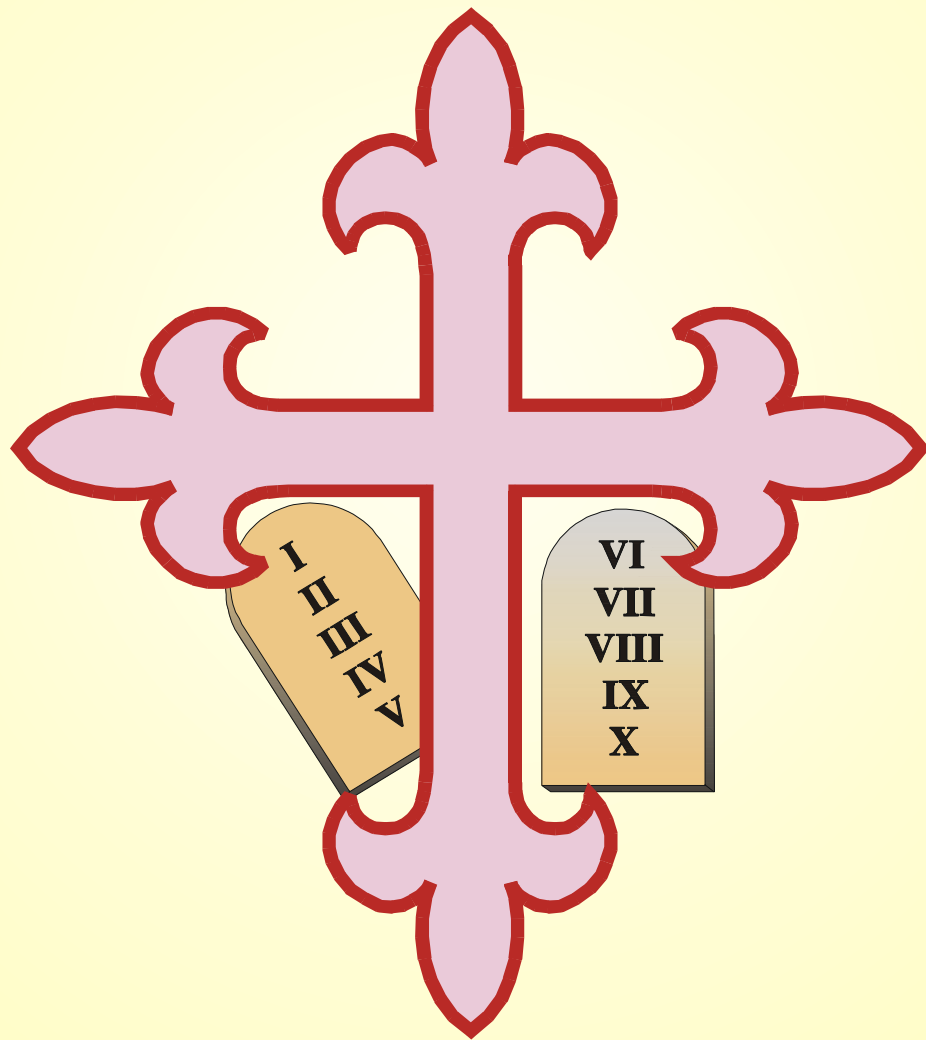


The Epistle To The  
**GALATIANS**

The Gospel of the Emancipating Grace of God



AN OUTLINED COMMENTARY

by

Barry E. Horner

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## Christ's New Covenant Church

Tucson, Arizona

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*Gospel truth* is the only root  
whereon  
*Gospel holiness* will grow.

*John Owen*  
*Works, VII, p. 188*



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## LITERAL TRANSLATION

### The Character of the Greek translation

It is readily admitted that this translation from the Greek in this commentary is decidedly literal. For this reason it obviously lacks both smoothness of style and the nature of conventional English. It might even be designated, quite accurately, as disjointed. This is especially the case when the original word order is followed more closely. However, the intent here is not that of conveying attractiveness of literary style, as would be appropriate for a contemporary version. Rather the purpose here is to encourage the student of the Word of God, perhaps having a minimal understanding of New Testament Greek, to consider the basic structure of the original text in such a way that he might better understand the eventual end product of the translator. Hopefully he will also be encouraged to consider a more rounded translation for himself.

A note of caution should also be considered. The first century reader of Galatians would not read the text as is here presented. He would translate with greater idiomatic understanding and fluency which we expect of a modern translation. Yet this would in no way nullify the import of more specific grammatical distinctions. It has been well said that the grammar of Scripture is the grammar of God. Hence this version is not an end product, but a *via media*, a middle ground between the original text and an accurate yet smooth-flowing text.

When a Greek word and its transliteration are provided, the basic form is indicated along with possible alternative meanings that to some degree fulfill the original intent. Parsing of verbs, participles, infinitives, nouns, pronouns and adjectives, as used in the text, is represented by the following abbreviations.

<i>Verb (v) / Participle (par) / Infinitive (inf)</i>	<i>Tense</i>	Present	p
		Imperfect	i
		Future	f
		Aorist	a
		Perfect	pf
		Pluperfect	pl
	<i>Voice</i>	Active	a
		Middle	m
		Passive	p
	<i>Mood</i>	Indicative	i
		Subjunctive	s
		Imperative	im
		Optative	opt
	<i>Case</i>	Nominative	n
		Genitive	g
		Dative	d
		Accusative	a
	<i>Number</i>	Singular	s
		Plural	p
	<i>Gender</i>	Masculine	m
		Feminine	f
		Neuter	n

<i>Adverb</i>			adv
<i>Noun (n) / Adjective (adj) / Article (art)</i>	<i>Case</i>	Nominative	n
		Vocative	v
		Genitive	g
		Dative	d
		Accusative	a
	<i>Number</i>	Singular	s
		Plural	p
	<i>Gender</i>	Masculine	m
		Feminine	f
		Neuter	n
<i>Pronoun</i>			pro
<i>Preposition</i>			pre
<i>Conjunction</i>			con
<i>Particle</i>			ptc

By way of example,

A verb with “v pais” is parsed “present (tense), active (voice), indicative (mood), singular (number).”

A participle “par pansm” is parsed “present (tense), active (voice), nominative (case), singular (number), masculine (gender).”

An infinitive “inf aa” is parsed “aorist (tense), active (voice).”

A noun with “n nsm” is parsed “nominative (case), singular (number), masculine (gender).”

A pronoun with “pro nsm” is parsed “nominative (case), singular (number), masculine (gender).”

## A LITERAL TRANSLATION OF GALATIANS

Galatians 1:1-24

- <sup>1</sup> Paul, [an] apostle [Παῦλος ἀπόστολος, Paulos apostolos n nsm], (not [sent] from men nor [sent] through men but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised [ἐγείρω, par aagsm] Him from the dead),
- <sup>2</sup> and all the brethren [ἀδελφός, adelphos n nrm] who are with me, to the churches [ἐκκλησία, ekklēsia n dpf] of Galatia:
- <sup>3</sup> Grace [χάρις, charis n nsf] to you and peace [εἰρήνη, eirēnē n nsf] from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,
- <sup>4</sup> who gave Himself for [ὑπέρ, huper pre] our sins so that He [Christ] might rescue/deliver/remove [ἐξαιρέω, exaireō v amss] us from this present evil/pernicious [πονηρός, ponēros adj gsm] age [αἰών, aiōn n gsm] according to the will of our God and Father,
- <sup>5</sup> to whom [the Father] be the glory [δόξα, doxa n nsf] for/throughout the ages of the ages/forever and ever! Amen [ἀμήν, amēn ptc].
- <sup>6</sup> I am amazed/astonished [θαυμάζω, thaumazō v pais] that you are so quickly removing/deserting [μετατίθημι, metatithēmi v pmip] from He who called [καλέω, kaleō par aagsm] you in [the] grace [of Christ] unto another [ἕτερος, heteros adj asn] gospel,
- <sup>7</sup> which is [really] not another [ἄλλος, allos adj nsn]. Except that there are some who are disturbing/shaking/agitating [ταράσσω, tarassō par pa nrm] you, and desiring to distort/pervert [μεταστρέφω, metastrephō inf aa ] the gospel of Christ.
- <sup>8</sup> But even if we or an angel from heaven should evangelize/gospelize [εὐαγγελίζω, euangelizō v pmss] you contrary to that with which we [initially] evangelized/gospelized [εὐαγγελίζω, euangelizō v amip] you, let him be accursed/consigned to hell [ἀνάθεμα, anathema n nsn].
- <sup>9</sup> As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone evangelizes/gospelizes/preaches [to] you contrary to that which you [initially] received, let him be accursed!
- <sup>10</sup> For am I now seeking the approval/favor [πείθω, peithō v pais] of men or God? Or am I seeking to please men? If I were still seeking to please men [which is not the case], I would not be a bond-servant [δούλος, doulos n nsm] of Christ.
- <sup>11</sup> For I certify/declare/make known [γνωρίζω, gnōrizō v pais] to you, brethren, that the gospel which was evangelized/gospelized/preached [εὐαγγελίζω, euangelizō par apasn] by me is not according to/sourced in man.
- <sup>12</sup> For I neither received [παραλαμβάνω, paralambanō v aais] it from man, nor was I taught it, but I [received/was taught] it through a revelation/unveiling [ἀποκάλυψις, apokalupsis n gsf] of Jesus Christ.
- <sup>13</sup> For you heard [ἀκούω, akouō v aair] of my [former] manner of life [ἀναστροφή, anastrophē n asf] when in Judaism, that beyond measure/in the extreme [ὑπερβολή, huperbolē n asf], I was persecuting [διώκω, diōkō v iais] the church and was ravaging/destroying [πορθέω, portheō v iais] it.
- <sup>14</sup> And I was advancing [προκόπτω, prokoptō v iais] in Judaism beyond many of my own age/contemporaries [συνηλικιότης, sunelikiōtes n apm] among my race [γένος, genos n dsn], abounding in zeal [ζηλωτής, zelōtēs n nsm] for the traditions [παράδοσις, paradosis n gpf] of my ancestors/fathers [πατρικός, patrikos adj gpm].
- <sup>15</sup> But when He [God], who had set me apart [ἀφορίζω, aforizō par aansm] from/out of my mother's womb, and called [καλέω, kaleō par aansm] me through His grace [χάρις, charis n gsf], [God] was pleased [εὐδοκέω, eudokeō v aais]
- <sup>16</sup> to reveal [ἀποκαλύπτω, apokaluptō inf aa] His Son in me in order that I might gospelize/preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with/gain information from [προσανατίθεμαι, prosanatithemai v amis] flesh and blood,
- <sup>17</sup> nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles [ἀπόστολος, apostolos n apm] before/preceding me, but I went away to

Arabia and again returned [ὑποστρέφω, hupostrephō v aais] to Damascus.

<sup>18</sup> Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to make acquaintance [ἱστορέω, istoreō inf aa] with Peter, and remained [ἐπιμένω, epimenō v aais] with him fifteen days.

<sup>19</sup> But of the other apostles, I did not see [any of them] except James, the brother of the Lord.

<sup>20</sup> (Now what I am writing to you, behold/I make bold before God that I am not lying [ψεύδομαι, pseudomai v pmis].)

<sup>21</sup> Then/afterward I went into the regions [κλίμα, klima n apn] of Syria and Cilicia.

<sup>22</sup> I was [continuing] unknown [ἄγνοέω, agnoeō par ppnsm] in person to the churches/messianic fellowships in Judea which are in Christ,

<sup>23</sup> but only they were hearing [ἀκούω, akouō par panpm] that, 'He who was persecuting [διώκω, diōkō par pansm] us is now gospelizing/preaching the faith [πίστις, pistis] which he once tried to destroy [πορθέω, portheō v iais].'

<sup>24</sup> And they were glorifying [δοξάζω, doxazō v iaip] God in/because of me.

#### Galatians 2:1-21

<sup>1</sup> Then, after a period of fourteen years, again I went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, also having taken along [συμπαράλαμβάνω, sumparalambanō par aansm, as a companion] Titus.

<sup>2</sup> I went up according to/because of [a] revelation/unveiled truth [ἀποκάλυψις, apokalupsis n asf]; and I submitted to them the gospel which I proclaim/herald among the Gentiles, yet according to privacy/oneself [κατά, kata pre ἴδιος, idios adj asf] to those who were notable/esteemed/of reputation [δοκῶ, dokeō par padpm], lest in vain [κενός, kenos adj asn] I might run [τρέχω, trechō v pass], or I had run [v aais].

<sup>3</sup> But not even Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled [ἀναγκάζω, anankazō v

apis] to be circumcised [περιτέμνω, peritemnō inf ap].

<sup>4</sup> But [it was] on account of false brethren [ψευδάδελφος, pseudadelphos n apm] brought in alongside/privately/secretly [παρείσακτος, pareisaktos adj apm], who had come in alongside/entered/slipped in [παρεισέρχομαι, pareiserchomai v aaip] to spy out/secretly examine [κατασκοπέω, kataskopeō inf aa] our freedom/liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to enslave us/make us captive [καταδουλόω, katadouloō v faip, to the Law of Moses].

<sup>5</sup> But to them, not for an hour/a brief moment did we yield [εἴκω, eikō v aaip] in submission [ὑποταγῆ, hupotagē n dsf] in order that the truth of the gospel would permanently remain [διαμένω, diamenō v aass] with you.

<sup>6</sup> But from those seeming to be something [of importance], (what kind they were makes no difference [διαφέρω, diapherō v pais] to me; God does not receive [is not swayed by the] face/appearance of man); those seeming [to be something] add nothing [προσανατίθεμαι, prosanatithemai v amip] to me.

<sup>7</sup> But on the contrary [τὸναντίον, tounantion pro asn], seeing that I had been entrusted [πιστεύω, pisteuō v ppis] with the gospel to the uncircumcised [ἀκροβυστία, akrobustia n gsf], just as Peter [had been entrusted] to the circumcised [περιτομή, peritome n gsf]

<sup>8</sup> (for He who has worked [ἐνεργέω, energeō par aansm] through Peter in apostleship to the circumcised has also worked through me [in apostleship] to the Gentiles [ἔθνος, ethnos n apn]),

<sup>9</sup> and knowing/acknowledging the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas [Peter] and John, those seeming/appearing [δοκέω, dokeō par panpm] to be pillars/steadfast leaders [στῦλος, stulos n npm], they gave to me, also Barnabas, the right hand of fellowship, in order that we [might go] to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

<sup>10</sup> Only concerning the poor [πτωχός, ptōchos adj gpm, they asked that] we might remember [them], which very same thing also I was

diligent/eager [σπουδάζω, spoudazō v aais] to do.

<sup>11</sup> But when Cephas [Peter] came to Antioch, I opposed [ἀνίστημι, anistēmi v aais] him to his face because he was to have been condemned [καταγινώσκω, kataginōskō par ppnsm].

<sup>12</sup> For before certain men came from James, he [Peter] was eating together with the Gentiles; but when they came, he was withdrawing [ὑποστέλλω, hypostellō v iais] and separating [ἀφορίζω, aphorizō v iais] himself, fearing those from the circumcision [party/persuasion].

<sup>13</sup> Also the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy [συνυποκρίνομαι, sunupokrinomai v apip], so that even Barnabas was lead away together [συναπάγομαι, sunapagomai v apis] with their hypocrisy.

<sup>14</sup> But when I saw that they were not walking straightforwardly [ὀρθοποδέω, orthopodeō v paip] in the face of [πρός, pros pre] the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in the presence of them all, “If you [as a] Jew, exist [ὑπάρχω, huparchō par pansm, in daily living as a] Gentile, and do not live like a Jew, how is it that you compel [ἀναγκάζω, anankazō v pais] the Gentiles [to live like] Jews?”

<sup>15</sup> We [indeed], by nature/birth [φύσις, phusis n dsf], [are] Jews, and not sinners from among the Gentiles.

<sup>16</sup> Yet having known [οἶδα, oida par panpm] that a man is not justified [δικαιώω, dikaiōō v ppis] by works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we [Jews] have believed [πιστεύω, pisteuō, v aaip] in Christ Jesus in order that we may be justified [v apsp] by faith in Christ and not by works of the Law, because by works of the Law no flesh/human being will be justified [v fpis].

<sup>17</sup> But if [while] seeking to be justified [δικαιώω, dikaiōō inf ap] in Christ, we ourselves are also found [to be] sinners, is it conceivable that Christ is a minister [διάκονος, diakonos n nsm] of/a participant in sin? May it never be/it is unthinkable!

<sup>18</sup> For if what I tore down [καταλύω, kataluō v aais] I rebuild [οἰκοδομέω, oikodomeō v pais],

I prove [συνίστημι, sunistēmi v pais] myself to be a transgressor/boundary breaker [παραβάτης, parabatēs n asm].

<sup>19</sup> For I, through [the] Law, died [ἀποθνήσκω, apothnēskō v aais] to [the] Law, in order that I might live [ζάω, zaō v aais] to God.

<sup>20</sup> I have been crucified [συσταυρόομαι, sustauroomai v ppis] with Christ; so I am no longer living, but Christ is living in me; so the [life] I am now [νῦν, nun adv] living [ζωω, zaō pais] in the flesh, I am living by faith in the Son of God who loved me and delivered [παραδίδωμι, paradidōmi par aagsm] himself [up] on my behalf/for [ὑπέρ, huper pre] me.

<sup>21</sup> I do not deny/set aside [ἀθετέω, atheteō v pais] the grace of God; for if [saving] righteousness [acceptable to God comes] through [the] Law, consequently Christ died vainly/unnecessarily [δωρεάν, dōrean adv].

## Galatians 3:1-29

<sup>1</sup> O foolish/unthinking [ἀνόητος, anoētos adj vpm] Galatians, who has bewitched/cast a blinding evil spell upon [βασκαίνω, baskainō v aais] you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed/placarded [προγράφω, prographō v apis], having been crucified?

<sup>2</sup> This only do I wish to learn [μανθάνω, manthanō inf aa ] from you; from the works of the Law did you receive the Spirit or from the hearing of faith?

<sup>3</sup> Are you so foolish [ἀνόητος, anoētos adj npm, as Galatian Christians]? Having begun with/by the Spirit, are you now being completed/perfected [ἐπιτελέω, epiteleō v pmip] with/by the flesh?

<sup>4</sup> Have you endured/suffered [πάσχω, paschō v aaip] so great/numerous things in vain/for nothing [εἰχνη, eikē adverb]—if indeed it was in vain?

<sup>5</sup> Therefore, He who is generously supply-ing/providing [ἐπιχορηγέω, epichorēgeō par pansm] you the Spirit and working [ἐνεργέω, energeō par pansm] powerful miracles [δύναμις, dunamis n apf] among you, [is He

- accomplishing this] by [the] works of the Law or by hearing with faith?
- <sup>6</sup> Just as [καθώς, kathōs con] Abraham ‘believed God, and it was reckoned/counted [λογίζομαι, logizomai v apis] to him as righteousness [δικαιοσύνη, dikaiosunē n asf].’
- <sup>7</sup> Therefore know [γινώσκω, ginōskō v paimp] that those who are of faith [and continue this way], these are sons of Abraham.
- <sup>8</sup> The Scripture foreseeing [προοράω, prooraō par aansf] that by/through faith, God would justify the Gentiles, [He] preached the gospel beforehand [προεευαγγελίζομαι, proeuangelizomai v amis] to Abraham [saying] that “all the nations will be blessed [ἐνευλογέω, eneulogēō v frip] in you.”
- <sup>9</sup> So then those who are of [genuine] faith [and continue this way] are blessed [εὐλογέω, eulogēō v ppip] with Abraham the believer.
- <sup>10</sup> For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse [ὑπὸ κατάραν, hupo pre kataran n asf], for it has been written [γράφω, graphō v pfpis], “Cursed [ἐπικατάρατος adj nsm, epikataratos] is everyone who does not continue/abide [ἐμμένω, emmenō v pais] in all things that have been written in the book of the Law, to perform/obey them.”
- <sup>11</sup> But that no one is justified [δικαιώω, dikaiōō v ppis] in/by the Law before God is clear/evident [δῆλος, dēlos adj nsn], because ‘the righteous man, by faith, shall live [ζάω, zaō v fmis].’
- <sup>12</sup> But the Law [νόμος, nomos n nsm] is not of faith; rather “he who does/practices [ποιέω, poieō par aansm] them shall live in/by them.”
- <sup>13</sup> Christ redeemed [ἐξαγοράζω, exagorazō v aais] us from the curse [κατάρα, katara n nsf] of the Law, having become a curse for us/on our behalf because it has been written, ‘Cursed [ἐπικατάρατος, epikataratos adj nsm] is everyone who is hung [κρεμάμηνυμι, kremānumii par amnsm] on a tree,’
- <sup>14</sup> in order that the blessing [εὐλογία, eulogia n nsf] of Abraham might come to the Gentiles [ἔθνος, ethnos n apn, even in Galatia], in Christ Jesus, in order that we might receive the promise [ἐπαγγελία, epangelia n asf] of the Spirit through faith.
- <sup>15</sup> Brethren, according to men [human terms/expressions] I speak: even though a covenant/agreement has been validated [κυρόω, kuroō par ppasf] by man, no one annuls [ἀθετέω, atheteō v pais] it or adds a condition [ἐπιδιατάσσομαι, epidiatassomai v pmis] to it.
- <sup>16</sup> Now to Abraham the promises were spoken and to his seed [σπέρμα, sperma n dsn]. He does not say “And to seeds/offspring [σπέρμα, sperma n dpn]” as [referring] to many, but [referring] to one, “And to your seed [n dsn],” who is Christ.
- <sup>17</sup> Now this I say, a covenant having been previously ratified [προκυρόω, prokuroō par ppasf] by God, a Law brought about four hundred and thirty years later does not invalidate [ἀκυρόω, akuroō v pais] so as to nullify [καταργέω, katargeō inf aa] the [original] promise.
- <sup>18</sup> For if the inheritance [κληρονομία, klēronomia n nsf] is based on law, it is no longer based on promise [ἐπαγγελία, epangelia n gsff]; but to Abraham God gave it by means of a promise.
- <sup>19</sup> Therefore why the Law? It was added/placed alongside of [προστίθημι, prostithēmi v apis] for the sake of [defining] transgressions until [Christ] the seed [of Abraham] would come to whom the promise had been made/enacted, [the Law] having been ordained through angels by the hand/agency/authority [χείρ, cheir n dsf] of a mediator [μεσίτης, mesitēs n gsm].
- <sup>20</sup> Now a [human] mediator [n nsm] is not of/does not represent one [party, but several parties, cf. v. 15]; whereas God is [only] one [party in terms of His sovereign unilateral promise to Abraham].
- <sup>21</sup> Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be/the thought is unthinkable [μή mē adv γίνομαι ginomai v amos]! For if a law had been given being able [δυναμια, dunamai par pm nsm] to make alive/to give life [ζωοποιέω zōopoieō inf aa], then righteousness would certainly have originated from law.
- <sup>22</sup> But the Scripture has shut up/enclosed [συγκλείω, sunkleiō v aais] everyone

[everything] under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe [πιστεύω, pisteuō par padpm].

<sup>23</sup> But before the faith came, under Law, we [as the nation of Israel, cf. 4:3-5] were held captive [φρουρέω, phroureō v ipip], being locked up/shut up [συγκλείω, sunkleiō par prnrm, cf. v. 22] to the coming faith which was to be revealed [ἀποκαλύπτω, apokaluptō inf ap].

<sup>24</sup> So then, the Law became to us a strict guardian [παιδαγωγός, paidagōgos n nsm, directing/driving us] to Christ, in order that we might be justified [δικαιώω, dikaiōō v apsp] through faith.

<sup>25</sup> But [the] faith having come, we are no longer under a strict guardian [paidagōgos n asm].

<sup>26</sup> For you [not the “we” of vs. 23-25; 4:3-5] are *all* [emphatic position] sons [υἱός, huios n nrm] of God through the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

<sup>27</sup> For as many of you who were baptized [βαπτίζω, baptizō v apip] into Christ have put on/clothed yourselves with [ἐνδύω, enduō v amip] Christ.

<sup>28</sup> Not in being [ἐνι, eni v pais] a Jew or a Greek; not in being a slave or a free man; not in being a male or a female [is there any distinct gospel status], for you are all one [through faith] in Christ Jesus.

<sup>29</sup> And if you belong to Christ [as one], then you are Abraham’s seed [σπέρμα, sperma n nsn], heirs [κληρονόμος, klēronomos n nrm] according to promise.

#### Galatians 4:1-31

<sup>1</sup> Now I say, as long a time as the heir [ὁ κληρονόμος, ho klēronomos n nsm] is a child [νήπιος, nēpios adj nsm], he does not differ from a slave, although he is lord/the legal owner/head of all [his father’s estate],

<sup>2</sup> but he is under guardians [ἐπίτροπος, epitropos n apm] and appointed stewards [οἰκονόμος, oikonomos n apm] until the time

set [προθεσμία, prothesmia n gsf] by the father.

<sup>3</sup> In the same way we also, when we were children [νήπιος, nēpios adj nrm], were enslaved [δουλεύω, douleuō par prnrm] under the elementary principles [στοιχεῖα, stoicheia n apn] of the world.

<sup>4</sup> But when the fullness [πλήρωμα, plērōma n nsn] of the time [χρόνος, chronos n gsm] came, God sent forth [ἐξαποστέλλω, exapostellō v aais] His Son, begotten [γίνομαι, ginomai par amasm] of woman, begotten under Law,

<sup>5</sup> so that those under [ὑπό, hupo pre] Law might be redeemed [ἐξαγοράζω, exagorazō v aass], in order that we might receive son-placement/the adoption as sons [υἰοθεσία, huiiothesia n asf].

<sup>6</sup> Because you are sons, God sent forth [ἐξαποστέλλω, exapostellō v aais] the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying [κράζω, krazō par paasn] ‘Abba [Αββα]! [the] Father!’”

<sup>7</sup> Therefore [it is evident that] you are no longer a slave but a son, and if you are a son then you are also an heir [κληρονόμος, klēronomos n nsm] through God.

<sup>8</sup> But then, on the one hand, not having known God, you were enslaved to those [gods] that by nature [φύσις, phusis n dsf] are not gods [θεός, theos n dpm].

<sup>9</sup> But now, on the other hand, having known God, or much more being known by God, how is it that you turn [ἐπιστρέφω, epistrepō v paip] again to the weak [ἀσθενής, asthenēs adj apn] and poor/worthless [πτωχός, ptōchos adj apn] elementary principles [στοιχεῖα, stoicheia n apn, as in v. 10], to which you desire to be enslaved [δουλεύω, douleuō inf pa] all over again.

<sup>10</sup> You are observing [παρατίθημι, paratithēmi v pmip] days and months and seasons and years.

<sup>11</sup> I fear [φοβέομαι, phobeomai v pmis] for you lest my toiling [κοπιάω, kopiaō v pfais] amongst you has been in vain [εἰκῆ, eikē adv].

<sup>12</sup> Become [γίνομαι, ginomai v pmip] as I am, because I also [have become] as you are;

- brethren, I entreat [δέομαι, deomai v pmis] you! You have done me no wrong,
- <sup>13</sup> but you know that it was because of a weakness of the flesh I preached the good news to you the first time,
- <sup>14</sup> and that which was a trial to you in my flesh you did not despise as nothing or loathe; but as an angel of God, you received/welcome me as Jesus Christ.
- <sup>15</sup> Therefore where is the blessedness you [formerly] experienced? For I bear witness [μαρτυρέω, martureō v pais] to you that, if you were able, you would have gouged out [ἐξορόσσω, exorussō par aanpm] your eyes and given them to me.
- <sup>16</sup> So have I become your enemy [ἐχθρός, echthros adj nsm] having spoken to you the truth [ἀληθεύω, alētheuō par pansm]?
- <sup>17</sup> They zealously seek [ζηλώω, zeloō v paip] you, not for a good purpose, but they wish to shut you out/exclude you [ἐκκλείω, ekkleiō inf aa] so that you will seek [v pasp] them.
- <sup>18</sup> But it is always good [καλός, kalos adj nsn] to be eagerly sought after [ζηλώω, zeloō inf pm] for a good purpose, and not only when I am present [πάρειμι, pareimi inf pa] with you.
- <sup>19</sup> My children, with whom again I am having birth pangs [ὠδίνω, ōdinō v pais] until Christ is formed [μορφώω, morphoō v apss] in you,
- <sup>20</sup> I wish I could be present with you now and change [ἀλλάσσω, allassō inf aa] my tone of voice [φωνή, phonē n asf], because I am perplexed/at my wit's end [ἀπορέω, aporeō v pmis] about you.
- <sup>21</sup> Tell me, you who are desiring [θέλω, thelēō par pavpm] to be under [the] Law [ὑπὸ pre νόμον, hupo nomon n asm, ], do you not listen to/hear [ἀκούω, akouō v paip] the Law?
- <sup>22</sup> For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman/maidservant [παίδισκη, paidiskē n gsf, Hagar] and one by the free woman [ἐλευθερός, eleutheros adj gsf, Sarah].
- <sup>23</sup> But on the one hand, the son by the bondwoman has been born [γεννώω, gennaō v pfpis] according to flesh, and on the other hand, the son of the free woman [has been born] through promise.
- <sup>24</sup> This is by allegorical interpretation [ἀλληγορέω, allēgoreō par pphn], for these [women] are two covenants [διαθήκη, diathē kē n nprf]: one is from Mount Sinai bearing [γεννώω, gennaō par pansf] children for slavery [δουλεία, douleia n asf]; she is Hagar.
- <sup>25</sup> Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, corresponding [συστοιχέω, sustoicheō v pais] to the present/now [νῦν, nun adv] Jerusalem, for she is in slavery [δουλεύω, douleuō v pais] with her children.
- <sup>26</sup> But the Jerusalem above [ἄνω, anō adv] is free; she is our mother [μήτηρ, mētēr n nsf].
- <sup>27</sup> For it is written, “Rejoice [εὐφραίνω, euphrainō v apims] barren [στεῖρα, steira adj vsf] woman who does not bear; break forth [ῥήγνυμι, hrēgnumi v aaims] and cry aloud/shout [βοάω, boaō v aaims], you who are not in labor [ὠδίνω, ōdinō par pavsf]; because many are the children of the desolate [ἔρημος, erēmos adj gsf], more than the one who has a husband [ἀνὴρ, anēr n asm].”
- <sup>28</sup> And you brethren, according to [after the manner of] Isaac [his birth according to pure grace based solely on promise], are children of promise [ἐπαγγελία, epangelia n gsf, through pure grace in Christ].
- <sup>29</sup> But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted [διώκω, diō kō v iais] him [who was born] according to the Spirit, so also it is now [νῦν, nun adv].
- <sup>30</sup> But what does the Scripture [γραφή, graphē n nsf] say? “Cast out [ἐκβάλλω, ekballō v aaims] the bondwoman/maidservant and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not inherit/be an heir [κληρονομέω, klēronomeō v fais] with the son of the free woman.”
- <sup>31</sup> So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.

## Galatians 5:1-26

- <sup>1</sup> For [the] freedom [ἐλευθερία, eleutheria n dsf], Christ set us free [ἀλευθερώω, eleutheroō v aais]; therefore keep standing firm [στήκω, stēkō v paimp] and do not be entangled/ensnared [ἐνέχω, enechō v ppimp] with a yoke [ζυγός, zugos n dsm] of slavery.
- <sup>2</sup> Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision [περιτέμνω, peritemnō v ppsp], Christ profits/benefits [ὠφελέω, ōpheleō v fais] you nothing.
- <sup>3</sup> And I testify again to every man receiving circumcision that he is a debtor/obligated [ὀφειλέτης, ophelētēs n nsm] to keep/obey [ποιέω, poieō inf aa] the whole Law.
- <sup>4</sup> You have been invalidated/separated/estranged [καταργέω, katargeō v apip] from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified [δικαιώω, dikaiōō v ppip] by Law; you have fallen [ἐκπίπτω, ekriptō v aaip] from grace.
- <sup>5</sup> For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting expectantly/eagerly [ἀποδέχομαι, apodechomai v pmip] for the hope of righteousness [δικαιοσύνη, dikaiosunē n gsf].
- <sup>6</sup> For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any effective power [ἰσχύω, ischuō v pais], but faith working [ἐνεργέω, energeō par pmnsf] through love.
- <sup>7</sup> You were running [τρέχω, trechō v iaip] well. Who cut in/hindered [ἐγκόπτω, enkoptō v aais] you from obeying [πείθω, peithō inf pp] the truth?
- <sup>8</sup> This persuasion [πεισμονή, peismonē n nsf] is not of He who calls [καλέω, kaleō par pagsm] you.
- <sup>9</sup> A micron of/little [μικρός, micros adj nsf] leaven leavens [ζυμόω, zumoō v pais] the whole lump of dough [φύραμα, phurama n asn].
- <sup>10</sup> I have confidence/have been persuaded [πείθω, peithō v pfais] in/toward you in the Lord that you will think/hold [φρονέω, phroneō v faip] no other opinion; but the one who is troubling/disturbing [ταράσσω, tarassō par pansm] you will bear [βαστάζω, bastazō v fais] [his] the judgment [κρίμα, krima n asn].
- <sup>11</sup> But I [Paul], brethren [ἀδελφός, adelphos n vpm], if I am still proclaiming [κηρύσσω, kē russō v pais] circumcision, yet why am I being persecuted [διώκω, diōkō v ppis]? Then has been abolished/removed [καταργέω, katargeō v ppis] the stumbling block/offense [σκάνδαλον, skandalon n nsn] of the cross [σταυρός, stauros n gsm].
- <sup>12</sup> Would that/I wish that [ὄφελον, ophelon ptc] also those troubling/disturbing [ἀναστατώω, anastatoō par panpm] you would cut/mutilate/castrate [ἀποκόπτω, apokoptō v fmip] [themselves].
- <sup>13</sup> For you were called [καλέω, kaleō v apip] for the purpose of freedom [ἐλευθερία, eleutheria n asf], brethren. Only do not [turn] the freedom into an opportunity [ἀφορμή, aphormē n asf] for [serving] the flesh; but through the [constraining] love [of Christ] serve [δουλεύω, douleuō v paimp] one another.
- <sup>14</sup> For the whole Law, in one word, has been fulfilled [πληρώω, plēroō v pfpis], in which [it is written by the holy God of Abraham] “You shall love [ἀγαπάω, agapaō v fais] your neighbor [πλησίον, plēsion adv] as yourself.”
- <sup>15</sup> But if you are biting [δάκνω, daknō v paip] and devouring/savaging [κατεσθίω, katesthiō v paip] one another, see that you are not consumed/destroyed [ἀναλίσκω, analiskō v apsp] by one another.
- <sup>16</sup> But I [Paul] say, you are to be walking [περιπατέω, peripeteō v paimp] in/by [the Holy] Spirit and you will not fulfill/carry out [τελέω, teleō v aasp] [the] desire of [the] flesh.
- <sup>17</sup> For the flesh desires against/to oppose [κατά, kata pre] the Spirit [and] the Spirit desires against/to oppose [κατά, kata pre] the flesh, for these things/entities/forces oppose [ἀντίκειμαι, antikeimai v pmis] each other, so that you are unable to do the things you wish/desire.
- <sup>18</sup> But if you are being led [ἄγω, agō v ppip] in/by [the] Spirit, you are not under [ὑπό hupo] [the Mosaic] Law.

<sup>19</sup> Now the works [ἔργον, ergon n npn] of the flesh are evident/clear/obvious [φανερός, phaneros adj npn], which are sexual immorality [πορνεία, porneia n nsf], uncleanness/impurity [ἀκαθαρσία, akatharsia n nsf], unrestrained sensuality/depravity [ἀσέλγεια, aselgeia n nsf],

<sup>20</sup> idolatry [εἰδωλολάτρης, eidōlōlatrēs n nsf], sorcery [φαρμακεία pharmakeia n nsf], enmities/hostilities [ἔχθρα, echthra n npf], strife/contention [ἔρις, eris n nsf], jealousy [ζήλος, zēlos n nsm], anger/rage [θυμός, thumos n npn], selfish pursuits [ἐριθεία, eritheia n npf], dissensions [διχοστασία, dichostasia n npf], factions/heretical schisms [αἵρεσις, haireisis n npf],

<sup>21</sup> envying [φθόνος, phthonos n npn], drunkenness [μέθη, methē n npf], carousings [κῶμος, kōmos n npn] and related/similar matters/revelings, [about] which I forewarn [προλέγω, prolegō v pais] you, just as I forewarned you that those practicing [πράσσω, prassō par panpm] such things will not inherit [κληρονομέω, klēronomeō v faip] the kingdom of God.

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit [καρπός, karpos n nsm] of the Spirit [τοῦ πνεύματος, tou pneumatōs, n gsn] is love [ἀγάπη, agapē n nsf], joy [χαρά, chara n nsf], peace [εἰρήνη, eirēnē n nsf], patience [μακροθυμία, makrothumia n nsf], kindness [χρηστότης, chrēstotēs n nsf], goodness [ἀγαθωσύνη, agathōsunē n nsf], faithfulness [πίστις, pistis n nsf],

<sup>23</sup> gentleness [πραΰτης, prautēs n nsf], self-control [ἐγκράτεια, enkrateia n nsf]; against such things there is no law.

<sup>24</sup> Now those of [belonging to] Christ Jesus, [they have] crucified [σταυρώω, stauroō v aaip] the flesh with its passions [πάθημα, pathēma n dpn] and desires [ἐπιθυμία, epithumia n dpn].

<sup>25</sup> If we live [ζάω, zaō v paip] by the Spirit, let us also walk [στοιχέω, stoicheō v pasp] in the Spirit.

<sup>26</sup> Let us not become vainly glorying/conceited/boastful [κενόδοξος, kenodoxos adj npn],

challenging/provoking [προκαλέω, prokaleō par pm npm] one another, envying [φθονέω, phthoneō par panpm] one another.

## Galatians 6:1-18

- <sup>1</sup> Brethren, if a man [among you] is overtaken/overpowered [προλαμβάνω, prolambanō v apss] in any trespass/transgression/ infraction [παράπτωμα, paraptōma n dsn], you [who are] the spiritual ones, restore [καταρτίζω, katartizō v paimp] [to spiritual health] such a person in a spirit of meekness/gentleness [πραΰτης, prautēs n gsf], [each one] examining [σκοπέω, skopeō par pansm] yourself, lest you also should be tempted [πειράζω, peirazō v apss].
- <sup>2</sup> Bear/support/endure [βαστάζω, bastazō v paimp] one another's [pressing, heavy] burdens [βάρος, baros n apn], and so fulfill/fully discharge the true purpose of [ἀναπληρώω, anaplēroō v faip] the law of Christ.
- <sup>3</sup> For if anyone thinks [δοκέω, dokeō v pais] he is something when he is nothing, he deceives/mentally leads astray [φρεναπατάω, phrenapataō v pais] himself.
- <sup>4</sup> Let each one examine [δοκιμάζω, dokimazō v paims] his own work, and then he will have [cause/reason] to boast [καύχημα, kauchēma n asn] only according to himself, and not according to another.
- <sup>5</sup> For each one shall bear/support/endure [βαστάζω, bastazō v fais] his own load/weight to be carried [φορτίον, phortion n asn].
- <sup>6</sup> Let he who is being catechized/instructed [κατηχέω, katēcheō par ppnsn] in the Word share [κοινωνέω, koinōneō v paims] all good things with his catechizer/instructor.
- <sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived/lead astray [πλανάομαι, planaomai v ppimp], God is not being [successfully] deceived/mocked/ridiculed [μυκτηρίζω, muktērizō v ppis]. For whatever a man sows [σπείρω, speirō v pass], this he will also reap [θερίζω, therizō v fais].

- <sup>8</sup> Because the one sowing to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption/rotteness [φθόρα, phthora n asf], but the one sowing to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.
- <sup>9</sup> Let us not become weary/losing heart/yielding to evil [ἐγκάκεω, enkakeō v pasp] in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not yield to weariness/fainting/throwing in the towel [ἐκλύω, ekluō par pnp].
- <sup>10</sup> So then, as we have time, let us do/work [ἐργάζομαι, ergazomai] good to all [people], and especially to those who are of the householders [οἰκέτης, oikeios adj apm] of the faith.
- <sup>11</sup> See with what large [πηλίκος, pēlikos pro dpn] letters [γράμμα, gramma n dpn] I wrote/have written [γράφω, graphō v aais] to you with my own hand.
- <sup>12</sup> Whoever desires to impress/make a boastful show [εὐπροσωπέω, euprosōpeō inf aa] in the flesh, these [try to] compel/coerce [ἀναγκάζω, anakazō v paip] you to be circumcised, only for the purpose that they will not be persecuted [διώκω, diōkō v ppsp] for the cross [σταυρός, stauros n dsm] of Christ.
- <sup>13</sup> For those being circumcised themselves do not keep/obey [φυλάσσω, phulassō v paip] the Law, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast/glory [καυχάομαι, kauchaomai v amsp] in your flesh.
- <sup>14</sup> But as for me, may it never be that I am boasting/glorying [καυχάομαι, kauchaomai inf pm], except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified [σταυρώω stauroō v ppis] to me, and I [have been crucified] to the world.
- <sup>15</sup> For neither circumcision is anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation/species [καινή adj nsf κτίσις n nsf, kainē ktisis].
- <sup>16</sup> And as many as will walk [στοιχέω, stoiceō v faip] by this rule [κανών, kanōn n dsm], peace and mercy [be] on them, and [καί, kai ptc] on the Israel of God.
- <sup>17</sup> For the rest/from now on, let no one cause [παρέχω, parechō v paims] me trouble [κόπος, kopos n apm], for I bear [βαστάζω, bastazō v pais] in/on my body the brand-marks/scars [στίγμα, stigma n apn] of Jesus.
- <sup>18</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, [may it be] with your spirit, brethren. Amen [ἀμήν, amēn ptc].



The Epistle To The  
**GALATIANS**

The Gospel of the Emancipating Grace of God

General Introduction

A. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GALATIANS

1. Concerning gospel emancipation.

The word “emancipation” will most likely stimulate our thinking in the direction of deliverance from slavery that came to England and America during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As noble and necessary as this movement was, and without the slightest thought of denigrating its influence, yet it must be stated that this form of emancipation, at its best, only dealt with the deliverance of the outer man. Nevertheless it should be noted that much of the impetus leading to the defeat of slavery came from evangelical Christian stimulation. The renowned English historian, George Trevelyan, emphasized that the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century saved Britain and the Empire, as well as Europe, from corruption and destruction, particularly concerning the horror of the slave trade. The contributions of William Wilberforce, John Wesley, George Whitefield, John Newton, and William Cowper, just to name a few, were all driven by the gospel truth of the Word of God. Likewise in the United States, consider but three examples. At the forefront must be President Abraham Lincoln.

The first influences which molded his boyish mind, were his mother’s reverent Scripture reading and her simple Evangelical piety, together with the occasional ministrations of Methodist and Baptist itinerant preachers which he never failed to attend, despite the mud, slush or snow of frontier trails, through which so often he had to trudge. The Bible, throughout life, remained to Lincoln ‘the Book of Books.’ Always, was it on his presidential desk; daily, he perused its pages; his spiritual outlook was formed and colored by it. . . . Lincoln was as much a product of the Revival’s impact in America, as was Wilberforce of its impact in England. . . . [Second], there was Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, which was no ‘art for art’s sake’ production: rather was it a creative Evangelical treatise exposing the total incompatibility of slavery and Christianity.” [Third], there was the case of the hymn writer, John Greenleaf Whittier who wrote numerous and effective anti-slavery poems, [he being] what Cowper was to the negroes’ cause in America.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> All of the above quotations and historic references come from a remarkable book by J. Wesley Bready, *England: Before And After Wesley*, pp. 305, 331-47. In the Preface the author confesses that this adaptation of his doctoral thesis for the University of London was the fruit of studies that ended with a conclusion far different from that of his original expectations. On page 13 he explains: “I was forced by pressure of much evidence to the conclusion that the democratic and cultural heritage of the modern English-speaking world is much more a spiritual than a political or an economic achievement. . . . [T]he much-neglected and oft-lampooned Evangelical Revival, which began with Wesley among the outcast masses, was the true nursing-mother of the spirit and character values that have created and sustained Free Institutions throughout the English-speaking world.”

However, given the force of the above evidence, if the root of such emancipation, both inner and outer, was biblical Christianity, then we should further enquire as to where in the Word of God do we discover the heart of this gospel message of liberation. The answer here must unequivocally be the Apostle Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. Amongst all of his writings, it is this short letter which so powerfully declares the gospel of soul emancipation that inevitably leads to societal emancipation. Significant verses in this regard would be, first 1:6: "I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel." Second, 2:16, cf. 3:11, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law, since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified." Third, 2:21: "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly." Then fourth, 5:1: "It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery." Here we are faced with the most defiling of all tyrannies, the polluted soul bound to self-admiration, and the surpassing greatness of the gospel of the emancipating grace of God that brings about personal conversion resulting in self-displacing admiration of Jesus Christ.

## 2. Concerning sanctification emancipation.

However, as clear as the gospel is stated in Galatians, a most vital distinction needs to be made between the employment of the gospel leading to initial conversion and the ongoing employment of that same gospel leading to continuous sanctification. Paul does not write Galatians as an evangelistic tract that is designed to encourage lost sinners to savingly believe in Christ alone through faith alone, even though he describes the gospel in these very terms. Rather he writes to Christians who have been saved by the gospel (1:2-4, 6; 2:20; 3:1-6, 24-29; 4:15, 19, 31; 5:7) concerning how they might live as Christians according to the dynamic of the gospel and not the Law of Moses. Paul references the gospel with exactness (3:16), but he is earnestly concerned about encouragement in sanctification that is rooted in the gospel alone. The problem that the Apostle confronts is the erroneous belief that faith in Christ must be augmented with conformity to the Mosaic code (Acts 15:1, 5). To become a Christian one must believe in Christ and employ the assistance of the Law in subsequent Christian living; to maintain the Christian life one must continue to believe in Christ and obey the augmenting Law, in a synthetic manner of speaking. Yet for Paul, this is another gospel that is far more than being slightly off-track, that is just a tad deviant; rather the proponents of this other gospel are worthy of consignment to hell (1:8-9)! If the Christian was initially saved through faith alone in Christ, then his ongoing life is to be upon the same singular basis, namely faith alone in Christ and thus spiritual union with Him. Hence Christian sanctification is not augmented by the Mosaic code (Rom. 7:1-4). Here is the very heart of Paul's concern which he declares most plainly, "I have been crucified with Christ; so I am no longer living, but Christ is living in me; so the [life] I am now [vñv, nun] living in the flesh, I am living by faith in the Son of God who loved me and delivered [παράδιδωμι, paradidōmi] himself [up] on my behalf/for me" (2:20). Keeping in mind that Galatians was written to Gentile Christians in the main, you will search Galatians in vain to discover the slightest encouragement for Gentiles to employ the Law of Moses as an aid to Christian growth. On the other hand, this Epistle is replete with innumerable encouragements that excite singular, continuous, exclusive, unalloyed boasting in "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (6:14).

## B. THE BACKGROUND TO GALATIANS

Introductory details can seem boring, of detached academic concern, in much the same way as a menu at a restaurant has a relatively perfunctory importance. We much prefer to quickly jump into the text itself and taste its soul-satisfying delights. Nevertheless, the menu tells us where we are going, from appetizer to entrée to dessert, and so the following matters necessarily set the stage for a banquet of gospel delights.

1. Its *personal* background. According to 1:1, the author is the Apostle Paul, even as the vigorous style and gospel substance are decidedly Pauline. There is also widespread scholarly acknowledgment that this is so.
2. Its *geographic* background. Paul writes to several churches in “Galatia,” a middle region of Asia Minor extending southward from the Black Sea almost to the Mediterranean. Certainly he must have become familiar with this territory, founded by immigrant European Gauls, during his youthful life in Tarsus as an unbeliever, during his initial ministry at Antioch, and then during his first missionary journey to Asia Minor. To which part he exactly wrote, either north or south, is disputed. However, somewhat decisive in this matter for the more historic North Galatian theory, at least for this commentary, is the identification of Galatians 2:1-10 with Paul’s participation in the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15:1-29. So J. Gresham Machen concludes:

The identification of Galatians 2:1-10 with the famine visit [of Acts 11:30; 12:25 according to the South Galatian theory] is not impossible. But on the whole the usual view, which identifies the event of Galatians 2:1-10 with the meeting at the time of the Apostolic Council of Acts 15:1-29, must be regarded as more probable.<sup>2</sup>

3. Its *chronological* background. Suffice to say here that Galatians is one of Paul’s earliest epistles which he writes, perhaps from Corinth during his second missionary journey, about 51 A.D., prior to his writing of Romans.
4. Its *controversial* background. Galatians is surely Paul’s strongest polemic, notwithstanding its brevity of 149 verses compared with 433 in Romans. Here is a theological firecracker that will tolerate no compromise, no middle ground with regard to the nature of the Christian gospel and sanctification. The proponents of a false gospel, that with the superficial employment of terminology and judgment is not unlike the true, are yet consigned to damnation by means of a double-barreled discharge (1:8-9) on account of their subtle heresy. In summary, the key distinguishing issues here are:
  - a. *The clear distinction between Christianity and distorted Mosaic Judaism.* Humanly speaking, Christianity would have become just another Jewish sect without Paul.<sup>3</sup> Judaism gave birth to Christianity that has now left the nest and flown independently on its own. Paul is not subject to Peter’s legalism (2:10-13). Paul is not subject to the

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<sup>2</sup> J. Gresham Machen, *Machen’s Notes on Galatians*, pp. 215-216.

<sup>3</sup> J. Gresham Machen comments: “The difference which divided him [Paul] from the Judaizers [at Galatia] was no mere theological subtlety, but concerned the very heart and core of the religion of Christ. ‘Just as I am without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me’—that was what Paul was contending for in Galatia; that hymn would never have been written if the Judaizers had won. And without the thing which that hymn expresses there is no Christianity at all.” *Christianity and Liberalism*, p. 25.

Mosaic economy (3:11, 24-25). Christians are not to be in subjection and bondage to the whole administration of the Mosaic Law (4:31).

- b. *The doctrine of justification by faith alone.* Like Romans, rapprochement with God, that is peace following the cessation of hostilities, comes through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice. This objective hope, in contrast with subjective infused righteousness propounded by Roman Catholicism, is wholly works and self renouncing (2:16, 20; 3:2, 6-9, 11).
  - c. *The doctrine of gospel sanctification apart from the law.* This is the predominant matter in Galatians since Paul writes to Christians who have already been saved by the gospel, though they need instruction in the gospel. This key truth proceeds from the gospel of justification by faith alone which is the ground of progressive sanctification. Thus spiritual growth in the Christian is by means of gospel stimulus rather than legal mandate. Is there, what is commonly called, a "third [sanctifying] use of the Law"? The answer of Galatians is plainly and emphatically, "No! (2:20; cf. Rom. 7:1-4).
  - d. *The true bounds of Christian freedom.* The Law of Moses only leads to bondage, never freedom (3:10, 19, 21; 4:24-25). False concepts of Christian freedom suggest boundlessness, whereas true freedom always has limits. However, for the Christian it is Christ who establishes a new definition of boundaries. Thus freedom in Christ is freedom under Christ (I Cor. 9:21), but not freedom from Christ (2:20; 5:1, 13). Freedom in the Spirit of Christ is freedom under the Spirit, but not freedom from the Spirit (5:16, 18). Freedom in Christ is the most blessed bondage!
  - e. *The validity of the doctrine of Paul.* Today it is sometimes heard in Christian circles, "But that was Paul's opinion," as if his teaching was optional, whereas in Galatians his gospel teaching is sourced according to apostolic authority "by revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:12; 2:2; cf. 1:1). What Paul teaches in Galatians is the true doctrine of Christ.
5. Its *historic* background. By this is meant the remarkable influence of Galatians upon church history and three notable Christians in particular. Notice the linkage that Galatians provides in connecting all three with a common, biblical evangelical faith.
    - a. *Martin Luther.* While the Reformer's exposition of *Psalms*, *Romans*, and *Galatians* during 1513-17 proved to be his "Damascus road,"<sup>4</sup> yet it was his study of Galatians in particular that, like a crescendo, culminated in his posting of his 95 theses in 1517. In *Romans* was discovered the free saving righteousness of God which is by faith alone, while *Galatians* distinguished between the law that condemns and imprisons, and the gospel that liberates and renews. The animated style of Luther is not unlike that which here erupts from Paul. Not surprisingly then, the Reformer of Saxony focused on "law and gospel," and designated *Galatians* as "my Katherine von Bora" as a high tribute to his wife,<sup>5</sup> for he seems to have been particularly wedded to this epistle.

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<sup>4</sup> Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand*, pp. 45-6.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228.

- b. *John Bunyan*. In his personal spiritual testimony, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, and shortly following his conversion, the Bedford tinker testifies:

[O]ne day, a book of Martin Luther [was placed into my hands]; it was his comment on the Galatians—it was so old that it was ready to fall to piece from piece. . . . [W]hen I had but a little way perused, I found my condition, in his experience, so largely and profoundly handled, as if his book had been written on my heart. . . . I do prefer this book of Martin Luther upon the Galatians, excepting the Holy Bible, before all the books that ever I have seen, as most fit for a wounded conscience.<sup>6</sup>

In this regard, it is not so surprising to discover that the gospel doctrine of the author of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is rooted more in Wittenberg than either Geneva or Westminster.

- c. *Charles Wesley*. On May 17, 1738, a friend brought a copy of Luther's commentary on Galatians to ailing Charles Wesley in London. A reading session followed, the result of which Wesley records in his diary:

'I marveled that we were so soon and so entirely removed from him that called us into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel. . . . From this time forward I endeavored to ground as many of our friends as came in this fundamental truth, salvation by faith alone, not an idle, dead faith, but a faith which works by love, and is necessarily productive of all good works and all holiness. I spent some hours this evening in private with Martin Luther, who was greatly blessed to me.' . . . Four days later, Charles Wesley's prayer was answered, when on Whit Sunday he experienced his 'evangelical conversion' and knew what it was to have, not only the doctrine of justification by faith, but also the faith itself of which the doctrine speaks.<sup>7</sup>

## C. THE CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE OF GALATIANS

It is not too extreme a statement to declare that, when western civilization as a whole is considered and its peculiar characteristic of freedom that medieval generations and prior did not enjoy, the essential nerve of this movement must be accredited to the Reformation, hence Martin Luther, hence Paul's Epistle to the Galatians.<sup>8</sup> There is a very logical connection here. History has indicated time and time again that when the gospel of the free grace of God is gradually neglected, then tyranny incrementally takes its place. But when that same gospel surges forth once again, then a whole movement of emancipation follows under the familiar term of revival. As Charles Wesley has written concerning this unique gospel liberty:

My chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

<sup>6</sup> John Bunyan, *The Works of John Bunyan*, ed. George Offor, I, p. 22.

<sup>7</sup> Philip S. Watson, "Editors Preface," Martin Luther, *A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> Martyn Lloyd-Jones has written: "Luther's action in 1517 has changed the entire course of history. The historians are granting that, and as I say, the secular newspapers are granting that history has been different ever since, and you really cannot understand what is generally called modern history apart from the Reformation. You cannot understand the history of this country [England], you cannot understand, especially, the history of the United States of America. There would never have been Pilgrim Fathers if there had not been a Protestant Reformation. So you see it has been something very vital in connection with the whole history of the human race." *Luther and His Message for Today*, p. 4.

Regrettably a new tide of emphasis has gained increasing currency during the last two centuries, that is regression back to man-centered ways with the only difference being the substitution of “religious liberalism” for “medieval humanism.” Dr. Gresham Machen explains: “

According to modern liberalism, faith is essentially the same as ‘making Christ Master’ in one’s life; at least it is by making Christ Master in the life that the welfare of men is sought. But that simply means that salvation is thought to be obtained by our own obedience to the commands of Christ. Such teaching is just a sublimated form of legalism. Not the sacrifice of Christ, on this view, but our own obedience to God’s law, is the ground of hope.

In this way the whole achievement of the Reformation has been given up, and there has been a return to the religion of the Middle Ages. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, God raised up a man who began to read the Epistle to the Galatians with his own eyes. The result was the rediscovery of the doctrine of justification by faith. Upon that rediscovery has been based the whole of our evangelical freedom. As expounded by Luther and Calvin the Epistle to the Galatians became the ‘Magna Charta of Christian Liberty.’ But modern liberalism has returned to the old interpretation of Galatians which was urged against the Reformers.

The grace of God is rejected by modern liberalism. And the result is slavery—the slavery of the law, the wretched bondage by which man undertakes the impossible task of establishing his own righteousness as a ground of acceptance with God. It may seem strange at first sight that ‘liberalism,’ of which the very name means freedom, should in reality be wretched slavery. Emancipation from the blessed will of God always involves bondage to some worse taskmaster. Thus it may be said of the modern liberal Church, as of the Jerusalem of Paul’s day, that ‘she is in bondage with her children.’ God grant that she may turn again to the liberty of the gospel of Christ.<sup>9</sup>

Surely this perceptive analysis of Christianity today should lead us to reverently ponder once again, at a most personal level, exactly what the heart of this epistle is all about. If God graciously wills, rather than pour out judgment upon America, He may be pleased to refresh us yet again with liberation from our bondage to self and sin and materialism, the whole increasing shameful of it all.

## D. A BROAD OUTLINE OF GALATIANS

### I. Introduction and Encapsulation of Paul’s Message, 1:1-5.

A. Paul’s guarantee of his authentic apostleship, vs. 1-2a.

B. Paul’s greeting to the Galatian churches, vs. 2b-3.

C. Paul’s gospel of glorious sovereign grace, vs. 4-5.

### II. Paul’s Rebuke of the Galatian Heresy, 1:6-10.

A. Paul’s gospel is unique as the gospel of grace, vs. 6-9.

B. Paul’s gospel is unique as the gospel of God, v. 10.

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<sup>9</sup> J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, pp. 143-4.

- III. Paul's Vindication of his Gospel Ministry, 1:11-2:21.
  - A. Paul's gospel is direct from Christ, 1:11-24.
  - B. Paul's apostleship is authentic, 2:1-21.
- IV. Paul's Vindication of Gospel Sanctification, 3:1-4:31.
  - A. Gospel sanctification by the Spirit, 3:1-5.
  - B. Gospel sanctification and the Abrahamic Covenant, 3:6-29.
  - C. Gospel sanctification and the adoption of the believer, 4:1-31.
- V. Paul's Vindication of Liberty Living, 5:1-6:10.
  - A. Liberty living manifests stability, 5:1-12.
  - B. Liberty living manifests the fruit of the Spirit, 5:13-6:10.
- VI. Conclusion and Encapsulation of Paul's Message, 6:11-18.
  - A. Gospel sanctification underlined for emphasis, 6:11.
  - B. Gospel sanctification through boasting faith, 6:12-17.
- VII. Concluding benediction, 6:18.

