

THE BOOK OF GALATIANS

by Peggi Klubnik

AN INTRODUCTION

I. AUTHOR: The Apostle Paul

Galatians is highly regarded by most to be authentically Pauline, with the exception of the eighteenth century Dutch school and recent critic F. R. McGuire.¹

Internal Evidence. Confirmation of the authorship of Galatians appears in the salutation (1:1), in the body of the epistle (5:2), and in his autobiography in the first two chapters. In addition, the objections of chapter three (3:1-6, 15) are written in the first person singular, the pleas of chapter four are personal (4:11, 12-20), and the persecution of Paul is mentioned (5:2, 3) and then specified (6:17).²

External Evidence. The writings of the church fathers allude to the circulation of the epistle at the beginning of the second century.³

II. DESTINATION: Churches located in the Roman province of Galatia

A. The northern Galatia theory, widely accepted until the nineteenth century,⁴ assumes that the letter was written on Paul's third missionary journey from Macedonia or Achaia in A.D. 57 or 58.⁵ Paul would then have established churches in the northern part of the Roman province of Galatia on his second missionary journey following the prohibition of the Spirit to preach the gospel in Asia (Acts 16:6).⁶ B. The northern theory, which would date the book after the Corinthian letters, is based on the following arguments:

1. After the Gauls' occupation of the central region, the inhabitants were known as *Galatians*.⁷
2. The word *Galatia* in Acts 16:6 and 18:23 is interpreted as a separate region from Phrygia, refuting the use of the term as the provincial title.⁸
3. The geographical district was commonly used by Luke to specify a particular city.⁹
4. There are similarities in characteristics between the Gauls and the Galatians.¹⁰
5. The Epistle speaks of two distinct visits to Jerusalem by the Apostle Paul (Gal 1:18; 2:1), the second of which was the occasion for the Jerusalem council.¹¹
6. The epistle suggests that Paul visited Galatia on two occasions (Acts 16:6; 18:23), and therefore must have been written after A.D. 54.¹²
7. Galatians is characteristic in style, matter, and general tone to the epistles of the third missionary journey in A.D. 57-58 (i.e., Corinthians and Romans).¹³

B. The South Galatian theory, which proposed that the epistle was sent to churches of Acts 13 and 14 which Paul established in southern Galatia and later returned to visit (Acts 16),¹⁴ is based on the following arguments:

1. The preferred title of the *Phrygian Galatian region* (Acts 16:6; 18:23) argues against Paul visiting northern Galatia.¹⁵
2. The Acts account of Paul's ministry gives particular attention to the southern Galatian churches while avoiding reference to those in the northern region.¹⁶
3. The convalescent of Paul (Gal 4:13) during his first visit is not likely to have been in a distant region of Galatia.¹⁷

4. Paul typically referred to the provinces by name when writing about churches.¹⁸
5. The name Galatia is a non-ethnic term which is descriptive of the variety of inhabitants on the southern area.¹⁹

6. The *angel of God* (Gal 4:14) could refer to the Acts 14:12 Lystra incident, the term *marks of Jesus* (Gal 6:17) might be a reference to Paul's stoning (Acts 14:19), and the phrase *truth of the Gospel might remain with you* (Gal 2:5) may refer to Paul's argued position at the Jerusalem council.²⁰

7. The reference in Acts to the presence of Judaistic believers in the southern region and their activity as the direct cause of the Jerusalem council makes a southern theory more likely.²¹

C. Conclusion: The evidence is inconclusive, but the terminology of Paul and Luke, the presence of Judaizers in Galatia, and Luke's focus on the southern churches favor the southern theory.

III. DATE OF WRITING: AD 49-50

A. A late date of the epistle, because it requires adherence to the northern theory, will not be addressed.²²

B. Those who hold to the southern theory place the writing of the epistle either before or after the Jerusalem council. However, an early date encounters fewer conflicts²³ and is preferred because (1) Barnabas is mentioned, who only accompanied Paul on the first of his missionary journeys, (2) the decrees of the Jerusalem council are not quoted, and (3) the issue of Gentiles adhering to the Mosaic Law was current in Antioch and Jerusalem.²⁴

IV. THE OCCASION AND PURPOSE:

The eagerness with which the Galatians had rejected grace (1:6), adopting a perverted gospel, and the subversive activities of the Judaizers (1:7) were the impetus for the writing of the epistle.²⁵

AN ARGUMENT OF THE BOOK OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE STATEMENT: PAUL VALIDATES HIS APOSTLESHIP, WHICH AUTHENTICATES HIS MESSAGE THAT ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF GRACE JUSTIFICATION IS BY FAITH, AND NOT ACCORDING TO THE WORKS OF THE LAW, THEREFORE SANCTIFICATION IS ALSO BY FAITH, WHICH MEANS LIVING BY THE SPIRIT IN THE FREEDOM THAT CHRIST PROVIDED AS BELIEVERS SERVE ONE ANOTHER

- I. Introduction:²⁶ Paul the Apostle, with the brethren, greets the churches of Galatia, and prays that grace and peace would be with them although he is astounded that perverters of the gospel have incited them to abandon the gospel of grace which is from Jesus Christ 1:1-10
 - A. Paul, an apostle of God, and believers with him address the letter to the churches of Galatia 1:1-2
 1. Paul defends his apostleship as not originating from man but given directly by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead 1:1
 2. Paul writes the epistle along with all the brethren who are with him 1:2a
 3. The recipients of the letter are the churches which are located in the region of Galatia 1:2b

- B. Paul extends to the Galatians a blessing of peace and grace defining the past and present aspects of the gospel according to the will of God and for His glory 1:3-5
 1. Paul conveys a blessing of grace, the subject of His epistle, to which he adds the traditional Hebrew blessing of peace.²⁷ 1:3a
 2. Explaining that the source of peace is God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul summarizes the gospel of grace as the substitutionary work of Christ and His present deliverance for believer, according to the will of God the Father 1:3b-5
- C. The eager abandonment of the gospel of grace for a pseudo-gospel by the Galatians was astonishing to Paul, even though some were agitating them and attempting to pervert the gospel of Christ 1:6-7
 1. Expressing his amazement, Paul accuses the Galatians, who were called by Christ's grace, of abandoning God²⁸ for a different gospel²⁹ 1:6
 2. The message, presented by those who were troubling the Galatians, was not an additional gospel but an attempt to reverse or undo the gospel of grace³⁰ 1:7
- D. Paul declares all who preach a gospel opposed to grace, to be accursed, stating that a bond-servant of Christ does not seek to please men 1:8-10
 1. If anyone, even an angel,³¹ preaches a gospel contrary to the true gospel which had been preached to the Galatians, let them be alienated from God³² 1:8-9
 2. In a rhetorical question³³, Paul asks if he, as a bond-servant of Christ, seeks to please God not man³⁴ 1:10
- II. Paul validates his gospel message as having been revealed by God, specified at his calling, approved by the pillars of the Jerusalem church, and of superior authority to Peter's hypocrisy 1:13-2:21
 - A. Paul documents the gospel he preached as being received through revelation of Jesus Christ not from man 1:11-12
 1. The gospel which Paul heard did not originate from men 1:11
 2. Men did not give Paul the gospel, but he received it through the revelation of Jesus Christ 1:12
 - B. At the time that Paul unmercifully persecuted the church while zealously excelling in traditional Judaism, God graciously called him to preach to the Gentiles for which the Judean believers praised God 1:13-24
 1. Paul acknowledges that in his zealotness for Jewish tradition he persecuted the church of God seeking to destroy it 1:13-14
 2. But God sovereignly called Paul through grace and revealed His Son in him so that he would preach Jesus Christ to the Gentiles 1:15-16a
 3. After his conversion Paul did not confer with men or go to the apostles in Jerusalem but went to Arabia before returning to Damascus 1:16a-17
 4. After three years Paul went to Jerusalem but saw only Peter before going to Syria and Cilicia 1:18-21
 5. During this time Paul had not visited the churches in Judea but they glorified God because the one who persecuted them now preached the faith he attempted to destroy 1:22-24
 - C. After validating his gospel message with the leaders in Jerusalem, Paul confronted false brethren and was then received by the pillars of the Jerusalem church 2:1-10
 1. After fourteen years Paul, accompanied by Barnabas and Titus, the gospel which he preached to the Gentiles was verified by the Jerusalem leaders, who did not insist that Titus the Greek be circumcised 2:1-3
 2. But in spite of false brethren who sought to place them under bondage, Paul stood firm in the truth of the gospel of liberty, without assistance from the leaders 2:4-6

3. Recognizing that God had committed to Paul the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, the pillars of the Jerusalem church commissioned him to that ministry, requesting that he remember the poor 2:7-10
- D. Paul uses his apostolic authority to rebuke Peter for disassociating with the Gentiles and misleading others out of fear for the legalistic Jews 2:11-14
 1. When Peter condemned himself with his actions in Antioch, Paul rebuked him publically³⁵ because out of fear of some Jews he stopped associating with the uncircumcised Gentiles, influencing other Jews, even Barnabas, in his hypocrisy 2:11-12
 2. Recognizing their dishonesty about the truth of the gospel, Paul confronted Peter for pressuring the Gentiles to a legalism which he himself did not practice 2:14
- E. Justification is not by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus who died to free believers from the Law 2:15-19
 1. Paul speaks with the pride of their Jewish heritage as opposed to Gentile sinfulness³⁶ 2:15
 2. Even the Jews are justified by faith in Christ Jesus apart from the works of the Law because no one can be justified by keeping the Law³⁷ 2:15-16
 3. If, while seeking to be justified in Christ, the Jews realize that they also are sinners, Paul asks if Christ then has led them into sin? May it never be 2:17
 4. Transgression is approving once again that which has been disallowed³⁸ 2:18
 5. Because the righteous demands of the Law have been satisfied by Christ's death on the cross, believers are no longer subject to the Law and are free to live for God 2:19
- F. Righteousness (sanctification) is also by faith apart from the Law but through the death of Christ by grace 2:20-21
 1. In Christ believers have died (positionally) to the Law and, because of Christ living in them, they are now free to live by faith for Him who in love gave Himself for them 2:20
 2. This does not void God's grace because if righteousness can be obtained by keeping the Law, there was no need for Christ to die 2:21

III. Justification has always been by faith and since the Law is unable to make anyone righteous,³⁹ Christ died to redeem those who were under the Law making them heirs and sons of God as children of Abraham according to promise 3:1-4:31

- A. As justification is obtained by faith (as evidenced by the reception of the Holy Spirit) so sanctification is also experienced by faith 3:1-5
 1. The Galatians have been beguiled because the crucifixion of Christ was explained to them 3:1
 2. Paul pleads with the Galatians to remember that they received the Holy Spirit by faith not by the works of the Law 3:2
 3. It would be foolish to think that justification were by faith and sanctification were by works because if that were true, they have suffered in vain 3:3-4
 4. Paul then asks if God's provision of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles is by the hearing of faith or the works of the law⁴⁰ 3:5
- B. The spiritual sons of Abraham, those who are of faith, are partakers of the promised blessing 3:6-9
 1. Abraham was declared righteous because of his faith 3:6
 2. The only true sons of Abraham are those of faith 3:7
 3. The Scripture predicted, through the promise of blessing all nations through Abraham, that Gentiles would be justified by faith⁴¹ 3:8
 4. Those who are of faith are the fulfillment of the promised blessing to Abraham who believed God 3:9

- C. Christ has freed those of faith from the curse of the Law to enable Gentiles to partake of the blessing of Abraham in Christ 3:10-15
 - 1. The Law is a curse to all who do not keep it completely 3:10
 - 2. Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4 to argue that the Law does not justify anyone before God because the Scripture says the righteous will live by faith 3:11
 - 3. The Law is not kept through faith but through obedience 3:12
 - 4. Through His death,⁴² Christ frees from the curse⁴³ of the Law, providing blessing to the Gentiles, and the promise of the Spirit⁴⁴ to all believers 3:13-14
- D. The Mosaic Law does not nullify the Abrahamic Covenant because it is a promise confirmed by God 3:15-18
 - 1. Arguing that even covenants between men cannot be canceled or changed he implies that those by God certainly are ongoing 3:15
 - 2. In the promise God made to Abraham, the seed referred to Jesus Christ 3:16
 - 3. Since the Abrahamic Covenant was ratified by God, the Mosaic Law which came later cannot invalidate the promise of inheritance given by God to Abraham 3:17-18
- E. The Mosaic Law was given because of sin but those who believe in Jesus Christ receive the promise of Abraham 3:19-22
 - 1. Paul then asks why the Law was needed, answering that the Law, ordained by angels and mediated by Moses, was given because of sin until the coming of Jesus Christ to whom the promise was made⁴⁵ 3:19
 - 2. A mediator required more than one party, but God needed no one else 3:20⁴⁶
 - 3. Arguing against the possibility of the Law being contrary to the promises of God, Paul concludes that righteousness would have come through the Law if it had been able to give life 3:21
 - 4. The Scripture concludes that in his state of sinfulness man cannot save himself but those who believe in Jesus Christ receive the promise⁴⁷ 3:22
- F. The Law served as a tutor to prepare Israel to come to faith in Christ 3:23-29
 - 1. The Law, although it was not of faith, became a tutor to those under it until the time when faith in Christ would justify them⁴⁸ 3:23-25
 - 2. All who have faith in Jesus Christ are sons of God, identified⁴⁹ with Christ 3:26-27
 - 3. Distinctions between people are removed because of their unity in Christ Jesus⁵⁰ 3:28
 - 4. Those who belong to Jesus Christ are also heirs of Abraham according to the promise 3:29
- G. Israel is no longer a slave-like son under the bondage of the Law, but an adopted heir of God with full privileges 4:1-7
 - 1. A child-heir is subject to those in authority over him 4:1-2
 - 2. Israel,⁵¹ like children, were under bondage to the regulations of the Law (4:3)
 - 3. But at the proper time God sent His Son, who was subject to the Law, to redeem the Jews enabling both Jews and Gentiles⁵² to be adopted as adult sons 4:4-5
 - 4. To His sons God sent the Spirit of Jesus Christ to unite them with the Father and change their position from that of slaves to heirs 4:6-7
- H. In view of their new position, Paul asks why the Galatians have returned to the bondage of the Law 4:8-11
 - 1. Since the Galatians know God and more importantly God knows them, Paul asks why they want to enslave themselves to the powerless and useless practices of Judaism as evidenced by their observation of feasts, festivals, and holy days 4:7-8
 - 2. Paul fears that his ministry to the Galatians has been fruitless in terms of Christian living⁵³ 4:9

- I. Paul pleads with the Galatians to not abandon the teachings of faith and agonizes over their spiritual growth 4:12-20
 1. Paul pleads with the Galatians to imitate him in the abandonment of legalism and Jewish traditions to live in the realm of Christian freedom⁵⁴ as fellow believers who formerly did him no wrong⁵⁵ 4:12
 2. Paul reminds them of their gracious attitude toward him when he, although sick, preached the gospel to them and they received him as an angel even as Christ Jesus 4:13-14
 3. Asking where their attitude of blessing is now, Paul acknowledges that they would have done anything for him because of their love and wonders if being honest with them as made him their enemy 4:15-16
 4. Paul does not praise the interest⁵⁶ that the false teachers have in the Galatians because they want to isolate⁵⁷ them, hoping that they will seek their teaching 4:17
 5. Paul comments that it is desirable to be sought in an acceptable manner, even when he is not with them 4:18
 6. Speaking affectionately, Paul expresses his anguish in longing for them to grow in their relationship with Christ, communicating his desire to be with them so he could speak differently because of his confusion about them 4:19-20
- J. Paul argues that the teaching of the Law is that those under bondage persecute the free--those who are children of promise 4:21-31
 1. Since the Galatians want to be under the law, Paul states he will use the Law to support his argument 4:21
 2. Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman according to the flesh and one by the free woman according to promise 4:22-23
 3. Paul explains that he is using an allegory to show that Hagar represents legalistic Judaism⁵⁸ which, like the law, enslaves her children 4:23-25
 4. In contrast, however, believers are free, the children of promise, as was Isaac who was born to Sarah 4:26-28
 5. Like Ishmael persecuted Isaac, so those in bondage to legalism today persecute those who have liberty in Christ 4:29
 6. As the children of bondage were not heirs with the children of promise and therefore were to be cast out, so believers are not under bondage but are free (children of promise) 4:30-31
- IV. Paul exhorts the Galatians to stand firm in their Christian freedom and not to misuse that freedom but to walk in the Spirit and lovingly minister to one another 5:1-6:10
 - A. Circumcision, which is of no value, places believers back under the bondage of the Law taking them out from under the grace which is in Christ Jesus through faith 5:1-5
 1. Believers are to remain in the freedom for which Christ died, not placing themselves again under the bondage of the Law 5:1
 2. Through circumcision believers claim sanctification by works, therefore Christ is of no advantage because by keeping a portion of the Law (circumcision), the Galatians are obligating themselves to keep the whole law 5:2-3
 4. Those who seek justification by works are disassociating themselves from the freedom which is in Jesus Christ through grace⁵⁹ because it is only by faith through the Spirit that the believer can experience justification⁶⁰ 5:4-5
 5. To those who are in Christ Jesus, the presence or absence of works (circumcision) is not significant, but rather faith as it is manifest through love 5:6
 - B. Paul advises the Galatians to judge the Judaizers who are contaminating their faith and persecuting him for opposing their teaching 5:7-12

1. The Galatians started right (justification by faith), so Paul asks who hindered them from obeying the truth (sanctification by faith) 5:7
 2. The false teaching which encumbered them is not from God but even a small amount of legalism destroys faith 5:8-9
 3. Paul is trusting the Lord that the Galatians will not be swayed by false teaching but will judge the one who is upsetting them 5:10
 4. If Paul continues to preach circumcision (as he apparently has been accused of doing) then why do those who promote circumcision continue to persecute him⁶¹ 5:11
 5. So serious is the false doctrine which is being forced upon the Galatians that Paul uses the extreme of mutilation to express his desire that they would cease making converts to legalism⁶² 5:12
- C. Freedom is not to be misused but used to benefit one another 5:13-15
1. The Galatian believers were to use their freedom, to which they had been called, to serve each other through love rather than for their own selfish desires 5:13
 2. By loving their neighbors as themselves, they would be fulfilling the entire Law⁶³ 5:14
 3. Paul is stating that if they use their liberty to oppose each other they will destroy themselves 5:15
- D. The only way believers will not be using freedom for satisfying fleshing desires is to walk by the Spirit which frees them from the bondage of the Law 5:16-18
1. Paul commands the Galatians to walk empowered by the Spirit so that the desires of the flesh will not be produced in their lives⁶⁴ 5:16
 2. The desires of the flesh and the Spirit war against each other and are contrary to one another with the result that believers may not do what they desire 5:17
 3. But those who are led by the Spirit are not under the bondage of the Law 5:18
- E. The works of the flesh are continually practiced by unbelievers 5:19-21
1. The works of the flesh are obvious, including all kinds of immorality, idolatry in various forms, attacks against one another, and the fulfillment of all selfish desires 5:19-21a
 2. Paul warns the Galatians against participating in such fleshly deeds stating that the unbelievers, whose lifestyle is characterized by such acts, will not inherit the kingdom of God⁶⁵ 5:21b
- F. On the contrary, the fruit of the Spirit is produced in those who walk by the Spirit in whom they live 5:22-26
1. But the fruit which the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control 5:22-23a
 2. There is no law⁶⁶ against the fruit which is a by-product of walking in the Spirit 5:23b
 3. In contrast to the unbelievers, those who are in Christ Jesus have crucified (positionally) their fleshly passions and desires⁶⁷ 5:24
 4. Since the believer has been given life by the Spirit through faith in Christ Jesus, Paul challenges the Galatians to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit and not to act selfishly 5:25-26
- G. As believers walk in the Spirit, they will manifest forgiveness and helpfulness to one another in an attitude of humility 6:1-5
1. Those who walk in the Spirit are encouraged by Paul to gently restore (after repentance) one who has sinned,⁶⁸ being careful of temptation 6:1
 2. Paul emphasizes the relationship of believers to one another as he commands them to help those who are overburdened,⁶⁹ thus fulfilling Christ's law that they should love their neighbors as themselves 6:2
 3. Paul warns believers against pride which is deceptive 6:3

4. Believers are to prove their own work, as opposed to a comparative evaluation, because each is personally responsible to the Lord to do his own share of work 6:4-5
- H. Paul exhorts believers to do good to one another as they walk in the Spirit because the results are eternal life rather than the corruption which results from walking in the flesh 6:6-10
1. Paul exhorts those who are taught the Word of God should share all good things with their teacher 6:6
 2. Paul warns them to stop being deceived because God is not ridiculed when that which someone sows is later reaped 6:7
 3. Those who walk in the flesh will reap corruption, but those who walk in the Spirit will experience eternal life⁷⁰ 6:8
 4. Paul encourages them not to get discouraged in doing good, because they will be rewarded at the proper time 6:9
 5. Paul concludes with an exhortation to do good to all people but especially to believers while they have the chance 6:10
- V. Before closing with a benediction, Paul summarizes the elements of his letter to the Galatians emphasizing that they are a new creation in Christ 6:11-18
- A. Paul himself has written this epistles to the Galatians 6:11
- B. Paul explains the persecution for preaching the gospel is related to the issue of circumcision, which causes pride in its adherents, but the important issue is the fact that believers are a new creation in Christ 6:12-17
1. The Judaizers, to avoid persecution for preaching the gospel, selfishly tried to persuade the Galatians to be circumcised 6:12
 2. Even those who are circumcised do not keep the Law yet they want the Galatians to be circumcised so they can boast about their accomplishments 6:13
 3. Paul prays that his only boasting would be in the cross of Jesus Christ through whom the world has died to him and he to the world 6:14
 4. The importance issue is not whether a man is circumcised or not but the fact that each believer is a new creation in Christ⁷¹ 6:15
 5. Paul prays a blessing of peace and mercy upon those who live by this teaching and upon believing Israel 6:16
 6. Paul then requests that no one cause him trouble in the future because he bears the "brand-marks" of Jesus on his body 6:17
- C. Benediction: Paul prays that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with the spirit of the Galatians, his fellow believers 6:18

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¹Donald K. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, rev. ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 485; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary, eds. I. Howard Marshall and W. Ward Gasque (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1982), 1-2.

²Merrill C. Tenney, *Galatians: The Charter of Christian Liberty*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), 43-44.

³*Ibid.*, 44.

⁴Guthrie, *Introduction*, 465.

⁵J. B. Lightfoot, *The Epistles of St. Paul: The Third Apostolic Journey*, rev. ed., vol. 3, Saint Paul's Epistles to the Galatians (London: Macmillan and Co., n.d.), 40.

⁶Guthrie, *Introduction*, 465.

⁷*Ibid.*, 466.

⁸*Ibid.*, 466.

⁹*Ibid.*, 466.

¹⁰Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 43.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 40-41.

¹²*Ibid.*, 39.

¹³*Ibid.*, 44-45.

¹⁴Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*, New International Commentary on the New Testament, ed., F. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1953), 31.

¹⁵D. W. Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the epistle to the Galatians, The International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1980), xxviii-xxxix.

¹⁶Guthrie, *Introduction*, 466.

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- ¹⁷Ibid., 466.
- ¹⁸Ridderbos, *Churches of Galatia*, 23.
- ¹⁹Guthrie, *Introduction*, 466.
- ²⁰Ibid., 467.
- ²¹Guthrie, *Introduction*, 468-72.
- ²²Guthrie gives great detail to the discussion of the dating of the epistle (Guthrie, *Introduction*, 472-481).
- ²³Ibid., 480.
- ²⁴Tenney, *Galatians*, 58-60.
- ²⁵Ibid., 55-56; Guthrie, *Introduction*, 482.
- ²⁶Perhaps the reason that this salutation, the briefest of all the Pauline letters, omits Paul's usual word of thankfulness for the recipients is because of the severity of their error of perverting the gospel of grace.
- ²⁷Although Paul uses the traditional Hebrew blessing *peace* he places it in a Christian setting. Peace is not only from God the Father, which would have been recognized by Jews, but from the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ²⁸Lightfoot, *Epistles*, 19.
- ²⁹Paul is adamant that whatever regardless what the message was called which the false teachers were advancing, it was not the gospel and therefore could not be considered as an alternative to the gospel which Paul had preached to them (Ibid., 22).
- ³⁰Tenney, *Galatians*, 33.
- ³¹Paul uses a hyperbole to make his point that truth is paramount and unalterable to the extent that whoever preached to the contrary was deserving of a curse (Ibid., 147.)
- ³²Andrew W. Blackwood, *The Epistles of the Galatians and Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1962), 20.
- ³³Paul uses this literary technique to emphasize his point. The obvious answer to this question is "No" (Tenney, *Galatians*, 149).
- ³⁴The implication of this verse is that Paul had been accused of preaching that which was pleasing to men. The fact that he would curse opponents of the true gospel proved that he was not attempting to place himself in favor with men.
- ³⁵There may be several reasons for this public rebuke: (1) the pervasiveness of Judaistic teaching in Antioch, (2) the impact of Paul's message on the community by correcting one with Apostolic authority, (3) the validation of Paul's own apostolic authority, (4) presenting a concrete example of Paul's argument for sanctification by faith
- ³⁶It is possible that Paul's use of *we* includes Peter and the rest of the Jews who were led into hypocrisy, however, the meaning of the text remains unchanged if the reference is to all believing Jews.
- ³⁷God, not man, is the agent in justification of the believer. In this courtroom metaphor, the believer is declared righteous on the basis of Christ's sacrifice for sin. He who is forgiven is then just (cf. Psa 153:2; Rom 3:20) (Blackwood, *Galatians and Ephesians*), 35).
- ³⁸The premise of this argument is that a violation of the law was sin. However, Paul is arguing that adhering to a belief in justification by law and then holding that the commands of the law are still valid is another form of transgression (Burton, *Galatians*, 130).
- ³⁹The observance of the Law is shown to be without value in the Christian experience: It does not bring the Holy Spirit (3:2), it does not produce miraculous power (3:5), it does not bring blessing (3:10), it does not provide forgiveness (3:11), and it does not provide inheritance (3:18) (Tenney, *Galatians*), 159).
- ⁴⁰In an attempt to prove his argument, Paul asks a question, knowing that the Galatians must admit that the answer is, "Yes."
- ⁴¹The Gentiles share in the blessing because they are in Christ who is the promised seed of Abraham (Bruce, *Galatians*), 166.
- ⁴²The result of Christ's death on the cross is twofold: 1) the blessing of Abraham becomes universal and 2) both Jews and Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit (Guthrie, *Galatians*, 99).
- ⁴³The removal of the curse was necessary before the blessing could be given (Guthrie, *Galatians*, 100).
- ⁴⁴The giving of the Holy Spirit is proof of the redemption which was promised to Abraham (Ridderbos, *Churches of Galatia*, 128).
- ⁴⁵The dual purpose of the Law was to multiply sin and to declare mankind sinful before God (Bruce, *Galatians* 175).
- ⁴⁶This verse shows the superiority of an unconditional covenant where God acted as a party of one in contrast to a conditional covenant which requires a mediator for the two parties (Ridderbos, *Churches of Galatia*, 140).
- ⁴⁷Ibid., 142.
- ⁴⁸Israel was under the dominion of the Law, similar to a child for whose care a *paidagogos* was responsible. The authority of the law ended with the coming of Messiah.
- ⁴⁹The only occurrence in Galatians of the word *baptism*, this is not a reference to the rite of water baptism because of Paul's prohibition against works as a means of either justification or sanctification (Bruce, *Galatians*, 186).
- ⁵⁰Faith unites all who believe in Jesus Christ because they are sons of God and heirs of Abraham according to promise.
- ⁵¹Because of the reference to the Law, "we" probably is limited to the Jews (Bruce, *Galatians*, 193).
- ⁵²Ibid., 196.
- ⁵³David E. Malick, "The Book of Galatians," unpublished class notes in 306 Acts and Pauline Epistles, 31.

⁵⁴Paul is admonishing the Galatians to become imitators of him in his freedom from the bondage of legalism (Guthrie, *Galatians*, 118).

⁵⁵Because of the aorist tense of *wrong*, this gives the sense of the Galatians, although they have not wronged him in the past, are wronging him now (because they had perverted the gospel) (Ibid., 118).

⁵⁶Paul uses a litotes in this verse to imply that the false teachers were affirming the Galatians because of their impure motives in befriending them (Tenney, *Galatians*, 148).

⁵⁷Their desire to exclude the Galatians may have double meaning. In addition to keeping them from Paul, they desire to keep them from Christian liberty (Blackwood, *Galatians and Ephesians*, 64.)

⁵⁸*Jerusalem* is a metonymy suggesting the "whole complex of Jewish faith and law" (Ibid., 66).

⁵⁹In using the terms *severed from Christ* and *fallen from grace*, sometimes interpreted as loss of salvation, Paul is arguing with the strongest terminology that justification by faith and justification by law are opposite concepts and cannot be mixed (thus his illustration of the leaven in 5:9). Those who choose a system of justification by works are rejecting the work of Christ as the means of justification and put themselves outside the realm of grace (Burton, *Galatians*, 275).

⁶⁰Verse 5 is in contrast to the justification sought by law (5:4) and therefore probably refers to the righteousness which is produced in the believer who walks by faith. However, another interpretation is that the righteousness referred to is the perfect righteousness that the believer will have in the eternal state (Tenney, *Galatians*, 83).

⁶¹In this question, Paul appeals to the logic of the Galatian believers. The conclusion which he is seeking is that he cannot be in favor of circumcision or else there for be no reason for the legalistic Jews to persecute him.

⁶²Tenney views this as a brutal act of pagan worship, implying that if they want circumcision, they might as well go to the extremes of mutilation of the pagan priests, with the result that they could no longer produce their own kind (legalist Judaizers) (Tenney, *Galatians*, 149).

⁶³The irony of this statement is that the Galatians believed that they had to keep the Law. But here Paul emphasizes love which fulfilled the Law as contrasted to circumcision which obligated them to perform the works of the Law (5:3).

⁶⁴Paul not only argued against legalism, he provided a solution. In contrast to the Judaizers' demand to obey the law, Paul commanded the Galatians to "walk in the Spirit." The former was works, then latter was grace.

⁶⁵This parallels 1 Corinthians 6:9 and Ephesians 5:5

⁶⁶This does not mean that there is not a law against the fruit of the Spirit but that when believers walk in the Spirit they are outside the realm of the Law.

⁶⁷The term "have crucified" is a description of believers acknowledging that Christ died to free them from both the penalty and power of these sins and claiming that positional truth for everyday living.

⁶⁸This is not a small sin, but rather a "serious moral failure" (Blackwood, *Galatians and Ephesians*, 83).

⁶⁹In contrast to verse 5 where "burden" means the normal weight which would be carried by an animal, this word "burden" refers to an excessive weight which is too great for one person to carry (Tenney, *Galatians*, 180-81).

⁷⁰This verse is a paraphrase of 5:16 (cf. Rom 8:13). The flesh cannot produce spiritual fruit; the Spirit does not produce fleshly works. Those who walk in the flesh will produce the deeds of the flesh (5:19-21) and experience corruption. Those who walk in the Spirit will produce the fruit of the Spirit (5:22-23) and experience eternal life.

⁷¹External works are not important. The teaching that the Galatians needed to learn was that they possessed eternal life as believers in Jesus Christ. Spiritual beings don't need circumcision.