of individualized doctrine and belief? What might it reveal about the various denominations?

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## **The Gospel, Faith, & Salvation**

Galatians 2:11-21

[11-14]

Peter ate with the Gentiles. But when the Jews came, Peter and the others withdrew from them. How is this hypocrisy? By his actions, what were Peter and the others not demonstrating about the Gospel? See Ephesians 2:11-22

How is Peter's act of separation connected to Gal. 2:4-5? (If the Jew separates himself from a Gentile when other Jews come, i.e. Peter, what does this say about the Gospel?)

How was Peter influencing others? Who will receive the greater condemnation, the one who teaches or the one who 'learns'? James 3:1; Mark 9:42 Does this take the responsibility off the hearer to discern from truth and error? John 10:27; 2 Timothy 2:15; Colossians 2:6-10

Why is it important for the 'teacher' of the faith to teach the 'right' faith? Jeremiah 23:28; 1 Timothy 4:16 What will happen if he doesn't? Matthew 15:14; 1 Timothy 4:3; 2 Timothy 4:3-4

The apostle Paul confronted Peter 'to his face'. Is the action/teaching of a public figure public or private if seen by all? Does this influence how 'the situation' is 'handled'? (i.e. If one is teaching falsely, is it appropriate to speak out publicly against the false teaching? Why or why not? - Compare that scenario with a one on one conversation and something false has been said. How are they different? How are they the same? Matthew 18:15-18; Luke 17:3; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 2:15 Is there a difference between 'bearing false witness' and 'pointing out error'?

Why was Paul so obstinate with Peter? Why a big fuss in front of everyone? What was the point?

[15-21]

With relation to the previous verses, what should the Jews (and Peter) have known?

To whom is Paul speaking at this point? From where does 'new life' come from? v20 How do verses 19-21 speak against Peter's action? What do they say to us about faith and life?

### Catechetical Review

Baptism & the Office of the Keys

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## The Righteous Live By Faith

Galatians 3:10-14

[10]

The NIV reads, 'rely on observing the law' and the ESV reads, 'rely on works of the law'. The NKJV is a closer literal translation, 'as many as are of the works of the law'. Is the difference between the NIV & ESV and the NKJV a small matter? Why or why not? What does each translation indicate about the person?

Why are those 'of the works of the law' under a curse? Deuteronomy 27:26

[11-12]

What does 'is justified' mean? Is this active or passive on our part? Who does the justifying?

By what is one not justified? By what is one justified? Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Hebrews 10:38; Romans 4:4-5 How does one live 'by faith'? Romans 4; 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:7; Hebrews 11

Is Paul describing here something called 'antinomianism', which means lawlessness? In other words, does being justified by faith mean that the law need not be kept? Romans

What is the difference between 'of the law' and 'from faith'? What is the motivating factor of each? What is inherent in each as to purpose and the keeping of the law?

[13-14]

What has Christ redeemed us from? Galatians 4:15 How? What does this say about the curse of the law to those 'of faith'? To those not 'of faith'?

Is it Christian to call Christ 'my sin', 'my death', 'my curse'? Why or why not? (Notice the 'for us' in verse 13) What is the significance of Christ's Word and Work, and death and life? Who was it for?

What does it mean to be righteous before God? Is this a righteousness of our own or of another?

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## **The Law & the Promise**

Galatians 3:15-29

[15-18]

What is the comparison Paul is making between a 'human covenant' and God's covenant? What does this have to do with the context of Paul's proclamation?

Does the law set aside the covenant already established by God? (Another way of saying this is, 'Does God's second word cancel out His first?') What distinction is Paul making 'of law' and 'of promise' concerning 'the inheritance'?

Can Paul's use of words in verse 18 leave one with the impression of a 'gray area' with relation to how one receives the inheritance? How does one receive it?

[19-20]

What was the purpose of the law? Why was it added? What does the law show? How is this different from the promise spoken of in the preceding verses? Does salvation come from keeping the law or from the promise?

[21-25]

To whom is the promise given? To whom is it not?

How is the law not against the promise of God? Doesn't the law contradict the promise? What point is Paul making?

What does the law show us? The promise?

What does 'no longer under the supervision of the law' (NIV) mean? The literal word is pedagogue, a teacher.

[26-29]

How is one a 'Son of God'? Through what? How is this related to baptism?

'One in Christ' means what? What is the significance of the Christian faith? Being 'of Christ' (literal translation)? Of whose seed are all who believe? What are we heirs of?

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## No Longer a slave, but a Son

Galatians 4:1-7

[1-3]

What is the comparison between an heir and a slave? Galatians 3:23

How long is the heir under guardians and stewards (NKJ)?

What is the point of comparison between an heir and us? Colossians 2:8, 20-23; Galatians 4:9-10

[4-5]

Compare verses 1-2 with 3-4:

<sup>1</sup> The child heir and slave not different-under guardians

<sup>3</sup> We were in bondage

<sup>2</sup> Until time appointed by the father

<sup>4</sup> When the time had come

What do verses 4 and 5 have to do with Christmas? What do they say of God the Father? God the Son?

Fullness of time...When did the Lord come?

God sent forth a Son...John 3:16

Born of a woman...Genesis 3:15; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-7; Hebrews 2:14-18

What is the significance that Jesus Christ was born of a woman? Who was Jesus?

Born under the law...Galatians 3:13; Matthew 3:15; 5:17

For what purpose was Christ born, live, and die? Romans 5:6-21

To redeem...Who? What does it mean to be under the law? Galatians 3:11-12

What does it mean to not be 'under the law'?

In order that we receive what? What does this mean? Is this gift or earned?

[6-7]

What is the outcome of 'being a son'? Who is doing this? What is the result of 'the spirit in the heart'? Acts 4:20; 22:15; Romans 10:8-10; For 'Abba, Father', see Mark 14:32-42; Romans 8:14-17

Who is 'doing' the verb of 'making a son'? What is the comfort in this?

### Law and Gospel

What is law in this section?

What is Gospel?

What is the end result of each?

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## A Christian Concern

Galatians 4:8-20

[8]

Before becoming Christian, which god does one serve? How does one rightly serve the One True God? Hebrews 11:6; John 6:29. How does one not? [Discuss Matthew 7:21-23. How do we know what the will of the Lord is? What is it? John 6:39-40; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12.]

What is 'a god'?

<sup>2</sup> Answer: A god is that to which we look for all good and in which we find refuge in every time of need. To have a god is nothing else than to trust and believe him with our whole heart. As I have often said, the trust and faith of the heart alone make both God and an idol. <sup>3</sup> If your faith and trust are right, then your God is the true God. On the other hand, if your trust is false and wrong, then you have not the true God. For these two belong together, faith and God. That to which your heart clings and entrusts itself is, I say, really your God. (Luther's Large Catechism, First Commandment, paragraph 2-3)

[9-11]

What were the Galatians doing? Is it wrong to observe special days, months, seasons, and years? (see Genesis 1:14) Why or why not? Compare with Colossians 2:6-23. Galatians 5:1. How is one to understand 'observances'? What is the distinction between proper and improper observances, or is there a distinction? 'Should we throw the baby out with the bath water?'

<sup>21</sup> It is therefore taught that grace cannot be earned, God cannot be reconciled, and sin cannot be atoned for by observing the said human traditions. Accordingly they should not be made into a necessary service of God. <sup>22</sup> Reasons for this shall be cited from the Scriptures. In **Matt. 15:1-20** Christ defends the apostles for not observing the customary traditions, and he adds, "In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men" (**Matt. 15:9**). <sup>23</sup> Since he calls them vain service, they must not be necessary. Thereupon Christ says, "Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man." <sup>24</sup> Paul also says in **Rom. 14:17**, "The kingdom of God does not mean food and drink," <sup>25</sup> and in **Col. 2:16** he says, "Let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival," etc. <sup>27</sup> In **Acts 15:10, 11** Peter says, "Why do you make trial of God by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will." <sup>28</sup> Here Peter forbids the burdening of consciences with additional outward ceremonies, whether of Moses or of another. <sup>29</sup> In **1 Tim. 4:1, 3** such prohibitions as forbid food or marriage are called a doctrine of the devil, for it is diametrically opposed to the Gospel to institute or practice such works for the purpose of earning forgiveness of sin or with the notion that nobody is a Christian unless he performs such services. (Augsburg Confession, XXVI. The Distinction of Foods, paragraph 21-29)

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<sup>3]</sup> 1. For settling also this controversy we unanimously believe, teach, and confess that the ceremonies or church rites which are neither commanded nor forbidden in God's Word, but have been instituted alone for the sake of propriety and good order, are in and of themselves no divine worship, nor even a part of it. Matt. 15, 9: *In vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* (Formula of Concord, Epitome, X. Of Church Rites, paragraph 3)

What was Paul afraid of? Was it 'wasted efforts' on his part or something else? 2 Corinthians 6:1-2; Romans 2:4. Is this fear of Paul valid?

[12-16]

What does Paul mean by, 'become like me'? 1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Romans 12:16; 2 Corinthians 11:7; Colossians 3:12; 2 Timothy 2:24-26

What has resulted because of the 'different gospel' (Gal. 1:6-9) preached among the Galatians, esp. concerning the attitude of the Galatians towards Paul? What has changed? Does the truth cause enemies? John 8:45-47

[17-20]

Who are 'those people'? Galatians 1:7; 2:4 What was their 'purpose'? Notice the distinction Paul is making with the word, 'alienate'. Does trying to live according to the law for salvation alienate Christ? How about the other way? Does faith in Christ alienate us from doing 'good things'? Doing 'good things' to obtain eternal life? Galatians 3:10-13; Romans 4:4-8

How do we show that we are Christians? Is this to be our concern? What is? See verse 8 above. [Do we have to prove to God (or others) that we're Christian? If no, how might this change/alter one's perspective on the Christian life?]

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## **Children of Promise**

Galatians 4:21-31

[21-23]

What does it mean to be under the law? What does the Law say? What is the consequence or end result? Galatians 3:10-12

For Review, read:

Genesis 16 (Son by the slave woman)

Genesis 15:1-6; 17:15-22; 18:10-14; 21:1-7 (Son by the free woman)

What does Paul mean, 'born in the ordinary way'/'according to the flesh' and 'born as the result of promise'/'through promise'? (NIV/NKJV) What's the difference?

[24-27]

What do the two women 'represent' (NIV)? What are they 'symbolic' of (NKJV)?

Note: Covenant and Testament are synonyms

Why does Paul make reference to a Mount Sinai? To what does this refer? Exodus 19-31

What kind of children does Hagar (Mount Sinai) bear? Notice the reference to Jerusalem. What world religion has its central city as Jerusalem? What is Paul getting at?

What world religion(s) has Abraham and the 'son of the bondwoman' as its ancestors? How does the word, Islam, which means, 'submission' compare with Paul is saying in these verses? In other words, what kind of religions are Judaism, Islam, and all others that are not Christian?

What is the distinction between the earthly city of Jerusalem and the heavenly? Hebrews 12:18-29 (Also, 'I believe in the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints')

Roman Catholics may speak of 'church' as mother. How would you respond to someone who says, 'through the church we were begotten'? See Revelation 12:1ff

[28-31]

How did Ishmael (the son according the flesh) treat Isaac (the son of promise) and what happened as a result? Genesis 21:8-21

What is the comparison Paul is making? What is the meaning? Is it possible to be children of both slave and free at the same time? John 1:12-13; John 3:5-6; Matthew 6:24

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## Freedom in Christ

Galatians 5:1-6

[1]

What kind of freedom is Paul talking about? A freedom to do what we want (to sin)? A freedom to serve the Lord and one another? A freedom to what? Romans 6:1-14, 15-23; 7:1-6; 8:10-11; 12-17; 12:1-2

What does this kind of freedom that Paul speaks of indicate about our previous state? John 8:31-36; Romans 3:23

What does this kind of freedom lead to? v1

[2-3]

What does Paul mean by 'yoke of bondage (NKJ) / slavery (NIV)? What might/can be considered a 'yoke' of bondage/slavery today? (i.e. celibacy of priests, fasting, 'everyone a minister', etc.)

How do we distinguish between what is 'bondage/slavery' and the freedom we have in Christ? Colossians 2:20-23; Romans 14:14-23; 1 Corinthians 8:8; 10:23-33 Can one tell the difference by visual observation?

Compare Acts 16:1-3 with Galatians 2:3-5. What was the difference in the circumcision of the one but not of the other? Is it important for one to testify of one's freedom in Christ when and where others say that there is no freedom? Why or why not? Can you give an example?

What does it mean to be a debtor (NKJ) or under obligation (NIV) concerning the law? Galatians 3:10, 12 What does it mean not to be? Galatians 3:13-14; Romans 3:24-26

[4]

How is one estranged (NKJ)/alienated (NIV) from Christ? How or in what ways does one try to be justified by the law? What is wrong with doing so? What is God's grace? Romans 4:4-5; Ephesians 2:8-9

[5-6]

How is righteousness obtained? Genesis 15:6

What does faith work through? How does faith express itself?

Can true faith ever be without works? James 2:14-26 If there are no 'works', is the problem with 'works' or with faith? (i.e. If a patient is sick, is the problem the symptoms or the cause of the sickness?) Matthew 7:17-18; 15:18; Romans 14:23; Hebrews 12:6

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## **Freedom in Christ**

Galatians 5:7-15

[7-12]

In verse 9, Paul writes, "A little leaven leavens the whole lump." See also 1 Corinthians 5:6-8 & Matthew 16:6-12; Luke 12:1-3. What is Paul talking about (think context). According to this (these) verse(s), does it make a difference if one is 'a little' wrong? Is the teaching of any of God's Word insignificant? Does this verse help give reason for the concern over false and true doctrine?

[13-15]

How is the Christian to use liberty? For oneself or for others? Romans 12-15:7 [See also the Ten Commandments (What does the Gospel free us to do with regard to the Law?)]; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

By what one word is the law fulfilled? Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 19:19; 22:39; Romans 13:9; James 2:8-12

## **The Flesh and The Spirit**

Galatians 5:16-26

[16-18]

Is it true that we do not always do as we wish? Why or why not? How does Paul explain this? Romans 7:14-25

What does Paul mean by 'the flesh' and 'the spirit'? Where do the two come from?

[19-26]

What are the works of the flesh? One who continues in these things will not inherit what? 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

From whom do the fruits of the Spirit originate?

What have 'those who are in Christ' done with regard to the flesh? What does this mean with regard to sin and temptation? 1 Corinthians 10:12-13; 1 Timothy 6:11-16; 2 Timothy 2:22

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## Caring for others, Personal Responsibility, A New Creation

### Galatians, chapter 6

[1]

Within context, who is Paul specifically addressing, Christians or nonChristians? Read James 5:19-20 (and James 1:12-16)

(According to this passage, is 'once saved always saved' a teaching of the Christian faith? Is it possible for a Christian to 'lose their faith'? See also Galatians 1:6-7; 3:3; 4:9; 5:7; Romans 6:1-2; Ezekiel 3:20-21; 18:20-28; 33:12-19; Matthew 26:41; 1 Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:38/ Compare these passages with the following: John 10:27-29; Romans 11:29; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 John 3:9)

Is it narrow-minded and judgmental to point out another's sin? Why or why not? For what reason are we to do so? Remember: Verse 1! (Ezekiel 18:23; 33:11; John 3:17; 1 Timothy 2:4) What is the danger of 'restoring' a fallen brother or sister?

[2-10]

<sup>v2</sup> What does it mean to 'carry' or 'bear' the burdens of another? Romans 15:1-3; Matthew 8:17 (Isaiah 53:4, 11-12; 63:9); 1 Peter 2:21-24

<sup>v3-5</sup> As Christians, are we to compare ourselves with others? v4; Ezekiel 18:30; Romans 14:5, 12, 22 Does verse 5 contradict with verse 2? Why or why not? Does the 'for' (Greek: γαρ) in verse 5 help us to rightly examine the text? [Note: In both the ESV and the NKJ, verse 4 begins with the conjunction 'but' (Greek: δε)]

How are we to 'test our actions'? 1 Corinthians 11:28; 2 Corinthians 13:5

<sup>v6-10</sup> Are there consequences for how one lives according to v7-9?

What promise does God give in verse 9?

To whom are we to do good, generally and especially?

[11-18]

What reason does Paul give about 'doing certain things' like circumcision? Is it for us to distinguish such things? Where does the freedom of the Gospel come in?

What really counts with things not commanded, that we do them, not do them, or something else?