

# Dictionary OF Paul AND HIS Letters

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INTERVARSITY PRESS

DOWNERS GROVE, ILLINOIS 60515

LEICESTER, ENGLAND

InterVarsity Press

P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515, USA  
38 De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GP, England

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InterVarsity Press, England, is the book-publishing division of the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (formerly the InterVarsity Fellowship), a student movement linking Christian Unions in universities and colleges throughout the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, and a member movement of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. For information about local and national activities write to UCCF, 38 De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GP.

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USA ISBN 0-8308-1778-6

UK ISBN 0-85110-651-X

Printed in the United States of America (∞)

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#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Dictionary of Paul and his Letters/editors, Gerald F. Hawthorne,

Ralph P. Martin; associate editor, Daniel G. Reid.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

ISBN 0-8308-1778-6 (alk. paper)

1. Bible. N.T. Epistles of Paul—Criticism, interpretation, etc.

2. Bible. N.T. Epistles of Paul—Dictionaries. 3. Paul, the Apostle, Saint—Dictionaries. I. Hawthorne, Gerald F., 1925-

II. Martin, Ralph P. III. Reid, Daniel G., 1949-

BS2650.2.D53 1993

227'.03—dc20

93-36044

CIP

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#### British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

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19 18 17 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8  
07 06 05 04 03 02 01

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# G

**GALATIA.** See GALATIANS, LETTER TO THE.

G.W. Hanson

## **GALATIANS, LETTER TO THE**

Freedom\* and unity in Christ are central themes of Paul's letter to the Galatians. His letter addresses Christians, whose preoccupation with keeping the Law\* was splitting their churches along racial lines, separating Jews from Gentiles.\* Such splits could not be tolerated because "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). This new unity which transcends all racial, social and sexual barriers is based upon the "truth of the gospel\*" (Gal 2:5): Christ was crucified to set us free from the curse\* of the Law so that we might receive his Spirit (Gal 3:13-14; see Holy Spirit). It is the Spirit, not the Law, who gives us our identity as children of God (Gal 4:6; see Adoption, Sonship). Believers must protect their freedom from slavery to the Law (Gal 5:1) and yet use their freedom to fulfill the Law by serving one another through love\* (Gal 5:13-14). We are no longer under the Law that divides us; we are led by the Spirit who unites us. Paul undergirds these central concepts of freedom through the cross of Christ and unity by his Spirit with other complementary themes: an account of his own call to evangelize the Gentiles (Gal 1:13-16), a record of his loyalty to the gospel for the Gentiles in his relationships with the other apostles (Gal 1:17-2:21), an explanation of justification\* by faith, not by works of the Law (Gal 2:16; 3:6-12; see Works of the Law), an exposition of OT texts on the Abrahamic\* promise and the Mosaic Law in the context of salvation history (Gal 3:6-25; 4:21-31), and a definition of Christian ethics\* in terms of the flesh\* and the Spirit (Gal 5:13-6:10).

The significance of these central themes in Galatians gives this letter a predominant place in any consideration of Pauline chronology\* and theology. The letter has had a profound impact on Christian thought and action throughout the history of the church. Luther called it "my own epistle, to which I have plighted my troth; my Katie von Bora."

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### 1. Galatia.

Paul's letter "to the churches in Galatia" (Gal 1:2) rebuked the recipients for being "foolish Galatians" (Gal 3:1). His letter to the Corinthian church instructed that church to do what he had told "the churches of Galatia" to do concerning the collection (1 Cor 16:1). In a letter to Timothy he informed Timothy that "Crescens has gone to Galatia" (2 Tim 4:10). The geographical location of the churches in Galatia and the ethnic origin of the Galatians referred to by Paul is still a topic much debated by NT scholars. Some (notably, J. B. Lightfoot and H. D. Betz), following the majority of patristic, medieval and Reformation commentators, have argued that Galatians was written to Christians of Celtic (Gaulish) descent who were living in or around Ancyra, Pessinus and Tavium, three cities in northern Asia Minor. Others (notably, E. deW. Burton, F. F. Bruce and R. N. Longenecker) argue that the "churches in Galatia" were planted by Paul, as recorded in Acts 13-14, in Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe in southern Asia Minor and consisted of Gentiles from diverse ethnic origins (Phrygians, Pisidians and Lyconians). The references in Acts 16:6 ("the region of Phrygia and Galatia") and Acts 18:23 ("the region of Galatia and Phrygia") have been claimed as support by both sides in this debate. To understand the background for this debate, it is necessary to review three stages in the history of Galatia: the Celtic invasion, Hellenistic Galatia and Roman Galatia.

**1.1. The Celtic Invasion.** When an army of Celts (also called Gauls or Galatians by Greek and Latin authors) invaded and subsequently settled in north-central Asia Minor (modern Turkey), they gave their new homeland their own name, Galatia. Those Celts (or Galatians, as they were usually called in Asia Minor), who were of the same ethnic origin as the Celts of France and Britain, had migrated from central Europe

to Greece. According to the Roman historian, Livy (A.D. 23-79), they became "inflamed with desire" to cross into the rich land of Asia. Their opportunity came when they were invited by Nicomedes I, king of Bithynia, who needed mercenaries in his campaign to recapture the greater part of Bithynia. In 278 B.C. some 20,000 Galatians waged war on behalf of Nicomedes until all of Bithynia acknowledged his sovereignty. Livy describes those fierce Galatian warriors, who inspired such terror "that the most distant and nearest alike obeyed their orders: . . . tall bodies, long reddish hair, huge shields, very long swords; in addition, songs as they go into battle and yells and leaping and the dreadful din of arms as they clash shields according to some ancestral customs—all these are deliberately used to terrify their foes" (Livy *Hist.* 38.18.3-9.)

Livy's real purpose in giving this description was to demonstrate the might of Rome in defeating such awesome foes ("how far Roman valor surpasses Gallic madness"). But there must be some truth in his account because other ancient sources describe the way they ravaged western and north-central Asia Minor, and were paid tribute by even the Seleucid kingdom until Attalus I, king of Pergamum, was finally able to defeat them and confine them within fixed boundaries after 232 B.C. Their territory was over 200 miles from southwest to northeast, bounded by Lyconia and Pamphylia to the south, by Bithynia, Paphlagonia and Pontus to the north, by Cappadocia to the east and by Phrygia to the west.

The Galatian people inhabiting this territory consisted of three tribes: the most powerful, the Trocmi, settled in the east around Tavium; to the Tectosages belonged the fortress Ancyra (modern Ankara); the Tolistobogii lived in the area around Pessinus in the western part of the Galatian territory. Each tribe was subdivided into four tetrarchies, each tetrarchy having its own tetrarch, judge, military commander and two subordinate commanders. Representatives from the twelve tetrarchies formed one council which assembled at Drynemeton. The Galatian nobility ruled over the native population. Although the Galatians maintained their own Celtic language, to some extent they adopted the religion of the country. Thus a Celtic invasion from the west was the origin of Galatia in Asia Minor.

**1.2. Hellenistic Galatia.** Writing in the first century A.D. from a Roman perspective, Livy described the Hellenization of the Galatians: "those forefathers of ours had to do with true Gauls, born in their own land; these are now degenerates, of mixed race, and really Gallogrecians, as they are named" (Livy *Hist.* 28.17.9). Although the Galatians became known as the "Gal-

grecians," Greek-speaking Galatians, they are depicted by the ancient Greek and Latin historians as barbaric warriors, invading and ransacking neighboring countries. They were more influenced by local Phrygian culture and religion than by Hellenization. In Pessinus they participated in the famous ancient temple of the Phrygian goddess, the Mother of gods, called Agdistis. The sanctuary with its porticoes of white marble was an object of great veneration. The priests were called potentates because of the immense power they exercised in their society.

The Galatian form of government became more totalitarian: by 63 B.C. the tribes were no longer ruled by a council and tetrarchs, but by three tribal kings; by 42 B.C. Deiotarus gained control of all Galatia after a civil war. In a series of battles the Galatians fought against the power of Rome. In 190 B.C. they sided with the Seleucid king, Antiochus III, against Rome, but they were defeated at Magnesia in 189 B.C. by Consul Manlius Vulso.

The Galatians began to see the benefits of supporting the Roman cause. So when the Roman general, Pompey, marched against Mithradates V, the Galatians were on Pompey's side. In 64 B.C. Pompey rewarded their support by designating Galatia as a client kingdom and expanding its borders to include regions to the south and east. When in 36 B.C. Galatia was passed to Amyntas, the secretary and general of Deiotarus, the territory included portions of Pisidia and Phrygia. Later Amyntas acquired a large part of Lyconia and was given a section of Cilicia called Cilicia Tracheia and also much of Pisidia and Isauria by Augustus as a reward for his aid in the battle of Actium. As a result the territory of Galatia included a large area in the southern part of Asia Minor that had never been ethnically Galatian. When Amyntas, the last king of Galatia, was killed in battle against the Homandenses in 25 B.C., Augustus did not entrust the Galatian kingdom to the sons of Amyntas, but instead reorganized it as a Roman province under the authority of a Roman governor. Thus the Galatian kingdom became the Roman province of Galatia.

**1.3. Roman Galatia.** As a Roman province, Galatia included the original territory (the area from Pessinus in the west to Tavium in the east) with major additions from other regions: Phrygia, Isauria and Pisidia. Such cities and villages as Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe were now within the boundaries of the Galatian province. Portions of Pamphylia formerly belonging to Amyntas were restored by Augustus to Pamphylia and parts of eastern Lyconia and Cilicia Tracheia were transferred to his ally Archelaus, king of Cappadocia. But in 5 B.C. the Galatian province was

again enlarged by new annexations: a large section of Paphlagonia to the north was added and about three years later part of Pontus was added and then designated as Pontus Galatica, to distinguish it from the rest of Pontus which did not belong to Galatia.

By analogy with this official Roman designation of Pontus Galatica, it has been inferred that the references in Acts 16:6 and 18:23 should be taken as proper designations for Phrygia Galatica, that part of Phrygia which is included within the province of Galatia, to distinguish it from that part of Phrygia which lay within proconsular Asia (Phrygia Asiana). On this basis, Acts 13:14—14:23 is viewed as an account of the planting of churches in the region of Phrygia Galatica and Acts 16:6 and 18:23 are taken as references to Paul's subsequent visits in the same region. The alternative view that these references in Acts 16:6 and 18:23 describe a visit of Paul in the northern, original territory of Galatia fails to recognize the grammatical construction of these phrases in Acts ("the region of Galatia and Phrygia" indicates one region, not two) and the historical construction of the Roman province of Galatia. It seems that Acts follows the typical Greek practice of describing a Roman province by listing the regions within that province.

Thus in the time of Paul the Roman province of Galatia extended from Pontus on the Black Sea to Pamphylia on the Mediterranean. "The churches of Galatia" addressed by Paul might have been in the northern ethnic territory of the Galatian tribes in the vicinity of the chief cities, Pessinus, Ancyra and Tavium, or they might have been in the southern region of the expanded Roman province of Galatia where, according to the account in Acts 13—14, Paul visited Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. Either a North Galatia or a South Galatia address is theoretically possible as a result of the greatly expanded boundaries of the Roman province of Galatia in the first century A.D.

The Greek geographer Strabo describes the population of the province as a mixed one and distinguishes Galatians, Paphlagonians, Phrygians, Pisidians, Lyconians and Isaurians. Most of these ethnic groups maintained their own languages. But whatever their mother tongues or ethnic backgrounds may have been, all inhabitants of the Roman province of Galatia were considered Galatians. Inscriptions bearing the names of slaves refer to them as Galatians even though none of them has a Celtic name. An inscription (1st century A.D.) of Pednelissus, on the southern edge of Pisidia, designates that city as "the city of the Galatians." Another inscription of Apollonia in the Phrygian region of the province called the residents

of that city Galatians. In such places as Athens and Rhodes there are numerous inscriptions on tombstones which designate resident aliens as Galatians even though the names are almost uniformly Greek, though some show a Phrygian background.

It seems that the name of Galatians was widely used as a designation for persons of Phrygian as well as Celtic origin. Although this fact is well attested (see esp. Hemer, 299-305), it is disputed by such reputable authorities as W. Bauer's *Greek-English Lexicon* and the *IDB* article on Galatia. The latter insists that "the name of Galatians would hardly be an appropriate designation for all the inhabitants of the Roman province, but rather would evoke special memories of the history of the tribe" (Mellink, 338). But if Galatians were only a designation for pure-blooded Celts, it could only have been applied to a very small number of the Celtic aristocracy. S. Mitchell provides ample evidence to show that

although the nobility seems to have kept distinct from the subject population, the lower class probably intermarried freely and by the second century B.C. has become at least partly amalgamated with it. It is significant that the peasant population at this date was referred to not as Phrygian but as Galatian, although it is quite clear that most of it was of Anatolian origin. (Mitchell, 1058)

Even where Celtic names are found, they are usually in association with Greek, Roman or Phrygian family name types. So the pure-blooded Celt must have been very rare indeed. The entry in BAGD bases its case on Memmon's frequent use of the name of Galatians for "the people with a well-defined individuality, who came to Asia Minor from Europe." On this basis it is claimed that Memmon "would certainly never address Lycaonians as Galatians" (BAGD, 150). Presumably, we are to infer that Paul would follow the same practice as Memmon (a questionable inference in itself). Memmon, a contemporary of Paul, wrote a lengthy history of his own city, Heraclea Pontica. The purpose of his references to the Galatians was to show how the Celtic invasion in the third century B.C. weakened his city and reduced its territory. So his references do not establish the proper designation for the residents of the Roman province of Galatia in the first century A.D.

The evidence indicates that the name of the Celtic invaders became the name of honor for many diverse peoples of Asia Minor within the expanded borders of the Roman province of Galatia in the first century A.D. So members of churches anywhere in the Roman province of Galatia would have been regarded as Galatians in Paul's time. The question of their location in North or South Galatia cannot be decided one way

or the other simply on a geographical basis and must await further treatment in the discussion of Paul's letter to the Galatians.

Near the end of the first century (c. A.D. 74), Vespasian detached most of Pisidia from the Galatian province. In the second century (c. A.D. 137) the Lyconian portion of the province was transferred to Cilicia and Isauria to form an enlarged province of Cilicia. Then near the end of the third century (c. A.D. 297) the remainder of the southern regions of Galatia were transferred to a new province of Pisidia, with Pisidian Antioch as its capital and Iconium as its second city. The province of Galatia was thus reduced to approximately its ancient ethnological dimensions, the original northern territory of the Celtic invaders. It is not surprising, therefore, that patristic commentators, followed by medieval and Reformation commentators, assumed that Paul addressed his letter to churches in North Galatia since that was the only Galatia there was in patristic times.

**1.4. Culture and Religion of Roman Galatia.** Galatia was a rural province. The few major cities, notably Ancyra and Pisidian Antioch, and small villages were separated by vast tracts of countryside. The province was normally able to supply its own needs for food by the production of grain, the basic staple of life. Wool was the product that brought wealth to the province. Much of the central and southern area of the country was a huge sheep farm. Strabo informs us that many people made their fortunes from sheep, especially Amyntas, who had three hundred flocks. Many of the decorated tombstones of Galatia depict the same objects: a yoke of oxen with plow and sickles to portray the planting and harvesting of grain, a distaff and bobbin to indicate the care of sheep and weaving of wool, and a vine or bunch of grapes to show that for many the production of wine was important.

The vast areas of farmland and grazing land were crisscrossed by Roman roads which tied the cities and villages together in a remarkably efficient communications system. The Phrygian cult of the Mother of gods was widespread as were temples to Zeus (see Acts 14:13). When Ancyra became the capital of the Roman province of Galatia, the imperial cult was established there. The remains of the temple of Augustus and Roma can still be seen in Ancyra (now Ankara, the capital of modern Turkey).

## 2. Historical Context.

To understand the central themes of the letter we must consider the historical context: the authorship, addressees and date of the letter.

**2.1. Authorship.** Paul introduces himself in the first

line as "Paul an apostle" (Gal 1:1) and underlines the authority of his decision regarding the problem in the Galatian churches with the words, "Behold, I Paul say to you . . ." (Gal 5:2). His authorship is accepted by all except a few radical critics. Almost all scholars view Galatians as the standard example of Paul's style and theology.

**2.2. Addressees.** Paul addresses the recipients as his own children (Gal 4:19). To sharpen our focus on these believers we need to consider their location, Paul's relationship with them and the crisis they faced in their churches.

**2.2.1. Location of the Churches.** Paul addressed his letter to the "churches in Galatia" (Gal 1:2). Scholars are divided regarding the geographical location of these churches (see discussion above). The weight of evidence seems to be in favor of a south Galatian location. In Paul's time Galatia was the name for the entire Roman province, stretching from Pontus in the north to Pamphylia in the south. All the residents of this entire province were properly called Galatians whatever their ethnic origin. Paul normally classified the churches that he founded according to provinces: "churches of Asia" (1 Cor 16:19); "churches of Macedonia" (2 Cor 8:1) or "Achaia" (2 Cor 9:2). So it would be natural for Paul to refer to churches in Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe (all cities within the Roman province of Galatia) as churches in Galatia and to refer to the members of those churches as Galatians. Indeed, there would be no other single name which would be appropriate for them. Since there is no clear evidence that Paul founded churches in north Galatia, it seems best to take the account of Acts 13—14 as a record of the founding of the churches in Galatia which are addressed in Paul's letter to the Galatians. Acts 16:6 and 18:23 refer to subsequent visits by Paul to strengthen those same churches in Galatia.

**2.2.2. Paul's Relation to the Churches in Galatia.** Paul's description of his first visit to Galatia indicates that he went there because of some repulsive physical illness (see Healing, Illness). Nevertheless, when he preached the gospel there his converts received him as if he were an angel of God, as if he were Christ himself. Their response to Paul was extremely generous. Paul says that if it were possible, they would have given him their own eyes (Gal 4:12-15). When Paul portrayed Christ\* crucified, they believed and received the Holy Spirit\* (Gal 3:1-2).

**2.2.3. The Crisis in the Galatian Churches.** Soon after Paul planted the churches in Galatia, they were infiltrated by "troublemakers" who preached a gospel different from Paul's (Gal 1:6-9). The identity of these

troublemakers has been the subject of extensive discussion (see Judaizers; Opponents).

It is most likely that they were Jewish Christians who insisted that it was necessary to belong to the Jewish nation in order to receive the blessing of God.\* Therefore they required the badges of identity peculiar to the Jewish people: circumcision,\* Sabbath observance (the Holy Days) and keeping the Mosaic Law. No doubt they appealed to the example of Abraham's\* circumcision in their campaign to persuade the Galatian believers that without circumcision it was impossible to participate in the covenantal blessings promised to Abraham. Probably the intruders had preempted Paul's authority by claiming support from the higher authority\* of the original apostles in the Jerusalem\* church.

The troublemakers were winning the Galatian converts over to their side. Evidently their message met a need in the Galatian churches. They may well have felt a loss of identity since their faith in Christ excluded them from both their pagan temples and from the Jewish synagogues. So they sought identification with the Jewish people to gain a sense of belonging to God's people. It also appears that they wanted to come under the discipline of the Mosaic Law because they believed that the Law would give them clear guidance in their moral struggle. In any case, they were mesmerized by the message of the intruders and had become negative toward Paul.

**2.3. Date.** Paul provides an autobiographical sketch of his life from the time of his conversion to the time of writing this letter. A comparison of this autobiography with his other letters and Acts has led to a number of conflicting hypotheses regarding the place of this letter in the chronology\* of Paul's life (see Paul in Acts and Letters). These hypotheses can be evaluated on the basis of a consideration of three lines of evidence: (1) the Jerusalem visits; (2) the meaning of "former" in Galatians 4:13; and (3) the location of the churches in North or South Galatia.

**2.3.1. The Jerusalem Visits and the Date.** The basic point of dispute in the discussion of the Jerusalem visits revolves around the matching of Paul's visits to Jerusalem described in this letter and his visits to Jerusalem described in Acts. Only two visits are mentioned in Galatians: (1) Galatians 1:18, first post-conversion visit; and (2) Galatians 2:1-10, conference visit. Five of Paul's visits to Jerusalem are recorded in Acts: (1) Acts 9:26-30, first post-conversion visit; (2) Acts 11:30, famine relief visit; (3) Acts 15:1-30, conference visit; (4) Acts 18:22, quick visit; and (5) Acts 21:15-17, arrest visit. Of the many attempts to relate the visits described in Galatians to those of Acts, two merit spe-

cial attention: Galatians 2:1-10 = Acts 15:1-30; and Galatians 2:1-10 = Acts 11:30.

**2.3.1.1. Galatians 2:1-10 = Acts 15:1-30.** If we match the Galatians 1:18 (first post-conversion) visit with the Acts 9:26-30 (first post-conversion) visit and the Galatians 2:1-10 conference visit with the Acts 15:1-30 conference visit, then Paul's letter to the Galatians would be placed after the Jerusalem conference described in Acts 15:1-30 (= Gal 2:1-10). Such an equation seems reasonable since both accounts of the conference visit refer to the same issue (the obligation of Gentile converts to keep the Jewish Law), the same participants (Paul and Barnabas\* go to Jerusalem to confer with Peter\* and James\* and others) and the same decision (the requirement of circumcision is not imposed upon Gentile converts).

Two major objections raised against this equation are Paul's omissions under oath in Galatians 1:20 of any reference to the famine relief visit (Acts 11:27-30) or any reference to the "Apostolic Decrees" of the conference (Acts 15:20, 29). Some scholars assert that to hold to the equation of Galatians 2:1-10 and Acts 15:1-20 in the light of these two omissions necessarily involves an attack on the truthfulness of Paul's account or the account in Acts or both. Yet such scholars as J. B. Lightfoot and J. G. Machen, who certainly uphold the reliability of both accounts, argue that these two omissions on Paul's part can be explained on the basis that they are not relevant to his discussion in Galatians and therefore Paul was not obliged to record them. Since the point of Paul's autobiography was to record his relationship with the original apostles in Jerusalem, not simply his visits to Jerusalem, it was not necessary for him to refer to the famine-relief visit (Acts 11:27-30) since he did not meet with the apostles then. At least the account in Acts of that visit makes no mention of such a meeting. And it makes sense that Paul would not refer to the "Apostolic Decrees" since they are not viewed in the Acts account as a negation of the major decision not to require circumcision. Therefore, Paul's claim that "those who seemed to be important . . . added nothing to my message" (Gal 2:6) fits with the record in Acts. Since the Galatian Christians were all too eager to come under whatever decrees came from the Jerusalem church, Paul may have decided that any mention of the "Apostolic Decrees" would have been ill advised, unless absolutely necessary. Since he never appealed to the "Apostolic Decrees" in any of his letters, we may conclude that he did not feel obligated to do so (though some have suggested that he may have been out of sympathy with the Decrees). After all, his authority was not based on decrees from Jerusalem

but on "revelation from Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:12).

Another criticism of the Galatians 2:1-10 = Acts 15:1-20 equation is that this equation makes it difficult to explain the withdrawal of Peter and "even Barnabas" from table fellowship with Gentile Christians in Antioch\* (Gal 2:11-14) after guidelines for such fellowship were established at the conference according to the Acts account. But even if the conflict in Antioch occurred before the Acts 15 conference, as some scholars suggest, it still is difficult to explain Peter's behavior. We still have to ask why he would withdraw from table fellowship with Gentile Christians in Antioch after the Jerusalem conference described by Paul in Galatians 2:1-10. From Paul's perspective, Peter's conduct is indefensible because it violates the truth\* of the gospel which had been defended in the Jerusalem conference.

2.3.1.2. *Galatians 2:1-10 = Acts 11:27-30.* The criticisms of the Galatians 2:1-10 = Acts 15:1-20 equation have led some to suggest another equation: Galatians 2:1-10 = Acts 11:27-30. The benefit of this equation is that it avoids any suspicion that Paul has failed to report all of his visits to Jerusalem after his conversion since in this equation the first two visits in Acts equal the two visits listed in Galatians. And Paul did not refer to the Apostolic Decrees for the simple reason that this letter was written before the Acts 15 conference when those decrees were set forth. This equation also takes at face value the statement in Galatians 1:21, "Later I went to Syria and Cilicia." If Galatians 2:1-20 refers to the Jerusalem conference that came after Paul's mission in Galatia, then Galatia must be read into the statement in Galatians 1:21. But if Galatians 2:1-10 refers to a conference that occurred during the Acts 11:27-30 visit, then the natural reading of the text stands: Paul was only in Syria and Cilicia between the two Jerusalem visits of Galatians 1:18 and 2:1-10.

It is also easy to see similarities between Paul's account of the conflict in Antioch in Galatians 2:11-14 and the conflict in Antioch before the Jerusalem conference described in Acts 15:1-2. Both refer to a conflict over the application of the Jewish Law to Gentile converts and both indicate that the conflict was caused by a delegation from Jerusalem. If these accounts refer to the same event, then it would be reasonable to conclude that Paul wrote Galatians on the eve of the Jerusalem conference of Acts 15:1-20. And if so, then we can identify the conference visit of Galatians 2:1-10 with the famine-relief visit of Acts 11:27-30.

But this identification also faces problems. There is no record of a conference visit in Acts 11:27-30 or even any indication that Paul and Barnabas met with

the apostles. Of course, Acts is a selective account, but there is very little evidence in the text for matching the Galatians 2:1-10 visit with the Acts 11:27-30 visit. Even though there are minor differences between Galatians 2:1-10 and Acts 15:1-20, at least both passages seem to describe a conference in Jerusalem. Furthermore, if Galatians 2:1-10 = Acts 11:27-30, then there were two conferences in Jerusalem. Many scholars have thought that it is highly unlikely that there were two conferences where the same people debated the same issue with the same outcome. This duplication of conferences is unnecessary if the Galatians 2:1-10 = Acts 15:1-20 equation stands.

2.3.2. *The "First" Visit and the Date (Gal 4:13).* Paul's reference to the time when he "first preached the gospel" in Galatia (Gal 4:13) has been taken as a clue for the date of the letter. Unfortunately, all sides of the debate claim this clue as support. Even if the term "first" should be taken as a true comparative (the "former" of two), it is by no means clear which visit it designates: it could either refer to the Acts 16:6 visit as the one before the second visit of Acts 18:23, or it could refer to the visit of Acts 13:14—14:23 as the one before the second visit of Acts 16:6, or it could refer to the Acts 13:14—14:21a visit as the one before the return journey of Acts 14:21b-23. So this term does not provide much help in dating the letter to the Galatians.

2.3.3. *The Destination and the Date.* The question of the date of the letter is related to the question of destination. But it must be admitted that a determination of the destination does not necessarily decide the date. If the framework of Acts is accepted, then a destination of north Galatia means that the letter was written after the so-called second missionary journey (after Acts 18:22), sometime between A.D. 53 and 57. If south Galatia was the destination (as seems more likely in light of the discussion above), the letter could have been written immediately after the first missionary journey and before the Jerusalem conference in A.D. 49. But if the equation of Galatians 2:1-10 = Acts 15:1-20 is slightly favored by the evidence as argued above, then the letter was written to south Galatia sometime after the Jerusalem conference, anytime between A.D. 50 and 57.

It has often been noted that a comparison of Galatians with 2 Corinthians and Romans shows a similarity of tone and themes, especially related to the controversy over the role of the Jewish Law in Gentile churches. This similarity may indicate that these three letters were written during the same time, a time when Paul faced a fierce struggle for the freedom of his Gentile churches from pressure to succumb to bond-

age to the Jewish way of life. But attempts to date the letter on the basis of such theological comparisons with other letters have been used to support early (Longenecker) and late (Lightfoot) dates. The subjective approach of such comparisons and the occasional nature of Paul's letters (each letter responds to a specific occasion) render these attempts at best only secondary lines of support for theories in search of firmer ground.

The dating of Galatians is a notorious and for some a fascinating historical puzzle. But the outcome of the protracted debate about the date has little if any effect on the interpretation of the major themes of the letter.

### 3. Literary Forms.

Considerable attention has been given in recent years to the literary form of Galatians.

3.1. *The Form of the Letter.* A detailed comparison of Galatians to Hellenistic letters (see Letters, Letter Forms) of the same period indicates that Paul used a standard form of letter called the "rebuke-request" form (see Hansen and Longenecker). Unlike his custom in all the rest of his letters, in Galatians Paul does not follow his salutation (Gal 1:1-5) with any form of thanksgiving. Instead, he expresses astonishment and rebuke: "I am astonished that you have so quickly departed from the one who called you by grace" (Gal 1:6).

The expression "I am astonished" was often used in letters of that time as a rebuke for not meeting the expectations of the writer. The expression of rebuke was usually followed by reasons for the rebuke. Paul scolds his readers for their disloyalty to the gospel (Gal 1:6-10) and undergirds that rebuke with an autobiographical account of his loyalty to the truth of the gospel (Gal 1:11—2:21). Then he rebukes them for their foolishness regarding the gospel (Gal 3:1-5) and undergirds that rebuke by explaining the meaning of the gospel in the light of his exposition of the Scriptures (Gal 3:6—4:11). Letters of rebuke contained requests to set things right. Paul begins his request in Galatians 4:12 with the personal appeal to imitate\* him in his stand for the freedom of the gospel. This appeal is strengthened by an autobiographical account of his relationship with the Galatian believers (Gal 4:12-20) and an allegorical treatment of the Abraham story (Gal 4:21-31). The request to stand fast for freedom is then spelled out in a series of specific ethical instructions (Gal 5:1—6:10). Paul underlines the main themes of the letter in his own hand-written subscription (Gal 6:11-18).

3.2. *The Structure of the Argument.* Recent rhetorical analyses have attempted to explain the methods and

structures of Paul's argumentation in Galatians (see Rhetoric; Rhetorical Criticism). They point to many similarities between the structure of Paul's argument in Galatians and the guidelines for rhetoric in the classical rhetorical handbooks. H. D. Betz classifies Paul's argument as an example of forensic rhetoric since he is viewed as adopting the tactics of persuasion used in the law court to address the judge or jury in order to defend or accuse someone regarding past actions. Paul defends himself against accusations (Gal 1:10); at the same time he accuses his opponents of perverting the gospel (Gal 1:7). Using the categories of classical forensic rhetoric, Betz outlines Galatians as follows:

- I. Epistolary Prescript (Gal 1:1-5)
- II. *Exordium* ("introduction," Gal 1:6-11)
- III. *Narratio* ("narration," Gal 1:12—2:14)
- IV. *Propositio* ("proposition," Gal 2:15-21)
- V. *Probatio* ("confirmation," 3:1—4:31)
- VI. *Exhortatio* ("exhortation," Gal 5:1—6:10)
- VII. Epistolary Postscript-*Peroratio* ("conclusion," Gal 6:11-18)

But Betz has to admit that he is not able to cite parallels to the exhortation section (Gal 5:1—6:10) from the classical rhetorical handbooks. For this reason G. Kennedy argues that Galatians is best viewed as deliberative rhetoric, since it aims to exhort or dissuade the audience regarding future actions by demonstrating that those actions are expedient or harmful. Paul seeks to dissuade the Galatian believers from following the false teachers by pointing to the harmful effects: severance from Christ and grace\* (Gal 5:4), exclusion from the kingdom\* of God (Gal 5:21) and a reaping of corruption (Gal 6:8). He underscores the expediency of the course of action which he has exhorted them to follow by giving them the promise of the harvest of eternal life (Gal 6:8) and granting them the benediction upon all those who walk according to "this canon" (Gal 6:16).

It seems best to classify Paul's argument in Galatians as a mixture of forensic and deliberative rhetoric. The rebuke section of the letter (Gal 1:6—4:11) has the characteristics of forensic rhetoric, but at Galatians 4:12 a major rhetorical shift to deliberative rhetoric occurs. Paul is no longer so much concerned to accuse or defend as he is to persuade the Galatian believers to adopt a certain course of action. He begins his appeal to this new course of action in Galatians 4:12: "Become as I am." That exhortation is then supported by the command from the Abraham story to "cast out the slave and her son" (Gal 4:30), clarified by authoritative instructions to stand in freedom (Gal 5:1-12) and defined in specific terms in the ethical



exhortation to walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:13–6:10). The following pattern thus emerges:

Salutation (Gal 1:1-5)

Rebuke (Gal 1:6–4:11)

Autobiography (Gal 1:13–2:21)

Argument from Scripture (3:6-29)

Request (Gal 4:12–6:10)

Autobiography (Gal 4:12-20)

Allegory from Scripture (Gal 4:21-31)

Ethical instruction (Gal 5:1–6:10)

Subscription (Gal 6:11-18)

#### 4. Contents.

**4.1. Salutation (Gal 1:1-5).** Beyond the standard elements of sender, addressees and greetings, present in all his salutations, this opening paragraph contains two significant theological statements which anticipate central themes of the letter. First, in Galatians 1:1 Paul's designation of himself as an apostle\* goes beyond his references to his apostolic position in his other letters. His double denial of any dependence on human agency or authority for the legitimacy of his apostleship and his claim to a divine commission place an emphasis on apostolic authority that will be an important feature in his letter. Second, Paul's declaration that the cross\* of Christ is the way to freedom from the present evil age (Gal 1:4) sets the cross in the center of his theology, where it stays through to the very end of the letter (Gal 2:19, 21; 3:1, 13; 4:5; 5:11, 24; 6:12, 14). Paul's central argument is that the cross alone is the way of salvation and therefore all attempts to supplement the work of the cross with works of the Law must be totally rejected.

**4.2. Rebuke (Gal 1:6–4:11).** Immediately after the opening paragraph Paul expresses his rebuke for the Galatians' desertion to a perverted gospel (Gal 1:6) and places anyone who distorts the gospel of Christ under a double curse (Gal 1:7-9). In this way Paul establishes at the outset the ultimate measure of genuine authority: adherence to the one gospel. Paul's recognition that he himself will be judged by the standard of the gospel as a servant of Christ keeps him from seeking human approval (Gal 1:10). The standard of the gospel was not derived from human tradition; it was given by "the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:11-12): Jesus Christ is both the source and the subject of the gospel.

**4.2.1. Autobiography (Gal 1:13–2:21).** Paul's autobiography is essentially a portrayal of his faithfulness to the one true gospel: he was called by God to preach the gospel (Gal 1:16); he defended the gospel in the Jerusalem conference (Gal 2:1-10) and in the conflict with Peter (Gal 2:11-14); and he embodied the essence

of the gospel (Gal 2:15-21). His record as a loyal representative of the gospel stands as the basis of his authority\* as an apostle\* and as a sharp rebuke to the Galatian believers' disloyalty to the gospel.

The primary point of Paul's story of his call (Gal 1:13-21; *see* Conversion and Call) is to stress that he was called by God, not by the church, to preach the gospel. Before God's gracious call stopped Paul in his tracks, he was engaged in a campaign to destroy the church of God because of his zealous devotion to the traditions of Judaism (Gal 1:13-14). God's call was not an afterthought; like the prophets of old (*see* Jer 1:5 and Is 49:1; *see* Prophet, Paul as), Paul had been set aside from his mother's womb (Gal 1:15). Paul heard the call when God revealed his Son to him so that he would preach Christ to the Gentiles (Gal 1:16). When Paul heard the call, he did not confer with "flesh and blood" or go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before him; instead he went into Arabia and then returned to Damascus (Gal 1:16-17). It was only three years later that he first had a short visit with Peter in Jerusalem. Except for James, Peter was the only apostle that Paul saw at that time (Gal 1:18-19). And after that visit he was in the regions of Syria and Cilicia, unknown by face to the church in Judea; they only heard that he was now preaching the faith he had previously tried to destroy (Gal 1:21-24). This part of the story defends Paul's independence from the original apostles. God directly commissioned him to be an apostle to the Gentiles.

But Paul did not work independently. As the next episode in his autobiography shows, he had the full support of those considered most important as leaders in Jerusalem (Gal 2:1-10). As a result of the council in Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas were given the right hand of fellowship by the leaders of the mother church in support of their mission to the Gentiles. The leaders in Jerusalem did not add anything to Paul's message (Gal 2:6-9). But even though Paul worked to establish a consensus with these leaders, he was not willing to allow arch-conservative Jewish "Christians" (counterfeit Christians, in Paul's eyes) to destroy his mission\* to the Gentiles. When there was pressure to get his Gentile companion, Titus, circumcised, Paul refused to give in; he stood for "the truth of the gospel." (As he hopes the Galatian believers will also do when they are pressured to be circumcised.)

In the next episode of his autobiography, Paul describes how he confronted Peter in order to defend the truth of the gospel (Gal 2:11-14). When Peter\* visited the church in Antioch,\* he followed the custom in the integrated congregation of Christian Jews and Gentiles of eating with Gentile Christians. Un-

doubtedly his presence at table fellowship with Gentiles was taken as an official stamp of approval on the union and equality of Jews and Gentiles in the church. But when some representatives who were sent by James from the church in Jerusalem came to Antioch, they persuaded Peter to stop the practice of Jews eating with Gentiles in the church. According to Paul, Peter gave in to their demand because he feared those who were circumcised, namely, the Jews. This probably means that he became concerned about the detrimental effect that his table fellowship with the Gentiles would have on the mission of the church in Jerusalem to the Jews. If non-Christian Jews in Jerusalem heard that Peter was eating with Gentiles, they might not only turn away from the witness of the church but also become actively hostile to the church for tolerating such a practice (for social background in Palestine *see* Revolutionary Movements).

Peter's withdrawal from table fellowship with the Gentiles split the church into Jewish and Gentile factions and by action if not by word compelled the Gentiles to think that they would have to become Jews if they wanted to enjoy table fellowship with the apostles and the mother church. From Paul's perspective, Peter's action was not a legitimate accommodation for the sake of the gospel; it was a compromise of the essential truth of the gospel. Peter was charged with hypocrisy, not heresy. Peter and Paul did not disagree about the truth of the gospel; but Peter's action was inconsistent with his belief in the gospel. By going along with Jewish adherence to the Law, which required the separation of Jews and Gentiles and implied that incorporation into the Jewish nation was necessary for salvation,\* Peter had denied the essence of the gospel, which proclaimed that salvation for both Jews and Gentiles was by way of the cross and incorporation into Christ. The conflict in Antioch was a mirror image of the crisis faced by the Galatian believers, since the issue of compelling Gentiles to live like Jews was precisely the central issue for the churches in Galatia.

Paul wraps up his autobiography with a statement that is both intensely personal and at the same time serves as a paradigm for all Christians (Gal 2:15-21). In his own experience as a Jew by birth (Gal 2:15; *see* Jew, Paul the), he knew that he was justified by faith in Christ, not by works\* of the Law (Gal 2:16). By implication it must be clear that those who are Gentile sinners (Gal 2:15) could only be justified by faith\* in Christ and not by works of the Law. Paul sought justification\* only in Christ, but he was found to be a sinner on the basis of the Law (Gal 2:17) because he was eating with Gentiles. Since his table fellowship

with Gentiles was on the basis of common faith in Christ, Christ was blamed for being the agent who caused Paul to break the Law by eating with Gentiles (Gal 2:17). But Paul adamantly rejects any notion that Christ is an agent of sin.\* For it is only if the Law which separates Jews and Gentiles were to be rebuilt that then Paul would be proved to be a sinner on the basis of the Law (Gal 2:18). But in fact he has died to the Law, so the Law can no longer be used to condemn table fellowship with Gentiles. His death to Law was accomplished by union with Christ in his death—"I am crucified with Christ" (Gal 2:19).

Death to the Law did not mean moral license but the means for achieving the highest goal—"that I might live to God" (Gal 2:19). This life\* to God is empowered by Christ ("Christ lives in me"); it is lived by faith in Christ ("I live by faith in the Son of God"); it is motivated by the sacrificial love of Christ ("who loved me and gave himself for me"). Paul's experience sets forth an either-or choice: either attempt to attain righteousness\* "through the Law" and so negate the value of Christ's death (Gal 2:21); or die to the Law by participation in the death of Christ and so live to God by the indwelling life of Christ (Gal 2:19-20; *see* Death of Christ). Paul sets forth his own experience in Galatians 2:15-21 to prove that participation in the events of the gospel, not adherence to the Law, is the source of life and righteousness. In the next chapter he uses the story of Abraham to prove the same thesis.

**4.2.2. Argument from Scripture (Gal 3:6-29).** The Abraham argument is introduced by five barbed questions (Gal 3:1-5) which rebuke the Galatians for their foolishness. Implied in these questions is the charge that the Galatians have failed to understand the significance of the message of Christ crucified (Gal 3:1) and have not realized the implications of their experience of the Spirit (Gal 3:2-5). Their past (Gal 3:2, 3) and present (Gal 3:5) experience of the Spirit is indisputable evidence that they are already experiencing the full blessing of God. Paul's questions are posed as sharp antitheses so that the Galatians will be compelled by their own experience of the Spirit to choose the right answer: "Not by observing the Law, but by believing what we heard about Christ crucified!"

The Galatians' expected answer is confirmed by the exposition of Scripture (*see* Old Testament in Paul). Paul quotes Genesis 15:6 to redefine the basis of Abrahamic sonship. The sign of the covenant—the true sign of Abrahamic sonship—is faith, not circumcision. His second quote from the Abraham story (Gen 12:3 and 18:18) is interpreted as a prophecy of the present experience of Gentile believers. Because Scripture foresaw that it would be by faith that God would justify

the Gentiles, it preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham: Gentiles would be included in the blessing promised to Abraham.

The Galatian believers had been lured into thinking that they could be included in the promised blessing of Abraham by keeping the Law\* of Moses. But in fact those who are of faith are already in the circle of blessing (Gal 3:9), while those who rely on the works of the Law are under a curse\* (Gal 3:10) because Scripture (Deut 27:26) puts all who do not keep all the things written in the book of the Law under a curse. If the Law keeps themselves are under a curse since even they have not kept all the Law, then the risk of incurring a curse is even greater for Gentile believers who accept only certain items of the Law in order to identify with Israel.\* Habakkuk 2:4 proves that righteousness by faith is the way to life (Gal 3:11).

But the Law is not of faith because it demands doing works of the Law as the way to life as the quotation of Leviticus 18:5 proves (Gal 3:13). The Law demands perfect obedience (Gal 3:10) and offers life on the basis of this perfect obedience (Gal 3:12), but the Law is incapable of engendering life or righteousness before God (Gal 3:21). The way to blessing is not through the Law but through the cross of Christ. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse in our place (Gal 3:13-14). The Galatian believers had already received the blessing of Abraham when they received the Spirit by believing in the message of the cross (Gal 3:1-2, 14).

Following this contrast of Law and faith, Paul turns to a contrast of Law and promise by sketching out the flow of salvation history. Since the promise of blessing had been given to Abraham and his seed 430 years before the giving of Law, it could not be modified or annulled by the giving of the Law. This argument from history is designed to destroy the synthesis of the Abrahamic promise and Mosaic law which had led the Galatians to turn to the Law as the way to experience the promised blessing. And Paul's messianic definition of seed (Gal 3:16) removes Jewish national boundaries as the limits of the inheritance of the Abrahamic blessing. The link Paul makes between Abraham and Christ bypasses the Mosaic law and the Jewish nation as channels for the reception of the promises to Abraham, with the result that Christ alone is the channel of the promised blessing.

Two rhetorical questions in Galatians 3:19-21 disclose Paul's own awareness that his argument so far would lead his readers to question whether he has denied any purpose to the law ("Why then the Law? . . . Is the Law therefore opposed to the promises of God?"). Paul's description of the negative purpose,

temporary function and mediated origin of the law leaves the Galatian converts without any sound reason for turning to the Law (Gal 3:19-25). The focus of Galatians 3:26-29 is the union of the Gentile believers with Christ. The equal status of all believers as "children of God," "Abraham's seed" and "heirs" in Christ renders any attempt to gain superior status by circumcision or Law observance of no value whatsoever. At the beginning and end of his argument from the Abraham story, Paul's main point is that the inclusion of Gentile believers in the people of God is based solely upon their identification with Christ. Identification by race, class or sex no longer has any significance because of identification with Christ.

Paul closes the rebuke section of his letter with a dramatic before-and-after picture (Gal 4:1-11) to contrast the slavery\* before and the freedom\* after Christ was sent by the Father and accepted by the Galatian believers. Now that they have experienced the Spirit who gives them assurance that they are children of God, it is absurd for them to turn back to live as slaves under the Law. Formerly they were slaves to the gods of this world, now they are children of God. Paul's rebuke ends with an expression of fear that his efforts for them may be in vain (Gal 4:11; *see* Futility).

**4.3. Request section (Gal 4:12-6:10).** Paul turns from rebuke to request. The initial request of Galatians 4:12 ("Become as I am!") really amounts to a call for loyalty to the truth of the gospel and decisive resistance against the troublemakers. Paul developed his autobiography to illustrate how at Jerusalem (Gal 2:3, 5) and at Antioch (Gal 2:11-14) he had remained loyal to the gospel and decisively resisted pressures from Jewish Christians similar to those faced by the Galatian churches. Now he turns to autobiography again to strengthen this initial request by reminding the Galatians of the close relationship which they and Paul enjoyed prior to their departure from the gospel.

**4.3.1. Autobiography (Gal 4:12-20).** Paul's account of the Galatians' previous welcome (as if he were Christ Jesus), even when he was suffering from repulsive illness and their willingness to give him their own eyes, adds great force to his request for renewed identification and imitation. His request that they imitate him is also intensified by contrasting the evil intentions of the intruders with his own concern for his "children" as a mother in labor with unborn children, laboring for them until Christ is completely formed within them (*see* Pastor).

**4.3.2. Allegory from Scripture (Gal 4:21-31).** Paul's initial request of Galatians 4:12 is now spelled out by quoting an imperative from the Law itself. If the Galatians are so eager to be under the Law, then let them

follow the Law. The "punch line" of the allegory is to command the Galatians through the Law to "cast out the bondwoman and her son" (Gal 4:30; Gen 21:10). Paul interprets Genesis 21 within the framework already established in Galatians 3. Within that framework Paul sees a real correspondence between the historical situation of the two sons of Abraham and the two sorts of descendants of Abraham in his own day, those born according to the flesh and those born according to the Spirit.

But Paul moves from typological interpretation built on historical correspondence to allegorical definitions. Here again, however, the key is the theological framework of Galatians 3. For in that argument Gentile converts were identified as true children and heirs of Abraham in the same sense as Isaac on the basis of the promise given to Abraham and their experience of the Spirit. And in that argument there is a contrast between the Abrahamic covenant and the Sinaitic covenant, which leads to slavery. Thus when Paul redefines the terms in his allegorical treatment of Genesis 21, Sarah (and her counterpart, the Jerusalem above, the true mother Zion) is identified as the mother of the Galatian believers in Christ.

Paul's Hagar = Sinai and Sinai = present Jerusalem equations are problematic. The major difficulty with them is their apparent lack of validity in the face of the fundamental Jewish conviction that the Mosaic Law had been given to the descendants of Isaac at Mount Sinai and had nothing to do with Hagar. The most satisfactory explanation of Paul's allegorical equations is simply stated in Galatians 4:25: "for she is in slavery with her children." Slavery is the common feature that links Hagar (the slave woman), the covenant given at Mount Sinai and the present Jerusalem. Paul had already attributed this feature of slavery to the Mosaic Law (Gal 3:22-24; 4:1-10) and to a certain faction at Jerusalem (Gal 2:4). His allegorization must be seen as a counterattack upon that Jewish-Christian faction within the church at Jerusalem which tried to rob Gentile believers of their freedom by requiring them to be circumcised (Gal 2:3-6) and which was now attempting to do the same thing at Galatia (*see* Judaizers). It was this actual experience of "troublemakers" in the church that gave rise to Paul's allegorical treatment of the text and is the key to its interpretation.

While the Hagar-Sarah allegory serves primarily as the basis for Paul's biblical appeal to resist the influence of the intruders, it also sets up a conceptual foundation for the ethical instructions of the rest of the letter. The freedom-slavery and spirit-flesh antitheses presented in the allegory set the stage for the ethical appeal to stand for freedom against slavery under the

Law and to walk by the Spirit and so overcome the desires of the flesh.

**4.3.3. Ethical instructions (Gal 5:1-6:10).** The new identity of the Galatian believers leads to a new behavior (*see* Barclay; *see* Ethics). By grace they are true children of the free woman (Gal 4:31), born by the power of the Spirit (Gal 4:29). Now they must learn to express their new identity in new behavior. Paul gives instructions about their behavior. But he constantly bases his imperatives on the indicatives of grace:

For freedom Christ has set you free (indicative). Stand firm (Gal 5:1)!

You were called to freedom (indicative). Serve one another (Gal 5:13)!

We live by the Spirit (indicative). Keep in step with the Spirit (Gal 5:24)!

After the emphatic declaration in Galatians 5:2-12 that faith and Christ, on the one hand, and circumcision and Law, on the other, are exclusive alternatives, Paul's imperative of Galatians 5:13 echoes the command of Galatians 5:1. In both Galatians 5:1 and Galatians 5:13 there is first an indicative statement regarding freedom in Christ, which is then followed by an imperative and a warning. In Galatians 5:1 Paul commands the Galatians to stand fast; in Galatians 5:13 he exhorts them to serve one another in love. The warning of Galatians 5:1 is against a return to slavery under the Law; in Galatians 5:13 it is against giving opportunity to the flesh.

The fact that in Galatians 5:13 Paul warns that the flesh is the danger to freedom in Christ, instead of slavery to the Law, has led many to suppose that Paul begins to attack libertinism and lawlessness in Galatians 5:13. The description of the warfare between the flesh and the Spirit in the verses which follow is understood to confirm this supposition. But in the allegory which precedes this section, Paul identified slavery with both the Sinaitic covenant and the flesh. Those who are according to the flesh, like Ishmael, are identified with those who are proponents of the Sinaitic covenant. And in the subscription which follows this section those who campaign for circumcision boast in the flesh. So it seems best to interpret Galatians 5:13-6:10 in context. Paul has not changed fronts to fight against libertinism in this section. His attack against the works of the flesh is a continuation of his attack against the works of the Law.

The intruders' campaign for circumcision and the Law evidently led to social disorder and a lack of love in the Galatian community. In Paul's list of the works of the flesh these social sins receive the major emphasis. Paul's description of the opposition of the flesh and the Spirit is developed as a way of explaining the



Christian's relationship to the Law. The Law is still a central factor in Paul's thinking (Gal 5:14, 18, 23, 6:2). His statement that one who is led by the Spirit is not under Law (Gal 5:18) implies that a life under the Law is a life subject to the desires of the flesh. The works of the flesh, then, are to be seen as the result of living under the Law rather than under the guidance of the Spirit. The result of living under the guidance of the Spirit results in the fruit of the Spirit (*see* Fruit of the Spirit), against which there is no Law (Gal 5:23). For love fulfills the Law (Gal 5:14), the "Law of Christ"\* (Gal 6:2). It is the Spirit, not the Law, which has the power to liberate one from the desires of the flesh.

**4.4. Subscription (Gal 6:11-18).** In common Hellenistic letters, the author would close the letter by writing a summary of the contents of the letter in his own hand. Paul does that in this letter. The denunciation of the intruders (Gal 6:12-13), the autobiographical statement of personal loyalty to the cross of Christ (Gal 6:14), with the mention of the marks of Christ as evidence of that loyalty (Gal 6:17), and the reminder that circumcision means nothing whereas the new creation means everything (Gal 6:15) all repeat and underscore the main themes of the letter. The first benediction on those who follow his rule, even on the Israel of God (Gal 6:16), his second benediction\* (Gal 6:18), the appellation "brothers and sisters" (*adelphoi*) and the final "Amen" all express Paul's confidence that his request to "stand firm" for freedom in Christ by "keeping in step with the Spirit" will be followed by his Christian readers.

*See also* ABRAHAM; ANTIOCH ON THE ORONTES; CHRONOLOGY OF PAUL; CIRCUMCISION; CONVERSION AND CALL OF PAUL; CROSS, THEOLOGY OF THE; CURSE, ACCURSED, ANATHEMA; ETHICS; FAITH; FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT; GENTILES; GOSPEL; HOLY SPIRIT; JERUSALEM; JUDAIZERS; JUSTIFICATION; LAW; LAW OF CHRIST; OLD TESTAMENT IN PAUL; OPPONENTS OF PAUL; PETER; RHETORIC; RHETORICAL CRITICISM; WORKS OF THE LAW.

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**GENERAL RESURRECTION.** *See* ESCHATOLOGY; RESURRECTION.