

An Exegetical Outline of

Galatians

“The Truth of the Gospel”

Galatians Overview

Author

The apostle Paul.

Audience

The churches of Galatia founded by Paul on his first missionary journey.

Date

late AD 48 (after Paul's first missionary journey and before the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15).

Reason for the Letter

After Paul left the churches of Galatia and returned to his base of operations in Syrian Antioch, false teachers told his new converts that faith in Christ alone for justification was not enough—they must also be circumcised. Some new converts listened to these heretics. Paul responded with this letter.

Purpose of the Letter

- To convince the Galatians that the “other gospel” (1:6-7) of justification through Christ *and* law-keeping was heretical.
- To persuade them to return to the true gospel of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone.
- To encourage them to walk by the Spirit and avoid the works of the flesh.

Method of Persuasion

Paul sought to convince the Galatians that the gospel he originally preached to them was true by:

1. Emphasizing his authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ (1:1).
2. Refuting the lies being spread about him by the false teachers (1:10, 20; 5:11; 6:17).
3. Proving that his gospel message was direct revelation from Christ Himself (1:11-2:21).
4. Reminding them of their personal conversion experience (3:1-5).
5. Showing them that the Scriptures support and are in harmony with his original gospel message (3:6-4:31).
6. Reminding them of their mutual friendship and trust (4:12-20).
7. Exposing the true motives of the false teachers (4:17; 6:12-13).
8. Reaffirming his own selfless motivation in ministry (6:14).

Introduction

1) Author.

- A) The letter to the Galatians begins by naming Paul as its author and there is no significant scholarly debate on this topic.¹ This is due to the theological content, style of writing and extensive autobiographical information given in chapters one and two.²

2) Audience.

- A) Galatians is the only letter that is not addressed to either an individual or to Christians in one specific city.³ In the period of late antiquity “Galatia” was an elastic term reflecting the changing political developments of central Asia Minor (Turkey).⁴
- B) Galatia became a Roman province in 25 BC, and the province included people from many ethnic groups, including the “Celts” or “Galatians,” who had migrated to Asia Minor by 278 BC. In Paul’s day the province was a large area that reached from the Black Sea in the north to the Mediterranean Sea in the south. As time passed, however, the province was reshaped and much of the territory in the south was removed and formed into the new province of Pisidia with Antioch as its capital.⁵
- C) Commentators in early church history naturally thought Galatians was written to the province as it existed in later Roman history (to the north). But the work of William Ramsay⁶ and others has led modern scholars to reexamine this position in light of the earlier dimensions of the province in Paul’s day (to the south).⁷ This has led to the development of two theories regarding Paul’s intended audience:

(1) North Galatia.

- (a) Geography: the middle to upper part of central Turkey.
- (b) Cities: unknown cities to the north. Perhaps Ancyra (modern capital of Turkey), Pessinus and Tavium.
- (c) Missionary Journey: churches founded on the second missionary journey and revisited on the third (Acts 16:6; 18:23).

¹ There is debate on the Pauline authorship of Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1&2 Timothy and Titus.

² Richard N. Longenecker, “Galatians,” *Word Biblical Commentary*, lvii-lix.

³ The destination of most of Paul’s letters is clear: Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Colossae, Philippi, Thessalonica, Timothy, Titus and Philemon.

⁴ Timothy George, “Galatians,” *New American Commentary*, 38.

⁵ Ben Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 2–5.

⁶ William M. Ramsay, *A Historical Commentary on Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians*.

⁷ Thomas R. Schreiner, “Galatians,” *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 23.

(2) South Galatia.

(a) Geography: the southern part of central Turkey.

(b) Cities: Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.

(c) Missionary Journey: churches founded on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:13–14:23).

D) While there are strong arguments for both theories, on balance, it seems that a south Galatia theory is preferable.⁸ Below are some arguments for the south Galatian theory:⁹

(1) We have clear record of the apostle's visit to, and establishment of churches in, the cities of the Roman province of southern Galatia, whereas we have no definite record of such in northern Galatia proper.

(2) Paul repeatedly alludes to Barnabas in Galatians 2 as though he were well known to them. We know Barnabas accompanied Paul on the first missionary journey, but he was not with Paul on his second or any subsequent journey as far as is known.

(3) In Galatians 1, Paul makes a strong case for his independence from the Jerusalem apostles by detailing each visit he made to Jerusalem. If he omitted a visit, he would open himself to the charge that his gospel was influenced by the apostles. Since only two visits are recorded in Galatians (matching Acts 9:26–30 and 11:27–30), the letter must have been written before the Council of Acts 15 and thus must be addressed to the only churches that existed in Galatia at the time (cities in the south).¹⁰

⁸ Older commentators favor the north Galatia theory (Lightfoot), while most modern commentators favor the south Galatia Theory (F.F. Bruce).

⁹ For more arguments see: Longenecker, *Galatians*, lxiii-lxx; Rainer Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, 286–291; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 24–29.

¹⁰ Schreiner, 28.



Galatia as it was in Paul's day.



In AD 297, southern Galatia was united with surrounding regions to form a new province of Pisidia with Antioch as its capital.

3) Date.

A) As can be seen from the third argument in favor of the south Galatia theory, the date of the letter and its destination are linked:

(1) If addressed to churches in south Galatia, then the letter was written shortly after Paul's first missionary journey and either prior to or just after the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15. This puts the letter's date at AD 48–50 (Early Date).

(2) If addressed to churches in north Galatia, then the letter was written after Paul's second missionary journey and either prior to or during his third missionary journey. This puts the letter's date at AD 53–58 (Late Date).

B) Another important factor for dating the letter is the correlation of Paul's visits to Jerusalem recorded in Acts and Galatians.

(1) In Acts, Luke records five visits by Paul to Jerusalem:

(a) Conversion visit (Acts 9:26–30).

(b) Famine visit (Acts 11:27–30).

(c) Jerusalem Council visit (Acts 15:1–29).

(d) Hasty visit (Acts 18:22).

(e) Collection visit (Acts 21:15–17).

(2) In Galatians, Paul records only two visits to Jerusalem:

(a) Conversion visit (Gal 1:18–20). This corresponds with the account in Acts 9:26–30.

(b) Private Meeting visit (Gal 2:1–10). Now we come to the main difficulty—which visit is this?

(3) Proposed Solutions.

(a) Galatians 2:1–10 is Luke's third visit (Jerusalem Council) of Acts 15:1–29, with the famine visit of Acts 11:27–30 left unmentioned by Paul in Galatians. This is the traditional view that held sway virtually unchallenged until the early twentieth century. This view allows for either an early or late date.

(i) This view has to answer the following questions: Why did Paul omit mention of a visit to Jerusalem in his autobiographical presentation? Why did Paul not

mention the decision of the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 in his letter to the Galatians? Why did Peter feel so pressured by the Jewish circumcision party at Syrian Antioch after the Council had just ruled on the issue.

- (b) Galatians 2:1–10 is Luke’s second visit (Famine Visit) of Acts 11:27–30, with the Jerusalem Council visit of Acts 15:1–30 taking place after Galatians was written. Main proponents include: Ramsay, Bruce, George, Guthrie, Longenecker. This view obviously places an early date on Galatians making it Paul’s first epistle (AD 48).
- (i) In this view the time spans of Galatians 1:18 and 2:1 are understood to be concurrent rather than consecutive (i.e., three years after conversion and fourteen years after conversion). At this time, I find myself preferring this view.¹¹

Galatians	Event	Acts	Event
1:15–17	Paul’s Conversion	9:1–25	Paul’s Conversion
1:18–20	First Jerusalem Visit	9:26–30	With Barnabas in Jerusalem
2:1–10	Private Meeting Visit	11:27–30	Famine Visit
2:11–14	Dispute in Antioch	15:1–2	Dispute in Antioch
-----	Paul writes Galatians	-----	-----
-----	-----	15:3–29	Jerusalem Council Visit
-----	-----	18:22	Hasty Visit
-----	-----	21:15–17	Collection Visit

¹¹ Stanley D. Toussaint, “The Chronological Problem of Galatians 2:1–10”, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 120.480 (1963): 335–340.

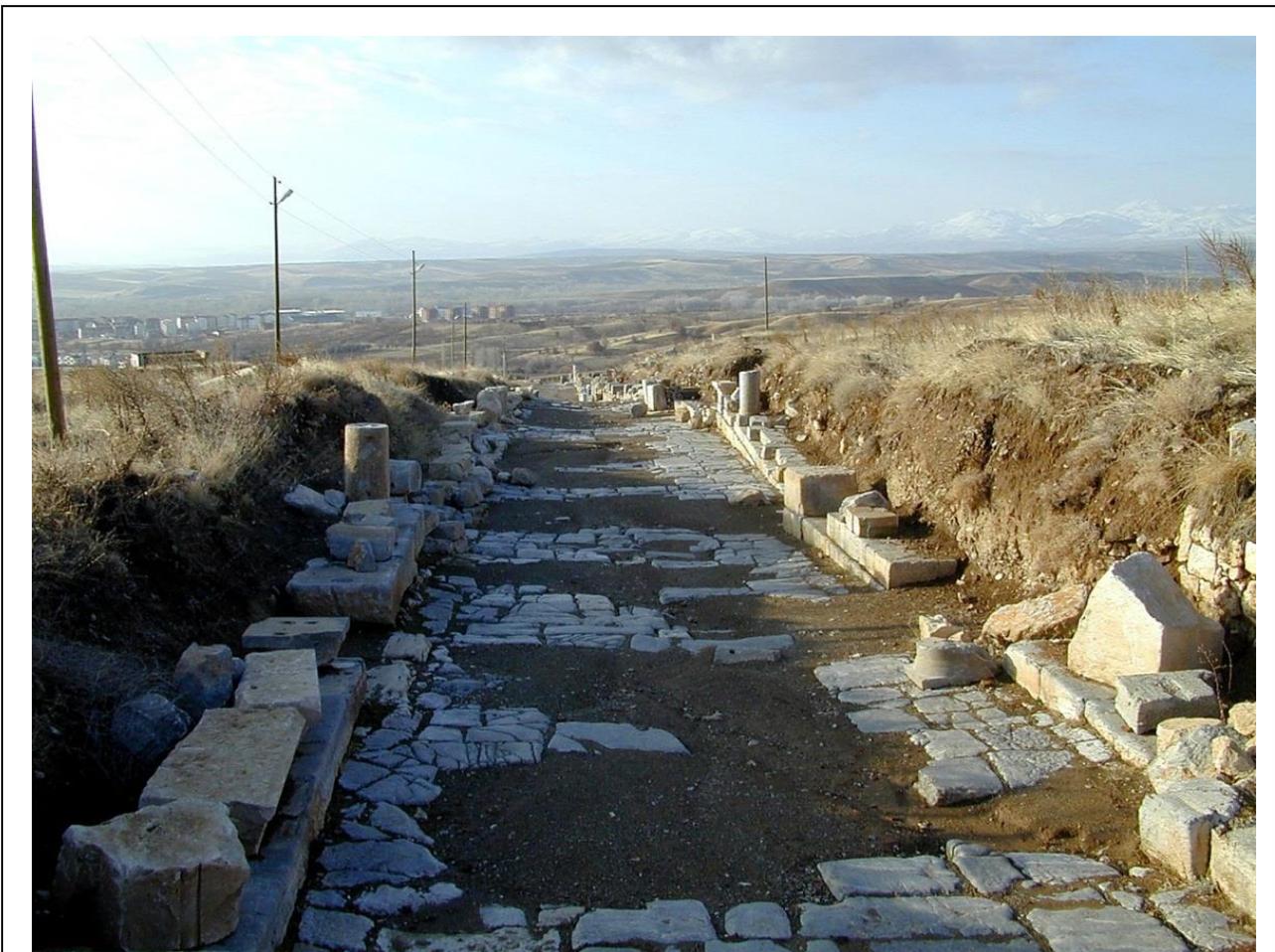
C) Galatians in the Context of Paul's Ministry.

- Crucifixion of Christ (Friday, April 3, AD 33).
- Paul's conversion on road to Damascus (late AD 34).
- Flight to Arabia and later return to Damascus (late AD 34 – early AD 37).
- First visit to Jerusalem (early AD 37).
- Ministry in Syria and Cilicia (c. AD 37–46).
- Work with Barnabas in Antioch.
- Death of Herod Agrippa I in AD 44.
- Famine visit to Jerusalem (2nd) with Barnabas (c. AD 47).
- Return to Antioch.
- First missionary journey (c. AD 47–48).
- Paul rebukes Peter at Antioch.
- **Galatians written - Early Date (late AD 48).**
- At Jerusalem Council (early AD 49).
- Return to Antioch.
- Second missionary journey (c. AD 49–51).
- Hasty visit to Jerusalem.
- Return to Antioch.
- Third Missionary Journey (c. AD 52–55).
- Visit to Jerusalem (May/June AD 55).
- Arrest and trial before Felix.
- Voyage to Rome (AD 57/58).
- Paul's Death (c. AD 68).

4) Background.

A) Paul's First Missionary Journey (Acts 13:4–14:23).

- (1) Paul visited the cities of Salamis and Paphos (Island of Cyprus), then Perga, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe and back to Attalia (Asia Minor).
- (2) Paul preached a sermon in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:15–41). Jews and Gentile proselytes alike were fascinated with what Paul had to say (Acts 13:42–43). Paul and Barnabas agreed to speak again the next Sabbath and nearly the entire city showed up to hear the message. The Jews became jealous of the attention Paul and Barnabas were receiving and eventually drove them out of the city.



Pisidian Antioch — Cardo

- (3) On to Iconium. They again visited the Jewish synagogue first (as was Paul's habit) and many believed the gospel (Acts 14:1). Once again, however, certain Jews did not believe and stirred up the Gentiles against them. They stayed for a long time but eventually learned of a plot to stone them and left the city.



Iconium

- (4) They fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the surrounding region; there they continued to preach the gospel. At Lystra, Paul healed a lame man and the city mistook them for gods (Acts 14:8–18). But Jews came from Pisidian Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. But while the disciples stood around him, he got up and entered the city. The next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe.

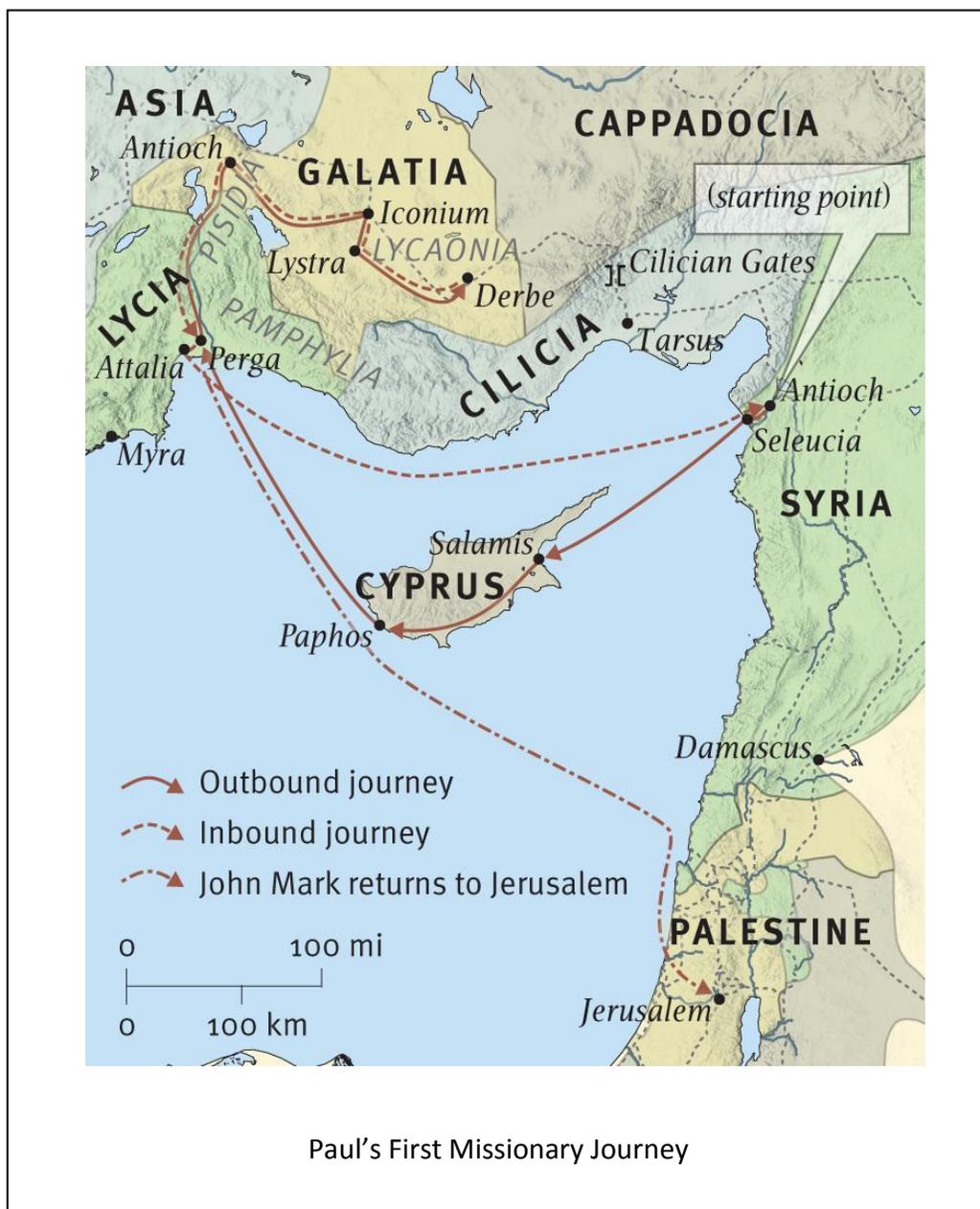


Lystra



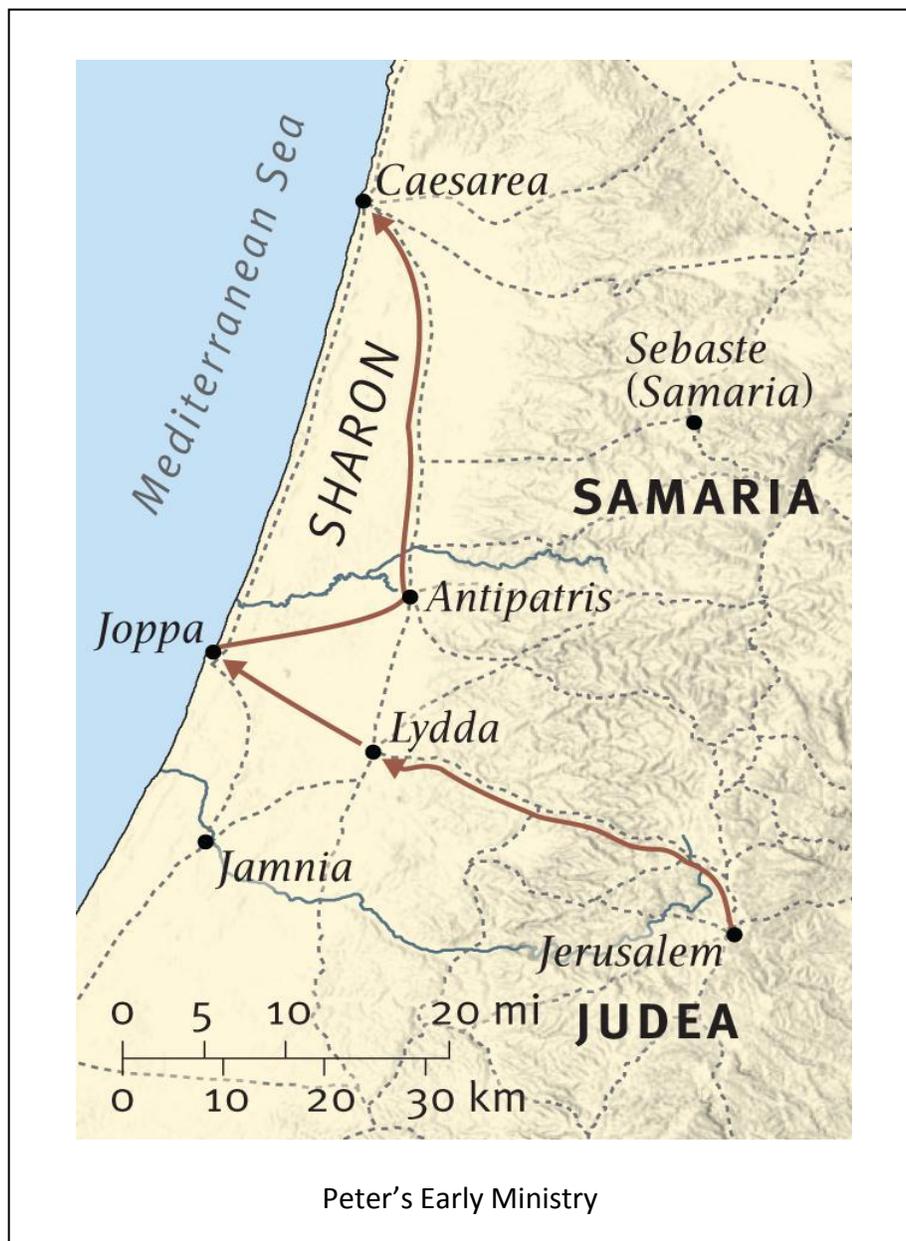
Derbe

- (5) After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Pisidian Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed (Acts 14:19–23).
- (6) This section of Acts gives us the background of Paul's relationship with the Galatians. He had literally laid down his life for them and the truth of gospel. He had a serious personal investment in these people; it is no wonder then that this letter is emotionally charged.



B) Events in Jerusalem and Syrian Antioch (Acts 10–11; 15:1).

- (1) Acts 10 tells the story of the Gentile named Cornelius. Peter received a vision from God in which he learns that God has declared the Gentiles to be clean. Peter went to Cornelius' house, preached the gospel and the entire household was saved and baptized. They also spoke in tongues, confirming to the amazed Jews who accompanied Peter that their salvation was genuine.
- (2) Acts 11 records the resistance Peter experienced from the party of the circumcision at Jerusalem when they heard reports of what had happened. They criticized him, saying, "You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them." Peter then related the entire experience to them. When he was finished they fell silent and glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."



- (3) It might be expected that this was the end of the controversy over Gentile salvation, but not all Jews were convinced. The first evidence of continuing resistance is found in Galatians 2:1–10 (which corresponds to Paul’s famine visit to Jerusalem of Acts 11:27–30). Paul mentions that false brothers were secretly brought in to “spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery.” Clearly some Jews still refused to accept that Gentiles could be saved apart from circumcision and law-keeping.
- (4) Acts 15 finds Paul and Barnabas back in Syrian Antioch spending time with the disciples. Then some men came down from Judea (acting on their own and not by sanction of the Jerusalem church)¹² and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” After Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question. During the council, some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses.”



Syrian Antioch

- (5) This overview of events in Jerusalem and Syrian Antioch sheds light on the nature of the “other” gospel that Paul mentions in Galatians. It seems likely that the men from Judea mentioned in Acts 15:1 are the same as the certain men from James

¹² Acts 15:24.

(circumcision party) mentioned in Galatians 2:12.¹³ This means that the nature of the controversy was not a matter of whether it was right for Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians to eat together;¹⁴ it was a matter of whether the Gentiles were truly saved without being circumcised and observing the Mosaic law (the “other” gospel).

5) Situation.

- A) The events that motivated Paul to write to the churches in Galatia must be determined from the letter itself. There was no need for Paul to explain the situation thoroughly to the Galatians since they were acquainted firsthand with what was happening. We, however, must dig into the text to discover the details of what was going on.¹⁵
- B) In Galatians 1:6–7 we learn that the Galatians were deserting Christ for another gospel. This “gospel” was being preached to them by certain men who wanted to distort the true gospel of Christ (hereafter called the false gospel agitators—the FGA).

(1) Where did the FGA come from?

- (a) They seem to have come from outside the Galatian congregations. In 4:17 Paul indicts their motives and says that they want to win the Galatians over for themselves. The way the verse is worded indicates that they were not part of the original congregations.

(2) How many FGA were there?

- (a) Paul uses the plural form in 1:7 when he mentions them, so it is clear that more than one was at work. How many exactly we cannot tell, but there were several churches and the false gospel was being preached in all of them. I think that Paul’s use of the singular in 5:7–10 is probably referring to a particular church who was being disturbed by an certain individual.

(3) What did the FGA want the Galatians to do?

- (a) They insisted the Galatians circumcise themselves (6:12–13). In addition, it may be inferred that they also demanded the Galatians “observe days and months and seasons and years” (4:10). This most likely refers to the various kinds of celebration of days and periods observed by the Jews (as prescribed by both Torah and tradition).

¹³ F. F. Bruce conjectures that “The people who came down from Judaea may have been those who, in Paul’s narrative, came to Antioch ‘from James’ (Gal. 2:12)” – Bruce, *Acts*, 286. T. W. Manson suggests that the controversy in Galatians 2:11–14 provoked the conference in Acts 15 (cf. T. W. Manson, “St. Paul in Ephesus: (2) The Problem of the Epistle to the Galatians,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 24, (1940): 77).

¹⁴ Contra what N.T. Wright suggests (cf. *Justification*, 114).

¹⁵ Schreiner, 31–52.

- (4) Why does Paul call the FGA's teaching "another gospel"?
- (a) The FGA did not reject Christ as necessary for justification. But they did insist that faith in Christ was *not enough* to be justified—the Galatians also needed to be circumcised (and perhaps follow other laws). Paul correctly recognized this as "another gospel"; if faith in Christ is not enough to be justified, then Christ is the minister of sin (2:17) and there is another way to be justified (hence another gospel).
- (5) What did the FGA say to convince the Galatians?
- (a) The FGA claimed that circumcision was necessary for inclusion in the people of God. They almost certainly appealed to Genesis 17, where circumcision is required as the sign of the covenant. Only those who were circumcised, they said, would receive the promises made to Abraham. They also pointed out that circumcision was not restricted to Jews—any foreigner who was brought into Abraham's house had to be circumcised. Anyone who was not circumcised was to be cut off from God's people (Gen 17:11–14). Furthermore, the necessity of circumcision was not temporally limited because God calls the covenant "everlasting" (Gen 17:8,13).¹⁶
- (b) They probably went on to say that circumcision was confirmed by the Mosaic Law: Leviticus 12 clearly states that all male children were to be circumcised on the eighth day after birth. Also, the law required that Gentiles who wished to keep the Passover must be circumcised: "But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it" (Exod 12:48).¹⁷
- (6) What did the FGA say about Paul?
- (a) They disputed the legitimacy of Paul's apostleship (inferred from 1:1).
- (b) They accused Paul of being a maverick and acting without official church sanction (inferred from 1:2).
- (c) They charged him with seeking people's approval over God's approval (inferred from 1:10).
- (d) They said that Paul's gospel was the invention of man not the revelation of God (inferred from 1:11–12).

¹⁶ Schreiner, 34–35, 50. We can infer much of this from Galatians 3–4.

¹⁷ Imagine yourself as a Galatian without any of the knowledge of the New Testament scriptures (most of which were not even written at the time). The FGA would certainly sound convincing.

- (e) They claimed that Paul was a liar and could not be trusted (inferred from 1:20).
 - (f) They claimed that the apostles in Jerusalem did not agree with Paul's gospel message (inferred from 2:1–10).
 - (g) They accused Paul of hypocrisy by pointing out that he circumcised or preached circumcision to his converts in some circumstances (inferred from 5:11).¹⁸
- (7) What were the motives of the FGA?
- (a) They desired to make a “good showing in the flesh” (6:12). They sought external glory from men, and wanted to be outwardly and publicly honored by them.
 - (b) They did not want to be persecuted for the cross of Christ (6:12). Teaching justification through faith in Christ alone would have brought scorn and ridicule.
 - (c) They want to “boast in the Galatians' flesh” (6:13). They wanted to claim the Galatians as their own disciples (proselytes) and so increase their stature in the eyes of others.
- (8) Were the FGA Jews or Gentiles?
- (a) It is improbable that a circumcision campaign would be started by Gentiles.¹⁹ One cannot rule out the possibility absolutely, but it seems to make the most sense to identify the FGA as Jews who did not want to lose their standing in the synagogue due to Paul's new Gentile converts.²⁰ If they could persuade them to be circumcised, they would avoid persecution and gain status in the eyes of other Jews.

¹⁸ Longenecker, 18.

¹⁹ Schreiner, 48.

²⁰ Consider John 12:42–43 as an explanation of some of the FGA's motives.

Exegetical Outline

1) Introduction to Letter (1:1–10).

A) Paul adapts the greeting in order to emphasize the divine origin of his apostleship (1:1–5).¹

B) Author/Audience (1:1–2).

(1) From:

(a) Paul, an apostle [“one sent forth”] (1:1).

(i) Not sent from man or by man (1:1).²

(ii) But sent by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Jesus from the dead (1:1).

(iii) Paul begins the letter by establishing his authority as an apostle.³ As an apostle, Paul is to be taken seriously, for what he says carries the weight of one who has personally seen and spoken with Christ (cf. Acts 1:15–26 for Peter’s comments on apostleship). While the word can be used in a general sense, it is used here in its more exclusive sense.

(iv) Paul emphasizes that he was not sent by man, but by Christ. His apostolic authority comes from Jesus Christ Himself (Acts 26:15–18; 1 Cor 9:1–2; 2 Cor 12:11–12). He is clearly disassociating himself from any human influence on his gospel or ministry as an apostle.

(b) And all the brothers with him (1:2).

(i) The reference to the “brothers with him” lends a secondary weight to Paul’s letter and confirms that he is not a maverick—there is unanimity among them concerning the truth of the gospel (note that he does not refer to them as apostles).

(2) To: the churches of Galatia (1:2).

(a) Note that Paul uses the plural form of the word *ekklesia* (“churches”). This would be an argument for the idea that we can refer to local gatherings of believers as

¹ Donald F. Tolmie, *A Rhetorical Analysis of the Letter to the Galatians*, 40.

² This emphasis is unique to Galatians.

³ Paul regularly, though not always (Phil 1:1; Philemon 1), affirms his apostolic authority at the beginning of his letters (Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Tim 1:1; 2 Tim 1:1; Tit 1:1).

“churches” (cf. 1 Cor 7:17; 14:33–34).

C) Greeting (1:3–5).

(1) Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1:3).

(a) Who gave Himself for our sins (1:4).

(i) To rescue us from the present evil age (1:4).

(ii) According to the will of the Father (1:4).

(1) To whom be glory forever (1:5).

(2) From the outset, we are confronted with the two major themes that will dominate Paul’s letter: 1) the vindication of his own apostolic authority and 2) God’s initiative to save the world through Christ alone.

(a) Paul will later explain that in wanting to be circumcised, the Galatians are effectively wanting to stay anchored in this present evil age (3:22–26; 4:1–11), which is the state of the world apart from Christ until his return.⁴

(b) Those who have led the Galatians astray are doing so to “make a good showing in the flesh” (6:12), whereas Paul will conclude the letter by stating that his sole desire is to give all the glory to Christ (6:14).⁵

D) Reason for the Letter – Paul expresses shock, dismay and anger at what was happening in the Galatian churches in order to cause them to reconsider their position (1:6–10).⁶

(1) At this point in the letter we would expect to find a Pauline prayer of thanksgiving (cf. Rom 1:8–15; 1 Cor 1:4–9; Phil 1:3–11; Col 1:3–8; 1 Thess 1:2–10; 2 Thess 1:3–10; 1 Tim 1:12–17; 2 Tim 1:3–7; Phlm 1:4–7). Instead, Paul states his astonishment concerning their apostasy.

(2) Paul is astonished that the Galatians are:

(a) So quickly deserting the one [God] who called you by the grace of Christ (1:6).

(i) By the early date, less than one year after Paul was with them. Paul’s example to us in confronting error is one of immediacy; he did not let the problem go unchecked.

⁴ ESV Study Bible, Note on Gal 1:4.

⁵ ESV Study Bible, Note on Gal 1:5.

⁶ Tolmie, 45.

- (ii) Examples of confronting error: Matt 18:15–17; Luke 17:3–4; Rom 16:17–20; 1 Cor 5; 2 Cor 2:5–11; Gal 1:6–10; 2:11–14; 6:1–2; Eph 5:11; 1 Tim 5:19–20; 2 Tim 2:16–18; 4:2; Tit 1; 2:15; 3:8–11; 2 Thess 3:6, 14–15; James 5:19–20; 2 John 10,11; Rev 2:12–29.
- (b) And are following a different (*heteros*) gospel (1:6).
 - (i) Not that there really is another (*allos*) gospel (1:7).
- (3) Paul acknowledges that there are some who are:
 - (a) Disturbing you (1:7).
 - (i) It becomes clear as the letter continues that the proponents of the “other gospel” adopted a classic political strategy—discredit and destroy the man and you will destroy his message as well [*ad hominem*] (cf. 1:10, 20; 5:11; 6:17).
 - (b) Trying to distort the gospel of Christ (1:7).
 - (i) The “other gospel”—faith in Christ is not enough; circumcision is also necessary to be justified (cf. 2:3; 5:1–4; 6:12–13; Acts 15:1). This tendency of the Jews to establish their own righteousness based on law-keeping is the main reason that Christ was a stumbling block to them (Rom 9:30–33). Christ plus anything for salvation is heresy.
- (1) Concerning circumcision:
 - (A) It was instituted by God as the sign of the covenant between God and Abraham. Those who refused circumcision were to be cut off from God’s people (Gen 17:1–14).
 - (B) It was a requirement of outsiders who wished to participate in the Passover (Exod 12:44–49).
 - (C) It was intended to symbolize a separation from the world to God in the hearts of His people (Lev 26:41; Deut 10:16; 30:6; Jer 4:4; 9:25; Acts 7:51).
 - (D) It became the single most important dividing line between Jews and Gentiles (Gen 34; Judg 14:3; 1 Sam 17:26; Ezek 44:6–9; Acts 11:3).
 - (E) It was thought by Jews (wrongly) to be the mark that they were

Abraham's children, heirs of the promise and thus in a right standing before God (John 8:33–42; Acts 15:1,5; Rom 2:28–29; 9:8).

- (ii) See Paul's message to the Jews in Pisidian Antioch for the content of his gospel (Acts 13:16, 32, 38–39; cf. also 1 Cor 15; Acts 20:18–24).
- (c) Paul repeatedly condemns to hell anyone (man, apostle, angel, or even himself) who preached a different gospel than the one they originally received from him (1:8–9).
 - (i) Originally the word *anathema* referred to any object set aside for divine purposes, whether an offering in the temple set aside for divine blessing or the booty of Achan reserved for divine cursing (Josh 7:11–12). In time the negative sense of the word prevailed, and *anathema* became synonymous with anything or anyone under the "ban" and hence delivered over to God's wrath and final judgment.⁷
 - (ii) The strong language used here indicates how seriously God takes the truth and accuracy of the gospel message. It is our responsibility to preach and teach a gospel that is in harmony with God's Word!
- (d) After the twice-repeated *anathema*, Paul interjects two somewhat defiant/sarcastic questions, which may be paraphrased as follows: "Now, does that sound like the language of one whose main concern is to gain the favor of others?"⁸ "If I were still attempting to please people, I would never have become of slave of Christ" (1:10).⁹
 - (i) Don't confuse the "pleasing men" here with Paul's comments in 1 Corinthians 10:33. In that context "pleasing men" has to do with not causing them to stumble into sin (cf. Rom 15:2; 1 Cor 9:22).
 - (ii) Apparently, the FGA claimed that Paul did not preach circumcision because he wanted to curry favor with the Gentiles in Galatia (cf. 5:11).¹⁰

2) Paul Defends the Source of His Gospel Message (1:11–2:21).

A) Declaration of the Divine Origin of His Gospel (1:11–12).

(1) His gospel was not according to man, or from man, but directly from Jesus Christ

⁷ Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 17. *Anathema* is the regular translation of *herem* "ban" in the LXX (e.g. Lev 27:28–29; Deut 7:26; 13:17; Josh 6:17–18; 7:11–13, 15).

⁸ Longenecker, 19.

⁹ Thomas R. Schreiner, "Galatians," *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 89.

¹⁰ Schreiner, 89.

(1:11–12).

(a) If Paul’s gospel is divinely inspired, then it is the only true gospel. Any other “gospel” must be rejected and condemned. Paul goes on in the next several verses to rigorously defend this premise.

B) Arguments to Support His Declaration (1:13–2:21).

(1) Argument #1 (Negative) – His former life in Judaism argues against the idea that he would be preaching a gospel that came from man (1:13–14).

(a) He persecuted the church of Christ and tried to destroy it (1:13).

- Took part in Stephen’s death (Acts 7:27–58; 8:1; 22:20)
- Made havoc of the church (Acts 8:3).
- Threw Christians in prison (Acts 8:3).
- Hounded them to their death (Acts 22:4).
- Beat Christians (Acts 22:19).
- Voted to put them to death (Acts 26:10).
- Tried to force them to blaspheme (Acts 26:11).

(b) He zealously kept the Mosaic Law and his ancestral traditions (Pharisaical traditions), advancing beyond most of his contemporaries (1:14).

(2) Argument #2 (Negative) – After Paul’s conversion, he did not discuss the gospel with anyone. This argues against the idea that his gospel message was influenced by other believers (1:15–17).

(a) He was called and commissioned by God (1:15–16a).

(i) God set Paul apart from birth (1:15a) (cf. Jer 1:4–5).

(ii) God called Paul by grace (1:15b).

(iii) God was pleased to reveal His Son in Paul so he could preach Christ to the Gentiles (1:16a).

(b) Verses 16–17 seem to conflict with Luke’s account in Acts 9:19–22 (Paul’s visit to Arabia is not even mentioned in Acts). How could Paul have “at once” both preached in Damascus and gone off to Arabia? It seems best to translate the verses as Longenecker has done: (16b) “I did not immediately thereafter consult with anyone; (17) nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were the apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia and returned again to

Damascus".¹¹

- (i) Why did Paul go to Arabia? The NT is silent on this issue. In the days of Paul the word "Arabia" referred to the Nabatean Kingdom, a vast expanse of territory stretching southward from Damascus toward the Arabian Peninsula (including the cities of Petra and Bostra). It was governed by Aretas IV, a monarch connected by marriage to the Herodian dynasty. One clue as to what Paul had been doing appears in 2 Corinthians 11:32–33 (also cf. Acts 9:23–25). What could Paul have done to come to the attention of King Aretas' governor? Riot tended to follow Paul's preaching and it is probable that Paul had been preaching the gospel in Petra and Bostra just like he did at Damascus.¹²
- (3) Argument #3 (Negative) – It was years before Paul had contact with any of the church leaders. This minimal contact argues against the notion that his gospel message was influenced by the other apostles (1:18–20).
- (a) When Paul finally went to Jerusalem to see Peter, it was three years after his conversion [the "many days" of Acts 9:23]; and he only stayed with him for fifteen days (1:18).
 - (b) He saw none of the other apostles, except James, the Lord's brother (1:19).
 - (c) With a solemn declaration he affirms these things to be true (1:20). The fact that Paul goes out of his way to affirm the truthfulness of his statements is indirect evidence for the personal attack being waged against him by the proponents of the "other gospel."
- (4) Argument #4 (Negative) – Paul did not spend time in Judea where he might have heard the gospel he preached from other apostles or Christians. This argues against the idea that Paul's gospel was influenced by the church (1:21–24).
- (a) Paul left Jerusalem and went north into the regions of Syria and Cilicia [his hometown of Tarsus was in Cilicia]. He ministered there for about seven years and was still there when Barnabas found him (Acts 11:25) (1:21).
 - (b) He remained unknown by face to the churches of Judea (1:22).
 - (c) Christians in Judea only heard reports of his preaching and they glorified God in him (1:23–24).
- (5) Argument #5 (Positive) – When Paul finally presented his gospel message to the

¹¹ Longenecker, 25–26.

¹² Timothy George, "Galatians," *New American Commentary*, 124.

leaders in Jerusalem, some fourteen years after his conversion, they added nothing to his message. Nor did they compel Titus to be circumcised. This argues strongly for the divine inspiration of his gospel (2:1–10).

(a) Paul's private meeting in Jerusalem with the influential people (leaders/apostles). (2:1–5).

(i) Occurred fourteen years after his conversion (2:1).

(1) From Acts 11:25–26 we learn that Barnabas brought Paul back from Cilicia to assist in the ministry in Antioch. Paul was living there when he visited Jerusalem with Barnabas and Titus.

(2) It seems best to understand that Paul means 14 years after his conversion rather than 14 years after his first visit to Jerusalem (cf. 1:18). Paul visited Jerusalem at least five times, and the visit described here seems to have been his second (Acts 11:27–30). It was not his third visit to participate in the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1–29). This seems clear from Paul's statement that it was a private meeting (2:2).

(ii) He was spurred to go because of a revelation (2:2).

(1) Some interpreters have seen in the word "revelation" a reference to the prophecy of Agabus (Acts 11:27–30) concerning a forthcoming famine, a prediction that prompted the Christians in Antioch to respond with a gift of charity to their Judean brothers and sisters. However, it may refer to a strictly personal revelation.

(iii) He communicated the gospel he had been preaching (2:2).

(1) It seems that various reports of Paul's preaching had filtered back to the church in Jerusalem. These reports were evidently not an accurate reflection of Paul's gospel message. Hence his desire to personally "set forth" his preaching to the leaders (cf. Acts 21:17–26).

(2) The phrase "for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain" is perplexing and has given rise to various interpretations:

(A) Interpretation 1 – Paul went to Jerusalem seeking the approval of the leaders there without which his ministry would not have been valid. This view, however, does not seem to be in harmony with the entire line of thinking in Galatians 1–2.

(B) Interpretation 2 – Paul was experiencing hesitation and self-doubt

about the validity of his gospel message. This also does not seem to be in harmony with Paul's declarations in Galatians 1 and his general tone of certainty in other epistles. Surely if doubt was to creep in, it would have done so far sooner than 14 years or more after his conversion?

(C) Interpretation 3 – It seems best to interpret Paul's words as an expression of concern for the new believers he had led to Christ and the young churches he had founded. A perceived/alleged division between Paul and the Jerusalem Church could have undermined his evangelistic work. It may also have caused confusion and doubt in the minds of believers who were told that Paul was not in fellowship with the other apostles.

(iv) He refused to allow Titus to be circumcised, as some brethren desired who were secretly brought in to the meeting (2:3–5).

(1) In light of Galatians 6:15 (and 1 Cor 7:17–19), why all the fuss over Titus? The answer relates to the claims for circumcision advanced by the "other gospel" proponents: "Unless you are circumcised...you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1).

(2) Why did Paul resist having Titus circumcised but later agreed to have Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3)? The answer is found in the fact that Paul intended Timothy to be a part of his missionary ministry. Paul's habit was to go into the Jewish synagogues and argue the case for Christ. Timothy, who was known to be uncircumcised ("they all knew his father was a Greek"), would have been a barrier to this evangelism. Therefore, Paul had him circumcised, not as a compromise to the truth of the gospel, but for expediency's sake as they ministered together.

(b) Paul's Sanction by James, Peter, and John (2:6–10).

(i) Those who were influential (reputation really makes no difference) did not add anything to Paul's message (2:6).

(ii) When those of reputation saw...

(1) That the gospel of the uncircumcised had been committed to Paul (Rom 11:13) just as the gospel of the circumcised was to Peter (2:7–8).

(2) That James, Peter, and John perceived the grace given to Paul (2:9).

(iii) ...they extended the right hand of fellowship to Paul and Barnabas (2:9).

(iv) They asked only that the poor be remembered, something Paul was very eager to do (2:10).

(6) Argument #6 (Positive) – Even the apostle Peter submitted to the authority and truth of Paul’s gospel. This argues strongly that Paul’s gospel was from God, not from men, and that he was preaching it correctly (2:11–21).

(a) Paul Opposed Peter (2:11). (AD 48)

(i) I agree with Longenecker that Peter’s visit to Antioch took place *before* the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 (during the time mentioned in Acts 14:26–28).¹³ Indeed, what happened at Antioch seems, in my opinion, to be what precipitated the Council (cf. Acts 15:1–2). If not, it is difficult to understand Peter’s fear in light of the decisions and decrees recently reached at the Council.

(ii) Because Peter was clearly in the wrong and because his actions had caused others to follow him, Paul chose to publicly oppose him. The fact that Paul did this in front of everyone (2:14) indicates how seriously Paul took the situation and how divisive Peter’s actions had been.

(b) Peter’s Hypocrisy (2:12–13).

(i) When Peter first arrived at Antioch, he ate freely with the Gentiles (table-fellowship). However, when certain people came from James, Peter was afraid of “those of the circumcision” and separated himself from the Gentiles (2:11–12).

(1) Social interaction between Jews and Gentiles was not categorically forbidden by the law, but Jews avoided it none the less out of a fear of becoming ceremonially unclean.¹⁴ Jews refused to eat with Gentiles because of the commands not to eat anything unclean (and even if clean might have been sacrificed to a pagan god or still contain blood). Even entering a Gentile building was a risk, as is seen in John 18:28.¹⁵

(2) The text is not clear on the nature of the relationship between James and the Jews who came to Antioch. Obviously they had some connection with

¹³ Longenecker, 71–72.

¹⁴ Kistemaker, “Acts,” *Baker New Testament Commentary*, 410.

¹⁵ F. F. Bruce, “Acts,” *New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 210. Recall that on Good Friday, Jesus’ accusers stayed out in the courtyard of Pilate’s praetorium; to enter the building itself would have necessitated their being ceremonially purified all over again, in order to celebrate the Passover that evening (John 18:28).

the church in Jerusalem and it seems likely that they were there to strengthen ties between Jerusalem and the work in Antioch (cf. Acts 15:24 for a possible explanation).

(3) The phrase “those of the circumcision” means that the people who arrived were Jews. However, in light of Paul’s rebuke, it also seems best to understand this phrase as indicating that some at least of the Jews believed circumcision was necessary for salvation (Acts 15:1).

(4) Why was Peter afraid of “those of the circumcision” given his previous experience with Cornelius? Peter had already faced the accusation of breaking the law by eating with uncircumcised men and satisfied his accusers (cf. Acts 10:28; 11:3, 18). What was there to fear now? The text does not give an explanation but clearly Peter’s experience with Cornelius had not settled the matter of whether Gentiles could be truly saved without being circumcised. There was still much division over the issue and Peter may have done what he did in an attempt to avoid conflict—why risk a huge flare up at Antioch among the Jews if you could prevent it?

(ii) Peter’s example of hypocrisy influenced other Jews, even Barnabas (2:13).

(c) Paul’s Public Rebuke (2:14–21).

(i) Paul considered Peter’s actions to be out of line with the truth of the gospel. Thus the truth of the gospel was at stake here (2:14).

(1) Peter’s actions brought the spiritual condition of the uncircumcised Gentile Christians into question and gave tacit approval to the beliefs of “those of the circumcision”—that circumcision was necessary for salvation.

(ii) Paul clearly states Peter’s hypocrisy (2:14).

(1) Peter himself, though Jewish, was living as a Gentile (like he was uncircumcised).

(2) Yet Peter was compelling Gentiles to live as Jews (when he withdrew from them, he was implying that they needed to be circumcised).

(iii) Excursus—Paul’s doctrine of justification is about:¹⁶

(1) The work of Jesus, the Messiah of Israel. You cannot understand what

¹⁶ N. T. Wright, *Justification*, 11–12.

Paul says about Jesus, and about the significance of His death for our justification and salvation, unless you see Jesus as the one in whom “all the promises of God find their ‘Yes’” (2 Cor 1:20).

- (2) The Abrahamic Covenant. The covenant whose purpose was from the beginning the saving call of a worldwide family through whom God’s savings purposes for the world were to be realized.
- (3) The divine law-court. God, as judge, declares that those who believe in Jesus Christ are “in the right” before Him.
- (4) Eschatology. Justification for Paul was part of God’s future for the whole world and for His people. Paul envisages two moments, the *final* justification when God puts the whole world right and raises people from the dead, and the *present* justification in which that moment is anticipated.

(iv) A summary of Paul’s rebuke (2:15–21).

- (1) This section is the theological heart of Galatians. Almost everything that comes after this section is either an argument in support of this truth (3:1–4:31) or an appeal based on this truth (5:1–6:18).
- (2) We Jews, in spite of being God’s covenant people and not outsiders like the Gentiles, understand that we are not justified by obeying the Mosaic Law. We too, no less than the Gentiles, are justified by faith in Christ; for obeying the law cannot justify anyone (2:15–16).
- (3) If, while seeking to be justified in Christ, I am still found [in the sight of God] to be a sinner [because I also need to keep the law (be circumcised) in order to be justified] then Christ is a minister of sin [because His work leaves me in sin]. May it never be! [This is unthinkable!] (2:17).
- (4) Indeed, the exact opposite is true. If I (after being saved) rebuild what I tore down (attempt to be right with God on the basis of circumcision—law-keeping), I demonstrate that I am still a transgressor [in state]! (2:18).
- (5) Through the law, I died to the law, having been crucified with Christ; Christ now lives in me and the life I now live to God is a life of faith in the Son of God (2:19–20).

(A) The law requires that the one who sins must die. Jesus Christ, when he died on the cross, fulfilled the just demand of the Mosaic Law. And

since we also died with Him, we can say that “through the Mosaic Law, we died to the Mosaic Law” (cf. John Brown’s 1853 Commentary on Galatians).

(B) Elsewhere Paul uses the expression “to die to” in relation to sin (Rom 6:2). Paul means that our relationship to sin has been so decisively altered by our union with Christ that it no longer controls, dominates or defines our existence. (Rom 7:6).

(6) If righteousness comes by obeying the Mosaic Law, Christ died in vain, and the grace of God has been set aside (2:21).

3) Paul Defends the Content of His Gospel Message (3:1–4:31).

A) Paul’s Beginning Arguments (3:1–18).

- (1) Imagine trying to argue for justification by grace through faith apart from the works of the Mosaic Law using only Genesis, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Isaiah and Habakkuk as your supporting texts. Paul does an inspired job. His only non-textual argument makes use of the personal salvation experience of the Galatians themselves.
- (2) Argument #1 (Positive) – the Galatians’ personal experience argues for justification by faith alone (3:1–5).
 - (a) Paul reminds the Galatians that Jesus Christ had been clearly portrayed to them as crucified (3:1).
 - (b) Question #1 - Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the Mosaic Law or by believing what you heard? (3:2)
 - (c) Question #2 - Although you began with the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by human effort? (3:3)
 - (d) Question #3 – Have you suffered so many things for nothing? – if indeed it was for nothing (cf. Acts 13–14). (3:4).
 - (e) Question #4 - Does God give you the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the Mosaic Law or by your believing what you heard? (3:5)
 - (f) Paul’s line of thinking is: does it make sense to think that keeping the law makes you right with God, when you were made right with God in the first place by simple faith in Christ alone?

- (3) Argument #2 (Positive) – Abraham’s conversion argues for justification by faith alone (3:6–9).
- (a) OT Quote #1 (Gen 15:6) - “Abraham believed what God said, and it was credited to his account as righteousness” (3:6).
 - (b) Inference from Quote #1 – it follows, then, that the true “children of Abraham” are those who have faith just as he did (3:7).
 - (i) Paul argues that the true “children of Abraham” were not his physical descendants, but those who, like Abraham, place their faith in God (Matt 3:9–10; Rom 4:11–16).
 - (1) Implication 1 – God’s primary purpose in setting apart the Jews for Himself was to create a spiritual lineage, not a physical one.
 - (2) Implication 2 – being a “child of Abraham” means responding to God in faith and obedience like Abraham (John 8:39; Rom 4:22–24).
 - (ii) The “other gospel” proponents were persuading the Galatians that their faith in Christ was not enough. They also needed to be circumcised to become true sons of Abraham. Paul denies this implicitly in v.7—Abraham, who is our example of how someone is made right with God, was declared righteous prior to his circumcision (Gen 17:9–10; Rom 4:10). Thus circumcision has nothing to do with being right before God.
 - (1) Implication 3 – keeping the law has nothing to do with justification.
 - (c) OT Quote #2 (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18) - “All nations will be blessed through you” (3:8)
 - (d) Inference from Quote #2 – it follows, then, that those who have faith as Abraham did, receive the inheritance of blessing that was promised to him (Acts 3:25–26). Paul stresses the fact that God’s promise to Abraham foretold God’s plan to justify the Gentiles by faith.
 - (i) Implication 1 – righteousness was promised apart from the Mosaic Law.
 - (ii) Implication 2 – keeping the Mosaic Law is not what qualifies you to inherit Abraham’s blessing (Rom 4:13).
 - (iii) Implication 3 – righteousness is the blessing that God promised to Abraham. [You might paraphrase God’s promise this way: “The Gentiles will receive righteousness through you.”]

(4) Argument #3 (Negative) – the unity of the Mosaic Law and the principle by which it operates argues against justification by law-keeping (3:10–14).

(a) Statement 1: “As many as are of the works of the law are under a curse” (3:10).

- (i) The phrase “as many as are of the works of the law” is crucial to the interpretation of this verse. To whom is Paul referring? It is best to understand this phrase to be referring to the proponents of the “other gospel”—those who said circumcision was necessary for salvation (cf. Acts 15:1).
- (ii) Quote of Deuteronomy 27:26 as his supporting verse – “Cursed is everyone who does not keep on doing everything written in the book of the law.”
- (iii) Point of Quote: The Law is a unit—it is a complete package. You cannot choose to observe some parts of it and pass over others. And that is exactly what Paul’s opponents were doing (Gal 6:13). Paul quotes Deuteronomy 27:26 to show the contradiction of such an idea—if you do not continue doing *everything* in the Law, you fall under the Law’s curse. Thus any attempt to include a piece of the Law (circumcision) as necessary for justification only ends in being cursed by the same Law which demands that you must keep *all* of its commands (cf. Gal 5:3; Jas 2:10–11).
 - (1) This interpretation helps to ease the paradox that troubles scholars in this verse: those who *do* the works of the law are cursed because Deuteronomy says that those who *do not* do the works of the law are cursed.
- (iv) At this point you can imagine one of Paul’s opponents saying, in an effort to preserve the unity of the Law, “Very well, you need Christ plus the *entire* Mosaic Law in order to be saved.” But Paul has an answer for this new proposition in the next verses.

(b) Statement 2 : No one is justified by law-keeping (3:11).

- (i) Quote of Habakkuk 2:4 as his supporting verse - “The righteous one will live by faith.”
- (ii) Point of Quote: justification, which results in spiritual life, operates on the principle of faith. Thus the promised blessing of righteousness before God comes only through faith; it cannot come through law-keeping.

(c) Statement 3: The Law is not of faith (3:12).

- (i) Quote of Leviticus 18:5 as his supporting verse - “The one who does the works of the law will live by them.”
- (ii) Point of Quote: The Mosaic Law, with its promised blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience, does not operate on the principle of faith. It operates on the principle of observance. Thus observance of the Mosaic Law, while bringing the physical life spoken of in Leviticus 18:5, cannot bring the spiritual life that comes from faith (Hab 2:4). Hence, the law is not of faith (you can’t get there from here).

(1) Leviticus 18:5 is also quoted in Romans 10:5. Here Paul speaks of the “righteousness which is of the law.” It should be noted that this righteousness is not that of being right with God. The “righteousness which is of the law” refers to the good-standing before the Mosaic Law that one had by keeping the Mosaic Law.

- (iii) This is the answer to “Very well, you need Christ plus the *entire* Mosaic Law in order to be saved.” The Law does not operate on the principle of faith and so cannot justify—it cannot give you a right standing before God even you were to keep it perfectly (cf. Gal 3:21). And since it cannot justify, anyone who places their faith in it for justification will find themselves in an unrighteous standing before God (Gal 5:4).

(1) The Mosaic Law was given by God to show a righteous people how to live a life pleasing to Him. For the sinner, and for those who put their trust in observing the law, it serves only to find them guilty as law-breakers (Rom 3:23) and places a curse of death on them.

(d) Statement 4: Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit (3:13–14).

- (i) Quote of Deuteronomy 21:23 as his supporting verse – “Cursed is everyone is who hanged on a tree.”
- (ii) Point of Quote: the proof that Christ took the law’s curse on Himself is the fact that His executioners hung Him on a tree. Under the Mosaic Law this was the fate of criminals whom God had cursed. Note that God did not curse Christ because He hung on a tree, but Christ hung on a tree because He had taken the curse and its accompanying penalty of death on Himself.

(iii) Our spiritual union with Christ makes us a part of Him. We thus become a

descendant of Abraham as well as partakers in Christ's death and resurrection. Our relation to Christ means that we also share in the inheritance promised to Abraham and Christ.

- (5) Argument #4 (Positive) – the unilateral/unconditional nature of the Abrahamic Covenant argues for justification by faith alone (3:15–18).
- (a) Here it seems as though Paul anticipates the reader's reaction: "But, Paul, the promise to Abraham was given before the Mosaic Law. When the Mosaic Law came, it superseded the promise."
- (b) Paul says, Brothers, let me explain. I'll borrow an illustration from everyday life. Consider a last will and testament (which is a kind of covenant). Once it is ratified (signed, witnessed and sealed), it cannot be added to or set aside (3:15).
- (i) Note Paul's use of "Brothers" for the first time since 1:11.
- (ii) Commentators have spent much time debating the exact legal nature of Paul's illustration. From what we know, it is not exactly in accord with the legal situation of the day. It may be that we lack sufficient data or that Paul was speaking loosely. Whatever the case, it is clear that Paul understands God's covenant with Abraham to be irrevocable.¹⁷
- (c) Now, think of God's promise to Abraham as being like a human last will and testament. It also cannot be revoked or set aside. And who is the heir that will inherit the promise? Is it Abraham's descendants? No, Scripture does not say *seeds*, referring to many, but *seed*, referring to one, that is Christ (cf. Gen 22:18).¹⁸ Christ is the heir of the promise and that promise is unilateral and unconditional (3:16).¹⁹
- (i) If the promise was made only to Abraham and his immediate descendants, it might well be considered fulfilled even before the giving of the law; the law would simply inaugurate a new era in God's dealings with mankind. Paul argues against this by pointing out that the promise was made to Abraham and his *seed*, Jesus Christ. Consequently, God's blessing of justification by grace through faith spans the ages; and the law must be seen to have served only an interim function.²⁰

¹⁷ Longenecker, 130.

¹⁸ For a good defense of Genesis 22:18 as the most likely referent, see C. John Collins, "Galatians 3:16: What Kind of Exegete Was Paul?" *Tyndale Bulletin* 54.1 (2003) 75–86.

¹⁹ For a rebuttal of N. T. Wright's opinion that Jesus is not the 'seed,' see Jason S. DeRouchie and Jason C. Meyer, "Christ or Family as the 'Seed' of Promise? An Evaluation of N. T. Wright on Galatians 3:16," *SBJT* 14.3 (2010) 36–48.

²⁰ James M. Boice, "Galatians," *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 462.

(ii) Physical lineage cannot be used to claim eligibility for inheritance of the promise. The fact that you are a Jew does not mean that you automatically receive the promise. Why? Because the promise was made to Abraham's *seed*, that is Christ. Thus the only way you can inherit the promise is for you to be united with Christ (vv. 28,29). Only when you are in Christ are you able to partake of the promise.

(1) I like what Dunn says: The "intention is not to deny that Abraham's seed is multitudinous in number, but to affirm that Christ's pre-eminence as that 'seed' carries with it the implication that all 'in Christ' are equally Abraham's seed."²¹

(iii) The Four Seeds of Abraham.

(1) Natural Seed: all physical descendants of Abraham (Gen 12:1–3,7; et. al.)

(2) Natural-Spiritual Seed: believing physical descendants of Abraham (Rom 9:27; 11:5).

(3) Spiritual Seed: believing non-physical descendants of Abraham (Rom 9:6,8; Gal 3:6–9,29).

(4) Ultimate Seed: Jesus Christ (Gal 3:16; Heb 2:16–17).

(iv) In the same way, the Mosaic Covenant, which came much later, does not invalidate the Abrahamic Covenant—if it did, it would invalidate God's promise [which is impossible].

(1) The 430 years began with God's reiterating the promises to Jacob at Beersheba as he left Canaan to settle in Egypt (1875 BC; Gen 46:2–4). They ended with the exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Mosaic Law (1446 BC; Exod 12:40–41; 19).

(2) The 400 years of bondage in Egypt (Gen 15:13,16; Acts 7:6) would be between 1845 B.C. when the Israelites were enslaved and 1446 BC when the Exodus occurred.

(3) The "about 450 years" of bondage, wandering and conquest mentioned in Acts 13:20 would be between 1845 BC when the Israelites were enslaved and 1395 BC when the conquest was completed.

²¹ James D. G. Dunn, "Galatians," *Black's New Testament Commentary*, 185.

special revelation.²² It exists because He exists.

- (b) The Mosaic Covenant, which contained the Mosaic Law, was made with a specific people, at a specific time, in a specific place, surrounded by specific cultures, and operating under specific cultural industries (e.g. farming). Because of this, the Mosaic Covenant is not useful beyond its original time-bound purpose. It has passed away and been replaced by the New Covenant and the Law of Christ.
 - (c) However, the New Covenant and Law of Christ deliberately remind us that the Mosaic Covenant contained within it expressions of God's Eternal Law (cf. 1 Cor 9:21). Those expressions are still binding on us today, even though we are not bound by the Mosaic Law itself (cf. Gal 5:14; Jas 2:8–12; Rom 13:8–10).
- (2) Question #1 – Paul anticipates the reader's reaction: "Paul, if the promised inheritance [being right with God] does not come from keeping the law, then why was the law given?" (3:19).
- (a) Answer: Why the Law Was Given (3:19).
 - (i) It was "added" (3:19a).
 - (1) The word "added" implies that the Mosaic Law was not the central theme in God's redemptive plan; it was supplementary and secondary to the enduring covenant made with Abraham.
 - (ii) "because of transgressions" (3:19a).
 - (1) A transgression is the violation of a standard. The law provides the objective standard by which the violations are measured. God gave the law in order for sinners to know how far they deviate from God's standards and how sinful they really are. Before the law was given there was sin (Rom 5:13). But after the law was given, sin could be clearly specified and measured (cf. Rom 3:19–20; 4:15; 7:7). Each act or attitude could then be labeled as a transgression of this or that commandment of the law.
 - (A) Imagine a state in which there are many traffic accidents but no traffic laws. Although people are driving in dangerous, harmful ways, it is difficult to designate which acts are harmful until the legislature issues traffic laws. Then it is possible for the police to cite drivers for transgressions of the traffic laws. Thus you have, in effect, increased

²² See the excellent article "Paul and the Law" written by James Akin. I incorporated several of his ideas into my material. Online: <http://jimmyakin.com/library/paul-and-the-law> on 6/17/2012.

transgressions because you now have a clear law which can be transgressed.²³

(iii) It was “administered through angels by an intermediary” [Moses] (3:19b).

(1) There is no indication that angels were present at the giving of the law in Exodus 19–20. In Deuteronomy 33:2, however, in a passage celebrating the theophany on Sinai, Moses declares that God came “with myriads of holy ones” and the LXX adds, “angels were with him at his right hand.” (cf. Acts 7:53; Heb 2:2).

(iv) It lasted “until the arrival of the descendant to whom the promise had been made” [Christ] (3:19c).

(1) Here Paul notes the temporary nature of the Mosaic Covenant. The Mosaic Covenant came into effect at a certain point in history for a specific people group in a specific geographical area. It was in effect only until the promised Seed, Christ, appeared. There is a contrast here between the permanent nature of the promise and the temporary nature of the Mosaic Covenant.

(v) Paul then clarifies the “administered through angels by an intermediary” comment in the previous verse: it serves to show the superiority of the Abrahamic Covenant over the Mosaic Covenant (3:20).

(1) MacArthur: “Paul seems to be pointing out that a mediator (literally one who stands between two parties) is only needed when more than one party is involved. God gave the covenant directly to Abraham without a mediator because He was the only one involved in making the covenant. Abraham was a witness to the covenant and was a beneficiary, but he was not a party to it. Abraham had no part in establishing or keeping the covenant. That responsibility was God’s alone. The covenant of law, however, not only involved mediators (angels and Moses) but mutual obligations on the two parties (God and Israel).”²⁴

(2) Many commentators think this verse is one of the most difficult, if not *the* most difficult verse in the Bible to interpret.²⁵

(3) Question #2 – Paul anticipates the reader’s reaction: “Paul, does this mean that the Law is in conflict with the promise of God to Abraham?” (3:21–22).

²³ G. Walter Hansen, *Galatians*, 101.

²⁴ John MacArthur, “Galatians,” *New Testament Commentary*, 88.

²⁵ Wesleyan Theological Journal, Vol. 16, 220–221.

- (a) Paul emphatically denies that the Mosaic Law is in conflict with the Abrahamic Covenant (3:21a).
- (b) If a law had been given that could bring life (by obeying it) then righteousness would have been based on law-keeping (3:21b).
- (i) This means that observance of the Mosaic Law, *even perfect observance*, cannot bring life. This refutes those who say that the reason we cannot be justified by law-keeping is because no one can keep the law perfectly. Paul implies here that it doesn't matter whether you keep the law perfectly or not; law-keeping *cannot* justify you (cf. Gal 2:16,21).
- (ii) This also implies that the only way the Mosaic Law could be in conflict with the promise is if obeying the law brought life. Thus Paul supports his denial of a conflict between law and promise by showing that the only way conflict *could* occur is impossible.
- (c) Instead of giving spiritual life, the Scripture finds all of us (both Jews and Gentiles) guilty as law-breakers, condemns us to death (the just penalty for sin), and imprisons us in sin (we are, so to speak, sitting on death row; the law itself provides no way of avoiding our penalty). This is done so that spiritual life (the promise) could be given to those who have faith in Jesus Christ (3:22).
- (i) What Paul is referring to when he uses the word "Scripture" is debated. Contextually, it may be understood as a reference to Deuteronomy 27:26, which Paul used earlier in his argument (cf. Longenecker, Hansen). It may also be understood as a metonymy for God Himself (Rom 11:32).
- (ii) We are left with no exit under the condemnation of the law so that we might find our freedom only by faith in Christ. The law imprisons all—both Jews and Gentiles—under sin to prepare the way for including all believers in Christ—both Jews and Gentiles—in the blessing promised to Abraham.
- (iii) Compare this passage with 2 Cor 3:6–18. Are there any parallels here? In what way does the Mosaic Law kill? (v.6)
- (4) Analogy – Paul compares the Law to a Roman pedagogue (3:23–25).
- (a) Note the pronoun shift in v.23 to "we" and then back to "you" in v.26 (cf. Galatians 4:3,6). This pronoun shift seems to indicate that Paul is making a distinction between "we" Jews and "you" Galatians (cf. Gal 2:15–17). If this is correct, then this section should be understood to be describing the special nature of the relationship between the Law and the Jews—it was a guardian/overseer for them until Christ came and their faith in Him brought

them to full maturity.

- (b) In v.23, Paul states that the Jews were kept imprisoned by the law. However, he now emphasizes the temporal nature of the law's imprisonment – until the coming faith [Christ] be revealed (3:23).
- (c) Paul then explains the temporal nature of the law's imprisonment by way of an analogy: we can think of the Mosaic Law as a pedagogue. It was placed over the Jews so that they might be justified by faith in Christ (3:24).
- (i) A pedagogue was put over a young Roman child until the child reached an age when they could be trusted to behave responsibly with their liberty. Thus the pedagogue was a temporary but necessary solution to a problem that would be solved in due time as the child matured. In spiritual terms, justification by faith in Christ is a "coming of age". The Jews would no longer need to be under the supervision of the Mosaic Law because their love for Christ would naturally lead them to fulfill what the Mosaic Law required (Gal 5:14; Rom 13:8–10).
- (ii) A paraphrase of verses 24–26 might read as follows: "When we [Jews] were children, our Father gave us the law of Moses to function as our legal guardian until the time of maturity in Christ should come, to the great end that we might be justified by faith. And now that this time has arrived and we are grown-up sons, we no longer need our former child-guardian who has served his purpose well. For now both Jews and Gentiles have reached redemptive maturity through faith in Christ Jesus."
- (iii) Today we think of pedagogues as teachers. However, in Paul's day a *paidagogos* was distinguished from a *didaskalos* ("teacher") and had custodial and disciplinary functions rather than educative or instructional ones. The point of the analogy here is not that the Mosaic Law was a positive preparation for Christ, though in terms of piety and education that cannot be doubted in other contexts. Rather, the focus here is on the supervisory function of the law, the inferior status of one under such supervision, and the temporary nature of such a situation in the course of salvation history (3:24).²⁶
- (d) Now that Christ has come, we [Jews] are no longer under the supervision and control of a pedagogue [the Law]. Paul again affirms that although the Mosaic Law had a role in redemptive history, it in no way is involved in our justification (3:25).

²⁶ Longenecker, 148.

C) Paul's Concluding Arguments (3:26–4:31).

(1) Argument #5 (Positive) – our spiritual union with Christ argues for justification by faith alone (3:26–4:7).

(a) Here Paul stresses the truth that our oneness with Christ, who was *the* descendant of Abraham, makes us descendants of Abraham also, and thus we are heirs of the promised inheritance. Law-keeping has nothing to do with our participation in the promise (3:26)

(i) Paul asserts that the Galatians' status as "sons of God through faith" is the result of being "in Christ." The importance of the concept of being united with Christ ("in Christ") cannot be over-emphasized. Everything that we are and have comes from the supernatural spiritual union we have with Christ (3:26).

(b) Paul then reminds the Galatians of their baptism as the sign of their union with Christ. Baptism is the physical outward sign of a spiritual inward union with Christ. Paul also introduces the idea of being "clothed with Christ" as an image that naturally flows from baptism – the Galatians had personally identified themselves with Christ by baptism (3:27).

(i) The likening of baptism to a "putting on" of Christ most nearly approximates the ancient practice of stripping off old clothes and putting on fresh ones as a part of the baptismal rite itself. Baptism by immersion, the normal pattern in apostolic times, required of necessity a changing of garments (3:27).

(1) It may also have reference to the Roman practice of giving a new toga to a child who has come of age.

(ii) Note that Paul does not mean that baptism itself accomplishes our union with Christ. Baptism is simply the sign of a genuine faith that has already trusted in and been united with Christ (3:27).

(c) Galatians 3:28 has become a critical text in the contemporary debate over the roles of men and women in the church, in the home, and in society. Rebecca Groothuis, in her recent book *Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality*, writes, "Of all the texts that support biblical equality, Galatians 3:26–28 is probably the most important." David Scholer recently said that Galatians 3:28 was "the fundamental Pauline theological basis for the inclusion of women and men as equal and mutual partners in all of the ministries of the church." These examples illustrate that, for some, Galatians 3:28 is more than a key text in the debate over men's and women's roles in the home and church; rather, it is the fundamental or most important statement in the New Testament

on this issue (3:28).

- (i) For a definitive treatment of the equality issue read *Equality in Christ? Galatians 3:28 and the Gender Dispute* by Richard W. Hove. See also the excellent collection of articles at the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood website (<http://cbmw.org/>).
 - (ii) Men and women are spiritual equals, but there are ministry distinctions between them in the church (cf. 1 Tim 2:11–12; 1 Cor 14:34–35).
- (d) Earlier in the chapter Paul stated that Jesus Christ alone is the true seed (singular) of Abraham (3:16). Through our union with Christ we have inherited this privileged status. The promise that was made to Abraham’s descendant, Christ, becomes ours through our spiritual union with Christ (3:29).
- (i) This does not mean Christians become physical Jews. Christians are Christians; we are in Christ, the Seed of Abraham (3:16). God still has a plan for national, ethnic Israel that is separate from Church. Failure to distinguish these groups and the promises given to each has resulted in much confusion.
- (e) Analogy – Having stated the difference between living under the Mosaic Law (3:23–25) and living “in Christ” (3:26–29), Paul illustrates what he means by using the analogy of a son growing up in a patrician household (4:1–7).
- (i) Paul draws the picture of a boy in a home of wealth and standing who is legally the heir and so the “young master” of the family estate, but who is still a minor and so lives under rules and managers very much like a slave. He cannot yet exert the control that his future position allows (4:1–2).
 - (ii) Note the shift here to the pronoun “we” in v.3 and then back to “you” in v.6. In this case, I will follow Longenecker/Witherington who understand Paul to be using “we” to refer in particular to the Jews (although there is some debate on this issue). “When we [Jews] were children, we [Jews] were slaves to the elemental or basic principles of this world” (4:3).
 - (1) What does Paul mean by “basic principles of this world”? It is difficult to say and there is much debate on the topic. It seems clear that it must be a reference to the Law, especially in light of v.9,10. The exact nature of the reference to the Law is difficult to discern. It may be referring to the state of the Jews under the Law as sinners or perhaps to the Jewish effort of law-keeping to be justified before God (which is what the Galatians were doing in v.9,10).
 - (iii) But when the appointed/appropriate time came, God sent His Son into the

world, born under the law, in order that He might redeem those under the law and adopt us as sons (4:4–5).

(1) The expression “when the time had fully come” is found only here in Paul’s writings. In the analogy of the heir-in-waiting just developed by Paul, the time designated by the father for his son to enter into the inheritance corresponds to the time in human history fixed and appointed by God for the sending forth of His Son (cf. 1 Cor 10:11).

(2) “Born of a woman” emphasizes the true humanity of Christ; He was a man—a descendant of Adam. Only a descendant of Adam could pay the penalty for sin (Although not Paul’s primary point, this phrase has also been understood as acknowledging the virgin birth).

(3) Paul also asserts that Jesus was “born under the law.” Not only was He a man, but he was also Jewish, circumcised on the eighth day as all Jewish males were. He grew up in a Jewish home reading the Torah, attending synagogue, faithfully observing and following, as no one before or after Him has ever done, all the precepts and requirements of the law. He, like all Jews, was part of the Mosaic Covenant.

(4) The term Paul uses for adoption was originally a legal technical term for adoption as a son with full rights of inheritance.

(iv) Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”. You are no longer slaves but sons, and since you are sons, you are also heirs (4:6–7).

(1) The word *Abba* is not so much associated with infancy as it is with intimacy.

(2) Argument #6 (Positive) – Paul’s original ministry, message and interaction with the Galatians argues for justification by faith alone (4:8–20).

(a) Paul pleads with the Galatians to remember how they believed him when he first ministered to them. “I told you the truth then and I am still telling you the truth now!” (4:8–20).

(b) Paul’s Question – Paul tries to get the Galatians to see how absurd it is to rely on law-keeping for justification (4:8–11).

(i) Before the Galatians became Christians, they were enslaved in religious traditions and pagan worship of gods that did not exist (4:8).

- (1) Perhaps some of them had been devotees of the various mystery religions that flourished in the Hellenistic cities of South Galatia. Others may have been devoted to the Roman Imperial cult or to the pagan deities of ancient Greece. There was a temple to Zeus just outside the city of Lystra. At Iconium, another South Galatian city, an inscription has been found to the goddess Dindimene, a goddess with four heads and ten breasts, who was worshipped in conjunction with her consort, the Greek wine god Dionysus.
- (ii) After reminding them of this, Paul asks, “Now that you have known God (or should I say, now that God knows you), why would you want to go back and become enslaved once more in a religious system that is essentially no different than your old pagan worship?” (4:9).
 - (1) The temptation the Galatians faced, prompted by the proponents of the other gospel, was to doubt that Christ *alone* was sufficient for salvation (they also needed to be circumcised). Yet to do this, Paul says, would be no different than succumbing to their former subservient obedience to the elemental spirits of the world.
 - (2) Certainly Paul’s opponents did not see it in this light. But Paul is unyielding on this point. Jesus Christ *and anything else* amounted to the same pagan slavery from which the Galatians had been delivered. Anything that leads us away from sole reliance on Christ is heretical, subversive and must be condemned.
 - (iii) Paul then gives them an example of how they were turning back to the weak and basic forces of the world: you are observing days, months, seasons and years (4:10).
 - (1) As you might imagine, debate as to what each of these terms signifies has been endless. It seems best to conclude that Paul uses these terms to cover the various kinds of celebration of days and periods observed by the Jews (as prescribed by both Torah and tradition).
 - (2) The problem that Paul highlights here is that a reliance on Christ *and* circumcision does not stop there. Once you open the door to justification by law-keeping, it begins to spread into other areas as well. The proponents of the other gospel soon found it easy to urge the Galatians to start observing other aspects of the Mosaic Law and tradition.
 - (iv) Paul concludes this section by emphasizing his concern for the Galatians: “I’m afraid for you; it seems that all my ministry for you may have been in vain” (4:11).

(c) Paul's Appeal – these verses reveal the true emotional turmoil that Paul was experiencing as he saw his ministry being destroyed and the very people that once loved him being turned against him (4:12–20).

(i) Paul's Appeal (4:12).

(1) It seems best to understand Paul to be saying, "Become like me [I trust in Christ alone for justification; I do not trust in law-keeping], for I became like you [when I was first with you, you did not trust in law-keeping for justification any more than I do now] (4:12).

(2) Paul's next phrase, "You have done me no wrong," has spawned numerous and divergent interpretations. It seems best to me to understand it this way: "You did not wrong me when I was with you, but now you are treating me as your enemy. Why?" (cf. v.16).

(ii) Paul's Bodily Ailment (4:13–16).

(1) Sometimes when a friendship is strained in a time of crisis, it is helpful to stir up memories of the initial warmth of the relationship. That is what Paul does here.

(2) There have been various theories about what the nature of Paul's illness may have been: (1) malaria, (2) epilepsy, and (3) ophthalmia. Whatever it was, God evidently used it to bring Paul and the Galatians together.

(A) The reference to "pluck our your eyes" has led commentators to speculate that Paul's illness was eye related. They also guess that this eye problem may also have been Paul's "thorn in the flesh."

(3) Whatever the nature of Paul's physical affliction, it must have resulted in some kind of bodily disfigurement or obviously unpleasant symptoms so that his condition was repulsive to the Galatians.

(iii) Paul Exposes the True Motives of the "Other Gospel" Proponents (4:17–18).

(1) I like the NIV translation: "Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you *from us*, so that you may be zealous for them."

(iv) Paul's Anguish of Mind and Confusion (4:19–20).

(1) The NLT is good here: "Oh, my dear children! I feel as if I'm going through

labor pains for you again, and they will continue until Christ is fully developed in your lives. I wish I were with you right now so I could change my tone. But at this distance I don't know how else to help you."

- (3) Argument #7 (Negative) – Hagar and her slave son Ishmael (Paul's metaphors for the Mosaic Covenant and those who seek to inherit by law-keeping) argue against justification by law-keeping (4:21–31).
- (a) Paul concludes his arguments with an allegory using the familiar OT story of Hagar and Sarah. His point is that Abraham has two kinds of children, namely children who are (spiritually) free and children who are (spiritually) slaves. Those who are free inherit the promised blessing; those who are slaves do not. Anyone who is circumcised in an effort to be justified becomes a child of Hagar, not Sarah. Thus they do not inherit the promise and return to slavery under the Law (4:21–31).
- (b) Paul is not interpreting the Genesis text allegorically or saying that it should be understood allegorically. He is simply using a literary device known as allegory to illustrate his point.
- (i) The literary device *allegory*, attempts to express immaterial truths in pictorial forms, employing a point-for-point comparison between the intangibles under discussion and the specified representations which are recognizable to the reader.
- (ii) Those who interpret Scripture allegorically, assign secondary meanings to the literal words in the text that are not expressly taught by the words. The allegorical method of interpretation allows the exegete to manipulate the text to support their presuppositions with little or no restraint.
- (c) The Original Story Retold as Paul's Allegory (4:21–23).
- (i) Abraham had two sons, one [Ishmael] through the slave woman [Hagar] and one [Isaac] through the free woman [Sarah] (4:22).
- (ii) Ishmael was born naturally, while Isaac was born supernaturally through the promise (4:23).
- (d) The Allegory Explained and Applied (4:24–31).
- (i) Hagar the slave woman represents:
- (1) The Mosaic Covenant given to Israel on Mount Sinai (4:24–25).

(2) The current, earthly Jerusalem who, with her children, is in slavery (4:25).

(ii) Sarah the free woman represents:

(1) The Covenant of Promise given to Abraham (4:28).

(2) The future, heavenly Jerusalem which is free (4:26).

(A) Isaiah 54:1 supports the statement that Paul makes in verse 26 – “she is our mother”. Isaiah prophesied that one day the “barren one” (the desolate Jerusalem of his time whose children had been exiled) would have more children than “her who has a husband”. Paul quotes the verse here indicating he understands Isaiah’s “children of the desolate woman” to be referring to the spiritual Jews who would result from faith in Jesus Christ. Christians are the Jews who will someday fill the new Jerusalem (4:27).

(B) Within the historical setting of Isaiah’s lifetime, it was a colloquial idiom to personify the capital city of an ethnic population as a female whose husband was the local patron deity. The population represented by that city was referred to as the “children” of the mother-city. During times of war when a nation was conquered, its capital overrun and its peoples exiled, the city was considered to be a barren woman rejected by her husband.

(iii) Ishmael represents:

(1) Those who attempt to be justified by law-keeping. They persecute the children of promise now just as Ishmael persecuted Isaac then (4:25,29).

(2) Those who are in slavery and do not share in the promised inheritance (4:30).

(iv) Isaac represents:

(1) Those who are justified by faith in Jesus Christ (4:28,31).

(2) Those who are free and inherit the promised blessing (4:30).

(e) Attempting to inherit God’s promise by keeping the law is the same as Abraham attempting to fulfill God’s promise through Hagar. It only leads to slavery and disinheritance.

4) Paul Proclaims Our Freedom in Christ (5:1–26).

A) Hold Fast to Your Freedom (5:1–12).

(1) The Call to Stand Firm (5:1).

- (a) The Galatians had recently been set free from their bondage to false gods. The freedom they had in Christ was the freedom to love the true God. Paul warns them that embracing circumcision would be to go back into a slavery similar to what they had just left (5:1).

(2) The Warning of Falling from Grace (5:2–6).

- (a) These verses have strong implications for theology on apostasy and separation from Christ. In them we see that it is possible to turn from Christ and sever the relationship we have with Him. Note in v.3 that Paul again points out that the Law is a unit—it is a complete package. You cannot choose to observe some parts of it and pass over others (cf. 3:10).

(3) The Condemnation of Those Who Promote the “Other Gospel” (5:7–12).

- (a) Paul again gives voice to the intense anger and frustration he is feeling over the fact that someone was persuading his converts to embrace circumcision as necessary to salvation. Evidently the false teaching was spreading throughout the churches (5:9). Not only that, but the false teachers were lying about Paul and claiming that he still preached the necessity of circumcision (cf. 5:11). V.12 contains perhaps the clearest statement (through what I feel is hyperbole) how serious the issue was (cf. Matt 18:7–9).

B) But Don't Use Your Freedom As An Opportunity To Indulge the Flesh (5:13–26).

(1) Warning Against Liberty as License (5:13–15).

- (a) True liberty is the God-enabled ability to live as we should, not as we please.

(b) Biblical data on the flesh:

(i) For the sinner:

- (1) The flesh is that part of the person in which sin dwells and holds sway. With the flesh, we serve the power/principle of sin (Rom 7:17–18).

- (2) The mind has also been corrupted by the principle of sin (Eph 2:3).

- (3) A sinner's mind can be enlightened by God's Word. With their mind, they can desire to do what is right. This is what Paul calls "serving the Law of God with my mind" (Rom 7:25). However, they are still a prisoner of the law of sin which dwells in their flesh. Try as they may, they will always find themselves losing the war between the law of their mind (inner man; sense of conceptual affirmation and emotional delight in God's Law) and the law of sin.
- (ii) In Romans 8, Paul contrasts those according to the flesh and those according to the Spirit:
- (1) Those who are according to the flesh: a) they walk according to the flesh, b) they are flesh-minders (someone whose mind is focused on the flesh and its desires, and joins in with the flesh in acting on those desires), c) they are spiritually dead and without peace, d) they are hostile to God, not submissive to His Law and indeed unable to submit to His Law, e) they cannot please God, f) they are not in the Spirit.
- (2) Those who are not according to the flesh: a) they walk according to the Spirit, b) they are Spirit-minders (someone whose mind is focused on the Spirit and His desires and resists the desires of the flesh), c) they are spiritually alive and have peace with God, d) they are putting to death the deeds of the body, e) they are not in the flesh.
- (iii) After salvation, the flesh continues to affect the believer (Gal 5:13, 16; Rom 8:12–13; 13:14; 1 Pet 2:11), but not the same way that it does a sinner. For the believer, the flesh has been "crucified" (Gal 5:24) and there has been a "removal of the body of the flesh" (Col 2:11). But it is still present and has desires that must be resisted; we must avoid making provision for the flesh (Rom 13:14; 1 Pet 2:11).
- (iv) Paul says that we are "dead to sin" [state] (Rom 6:11) yet goes on to say that we should not "let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts" [action] (Rom 6:12). The implication is that sin can reign in our bodies if we submit to it (and we are still capable as Christians of submitting to it). Thus being "dead to sin" does not mean that sin no longer has any effect on us. It means that sin is no longer "master over you" (Rom 6:14). There is a parallel between Paul's comments on sin and his comments on the flesh. He says that those "who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" [state] (Gal 5:24), yet he also says to "live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh" [action] (Gal 5:16). The implication is that the flesh will pull you to satisfy its desires unless you live/walk by the Spirit. Thus the fact that the flesh is "crucified" (Gal 5:24) does not mean that the flesh no longer pulls us to self-centered living.

(v) Summary Statement: the flesh (a) comes to all men through Adam's fall, (b) has mastery over the sinner and produces many evil works (Rom 7; Gal 5:19–21), and (c) although its controlling power is broken in the life of a believer (Gal 5:24), the flesh will still pull us away from God and toward self and sin (Rom 13:14; 1 Pet 2:11) if not resisted by a life of walking in the power of the Spirit (Gal 5:16, 18; Eph 5:18).

(c) It is clear from vv.13–15 that the Galatians were fighting amongst themselves. Paul describes such behavior as “turning your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh.” Our freedom is meant to allow us to live a life of love for one another; but it can also become an occasion to give in to fleshly desires if we do not live by the Spirit.

(2) Live by the Spirit (5:16–18).

(a) Verse 16 is an incredible promise. Consider the following expanded translation— “But I say, be walking in the Spirit and you will never fulfill the desire of the flesh.” Paul uses a double negative to make his denial as emphatic as possible. His point is that as long as a believer is presently, actively walking by the Spirit, they will not fulfill the desire of the flesh.

(b) Verse 17 begins with the word “for,” indicating that Paul is continuing the thought of the previous verse and is about to give further explanation:

(i) “For the flesh desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh” (5:17a, LEB). The flesh desires things that are “against,” or contrary to what the Spirit desires, and the Spirit desires things that are contrary to what the flesh desires. Doing the one necessarily means *not* doing the other.

(ii) “for these are in opposition to one another” (5:17b, LEB). The flesh and the Spirit are opposed to each other—both want to frustrate the desires of the other.

(iii) “so that you may not be doing whatever things you may be desiring” (5:17c). While you were living in the flesh, the flesh was working to keep any desire of the Spirit from being accomplished in your life. Now that you are walking by the Spirit, the Spirit is working to keep any desire of the flesh from being accomplished in your life. All you have to do is be yielding to the desires of the Spirit and “you will not fulfill the desire of the flesh” (5:16).

(c) Instead of painting a discouraging picture of the believer locked in a losing battle with the flesh, Galatians 5:17 proclaims a liberating truth—the Christian that is presently, actively walking by the Spirit will not fulfill the desires of the flesh

because the Spirit is working to keep any fleshly desire from being accomplished. What a wonderful truth—every believer can enjoy a life free from the willful indulgence of the flesh!

- (d) Verse 18 reinforces this conclusion from a different angle. If you are being led by the Spirit, which is another way of talking about walking in the Spirit, then you are not “under law.” The Galatians were being told by the FGA that they must be under the Mosaic covenant, through circumcision, to be saved. Paul refutes this idea by pointing out that what is begun by the Spirit cannot be completed by something done to the flesh. Being led by the Spirit is the antithesis of living according to the flesh, which places a person under the law.
- (i) The law is closely related in Paul’s mind to the flesh. Why? Because in his own life as a Pharisee, Paul found that the law (which was the focus of his life) aroused the flesh’s sinful desires and did not enable him to resist them (Rom 7:5–6). To the sinner the law is not an enabling force.
- (e) Many commentators argue that Galatians 5:17 and Romans 7:14–25 are talking about the same struggle. I have stated what I believe to be the correct understanding of Galatians 5:17 above. Let’s consider the following reasons why Galatians and Romans are different:
- (i) The conflict is different. In Galatians 5:17 the conflict is between the flesh and the Spirit. The conflict in Romans 7:14–25 is between the flesh and Paul’s mind (cf. Rom 7:23–24)—the Spirit is not mentioned anywhere in the passage. The struggle Paul testified to was the conflict that raged between his mind (which was enlightened by the law and wanted to obey) and his flesh (which resisted his attempts to please God).
- (ii) The spiritual state of the individuals is different. In Romans 7:14–25, Paul speaks of himself as: “fleshly” (v. 14), “sold into slavery to sin” (v. 14), having “sin that lives in me” (v. 17), “captive to the law of sin” (v. 23), and “serving the law of sin” (v.25). This characterization signals us that Paul is referring to his past life as a devout but unregenerate Pharisee who wanted to obey God’s law. Galatians 5:17 is referring to a believer: “brethren” (v. 13), “those who belong to Jesus Christ” (v. 24), “[we] live by the Spirit” (v. 25).
- (iii) The solution is different. The answer to the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit in Galatians 5:17 is for the believer to be presently, actively walking by the Spirit. The answer to Paul’s struggle between his mind and his flesh was for him to be “set free” (v. 24) “through Jesus Christ our Lord” (v. 25; also Rom 8:1–2).
- (f) If Paul wasn’t testifying about the losing battle in his life between the flesh and the Spirit, then what was he talking about? Remember that Paul was born a Jew

of the tribe of Benjamin. He was circumcised on the eighth day in obedience to the Law, and was a member of the sect called the Pharisees. The Pharisees were renowned for their zealous observance, not only of the Mosaic Law, but of the traditions of the elders as well.

- (g) What do you think happened when the devoutly religious but still unregenerate Paul tried to live a life that was holy and separated from sin? Exactly what is described in Romans 7:14–25! His mind, which was enlightened by God’s word, recognized what was good and desired to obey, but his flesh, which still had mastery over him, repeatedly thwarted his attempts to live a life free from sin. “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (Rom 7:24, ESV).²⁷ Paul gives the answer to his plea for help in Romans 8:2—“For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.”
- (h) Romans, along with Paul’s other letters, must be read through the lens of Paul’s personal background and experience with the Law as a unregenerate Jew. This is a unique perspective, quite different from the pagan Gentiles who grew up following the deeds of the flesh and only learning about the Law after being saved. Paul grew up reading the Law and wanting to follow it as an obedient Jew. But just as growing up in the church doesn’t give you the ability to live a Christian life, so being a Pharisee didn’t give the Paul the ability to live a holy life apart from Jesus’ saving grace.
- (3) The Works of the Flesh (5:19–21).
- (a) Examples include sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, participation in demonic activities, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these (5:19–21).
- (b) Those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God (5:21).
- (4) The Fruit of the Spirit (5:22–23).
- (a) Examples include love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (5:22–23).
- (b) Against such things there is no law (5:23).
- (5) Live in Light of the Truth (5:24–26).

²⁷ Paul’s use of the present tense in Romans 7:14–25 should be understood as a historical present. This technique uses the present tense to describe a past event in order to bring that event into the present and make it come alive for the reader/listener.

(a) Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires (5:24). I understand this verse to mean that our relationship to the flesh has been severed—we are no longer under its control. I see parallels here between sin and the flesh. We are dead to sin, yet sin can still tempt us and we can still yield to it. In the same way we are dead to the flesh, yet the flesh still has desires of self-centeredness that must be resisted.

5) Paul Emphasizes Our Responsibility in Christ (6:1–18)

A) Responsibility to Other Believers (6:1–2).

(1) We have the responsibility to restore a fellow believer that has sinned (6:1).

(a) The problem of sin in a believer’s life should be handled in and by the church. The introductory term “brethren” in verse 1 confirms that it is Christians who are to deal with the problem. The “you” of verse 1 is plural and not singular, which emphasizes the obligation of the church as a body to respond to the sin of a saint. It is inferred in this verse that the sinner (the one “caught in any trespass”) is a brother. The church is obligated to respond to the sin of fellow believer.

(b) There is some doubt as to the precise meaning of the Greek term rendered “caught,” but it seems best to understand this as referring to a believer who has become ensnared in the quicksand of sin and needs help getting out.

(c) The responsibility of the church is to restore the saint. The Greek word rendered “restore” is used to describe the mending of torn fishing nets (Matt 4:21). The ancient Greeks used this word for the setting of broken bones. In Ephesians 4:12 the same term is used for “equipping” of the saints. Clearly, the term has the positive implication of healing and restoration. Since the term “restore” is a present imperative, it is not just a particular act which is required, but a process.

(d) The process of restoration is to be carried out gently. Note that the situation described here is different from that in 1 Corinthians 5. The Corinthians had been “gentle and gracious” when they should have acted much more forcefully. The man living in incest among the Corinthians did not repent of his premeditated sin. In Galatians Paul is talking about one who is not defensive, but overcome with guilt and self-condemnation for his act. This situation requires encouragement and support, not rebuke and rejection.

(e) The restoration of a sinning saint is a task for those who are spiritual. The “spiritual” believer has the sensitivity and maturity to help the one who has sinned. His concern for his brother is motivated by God’s Word and a genuine love. Not everyone in the church has the maturity and wisdom it takes to restore one who has sinned.

- (f) The restoration process endangers the “spiritual” (Jude 1:23). The “spiritual” believer who seeks to restore another may himself also be tempted and fall into sin: either by committing a similar sin or by believing himself to be above such temptations (1 Cor 10:12).
- (2) We have the responsibility to bear other believer’s burdens (6:2).
- (a) All believers struggle with the cares and problems of living in a sinful world. We should be quick to help others with these burdens (6:2).
- B) Responsibility to Yourself (6:3–5).
- (1) People often think themselves to be something (or someone) because they are comparing themselves to those around them. Our confidence in our abilities should come from an accurate and truthful self-assessment, not from a comparison to someone else (6:3–4).
- (2) We are accountable for what we are truly capable of performing. And we are responsible for performing those things to the best of our ability (6:5).
- C) Responsibility to Spiritual Teachers (6:6).
- (1) Those who receive instruction in God’s Word are responsible for supporting the ones who teach them. This primarily applies to those whose occupation is the ministry (pastors, missionaries, etc.), but is not necessarily restricted to them alone (6:6).
- D) Responsibility to Do Good (6:7–10).
- (1) The Law of Sowing and Reaping (6:7–9).
- (a) God cannot be mocked – You will reap what you sow (6:7).
- (i) Sowing and reaping are part of God’s design for life. Our actions have consequences both for ourselves and for others. The enemy tries to deceive us into thinking that we can “beat the system” but Paul reminds us that we cannot make a fool of God.
- (b) If we sow to the flesh, we will from flesh will reap destruction and ultimately eternal death (6:8a).
- (c) If we sow to the Spirit, we will from the Spirit reap blessing and ultimately eternal life (6:8b).

(2) The Principles of Sowing and Reaping (6:9).

(a) We reap in a different season than when we sow (6:9b).

(i) Because it takes time for what we have sown to mature it is tempting to...

(1) Become weary of sowing to the Spirit (6:9a).

(2) Think that we are getting away with sowing to the flesh (Exod 8:15; Ps 10:6; Eccl 8:11; 2 Pet 3:3–4).

(b) We reap in kind with what we sow.

(i) If we sow wheat, we will reap wheat. If we sow a lie, unfaithfulness, or discord, we reap lies, unfaithfulness or discord. If we sow a kindness, we will reap a kindness (compare Gen 27:9–29 and Gen 37:31–35).

(c) We reap what others have sown.

(i) If we stop and think about it, we will realize that much of what we reap we never planted. Many of us are reaping the benefits of the good and godly deeds of Christian parents. Some of us are reaping sorrow and heartbreak because significant others in our circle of relationships sowed to the flesh (2 Sam 9:7; 21:1; 1 Kgs 11:12; Jer 32:18).

(d) We reap more than we sow.

(i) In the world of farming, the law of surplus is what makes sowing worthwhile. For every kernel of corn planted, the farmer hopes to gain at least one ear of corn bearing many kernels. If it were not for this law, no farmer would plant anything (cf. Josh 7; Hos 8:7).

(e) We reap in proportion to what we sow.

(i) If a person sows one acre with wheat, he will receive what one acre can produce. However, if he sows 100 acres, he will receive what 100 acres can produce. The more one sows to the Spirit, the more he reaps the blessings of a righteous harvest (Luke 6:38; 2 Cor 9:6,10). The more one sows to the flesh, the more he reaps the sorrow of an unrighteous harvest. This law teaches us why it is much better to be saved early in youth rather than late in old age.

(3) The Motivation of Sowing and Reaping (6:10).

(a) Whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone, especially

to our Christian brothers and sisters (6:10).

6) Concluding Remarks (6:11–18).

A) See What Large Letters (6:11).

(1) It was a common convention of Hellenistic letter writing that a secretary or amanuensis would prepare the main body of the letter while the sender would append his signature and perhaps a few closing words of benediction as a way of attesting the contents of the letter. We gather from other comments in Paul's letters that it was customary for him to do this (cf. 1 Cor 16:21; 2 Cor 10:1; 2 Thess 3:17; Col 4:18). Thus most commentators believe that 6:11 is the place in Galatians where Paul took the pen and finished off the letter in his own handwriting using, for some reason, unusually large letters to which he drew attention in this verse.

(a) Why did Paul write in such large letters, that is, in Greek uncials rather than in the smaller cursive script? Much speculation has been given to this question. Was it Paul's poor eyesight (cf. 4:15)? Was his writing hand twisted from some persecution? In the end, it seems more likely, as Lightfoot said, that "the boldness of the handwriting answers to the force of the apostle's conviction. The size of the characters will arrest the attention of his readers." Paul wanted to underscore and reemphasize both the central message of the letter and his own personal investment in it.

B) Paul Exposes the True Motives of the "Other Gospel" Proponents (6:11–13; cf. 4:17).

- (1) They desired to make a "good showing in the flesh" (6:12). They sought external glory from men, and wanted to be outwardly and publicly honored by them.
- (2) They did not want to be persecuted for the cross of Christ (6:12). Teaching justification through faith in Christ alone would have brought scorn and ridicule from the very people they wanted to impress.
- (3) They want to "boast in the Galatians' flesh" (6:13). They wanted to claim the Galatians as their own disciples (proselytes) and so increase their stature in the eyes of others.

C) Paul Offers His Own Motive in Contrast (6:14).

- (1) God forbid that I should boast in anything other than the cross of Jesus Christ (6:14a).
- (2) Why boast in the cross? Because the cross was the means by which the world was crucified to Paul and Paul to the world. We are dead to the world and the world is

dead to us (6:14b).

D) Summary of the Letter (6:15–16).

- (1) Circumcision does not count for anything. It has nothing to do with being justified (6:15a).
- (2) The only thing that matters is becoming a new creature through faith in Jesus Christ (6:15b).
- (3) Peace and mercy be to those who live by this truth, for they are the true Israel of God (6:16).

E) Farewell (6:17–18).

- (1) Paul bluntly states that the lies being spread about him must stop (6:17a).
- (2) The proof of Paul's loyalty to Christ is clearly seen in the scars on his body that he received while suffering for Christ (recall that Paul was stoned and left for dead during his ministry in the Galatian churches – Acts 14). They are to him a slave's mark of ownership (6:17b).
 - (a) How irritating it must have been for Paul to be called into question when he had suffered so much for the gospel!
- (3) Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. (6:18).

Study Questions

First Reading

1. Why do you think there is agreement among scholars that Paul is the author of this letter? (Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, and Titus are questioned as to whether or not they were written by Paul, but not Galatians).
2. When do you think this letter was written? (And do you think it matters when it was written? Why or why not?)
3. To whom is Paul writing? (Yes, I know he was writing to the Galatians, but who were the Galatians?)
4. Why did Paul write this letter?
5. What do you think Paul hoped to achieve through this letter?
6. How did Paul go about achieving his purpose in the letter? (Can you identify his logic/arguments?)
7. What surprises you the most as you read Galatians? (Do you find any of Paul's statements shocking?)
8. What confuses you the most as you read Galatians? (Where do you get lost as you're reading?)
9. Reading Galatians should cause you to want to read another NT book for context...which book?
10. Identify the main themes/topics in the letter. (I'm looking for single words or short sentences, not an essay).

Introduction

1. What are the two theories concerning the location of the Galatian churches?
2. When did Paul found and minister in the Galatian churches?
3. What are the two major factors that must be taken into account when trying to date the epistle?

4. What are the two main solutions that harmonize Galatians 2:1–10 with Luke’s record of Paul’s visits to Jerusalem?
5. What is the connection between Acts 15:1–2 and Galatians 2:12?
6. What did the false gospel agitators (FGA) want the Galatians to do?
7. Why does Paul call the FGA’s teaching “another gospel”?
8. What did the FGA say to convince the Galatians?
9. What did the FGA say about Paul?
10. What were the motives of the FGA?
11. Were the FGA Jews or Gentiles?

Chapter 1

1. Why does Paul mention the fact that he is an apostle at the beginning of his letter?
2. Why does Paul emphasize here that he was NOT sent from men or by men, but rather from Jesus Christ (something unique to Galatians)?
3. Why does Paul say that the letter is not from him alone?
4. Who is the “one” that the Galatians are so quickly deserting?
5. How quickly had the Galatians been led astray?
6. How was the true gospel message being distorted?
7. Why does Paul use such strong language in his condemning to hell of anyone who preaches a different gospel?
8. Why does Paul introduce the issue of pleasing people into his argument in verse ten?
9. Why does Paul make a point of telling the Galatians that his gospel was not of human origin?
10. How does reminding them of his former zeal for Judaism factor into his argument?
11. Why does Paul emphasize that he did not go to Jerusalem after his conversion?

12. Why does Paul tell the Galatians that he spent years working in the regions north of Judea?

Chapter 2

1. Why did Paul go to Jerusalem and discuss his gospel message with the apostles and church leaders?
2. What did Paul mean when he said, “for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain”?
3. Did anyone at the meeting resist Paul’s gospel?
4. Why did Paul resist having Titus circumcised but later agreed to have Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3)?
5. How did the apostles and church leaders react?
6. Describe the difference between Paul’s ministry and Peter’s ministry.
7. What was the nature of Peter’s hypocrisy at Antioch?
8. Who were “those of the circumcision”?
9. Why was Peter afraid of “those of the circumcision”?
10. Why was table-fellowship such an issue?
11. Why did Paul publicly rebuke Peter for his hypocrisy?
12. What do most commentators consider the verses in Galatians 2:15–21 to be?
13. Describe the logic behind Paul’s argument in Galatians 2:17.
14. What does it mean that “through the law, I died to the law”?
15. Describe what is meant by “died to the law”.

Chapter 3

1. Which books of the Old Testament were used by Paul in his defense of his gospel message?
2. How does Paul use the Galatians' personal salvation to argue for justification by faith alone?
3. How does Paul use Abraham's conversion to argue for justification by faith alone?
4. Who are the true children of Abraham?
5. Was Abraham saved before or after he was circumcised?
6. How does the quote of Genesis 12:3 factor into Paul's argument?
7. Do a comparison between Galatians 3:6–9 and Romans 4.
8. Who is Paul referring to when he says, "as many as are of the works of the law"?
9. Why are those people under the curse of the Mosaic Law?
10. What did the Mosaic Law do for the sinner?
11. Was the Mosaic Law given to a holy people or to a sinful people?
12. Did the Mosaic Law have the power to change the spiritual condition of those who observed it?
13. What OT verse does Paul use to support his argument that we are justified by faith?
14. Why does Paul quote Leviticus 18:5 to support his assertion that "the law is not of faith"?
15. What is the proof Paul speaks of to show that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Mosaic Law?
16. How does the nature of the Abrahamic Covenant argue for justification by faith alone apart from law-keeping?
17. Explain the difference between the Mosaic Covenant and the Abrahamic Covenant.
18. What reason does Paul give for why the Mosaic Law was given to Israel?

19. Is there any conflict between the promise to Abraham and the Mosaic Law? Why or why not?
20. Could perfect observance of the Mosaic Law justify someone?
21. Compare Galatians 3:21–22 with 2 Corinthians 3:6–18. Are there any parallels here? In what way does the Mosaic Law kill?
22. Explain the analogy between the Mosaic Law and a Roman pedagogue.
23. How does our spiritual union with Christ argue for justification by faith alone?

Chapter 4

1. What analogy does Paul use to illustrate the difference between living under the supervision of the Mosaic Law and living as sons of God?
2. Explain the similarity between law-keeping and the Galatians' old pagan lifestyle.
3. What is Galatians 4:10–11 referring to?
4. Why does Paul remind the Galatians of his original ministry and friendship with them?
5. What does the phrase “become like me, I have become like you” mean?
6. Why does Paul say “You have done me no wrong”?
7. What bodily ailment did Paul have and how did it factor into his ministry with the Galatians?
8. Discuss how “pluck out your eyes” factors into the conjecture on Paul's thorn in the flesh.
9. What does Paul have to say about the true motives of the proponents of the other gospel?
10. Why does Paul introduce the OT story of Sarah and Hagar as an argument for justification by faith alone?
11. Is Paul interpreting the Genesis text allegorically?
12. What does Hagar represent?

13. What does Sarah represent?
14. Explain the significance of Isaiah 54:1 in Paul's story?
15. What does Ishmael represent?
16. What does Isaac represent?
17. What happens to those who attempt to inherit the promise by law-keeping?

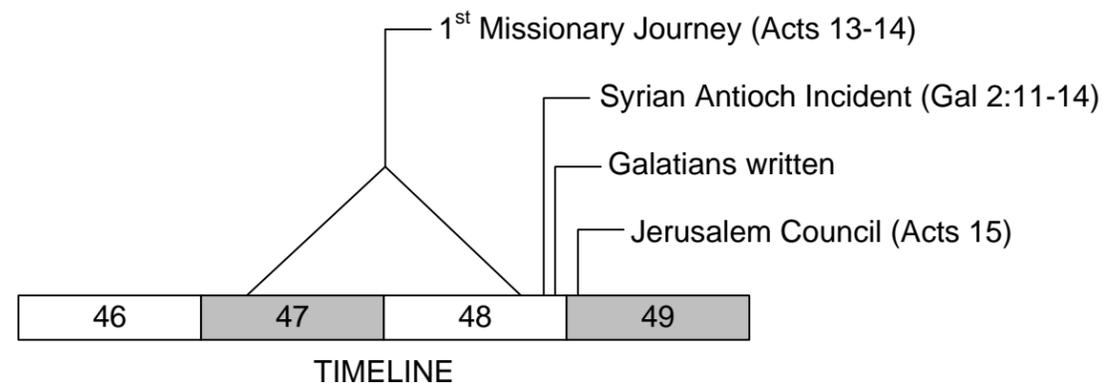
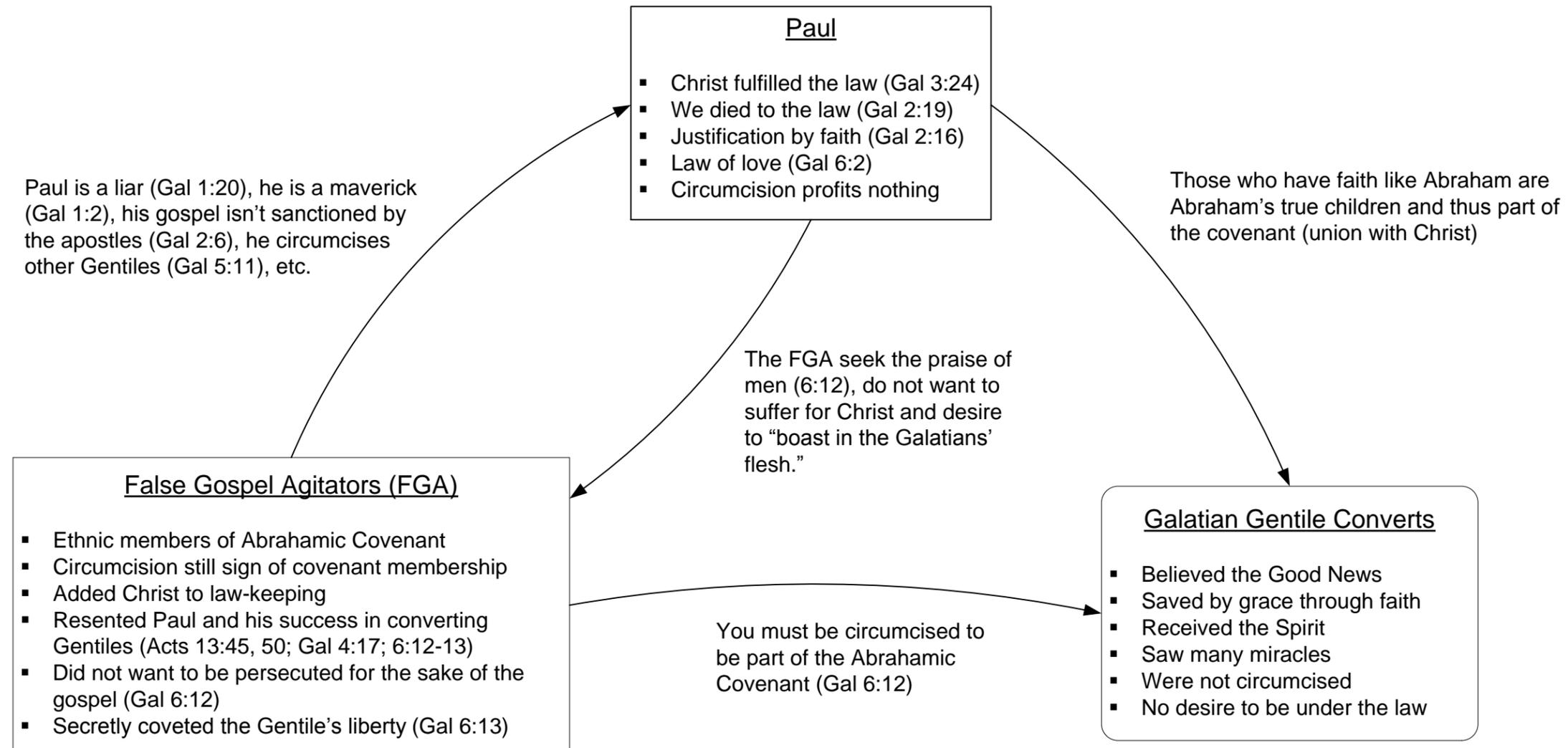
Chapter 5

1. Why does Paul state that those who attempt to be justified by law-keeping are under a yoke of slavery?
2. What happens to anyone who puts their trust in circumcision for justification?
3. What significance does circumcision have for the Christian?
4. How does accepting circumcision obligate you to keep the whole law? What implications does this have?
5. What does Paul mean in Galatians 5:12?
6. What does Galatians 5:13 indicate is still present in the life of those who are free in Christ?
7. What NT command serves as a summary of the Mosaic Law?
8. What danger is there for those who have freedom in Christ?
9. How do we avoid gratifying the desires of the flesh?
10. Is there a difference between the conflict described in Galatians 5:16–17 and Romans 7:14–24?
11. In what way is 5:17 the resolution to the conflict pictured in 5:16?
12. Do the fruits of the Spirit come naturally in the life of the believer?
13. If the flesh has been crucified, how can it still affect our lives?

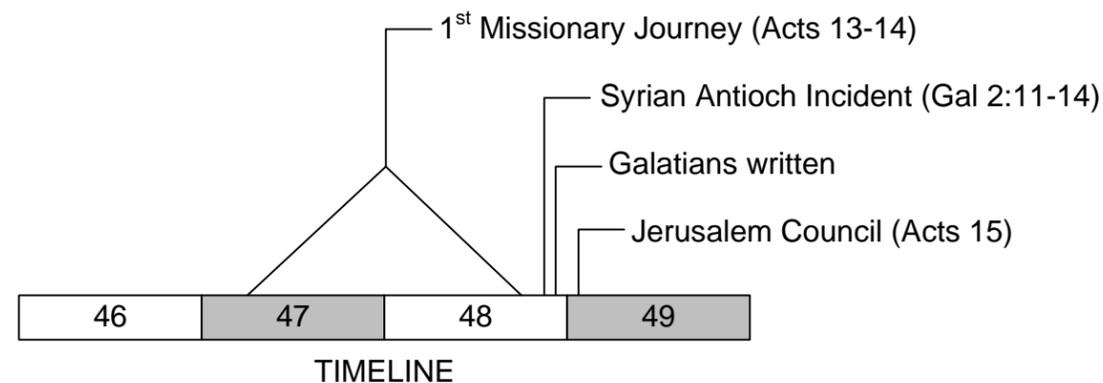
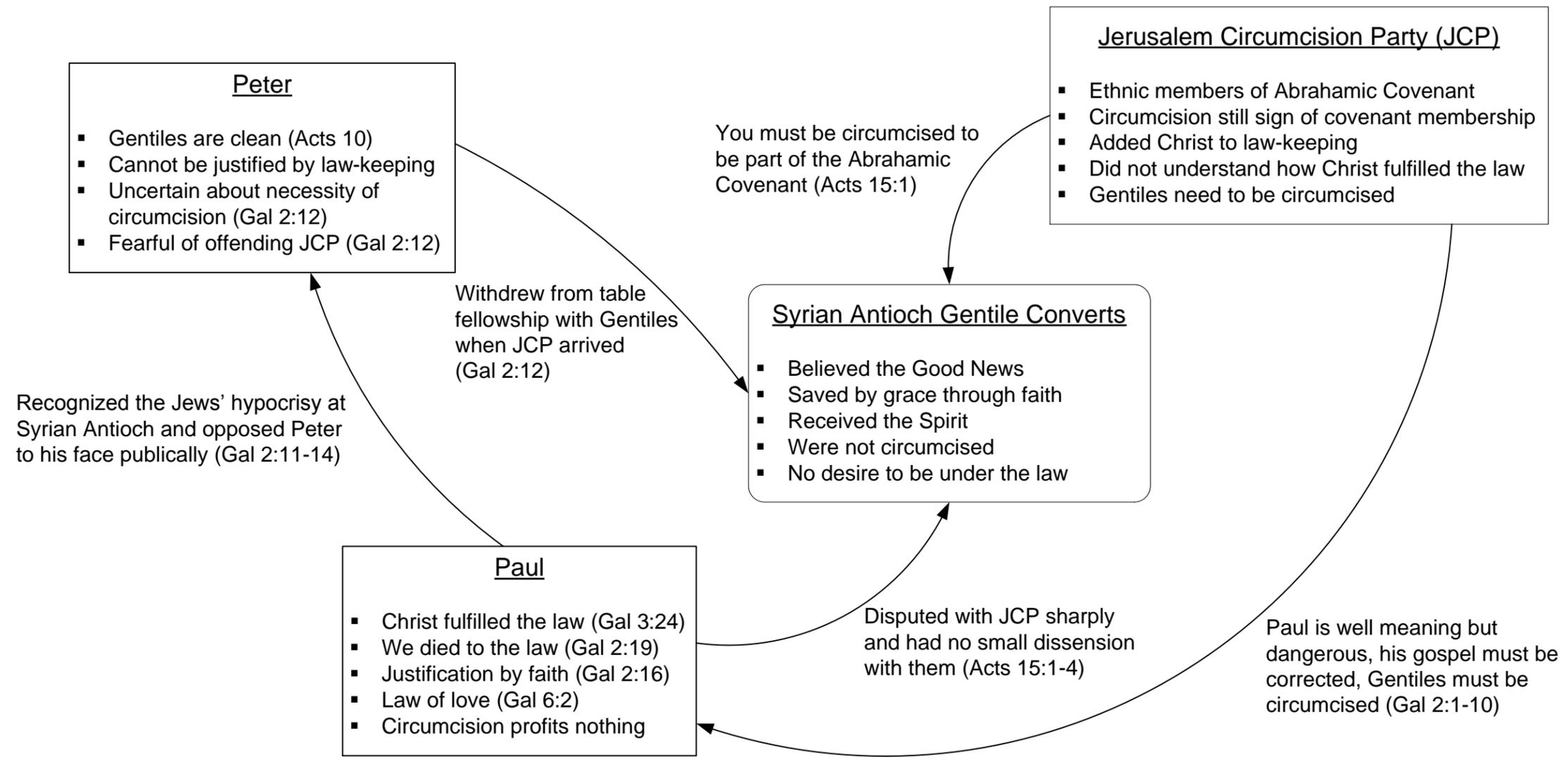
Chapter 6

1. What responsibility does the church have to a fellow believer who has sinned?
2. What does the word “caught” mean in Galatians 6:1?
3. What danger is there when dealing with a believer’s sin?
4. How is it possible to think you are something when you are nothing?
5. What responsibility do we have to those who teach God’s Word?
6. What law is in place to enforce the reality that our actions in the present have consequences in the future?
7. What two contrasting temptations face us due to the fact that reaping occurs in a different season than sowing?
8. Do we reap what others have sown? Why or why not?
9. Why did Paul use large letters in 6:11–18?
10. What were the true motives of the proponents of the “other gospel”?
11. How does Paul’s motive contrast with his enemies’ motives?
12. How does Paul summarize the truth about circumcision?
13. What does Paul say about the lies being spread about him? Why?

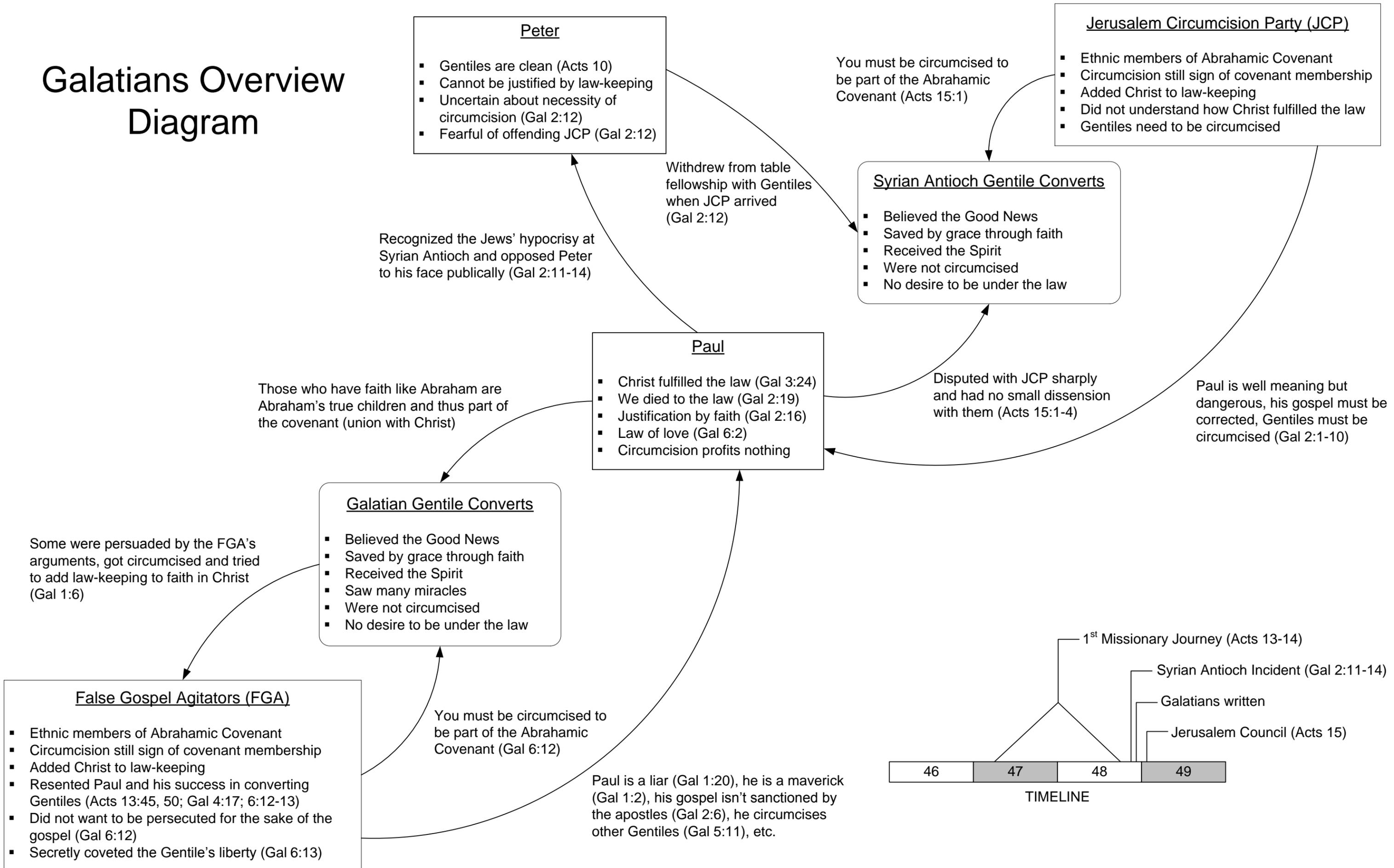
Paul, the FGA and the Galatians



Paul, Peter, the JCP and the Gentile Converts



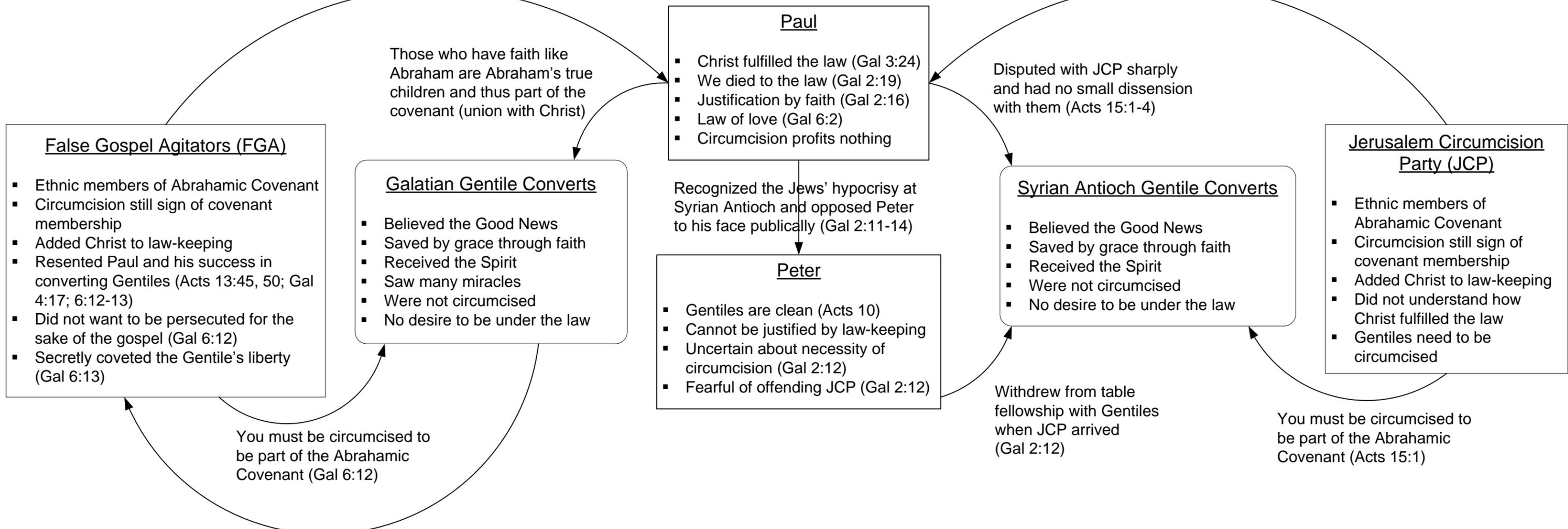
Galatians Overview Diagram



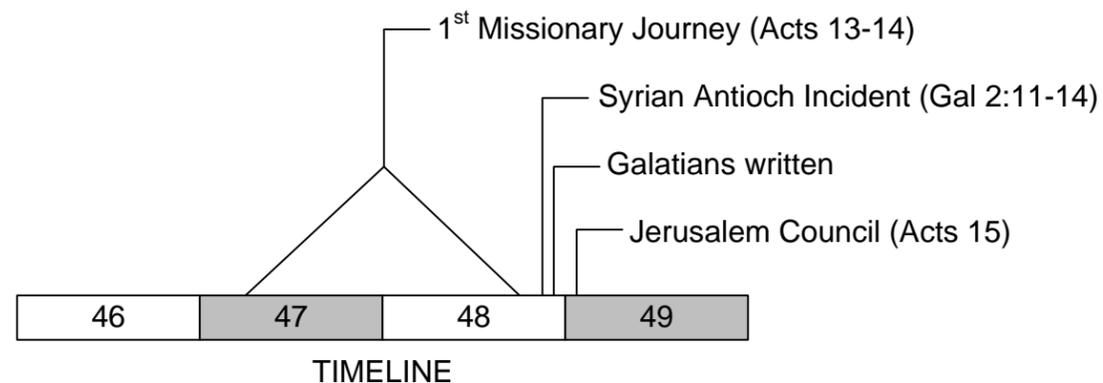
Galatians Overview Diagram

Paul is a liar (Gal 1:20), he is a maverick (Gal 1:2), his gospel isn't sanctioned by the apostles (Gal 2:6), he circumcises other Gentiles (Gal 5:11), etc.

Paul is well meaning but dangerous, his gospel must be corrected, Gentiles must be circumcised (Gal 2:1-10)



Some were persuaded by the FGA's arguments, got circumcised and tried to add law-keeping to faith in Christ (Gal 1:6)





Federal Law
Protection of Life

Florida



Texas



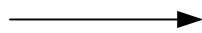
"Old" State Law

"Do not murder"
"Speed Limit 60"

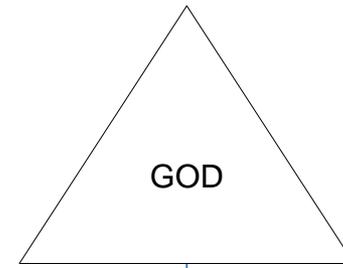


"New" State Law

"Do not murder"
"Speed Limit 70"



Florida state law contains both Federal Law and specific state-related laws. Murder is illegal in Texas, not because Florida state law is binding on Texans, but because murder is against Federal Law. Federal Law is reflected in both Florida and Texas state law.

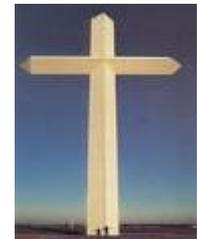


Eternal Law
Love God
Love Neighbor

Mosaic Covenant



New Covenant



1 Cor. 9:19-21



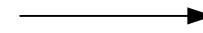
Mosaic Law

"Do not lie"
"Do not eat pork"



Law of Christ

"Do not lie"
--All things clean--



The Mosaic Law contains both Eternal Law and specific time-bound cultural law (which reflects God's Eternal Law in principle). Lying is wrong under the New Covenant, not because the Mosaic Law is still binding, but because lying is against God's Eternal Law. Eternal Law is reflected in both the Mosaic Law and the Law of Christ.

