

# **Peninsula City Church**

## **The Letter to the Galatians**

### **Week One: An Introduction**

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# The Letter to the Galatians: An Introduction

## An Introduction

**Q.** Why do you think Paul needed to write the letter, and what response did he desire from the Galatians?

One help is the Letter to the local church in Galatia itself, which may have been Paul's first Letter. It is a spirited and challenging letter to this young, troubled local church, where he does not hold back on those trying to bring it under legalism. There would appear to have been some Jewish Christ-followers who were agitating within the church as they disagreed with Paul's conclusions. These protesters thought that other Christ-followers needed Jesus Christ in addition to the Law of Moses to be right with God. One of the critical issues seemed to be around circumcision (Gal 5:2-3,6,11), to which Paul reacted very strongly (Gal 5:12). Paul disagreed with their opinion and was straightforward in expressing it. So, it was a letter that dealt with what it means to be free in Christ.

So here we will deal with the vital topic of freedom in Jesus Christ. That is, standing in freedom in Jesus Christ. It is opposed to being dragged back into slavery of self-effort. That is,

<sup>1</sup> "It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery... <sup>13</sup> For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another" (Gal 5:1,13 NASB).

## 1. The Why of the Letter to the Galatians

**Q.** Why Did Paul need to write this letter to the Galatians?

The book of Galatians has been called the "Charter of Christian Liberty."<sup>1</sup> It is a letter that deals with the issue of the Christ-follower's 'Spiritual Freedom.' It is an authoritative little letter, which has been called a 'Christian Magna Charta.'<sup>2</sup> As a 'Charter,' it summarises the rights to Christ-followers granted by God through Jesus Christ. It outlines the sovereign or legislative status of the Christ-followers and their privileges and stated rights.<sup>3</sup> Martin Luther (the great German reformer of the sixteenth century) was devoted and affectionate towards the Letter that he called it "...my dear epistle. I have put my confidence in it. It is my Katy von Bora (*she was Luther's wife*)."<sup>4</sup>

The Letter deals with the issue of the Galatian Christ-followers already being free in Christ. It was all because of the sovereignty of God through Jesus Christ. However, there was an attempt to force this local church to try to live under the bondage of struggling to keep the law (works). Paul had already shown them a better way, but they had been listening to a false Gospel. It has been said that,

"The theology of this letter is seen both in its explicit message and in the foundational presuppositions and implicit premises upon which the argument is built."<sup>5</sup>

The Letter is quite emotional and intense in its language and presentation. Paul called their attention to the truth that salvation (*which included their continuing walk in Christ*) was solely through faith in Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit alone. It was not by faith in Christ in addition

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<sup>1</sup> Tenney, Merrill C. *Galatians: The Charter of Christian Liberty*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982).

<sup>2</sup> "The Magna Carta was signed in June 1215 between the barons of Medieval England and King John. 'Magna Carta' is Latin and means 'Great Charter' The Magna Carta was one of the most important documents of Medieval England." "Magna Carta." [http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/magna\\_carta.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/magna_carta.htm) (13<sup>th</sup> November 2023)

<sup>3</sup> "Charter." <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/charter> 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023)

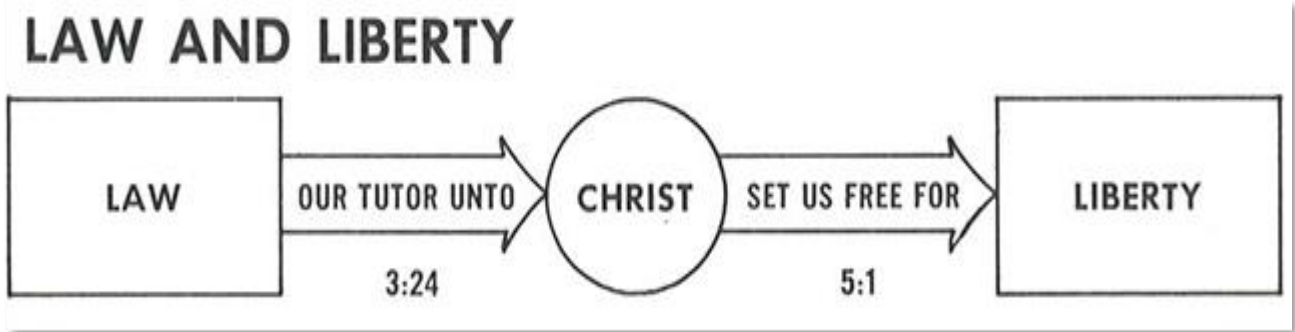
<sup>4</sup> Luther, Martin. *Luther's Works: Table Talk, (vol. 54)*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1967), 20. The italics here are mine.

<sup>5</sup> Ciampa, R.E. "Galatians." In *New Dictionary of Theology*. ed. T. Desmond. (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000), 311.

to the keeping of the law. Paul "...asserts that God freely bestows salvation in response to faith which is founded upon His personal revelation through His Gospel."<sup>6</sup> So, His message was,

"Sinners are justified (and live out a godly life) by trusting in Jesus Christ alone, not by keeping the law or by counting on good works."<sup>7</sup>

In doing this, he sought to clarify his God-given claim as an apostle to speak into the life of the Galatian church. He wanted to remind them that they were already free. It can be illustrated as follows.<sup>8</sup>



## 2. Where was Galatia located, and why was this important?

**Q.** Where was Galatia, and what is the structure of the letter?

At the time of Paul, the Roman district of Galatia was divided into two main parts, i.e. North and South Galatia. The North was more the 'geographic,' while the South was more the 'political' hub. Paul visited cities in the South of Galatia during his first missionary journey. He may have visited cities in the North of Galatia during his second and third missionary journeys. The area would have had their own worship with their local gods, in addition to the Roman ones that were either forced on them or taken themselves, Gal 4:8. Paul would, therefore, have to break through this spiritual stronghold by preaching and demonstrating the Gospel. See the maps: the area of Galatia and the surrounding region was that of modern Turkey. Understanding where the biblical lands were in light of the current geography is helpful. See the following map of Galatia and the surrounding region and the modern map of Turkey over the page.<sup>9</sup>



<sup>6</sup> Tenney, *Galatians*, 17.

<sup>7</sup> Easley, Kendell H. *Holman Quick Source: Guide to Understanding the Bible*. (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2002), 291.

<sup>8</sup> Jensen, I.L. *Jensen's Survey of the New Testament*. (Chicago, IL: Moody Press), 305.

<sup>9</sup> "Galatia." <http://www.mycrandall.ca/courses/ntintro/images/MapGal.gif> (13<sup>th</sup> November 2023). "Turkey." [http://www.countrywatch.com/imgs/vCountry/176\\_map.gif](http://www.countrywatch.com/imgs/vCountry/176_map.gif) (13<sup>th</sup> November 2023).



### a. The historical context and place of the Letter

The following is an approximate suggestion as to the date and place of the Letter according to Paul's travels as mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles:

Part One:

- |  |            |                 |
|--|------------|-----------------|
| a. The preparation for the first missionary journey: |            | Acts 13:13      |
| b. The first missionary journey:                     | (47-49 AD) | Acts 13:3-14:28 |

Paul's travels throughout Galatia, see Gal 1:2

- Antioch in Pisidia: Acts 13:14-52 (v14); 14:24
- Iconium in Lycaonia: Acts 14:1-7 (v1); 14:21-23
- Lystra in Lycaonia: Acts 14:8-20 (v8); 14:21-23
- Derbe in Lycaonia: Acts 14:20-21(v20); 14:21-23
- The Letter to the Galatians: Written from Antioch (49 AD) [possibly written Acts 14:26-28].

- |   |         |               |
|---|---------|---------------|
| c. The Assembly at Jerusalem:                         | (49 AD) | Acts 15:1-35  |
| d. The preparation for the second missionary journey: |         | Acts 15:30-36 |

Part Two: (50-57 AD)

- |                                   |            |                  |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------------|
| a. The second missionary journey: | (50-52 AD) | Acts 15:36-18:22 |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------------|
- The Letters to the Thessalonians: Written from Corinth (51 AD)
- |                                  |            |                  |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------------|
| b. The third missionary journey: | (52-57 AD) | Acts 18:23-21:16 |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------------|
- The 1<sup>st</sup> Letter to the Corinthians: Written from Ephesus (54 AD)
  - The 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter to the Corinthians: Written from Macedonia (55 AD)
  - The Letter to the Romans: Written from Corinth (57 AD)

## b. Scriptural mentions of the Galatians outside of the Letter

The area known as Galatia and the local churches in the region have been mentioned twice within the Letter. However, it is also mentioned in five other places within the New Testament. These references can also help us understand how others knew these local churches.

As mentioned in the Letter,

“and all the brethren who are with me, to the churches of Galatia” (Gal 1:2 NASB).

“You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?” (Gal 3:1 NASB).

As mentioned outside of the Letter,

“And they passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia” (Acts 16:6 NASB).

“And having spent some time there, he departed and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples” (Acts 18:23 NASB).

“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also” (1 Cor 16:1 NASB).

“For Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia” (2 Tim 4:10 NASB).

“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen” (1 Pet 1:1 NASB).

Below are Paul’s journeys that he went on to preach the Gospel throughout the region,<sup>10</sup>



<sup>10</sup> Paul’s Missionary Journeys Map. [https://www.conformingtojesus.com/charts-maps/en/paul%27s\\_journeys\\_map.htm](https://www.conformingtojesus.com/charts-maps/en/paul%27s_journeys_map.htm) (18<sup>th</sup> December 2023).

**c. Two Breakdowns of the Letter**

<b>GALATIANS: The Charter of Christian Liberty<sup>11</sup></b>		
Introduction		<b>1:1-9</b>
A. Salutation:	The Grounds of Liberty	1:1-5
B. Occasion:	The Challenge to Liberty	1:6-9
I. The Biographical Argument:	An Independent Revelation	<b>1:10-2:21</b>
A. Independent of Human Teaching		1:10-17
B. Independent of Judean Churches		1:18-24
C. Independent of Judaizing Brethren		2:1-10
D. Independent of Apostolic Pressure		2:11-18
E. Independent of Selfish Interest		2:19-21
II. The Theological Argument:	The Failure of Legalism	<b>3:1-4:31</b>
A. From Personal Experience		3:1-5
B. From Old Testament Teaching		3:6-14
C. From Priority of Promise		3:15-22
D. From Superiority of Mature Faith		3:23-4:7
E. From Danger of Reaction		4:8-11
F. From Contrast of Motives		4:12-20
G. From Contrast of Bondage and Liberty		4:21-31
III. The Practical Argument:	The Effect of Liberty	<b>5:1-6:10</b>
A. Introductory Statement		5:1
B. The Consequences of Legalism		5:2-12
C. The Definition of Freedom		5:13-15
D. Individual Practice		5:16-24
E. Social Practice		5:25-6:10
Conclusion		<b>6:11-18</b>
A. The Motive of Liberty:	The Cross	6:11-16
B. The Price of Liberty:	Suffering	6:17
C. The Benediction of Liberty		6:18

[See also Appendix One for Irving Jensen's outline of the Letter.](#)

<sup>11</sup> Tenney, Merrill C. *Galatians: The Charter of Christian Liberty*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1950), 35.

<b>A Chart of the paragraphs in Galatians:</b> According to the American Standard Version (English) & Eberhard Nestle's Text of the Greek New Testament <sup>12</sup>					
American Standard Version			Nestle's Greek New Testament		
No	Ref	Content	No	Ref	Content
1	1:1-5	Salutation	1	1:1-5	Salutation
2	1:6-10	Statement of Occasion	2	1:6-9	Statement of Occasion
3	1:11-17	Paul's 1 <sup>st</sup> Contacts with the Gospel	3	1:10-2:21	Biographical Statements Concerning Paul
4	1:18-24	Paul's 1 <sup>st</sup> Travels			
5	2:1-10	Paul's Visit to the Apostles			
6	2:11-21	Interview with Peter at Antioch			
7	3:1-14	Justification by faith, not Law	4	3:1-4:7	Contrast of Status Under Grace with Status Under Law
8	3:15-22	Purpose of the Law			
9	3:23-29	The Position of Sonship			
10	4:1-7	The Meaning of Sonship			
11	4:8-11	Contrast with the Past	5	4:8-11	Former State of Unsaved
12	4:12-20	Personal Appeal	6	4:8-11	Personal Appeal
13	4:21-31	Allegory of Hagar	7	4:21-31	Allegory of Hagar
14	5:1	Transition	8	5:1	Transition
15	5:2-12	Danger of Circumcision	9	5:2-12	Danger in Circumcision
16	5:13-15	Freedom in Love	10	5:13-6:10	Practical Exhortations
17	5:16-24	Moral Fruit of Life in the Spirit			
18	5:25-26	Exhortation to Walk in the Spirit			
19	6:1-5	Practical Life in the Spirit			
20	6:6-10	Sowing and Reaping			
21	6:11-16	Final Personal Appeal	11	6:11-16	Final Appeal
22	6:17	Statement of Personal Feeling	12	6:17	Personal Expression
23	6:18	Final Farewell	13	6:18	Final Farewell

[See also Appendix Two for Wuest's Expanded translation of Galatians.](#)

<sup>12</sup> Tenney, *Galatians*, 32.



### 3. What are four crucial issues in the Letter to the Galatians?

Q. What are four crucial issues Paul dealt with within the letter?

#### The first issue:

In (Gal 1:1) Paul claimed that the right to preach the message of freedom was from God; he said,

“Paul, an apostle (not sent from men, nor through the agency of any human, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead” (Gal 1:1 NASB).

Paul thought the Galatians would understand that the Gospel he had been preaching was from God and Jesus Christ (Gal 1:11-17). He used hyperbole to exaggerate the point. In conveying the awareness that anyone preaching anything other than this Gospel would come under the ‘divine curse or *anathema*’ (Gal 1:6-10). He carried this argument through to (Gal 1:1-2:14).

Paul’s message proclaimed that “Jesus Christ was...crucified” (Gal 3:1). And that “God the Father raised Him from the dead” (Gal 1:1). Any message other than this that he had preached was not from God. Paul saw this other gospel as a perversion of the truth. That is,

<sup>6</sup> “I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting (*going AWOL*) Him who called you by (Lit. *in*) the grace of Christ, for a different (*an entirely different*) gospel; <sup>7</sup> which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing (*stirring, agitating*) you and want to distort (*to turn around*) the gospel of Christ. <sup>8</sup> But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, they are to be accursed (i.e., *anathema*)! <sup>9</sup> As we have said before, so I say again now, if any person is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed (i.e., *anathema*)!” (Gal 1:6-9 NASB).

He was so furious that some had already turned away from the truth that he did not mince his words. He called down the divine curse on the troublemakers twice. There is only one true Gospel, and it was the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which he had preached.

#### The second issue:

Where did Paul get this Gospel message that he was preaching? He did not make it up, but it was firmly based on the Hebrew Bible and interpreted through Jesus Christ. The Letter does give us some indication as to where and how Paul got the message. He mentioned it as follows,

<sup>11</sup> “For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. <sup>12</sup> For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

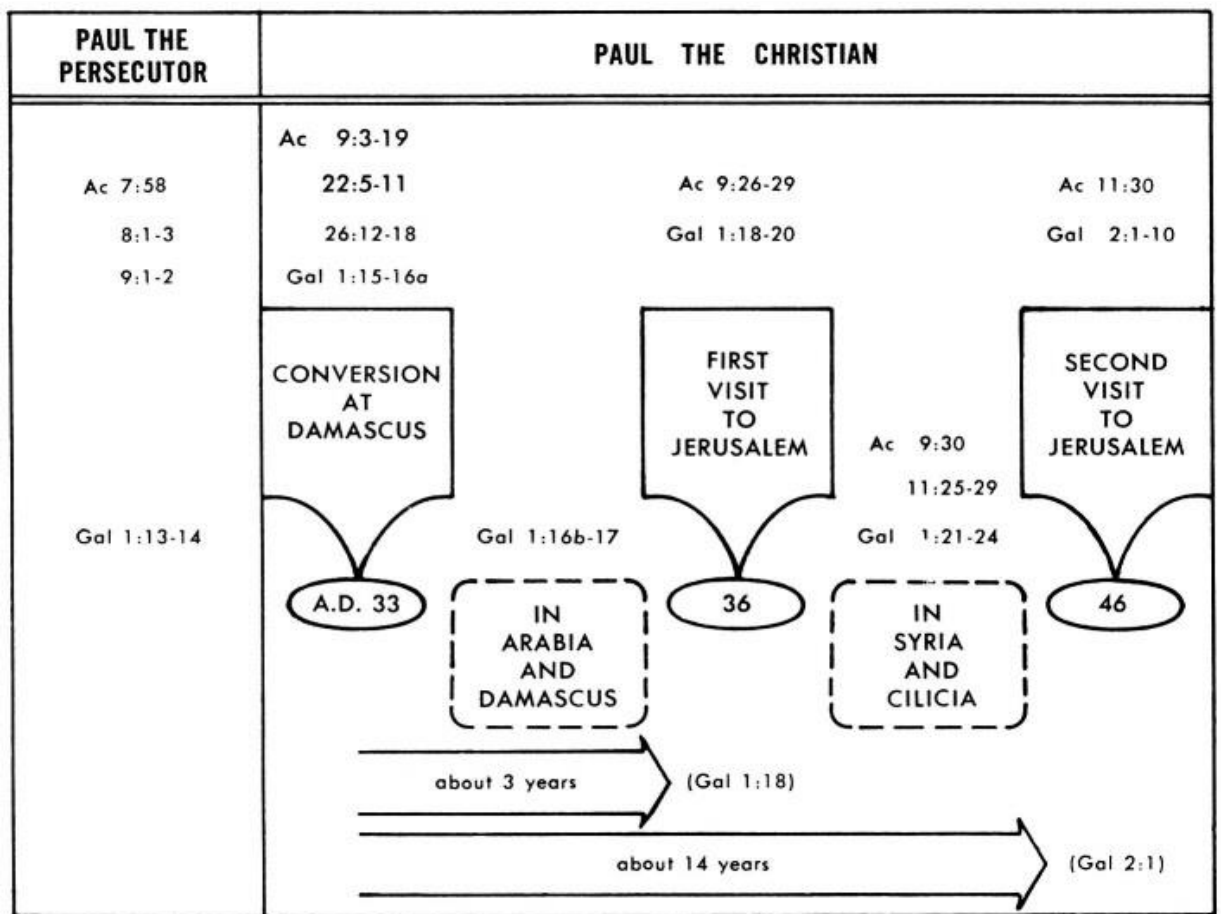
<sup>13</sup> For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism (*see also Phil 3:1-6*), how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; <sup>14</sup> and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions. <sup>15</sup> But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, was pleased <sup>16</sup> to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, <sup>17</sup> nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.

<sup>18</sup> Then, three years later, I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas (Peter) and stayed with him for fifteen days. <sup>19</sup> But I did not see any other of the apostles except James (Lit. *Jacob*), the Lord’s brother. <sup>20</sup> (Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.) <sup>21</sup> Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. <sup>22</sup> I was still unknown by sight (Lit. *face*) to the churches of Judea which were in Christ; <sup>23</sup> but only, they

kept hearing, He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy' (Cf. Acts 7:58; 8:1,3; 9:1-3,11-14)."<sup>24</sup> And they were glorifying God because of me.

2:1 Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also.<sup>2</sup> It was because of a revelation that I went up (Lit. *according to revelation I went up*); and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain.<sup>3</sup> But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.<sup>4</sup> But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage.<sup>5</sup> But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.<sup>6</sup> But from those who were of high reputation (Lit. *seemed to be something*) (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me.<sup>7</sup> But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised (Lit. *of the uncircumcision*), just as Peter had been to the circumcised (Lit. *of the circumcision*)<sup>8</sup> (for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised (Lit. *of the circumcision*) effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles),<sup>9</sup> and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James (Lit. *Jacob*) and Cephas (i.e. *Peter*) and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand (Lit. *hands*) of fellowship so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised (Lit. *of the circumcision*).<sup>10</sup> They only asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do" (Gal 1:11-2:10 NASB). Cf. Rom 2:28-29; Deut 30:6 for circumcision of the heart.

The following chart illustrates Paul's early journey, as mentioned in Galatians 1:11-2:10.<sup>13</sup>



<sup>13</sup> Jensen, *Jensen's Survey of the New Testament*, 303.

We can learn some important things about where Paul got his message,

- He said that God called him: Gal 1:15; cf. Gal 1:1
- Paul tells us here that the message that he is preaching was revealed to him by God and not by a person: Gal 1:11,16
- His message was to be preached to all, but especially the non-Jews: Gal 1:16,21; 2:2,7,9
- He went to Arabia for three years and got this revelation: Gal 1:17,18
- Then he did some travelling after coming back from Arabia: Gal 1:17,18,21
- It was another 14 years before he went back to Jerusalem: Gal 2:1
- Some false Christ-followers had come into the Galatian church that Paul needed to confront: Gal 2:4

### The third issue:

Paul dealt with this in two questions here,

In his first question, he used two metaphors in Gal 3:1: “You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?” (Gal 3:1 NASB). The first metaphor he used was who had “bewitched” them. That is to say, who ‘bewitch with the evil eye,’ ‘cast an evil spell on you,’ ‘to speak ill of one,’ or ‘to slander.’ The second metaphor is that Christ was “publicly portrayed.” That is, ‘of old layout or chosen previously (in the OT)’ or ‘to illustrate or reveal clearly’ or even ‘to write before the eyes of all who can read it.’

So, as it has been said,

“After transformation, we don’t look out at reality as if it’s hidden in the distance. We look out from reality! Our life is participating in God’s Life. We are living in Christ, as Paul tells the Colossians, ‘Your life’s hidden with Christ in God’ (3:3). Paul was enthusiastic about this idea. It undergirds everything he writes. Paul’s the great announcer of what’s happening everywhere all the time much more than he’s the architect of a new religion.”<sup>14</sup>

Paul's second question was answered throughout the Letter: ‘Is there still any place of the Mosaic Law in the plan of salvation for NT believers’ (Gal 3:3-4; 4:10; 5:2,3,4)?<sup>15</sup> By dealing with this law issue, the Letter to the Galatians was, in effect, a defence of the Gospel of grace. Paul used the idea of the ‘Law’ widely in the Letter but did not present it until chapter two, e.g. Gal 2:16,19,21; 3:2,5,10,11,12, 13,17,18,19, 21,23,24; 4:4,5,21; 5:3,4,14,18,23; 6:2,13. Paul used an example from the Hebrew Bible (Gen 15:6) of Abraham to validate that he was justified by faith and not by works (Gal 3:6-9; cf. also Rom 4:3,5,9,22; Jas 2:23). Consequently, justification was (and still is this day) is by faith, and not by the Law of Moses, Gal 2:14-16; cf. Gal 3:10-4:11.

“Nevertheless, knowing that a person 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” (Gal 2:16 NASB).

The Galatian church had received the blessings of salvation from God solely by faith and not by trying to keep the law, Gal 4:12-20. Consequently, the Law and grace cannot be present simultaneously if one is to grow in the things of God (Gal 4:21-31). So, Paul intended to teach them that clearly,

<sup>14</sup> Richard Rohr, “Christ in Paul’s Eye Paul’s Conversion.” <https://cac.org/pauls-conversion-2019-02-25/> (8<sup>th</sup> January 2024).

<sup>15</sup> Schreiner, T.R. *The Law & Its Fulfilment: A Pauline Theology of Law*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1993), 36.

“...God saves us, not because of the righteous things we have done, but through the renewal of the Holy Spirit; he assures the Galatians that we live by the Holy Spirit (meaning not just physical but particularly spiritual life, Gal 5:25).”<sup>16</sup>

### The Fourth issue:

Paul aimed to communicate to the Galatians that spiritual living is not based on keeping the Law but rather on the influence of the Holy Spirit.<sup>17</sup> They were to remain firm, stand in the liberty (freedom) they had already received, and not come back under the Law. Paul pointed out that the only law that is still relevant is the ‘law of love,’ in which the Law of Moses has been fulfilled (Gal 5:14). James, in his Letter, calls it the “royal law” Jas 2:8, and “law of freedom,” or “the law that sets you free” Jas 2:12. So, trying to keep the Law of Moses in human strength only cultivates the lust of the flesh with all of its fruit (this was a cautioning touching on not entering into the sin of antinomianism)<sup>18</sup> (Gal 5:13–21). Instead, they were to live in the power of the Spirit, bearing spiritual and God-glorifying fruit (Gal 5:22–26).<sup>19</sup> So, next, we will review what Paul had to say regarding the Spirit. It is this fourth issue of the Holy Spirit guiding the Christ-follower that we will now look at in the following section.

## Some concluding thoughts

So, coming back to the opening question,

**Q.** Why do you think Paul needed to write the letter, and what response did he desire from the Galatians?

We have seen that the book of Galatians has been called the *Charter of Christian Liberty*. We saw the reason Paul wrote the letter was that he was trying to encourage the Galatian church that,

“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore, keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery...<sup>13</sup> For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another” (Gal 5:1,13 NASB).

As with the Galatians, we are to live from the reality that we are free now, not that we will be free one day. We also need to continue to walk in the power of the Spirit, thus bearing spiritual and God-glorifying fruit. We have been encouraged to walk by the Spirit, and you will not conduct the desire of the flesh. That is, we need to live under the Holy Spirit's influence. Remember that, as with the Galatians, we have been justified. It is not merely an escape from sin but a Holy Spirit-empowered deliverance from sin. In other words, it is a new standing or status for the Christ-follower with God.

We are now clean and have had a clean break from the evil that had previously made the future hopeless. Jesus Christ is our righteousness and has made available to us all His merits and all the holy works He has done for us and in our place. Faith keeps us together with Him in communion with all His benefits. So, if someone asked you, ‘How are we right with God?’ You could tell them it

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<sup>16</sup> Hoekema, Anthony. *Saved by Grace*. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1989), 28.

<sup>17</sup> Easley, *Holman Quick Source*, 292.

<sup>18</sup> “The word antinomianism comes from two Greek words, anti, meaning ‘against;’ and nomos, meaning ‘law.’ Antinomianism means “against the law.” Theologically, antinomianism is the belief that there are no moral laws God expects Christians to obey. Antinomianism takes a biblical teaching to an unbiblical conclusion. The biblical teaching is that Christians are not required to observe the Old Testament Law as a means of salvation. When Jesus Christ died on the cross, He fulfilled the Old Testament Law (Rom 10:4; Gal 3:23-25; Eph 2:15). The unbiblical conclusion is that there is no moral law God expects Christians to obey.” “Antinomianism.” <http://www.gotquestions.org/antinomianism.html> (13<sup>th</sup> November 2023).

<sup>19</sup> Tenney, *Galatians*, 165-185. Cf. also the contrast in the letter of the Spirit and the flesh (Gal 4:29; 5:16, 19-22; 6:8).

is only by true faith in Jesus Christ. He is our righteousness who made available to us all His merits and all the holy works He has done for us and in our place.

So, Paul's message is that we are justified and need to continue to live a godly life in light of that truth, trusting in Jesus Christ alone. We are not to keep trying to keep the law by your good works, e.g. prayer, Bible reading, church attendance, giving, Good works, etc. What counts here is that 'circumcision is of the heart in the Spirit' and is not a work to be done. It has already been done. We need to rest in this truth and realise that we are already declared justified.

As said earlier, grace, as part of its makeup, is the freedom to choose, even the choice to be wrong. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are free to live a life that is overflowing to the extreme with the Spirit life. Since our freedom rests entirely on the absolute sovereignty of God, we do not need to continue living under the bondage of struggling to keep the law (works).

God has already freely given salvation, which is accepted by faith. Remember that we saw that it is founded upon His personal Gospel. So, as Paul said to the Galatians, do not let anyone bewitch you and draw you back under the weight of the lie of works. Because as I read earlier from Gal 2:26,

“...knowing that a person 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” (Gal 2:16 NASB).

So, be encouraged to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, daily bearing spiritual and God-glorifying fruit. Remember that we have been justified and have a new status with God as His children. Jesus Christ is our righteousness and has made available to us all His merits and all the holy works He has done for us and in our place. Faith is the means that keeps us together with Him in intimate communion with all His benefits. Only by true faith in Jesus Christ are we declared righteous. We can live this Kingdom life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

So, today, we have looked at God, the Holy Spirit, Who works amid the chaos of life to create order. We need to 'Stop and reflect.' We have seen what the Bible has said on the matter. But what has the Holy Spirit been telling us about who He is today? That is, what is the one thing that stands out to us? We need to apply this; otherwise, it is merely all academic. Then, we need to respond to what the Holy Spirit has been saying to us.

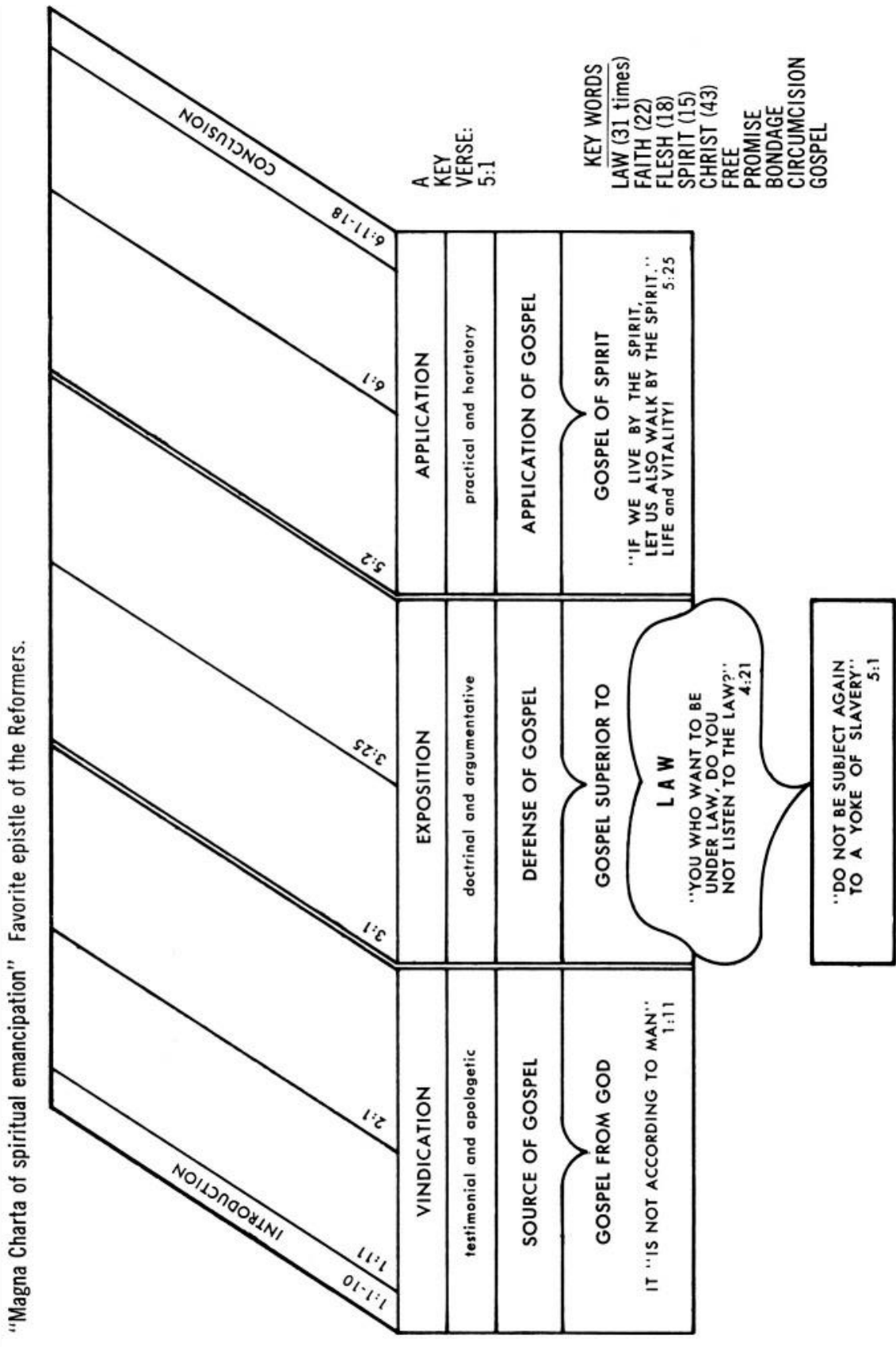
In response, we need to ask through this process:

- What personal application can be found in the passages?
- What is God teaching me today?
- That is, “What is God saying to me?”

How should I respond to what is being said, or so what?

- What are you going to do about it?
- What do you need to do to respond?
- Pray and respond

Appendix One: Jensen's Outline of Galatians <sup>20</sup>



<sup>20</sup> Jensen, *Jensen's Survey of the New Testament*, 302.