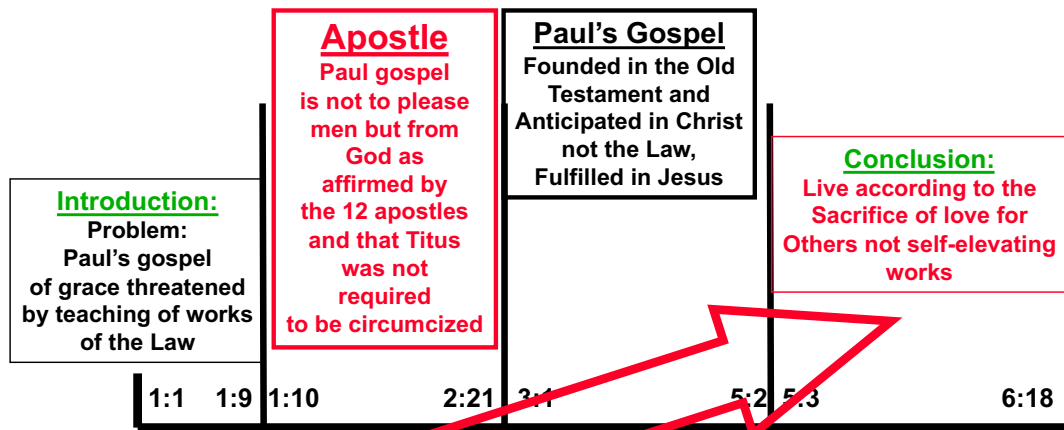


GALATIANS

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Problem: Jewish false teachers are teaching Galatians to be circumcised based on the theology that sanctification comes through the keeping of the law.

Solution: Paul warns the Galatians not to listen to the false teachers, nor to be circumcised (which is deserting the gospel), based on the theology that sanctification comes by faith in Christ and imputed righteousness.



ARGUMENT OF THE BOOK

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Main Problem

Jewish false teachers are teaching the Galatian believers that they must be circumcised and keep the Law for sanctification and avoidance of a curse and reject Paul, based on the theology that sanctification comes through keeping of the Law for righteousness.

Main Solution

Paul writes to warn the Galatian believers not to become circumcised but to trust in Christ for the theology that sanctification comes through faith in Christ alone resulting in imputed righteousness (and not a curse).

General Argument

Paul is not a man-pleaser

- He did not get his gospel from anyone other than God
- He did not require Titus to be circumcised in Jerusalem
- He corrected Peter on the very thing of which he is accused

and his gospel is true:

- Since it does come from the Old Testament; in that men were saved from the promise (not the Law) and the Law has reached its fulfillment in Christ.
- The result of works for righteousness always results in evil character traits, while imputed righteousness results in characteristics of love.

Explanation:

Paul had preached the gospel in Galatia previously (4:13), and the Galatians had received his gospel despite his physical weakness (4:13-14). Yet now some Jewish believers (6:12) entered the church and were preaching sanctification through the Law (3:1), particularly circumcision (5:11-12), and the Galatians were following them (1:6), even coming to the point of being upset at Paul (4:16) for preaching his gospel, which now they believed he did because he wanted to please men (1:10). Thus Paul writes to defend himself (and his gospel) and attack the antagonist and their error.

The Jewish antagonists (who want the Galatian Gentiles circumcised) are telling the Galatians that Paul preaches circumcision while in Jerusalem with the Jerusalem Jews, but does not require it in the Gentile lands so that he might be popular with them (1:10, 20; 2:3, 4:16, 5:11).

Precisely, Paul is accused of preaching the Law and circumcision (5:11) to the Jews in Jerusalem but when he preaches to the Gentiles he eliminates those doctrines in order to be accepted (a man pleaser). Thus, the antagonists state that Paul has deluded them into not keeping the Law (and circumcision) when in fact it is required for right standing before God. The antagonists claim that Gentiles who are not Abraham's children naturally need circumcision to become such. They are thus left under a curse, not obeying the Law, but have been deluded by Paul into thinking they are in a relationship with God.

Definitions

Abrahamic Covenant: This was the promise of God to Abraham, that through him would come the blessing of God to the Gentiles. This blessing was the ability to be saved (in a relationship with the Jewish God) through the gospel that would be mediated by Israel. Israel also was saved through this covenant following the imitation of Abraham in Gen. 15:6; imputation by means of faith (belief).

The Law: The Law was a sanctificational covenant (not for salvation). It told Israel how they were to represent God. While Israel could have kept the Law (since there was provision for sin), they rejected these provisions, preferring instead to find their own righteousness in the Law instead of God's.

Circumcision: Circumcision occurred before the Law and was a mark of an Israelite, naturally born. It was to be accompanied by a circumcision of heart accomplished through the Law and motivated by one's own heart (Deut. 6:4-6). Since Israel failed to circumcise their own hearts, God did it under the New Covenant. Thus a believer in Israel is circumcised inward and outward, while a Gentile is only circumcised inward.

Sons of . . . "Sons of . . .", "children of . . ." indicates an imitator. There are two aspects of this "sons of . . ." connotation. There are physical sons (representatives) as in children. All Israelites are representatives, sons of Abraham in this manner. The other aspect of "sons" is that of an imitator in actions (words, deeds). Thus, one could be a "son of Abraham" if he imitated Abraham's deeds.¹

¹ There are many illustrations of this use in the Bible. For instance in John 8, Jesus states that they the Pharisees are not sons of Abraham but have Satan as their

- “By faith”** By faith not sight. There are two options for anyone in following God or being a representative. They may follow the physical, human reasoning realm (“sight”) or they may follow the unseen, but true, realm as their direction (revelation). Thus, if one walks by faith, they are following revelation to direct their path. If one uses human reasoning to direct their path, they are walking by sight.
- Legalism** Legalism is not rules, as is normally advocated. Legalism is self-righteousness (earned-righteousness) based on any self-action. In other words, legalism is anything that draws credit to oneself instead of the total grace of God to provide imputed righteousness, forgiveness of sins, and the reorientation of the mind through the work of the Holy Spirit. However, this is not the removal of rules, standards or laws that indicate right actions, but simply a declaration of right standing based on self-actions. Rules and standards are necessary indications of Godly behavior and a part of the Christian life as is indicated by the last three chapters of Ephesians.² Legalism is resorting to any physical indication of one’s value before God instead of revelation which indicates his standing is totally on the merit of Christ.
- Judaizers** Judaizers are defined here as those who feel the keeping of the Law has merit before God either in salvation or sanctification.
- The Gospel** The gospel is identified elsewhere as the fullness of the provision of righteousness through Jesus Christ alone. This gospel is valid for sanctification as well as salvation. In other words, works alone that bring any attention to oneself, or indicate one’s standing, are as invalid following salvation as prior to it.
- Apostle** An eyewitness to the words and works of Jesus Christ who takes that witness and shows that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament anticipation of the Ultimate One. (cf. John 14--16, 1 Thess. 2:13). He is supernaturally directed by the Holy Spirit to observe and perceive the Old Testament so that he is able to produce the N.T. writings without error.

father. In other words, they imitate or represent Satan in their deeds and words not Abraham who anticipated Jesus.

² This is a large misconception in the evangelical community. For example, it is often stated that the believer is allowed so-called ‘freedom’ to do as he pleases (or perceives from his own viewpoint). This is nothing better than “doing what was right in their own eyes” of the Book of Judges and is not to be made in any way similar to the Christian walk. The believer is “declared righteous” through Christ, and though he is still to make a total effort to be holy according to the standards of the Bible, his motivation is not to glorify self any longer, but to glorify Christ. He has been freed from self-righteous demands, and is free to glorify Christ.

The Holy Spirit The major N.T. function of the Holy Spirit is to reveal Jesus Christ to the believer as the fullness of the O.T. anticipatory signs, symbols, types and prophecies. He reveals that the full atonement for salvation and sanctification is completed in Christ. This is done through understanding the Scriptures (apostolic eyewitness), for without them no one can know of Jesus Christ.

Justification: The term (*dikaios*, “declared righteous” or “justified”) is used in Galatians in some form 13 times. Paul’s point is that the Law never made anyone righteous, nor gave them life (for even if they did imitate, it was only temporal life). The Law looked forward to Christ to impute righteousness. Abraham was imputed righteousness in the Abrahamic Covenant by faith without the Law. Now Christ replaces the Law (lack of life, lack of righteousness) and is the One who grants positional justification and sanctificational justification.

- 2:16 nevertheless 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, that we may be ***justified*** by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be ***justified***.
- 2:17 "But if, while seeking to be ***justified*** in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be!
- 2:21 "I do not nullify the grace of God; for if ***righteousness*** comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."
- 3:6 Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS ***RIGHTEOUSNESS***.
- 3:8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would ***justify*** the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU."
- 3:11 Now that no one is ***justified*** by the Law before God is evident; for, " THE ***RIGHTEOUS*** MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH. "
- 3:21 Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then ***righteousness*** would indeed have been based on law.
- 3:24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be ***justified*** by faith.
- 5:4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be ***justified*** by law; you have fallen from grace.
- 5:5 For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of ***righteousness***.

Relationship of Message to the Biblical Narrative

The Biblical narrative had moved from the Law into the age following the crucifixion (forgiveness of sins) and the resurrection (validation of the future kingdom). So, while the Law did not give righteousness, it pointed to Christ's coming as the fullness of times when full righteousness would arrive in the Christ. Ultimately, the Old Testament pointed to salvation and sanctification only in the imputation of righteousness through the Christ, and thus the Jewish believer had to move onto the new age of full righteousness and leave the condemnation of the Law. The Gentile believer then entered this place of full righteousness in Christ apart from a move back to the Law.

Background Issues³

Author: Paul (1:1)

Date: 48 AD, just prior to the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15

Recipient: Southern Cities of Galatia

Place of writing: Antioch of Syria

Other Notable Issues: There is some controversy regarding the recipients of this letter, whether it was northern Galatia or southern Galatia. For more information see the source in the footnote herein.

³ Campbell, D. K. (1985). [Galatians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 588). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books. This source applies to all the "Background Issues."

Interpretive Argument

I. 1:1-9: The Introduction: In order to present himself as authoritative and to define the problem of the book, Paul establishes himself as an apostle of God, and reveals the antagonists as the Jewish Law-keepers, who are anti-God, and are amazingly influencing the Galatians to follow their false gospel.

Argument:

This comprises, in essence, the setting of this epistle, as Paul outlines exactly what the problem is and the parties involved.

- Paul is the apostle chosen by God and who has the revelation from God.
- The Galatians are the believers who have wavered away from the Gospel of Paul.
- The issue is Paul's theology which he repeats here

Galatians 1:3-4 . . . the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father . . .

- The antagonists who are luring them astray with another gospel that is a false gospel.

Contribution to the Solution:

Very simply this is the outline of the people involved and the problem. It is the setting for the defense that follows.

A. 1:1-2: Identification of Paul: The summary is the identity of himself as an apostle, his readers and those who accompany (and agree with) him, and the theological basis from which he writes (Christ).

1:1 Paul, an apostle (not *sent* from men⁴, nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead), ² and all the brethren who are with me, to the churches of Galatia:

⁴ Paul is being accused of receiving his gospel “from men” or through man”. This is in contrast to getting it through Jesus Christ and God the Father. Thus he appears to be defending both himself and the group that accompanies him (“all the brethren who are with me”) against the attack that he is the leader of a group who has plotted (“from men”), and that this gospel is through the reasoning of man (“nor man”) but through revelation from Jesus Christ and God (putting his gospel on a par with the Old Testament).

- B. **1:3-5: Theology of Paul:** His theology is clear: Christ delivered us from the sins under the Law. The present evil age⁵ is that man now exists apart from the obligations of this world, but according to God, who will deliver them into the future age.

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ,⁶ 4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age⁷, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom *be* the glory forevermore. Amen.

- C. **1:6-7: The Problem:** The Galatians are deserting Christ (and the theology of grace) by the adding the works of the Law to Christ's work.

6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; 7 which is *really* not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ.⁸

- C. **1:8-9: The Solution:** Paul repeats a doctrine of Deut. 13:1ff, that anyone, including the present antagonist who contradicts the word of God is a false prophet and deserves cursing.

8 But even though we, or an angel from heaven,⁹ should preach¹⁰ to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be

⁵ Paul has often pointed out that there is no physical visual benefit to a believer during this time. For the antagonists to claim that there is, and note Paul's physical demise, is to claim that this age is a good age. Paul rebuts this to say it will come later.

⁶ This greeting is from God and Jesus demonstrating that Paul has access to them as an apostle.

⁷ This present evil age is the one under which the Law-keepers exhort the believers to enjoy blessing, since the present tense blessing is based on their righteous deeds. But Paul says it is an evil age, and through Christ we have been delivered out of it. This would contradict the Law-keepers who say now is the time of blessing.

⁸ Paul clarifies here what he means by the statement that it is "really not another (gospel)". It still includes Christ (which Paul preached) but now it is distorted. In other words there are parts that are right, namely their position, but they distort the salvation. In Chapter 3:1ff it is apparent that they are still holding unto their position in Christ through their salvation, but now adding works as their sanctification.

⁹ Recall that angels brought the O.T. Law and this may be an allusion to the statements of the antagonists that angels brought the Law and thus it is valid.

accursed. 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received,¹¹ let him be accursed.¹²

II. 1:10--2:21: Defense of the accusation of being a man-pleaser: In order to defend himself against the accusation of not being authoritative, Paul affirms that his gospel and authority was received from God not men, including the 12 apostles, who verified it and agreed with it. He has consistently taught to Jews what he teaches to Gentiles.

Argument:

The accusation of Paul as a man-pleaser heads the section.

- He first will point out that he received the gospel as a revelation from God and not at all from consultation with men in that he wasn't with anyone to get information.
- He did not require Titus to be circumcised in Jerusalem
- He submitted his gospel to the apostles who agreed with it and appointed him as the apostle to the Gentiles.
- He corrected Peter of the very thing that he is accused of; acting differently toward Jews then toward Gentiles.

Contribution to the Solution:

Defense of Being a Man-Pleaser: This is the defense against the accusation that he as a man-pleaser, doing different things to different people in order to get them to like him. He points out his history that he has been consistently teaching the same thing wherever he went even though some disagreed. He did this because it came from God, not men.

¹⁰ The present subjunctive here indicates that Paul himself is subject to the earlier gospel preached (aorist).

¹¹ Paul's double statement in effect is not allowing it to be changed from the historical presentation. He cannot change what he said, and they cannot change what they heard. And variance from that historical preaching and commitment is error.

¹² The "anathema" here means to be separated from God, life and blessing. It could mean hell, positionally, but curses are not limited to unbelievers. In fact, the antagonists had accused the Galatians of being "sinners" before God since they did not keep the Law, and thus under a curse. Paul is stating that it is the antagonists who are deserving of separation from God. (Note that Israel incurs curses, yet would be considered a 'saved' nation).

- A. **1:10-14:** Paul is not a man-pleaser or else he would have continued persecution, instead of becoming the persecuted.

1:10 For am I now seeking the favor of men,¹³ or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.¹⁴ 11 For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but *I received it* through a revelation of Jesus Christ.¹⁵ 13 For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure, and tried to destroy it; 14 and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen,¹⁶ being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.

- B. **1:15-24:** That Paul did not consort with any men, not even the 12 apostles verifies that he received the revelation directly from God.

1:15 But when He who had set me apart, *even* from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, was pleased 16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who

¹³ Paul has been accused of wanting the Galatians to like him more by allowing them to skip circumcision as part of the gospel, yet he knows it is part of the gospel and preaches it to Jews.

¹⁴ If Paul is pleasing men, this is contrary to pleasing Christ. This is an allusion to the Law, under which Paul fought for superiority through its keeping. He has found that pleasing men in keeping the Law is contrary to pleasing God. He acknowledges that he had a wrong view of the Law, as do the self-righteous antagonists. In addition he is, and will point out, that if he is advocating circumcision among Jews and not Gentiles then he is contradicting God.

¹⁵ This is another piece of evidence that the antagonists were believers, since Paul is arguing not against receiving it from God (as he would have to if it were unbelieving Jews) but from Jesus Christ. Thus he is being accused of receiving it from men not Christ.

¹⁶ Paul's point here is that if he was a man-pleaser, then he could have stayed in the Law where he was since he was elevated there. And in fact if the Law is required, then he was the highest of all, being a zealous persecutor of those who did not keep the Law.

were apostles before me;¹⁷ but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus. 18 Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days. 19 But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother. 20 (Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.)¹⁸ 21 Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. 22 And I was *still* unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ; 23 but only, they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy."¹⁹ 24 And they were glorifying God because of me.

- C. **2:1-10**: The 12 apostles' message conformed to his as they approved his message, including the lack of requirement of circumcision for Gentiles.

2:1 Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. 2 And it was because of a revelation that 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 reputation²⁰, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain.²¹ 3 But not even Titus who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.²² 4 But *it was* because of the false brethren who had

¹⁷ Paul's point here is that he not only didn't consult men, but he didn't even consult the 12 apostles, so he wasn't even pleasing them.

¹⁸ Paul's emphasis here is because he has been accused of lying by the antagonists to the people of Galatia. The antagonists are advocating that the 12 apostles advocate circumcision and Paul agrees with that, but welcomes the Gentiles in without circumcision. Since Galatia would not likely have known any apostles but Paul the point of the antagonists would be accepted. Note also that Paul does not call on the testimony of Peter or others, but uses an example of how Peter admitted that they were all the same.

¹⁹ Paul's point here is that if he were a man pleaser he would not have reversed and become the persecuted as opposed to the persecutor. And he was not currying favor with apostles to be someone big among them. Had he wanted to do that he would have hung around them.

²⁰ He did not want to submit it publicly to those beyond the church leaders lest the legalists invade the approval process and reject Paul.

²¹ It appears that Paul was not submitting his gospel here for approval, but to see if they were still faithful to the revelation that they had received. Had they not concurred they would have been wrong and he would have been eliminated from their presence.

²² Paul's gospel is confirmed when they agree with him (not vice-versa) and the proof of this is that in accepting him they do not require Titus to be circumcised. This is proof that the apostles did not require circumcision of a Gentile. Thus Paul was not a

sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage.²³ 5 But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.²⁴ 6 But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)-- well, those who were of reputation²⁵ contributed nothing to me. 7 But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised,²⁶ just as Peter *had been* to the circumcised 8 (for He who effectually worked for Peter in *his* apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles), 9 and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we *might go* to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. 10 *They* only *asked* us to remember the poor²⁷-- the very thing I also was eager to do.²⁸

- D. 2:11-21:** Paul was no less an authoritative apostle than Peter since Peter submitted to his message in practice (believing Jews to fellowship with uncircumcised Gentiles) and to him, personally, as authoritative.

man-pleaser, nor an apostle-pleaser, since he did not require Titus to be circumcised. Had this been the doctrine of the apostles (as the antagonists claim) Paul would have had him circumcised.

²³ Paul points out that there were some legalists there also that were trying to eliminate their freedom in Christ, and this is why he had to submit it in private, since the legalists were invading the group, and he did not subject the gospel to their examination.

²⁴ Paul did not confer with them since the gospel was not up to them to validate. They were wrong and no consideration was given to them.

²⁵ These appear to be the apostles at the core, however, James the Lord's brother was not an apostle, but was head of the church. His point is that his gospel was not from any great persons, but from God, and he was not deriving any glory from being with reputed people.

²⁶ The difference here is that the uncircumcised are Gentiles, and the circumcised are Jews. Thus his point is that circumcision designates a race, not a theology.

²⁷ Remembering the poor here is important in Paul's gospel. The rich in the view of the antagonists were the blessed and the poor were the cursed. Thus, remembering the poor would indicate the gospel of mercy, not of self-righteousness.

²⁸ Remembering the poor was a basic element of Deuteronomy. The outcast was always the recipient of the gospel. The legalists were considering the poor as cursed.

2:11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face,²⁹ because he stood condemned. 12 For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he *began* to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.³⁰ 13 And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.³¹ 14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how *is it that* you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?³² 15 "We *are* Jews by nature,³³ and not sinners from among the Gentiles;³⁴ 16 nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we³⁵ have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.³⁶ 17 "But if, while seeking to be justified in

²⁹ Paul's confrontation of Peter was in person, so there could be no question of misunderstanding. In other words, Peter would confess the same event if asked. This may be a subtle suggestion that the antagonists are not facing Paul in person, but through his absence. Thus he cannot defend himself to their face.

³⁰ Peter, not Paul, had done what they were accusing Paul of doing. Peter had succumbed to the pressure from Jews to not associate with those uncircumcised, and treat them as sinners.

³¹ His point here seems to be that this kind of thing spreads, since men follow other men. Paul's point is that men tend to go the other way to avoid persecution, but Paul has stood up against the flow of concession.

³² This appears to be a contradiction that Paul is addressing to Peter. Peter is a Jew and has joined with the Gentiles in eating, but in joining the Jews at the exclusion of the Gentiles, he compels the Gentiles to live like a Jew in order to be accepted.

³³ Refer to Romans 2:14 for a parallel statement where he speaks of Gentiles not having the Law by nature (as the Jews).

³⁴ Paul's point is that the Jews have the Law by nature and thus the ability to please God through the revelation, while the Gentiles do not and are violators of the Law by their very existence.

³⁵ The "we" here is the Jews who have the Law (and the Abrahamic relationship) by nature.

³⁶ Although the Law was by nature (or most certainly the Abrahamic Covenant), the believing Jews had chosen to believe in Christ for their justification, realizing that the Law only condemned and did not provide justification. Thus, while the Jew had the Law to provide a relationship with God (and the Gentile did not), they would end the Law for a relationship with Christ.

Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be! 18 "For if I rebuild what I have *once* destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor. 19 "For through the Law I died to the Law, that I might live to God. 20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me. 21 "I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness *comes* through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."

III. 3:1--5:1: The defense of Paul's gospel: In order to defend his gospel against the accusation that it was sourced from Paul as a man-pleaser, he established that the promise in the O.T. (now fulfilled in Christ) was always the means by which God provided and not the Law.

Argument:

- The believers have been deceived into believing that the works of the Law will bring their sanctificational relationship with God, even though they were set apart by the Spirit through the Apostolic revelation of imputed righteousness.
- The Old Testament verifies that Abraham was saved and sanctified by his belief in "The Seed" of Christ to come before the Law.
- One becomes a child of Abraham by imitating his faith, not by becoming a Jew through circumcision.
- Children have inheritance as sons, while slaves (those who come to God through the Law, i.e., Israel) have no inheritance in the kingdom.

Contribution to the Solution:

Defense of Paul's theology from the Old Testament: This is the second phase of Paul's argument following his defense of himself as an apostle. Now he moves to the content of his argument that Abraham was saved by imputation of righteousness prior to circumcision or the Law. Thus, those who follow the faith of Abraham are sons and inheritors, not those who keep the Law and circumcision.

A. 3:1-5: The contradiction of the Spirit and the Law is that the revelation of Jesus Christ's imputation to the believer (the Spirit) is contradictory to the self-effort required in the Law.

3:1 You foolish³⁷ Galatians, who has bewitched³⁸ you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed *as* crucified? 2 This is the only thing I

³⁷ The word here is actually that of "impious" or "godless" implying that they have rejected God in their choice.

want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit³⁹ by the works of the Law, or by hearing⁴⁰ with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? 4 Did you suffer so many things in vain-- if indeed it was in vain? 5 Does He then, who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

- B. 3:6-29:** O.T.: Abraham's faith (promise) compared with the Law show that the Law only condemns while the promise provides apart from man's works.

3:6 Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. 7 Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, *saying*, "ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU." 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer. 10 For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM." 11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, " THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH. " 12 However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM." 13 Christ redeemed us

³⁸ Or "placed under a spell". Between the use of "godless" and this word, Paul is saying that they are very much like their Gentile heritage, dealing in mysticism and mythology, which is apart from firm truth.

³⁹ The "Spirit" in Galatians, as can be seen from this verse is a major reception. It is clear that the Spirit is indicative of the Promise that God will fulfill (4:29 where it is referenced that Isaac was born according to the Spirit, indicating that Isaac was born according to the unseen promise received by faith, while Ishmael was born according to the seen works received by human reasoning). In 5:5 it is clear that the Spirit reveals the future righteousness that the believer will receive thus again indicating the promise in Christ Jesus, unseen. In 3:14 it appears that the promise of the Spirit is what Paul is revealing did not come through the Law. This promise then insures the believer of the hope of the future. It is based on the visible crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Thus it might be said that the Spirit is provided during this age to men to indicate to them the fullness of Christ's sacrifice for them is realized, though unseen. To go back to the Law is to go back to physical indications that they are related to God, which are not needed during this age when the nation has been set aside for a time.

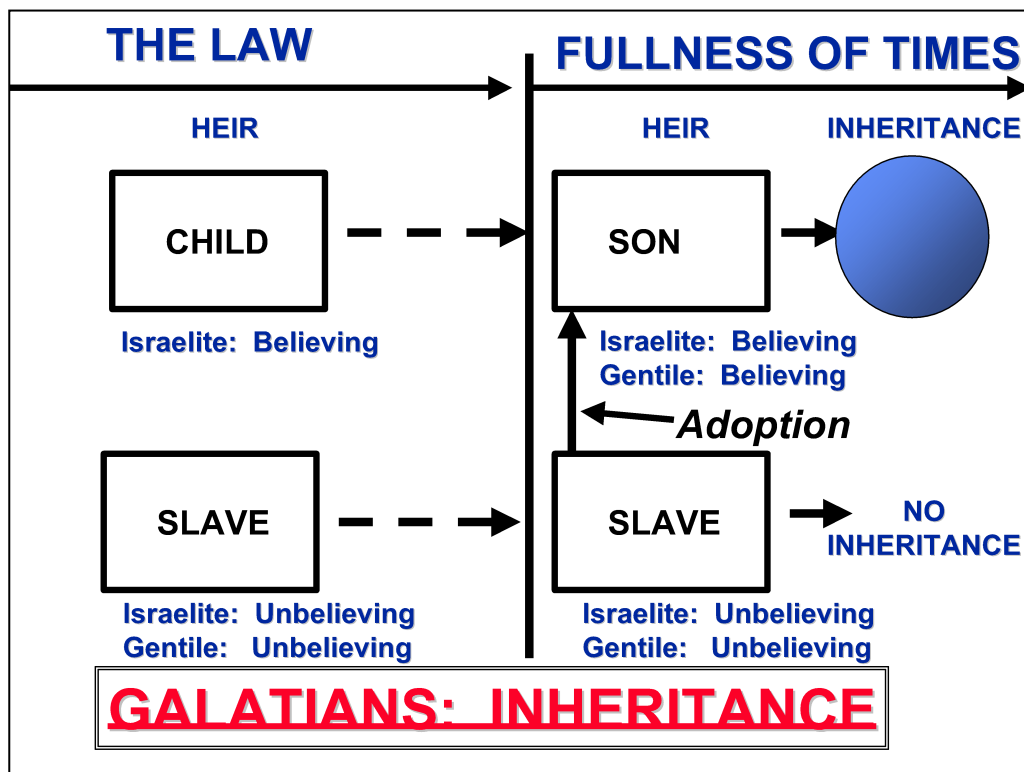
⁴⁰ The "hearing" is directly opposed to "seeing". In other words, one was only able to perceive Christ through "hearing" not by seeing, since the validation of the resurrection and the crucifixion was through the apostolic witness.

from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us-- for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"- - 14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. 15 Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is *only* a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it. 16 Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as *referring* to many, but *rather* to one, "And to your seed"⁴¹, that is, Christ. 17 What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. 18 For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise. 19 Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made. 20 Now a mediator is not for one *party only*; whereas God is *only* one. 21 Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. 22 But the Scripture has shut up all men under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. 23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. 24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor *to lead us* to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring⁴², heirs according to promise.

⁴¹ The phrase that Paul quotes in Galatians "to your seed" (tw/| spe,rmati, sou) is a direct quote from Gen 12:7; 13:15; 15:18; 17:8; 22:18; 24:7; 26:3f; 28:4, 13f; 35:12; 48:4, of which Genesis 22:18 is one of them. The only difference in Genesis 22:18 and the quote in Galatians is that the OT has an "en" ("in") preceding it. However, this is before the quote of Paul, and simply narrows the focus of the quotation to "en", but the dative article *tw* can carry the same point of "in" (normally "to" or "for", but "in" is not uncommon). Thus, while he didn't bring the "en" with it, the quotation is still intact and the meaning is not required to be different, even though it might show up in the English that way.

Interestingly enough, the only other place that the "en" preceding shows up is Genesis 28:13-14 at Jacob's ladder. All the rest are without the "in".

⁴² For a non-physical, obedient use of child see 1 Peter 3:6, or John 8.



- C. **4:1-7:** The difference between slaves or children (law) and sons (Christ) is that both slaves and children could not inherit until they became of age (full), thus Israel and Gentiles could not become inheritors of the kingdom until Christ came and they believed in Him.
- D. **4:8-20:** To continue as sons is important since they are not walking like the sons that they have become through belief.

13 but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time; 14 and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe⁴³, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus *Himself*. 15 Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness, that if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me. 16 Have I therefore become your enemy by telling you the truth?

⁴³ It is not simply that Paul's disease was something that they found repulsive in a physical way, but that health was a sign of blessing and disease was a sign of cursing to the Judaizers. To a believer however it should have been an indication that they should aid him as the helpless. However, they had been willing to do that on the first visit, but now they have changed, and he has become despised. This is a good example of what had transpired in their theology. Before, under Paul's gospel they were humble and wanted to help him in his ailment. Now they were prideful and wanted to reject his ailment as being the identity of a curse.

E. **4:21-5:1:** O.T.: Hagar and Sarah demonstrate the opposite choices of the Law and promise, since Isaac was provided according to the promise, yet Ishmael was provided according to their works (human reasoning)

IV. **5:2--6:18: 5:2--6:18: The Application of Paul's gospel.** In order to show the purpose of God is fulfilled through imputed righteousness as opposed to the Law, Paul details the nature of the expression of each as either good or evil.

Argument:

- If believers receive circumcision or keep the Law as their foundation for their relationship with God, then they have negated the grace that comes in Christ, since the two are not compatible.
- Israel, those who keep the Law, cannot please God, in the works of the flesh.
- The believer must walk in the Spirit, and have the deeds of self-sacrifice that exhibit the mercy of God.
- The relationship between believers is that of love and forgiveness.

Contribution to the Solution:

Application of Paul's theology as related to Israel and those in the church: This part is focused on application, that is, what do the deeds of those who follow self-righteousness look like (represented by Israel), and what do the deeds of those who follow Christ's grace look like in the church.

A. **5:1-12:** The worthlessness of the yoke of slavery which is the Law becomes evident if they do not walk on the basis of Christ's imputation.

B. **5:13-21:** The deeds of the Law keepers are self-centered, and neglect the brother and are characteristic of Israelites who reject Christ.

5:13 For you were called to freedom⁴⁴, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh,⁴⁵ but through love serve one another. 14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the *statement*, "

⁴⁴ This "freedom" is a freedom from having to demonstrate personal righteousness to God through the Law. Now they are established as sons with a standing that does not depend on works of Law.

⁴⁵ If they have freedom from self-works, or self-righteousness, they should not use this freedom to return to the self-elevation that works brought.

YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."⁴⁶ 15 But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed by one another.⁴⁷ 16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another,⁴⁸ so that you may not do the things that you please.⁴⁹ 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under⁵⁰ the Law. 19 Now the deeds of the flesh⁵¹ are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry⁵², sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions⁵³, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things

⁴⁶ The Law was a reflection of the love of God toward mankind, and how man could represent that love toward his brother on behalf of God.

⁴⁷ Paul, here, uses verbs which are more appropriate to dogs or vicious animals who are fighting and harming each other in order to preserve themselves by eating another's flesh. The 'flesh' here may be important, in that if they walk by the flesh (self-righteousness), then they will devour one another's flesh in order to elevate themselves.

⁴⁸ The Spirit is unseen, based on the Word of God alone, and reveals the fullness of the Law which is given by God. The flesh is seen, based on a partial symbolic seen Law which was to indicate the fullness, and relies on the attempts of man.

⁴⁹ This refers to their natural desire, which is not only self-elevating works of the Law, but is their natural desire to elevate themselves according to the Law which Jews have "by nature".

⁵⁰ "*upo*" in the accusative. Here likely means "under the authority of". Cf. Gal. 3:22,25; 4:5. This is used as a man under sin, under a tutor, and under the Law. None of these can he escape.

⁵¹ The use of "flesh" in Galatians is associated with the Adamic man, the human body and its passions, which always justify the human person itself. It is the self-justification, and that is normally through the keeping of the works of the Law.

⁵² Note here that idolatry (literal) is not present historically during this period of time with Jews. However it was present with Gentiles (Romans) and may indicate that this statement is beyond the scope of simply Israel. This gives credence to the issue that Paul is referring to the deeds of the flesh under the Law, that Israel moved to idolatry. His point is that the Law could not bring righteous behavior. It only recognized sinful behavior.

⁵³ This word implies the forming or separation of a sect based on false teaching or a different religious view.

like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned⁵⁴ you that those⁵⁵ who practice⁵⁶ such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

⁵⁴ The question of “forewarning” is not as easy as it looks. Most assume it is to a previous communication of Paul. However, it may be that he is simply referring to a prior place in his letter. In 4:30 Paul talks about casting out the bondwoman and her son for they shall not be *an heir* with the son of the freewoman. Thus Israel was previously mentioned as not being part of the inheritance. Thus the “forewarning” is the key to understanding the “practicing” which might better be contextually translated as “functioning”.

⁵⁵ The ones practicing here are those who are in the Law (although it could mean Gentiles who operate according to their human wisdom and act just like Israel did under the Law), and either have returned from being free, or have never been free from the Law, or are under Gentile ‘flesh’. The word “practice” is a present participle, which, in relationship to the main verb in future (shall not inherit) would simply indicate a ‘previous to the kingdom’ situation. There does not appear to be anything in this statement by itself that would eliminate a return to the Law by a saved individual, but it most certainly does include the Nation Israel, and unsaved Gentiles who live according to natural desires, and sight. The Law worked to condemn the flesh and show it was polluted. The Gentiles were clearly polluted when viewed by Jews. The question then arrives as to whether a believer returning to the Law could lose his inheritance as a son (obviously as a sanctificational reward inheritance and not in the sense of not entering the kingdom). Is there another place where Paul might allude to such a thing? There does not appear to be any confirming statements that indicate a loss for a believer.

Note also that this is a parallel statement to “those who belong to Christ” making it positional. And also note the statement “if we live (i.e., have been given life through his death, cf. 2:20).

⁵⁶ Refer to Gal. 2:15 where he says the Jews are not sinners “by nature”. In other words the Law is virtually the “nature” of the Jew being his practice at all times. This will add some evidence to the statement that “practice” indicates a hard, almost character, attribute. However, in a survey of the differences of “do” (poiew) and “practice” (prassw) they appear to be interchangeable with the exception that “do” may take on a single event more than “practice”, although that is not always the case (1 Cor. 5:10 where it is a single deed (sing.) but is a continuing hard core event, i.e., marrying his step-mother). “Practice” may go from an imperative (make this your habit) to something inbred as natural (like the Gentiles in Rom. 1), and the Jews ‘practicing’ the Law’ as in Rom. 2. Thus, the use of this word does seem to indicate a hard, decisive, continuity in deed (as opposed to “do” which tends to be used in a broader spectrum). Refer to the appendix for detailed study.

- C. **5:22--6:10**: The deeds of those under grace are those which are self-less, loving of brother (as Christ was) and result in forgiveness, care for the brother and support for Paul's gospel.

5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those⁵⁷ who belong to Christ Jesus [have]⁵⁸ crucified⁵⁹ the flesh with its passions and desires.⁶⁰ 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk⁶¹ by the Spirit. 26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.⁶²

6:1 Brethren, even if a man is caught⁶³ in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens⁶⁴, and thus fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have *reason for* boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another.⁶⁵ 5 For each one shall bear his own load⁶⁶. 6 And

⁵⁷ This is parallel to "those who practice such things".

⁵⁸ The brackets here have been added since this verb is in the aorist.

⁵⁹ Contrast with 2:20 (2:19 Grk.) where Paul uses the verb "co-crucified" and places it in the perfect tense.

⁶⁰ This is clearly a positional statement (ref. 2:20) stating that those who are believers The verb "crucified" is in the aorist.

⁶¹ This is not the verb (*peripateo*, found in 5:16 only) for "walking" when "walking according to the promises" but is the verb for 'conduct' as related to lifestyle.

⁶² These three are things that come by comparisons. According to the Law they would be arguing over who was more righteous, and alternatively who was the more evil. Note the following verses, in that in that place they should forgive those who fail, instead of elevating themselves and diminishing the other brother.

⁶³ The word implies that the person is caught doing something before he or she makes it public.

⁶⁴ This is in contrast to lowering one another on the basis of their burdens (poverty, sickness, sin). One is to look to aid the brother as a demonstration of the love of Christ, particularly when they are in need. This would be in opposition to the Judaizers who felt that when a man fell, he should be condemned.

⁶⁵ The point here is that the way the Judaizers became righteous was to look at others, demean them, and thus elevate themselves. However, Paul points out that if one

let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches⁶⁷. 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. 10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

- D. **6:11-18:** The boasting of the flesh is that of the antagonists regarding others they have gotten to follow them, while Paul's boasting is in Christ and service for them.

Application

Historical

The Church: Believers in Christ

1. Support the Doctrine: The believers are to reject heresies and support the apostolic doctrine of imputed righteousness.
2. Humble behavior: All are to serve the body, loving their neighbor, forgiving those who have fallen into sin as opposed to elevating themselves over them.
3. Support Paul: All are urged to support those who teach the Pauline doctrine as well as Paul himself.

Preaching Application

looks at the Law he is condemned and thus should judge himself in regard to that, and then boasting would be removed.

⁶⁶ In contrast to the earlier statement, this statement is in context with the former verse. One should evaluate himself according to the Law and thus be self-condemned and deal with that, thus turning to Christ for forgiveness, and not requiring others to bear his sinning self-righteousness.

⁶⁷ In contrast to the taking care of one's own problems, Paul states that one should actually support those who teach. The implication is that the false teachers will leave if there is no personal benefit such as power or money. Since they are not in it for sacrificial love, they will disappear. On the other hand one wants the true teachers of his apostolic doctrine to be able to continue, since they are self-sacrificing, they need support, as one would give to someone who provides them food.

1. Study the gospel: The apostolic doctrine of imputed righteousness as the means of one's walk must be reaffirmed and studied, not only in the Pauline corpus, but in the Bible as a whole. It is this that will allow the believer to recognize and reject false heresy.
2. Seek humble behavior: The natural outflow of imputation is humility and service of others. One needs to be clear that he personally is changed by this doctrine and then teaches others.
3. Support the Gospel: Financially and prayerfully support those who minister the truth of the gospel. Based on the clarity of the gospel doctrine, the church must identify and support those ministries that teach the absolute and pure apostolic doctrine and behavior.

Specific Application

1. Study the gospel: A regular and accurate means of Bible study must be implemented. One must seek not only good Bible teachers, but those who teach them how to read the Bible accurately on their own. One should begin to study and individual Book on a regular and systematic study basis, to study the Book as a whole. Perhaps, an hour a day, would be a regular starting point. Book on how to study the Bible with methodologies from sound authors should be obtained.
2. Seek humble behavior: The imperatives of the gospel provide the guide here. One should seek out the lowly in the church and seek to get to know them for Christ's sake. After getting to know them, one could provide for their needs as they are able, perhaps it is just friendship, perhaps monetary, perhaps prayer, yet invitations to include them along with oneself is the next step.
3. Support the Gospel: Actually ask for information on Biblical missions, one's church, local gospel missions, etc. so as to determine those who implement the gospel of Paul as the basis for ministering to others and then decide on what basis, and how much to support them in their pursuit of the Galatians objective.

APPENDIX

Galatians 5:19-21

19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Problem

The above verse, Galatians 5:19-21 has created problems since it seems to say that one's lifestyle determines one's destiny. The problem is that practically "enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying" appear to be characteristics of most Christians from time to time if not continuously in many cases. Thus, it has normally been interpreted to mean that professing Christians who continually practice these items show that they are not true Christians. A second interpretation has been to say that those with these lifestyles will not receive rewards (in this case inheritance would be rewards). "Envying" and "jealousy" are probably the best examples of behavior that are continuously the character of Christians, almost no matter how sanctified.

Solution

The question is to determine "who" does this apply to contextually?

Who

The possibilities

From the chart the 'characters' who directly involved at Galatia are possibilities are:

- The persecutor of the Antagonist Jewish believers (Unsaved Israel)
- The Antagonists (Jewish legalistic believers)
- The Reader (a Gentile believer),
- The Author (most certainly a believer).

The difficulty arises in that none of these practices are mentioned elsewhere in the book, thus there is no literary link of these evils to any of the immediate participants. However, the "works of the flesh" or those who operate according to "the flesh" has been named elsewhere. The antagonist of the antagonists is noted in 6:12. This is the present day Israel and they are referred as being in slavery (4:25) and being born according to the flesh (works of the Law; 4:29).

- Israel

That Israel (unsaved) is a participant in this book is apparent from 6:12-13 where 6:13 identifies the circumcised antagonist (likely a Jewish believer) as wanting to circumcise the Galatian believers so they themselves would avoid the persecution that they might endure for being believers themselves. It would be difficult to imagine how Christians being circumcised would help anyone escape persecution unless the persecuting group was the Nation Israel.

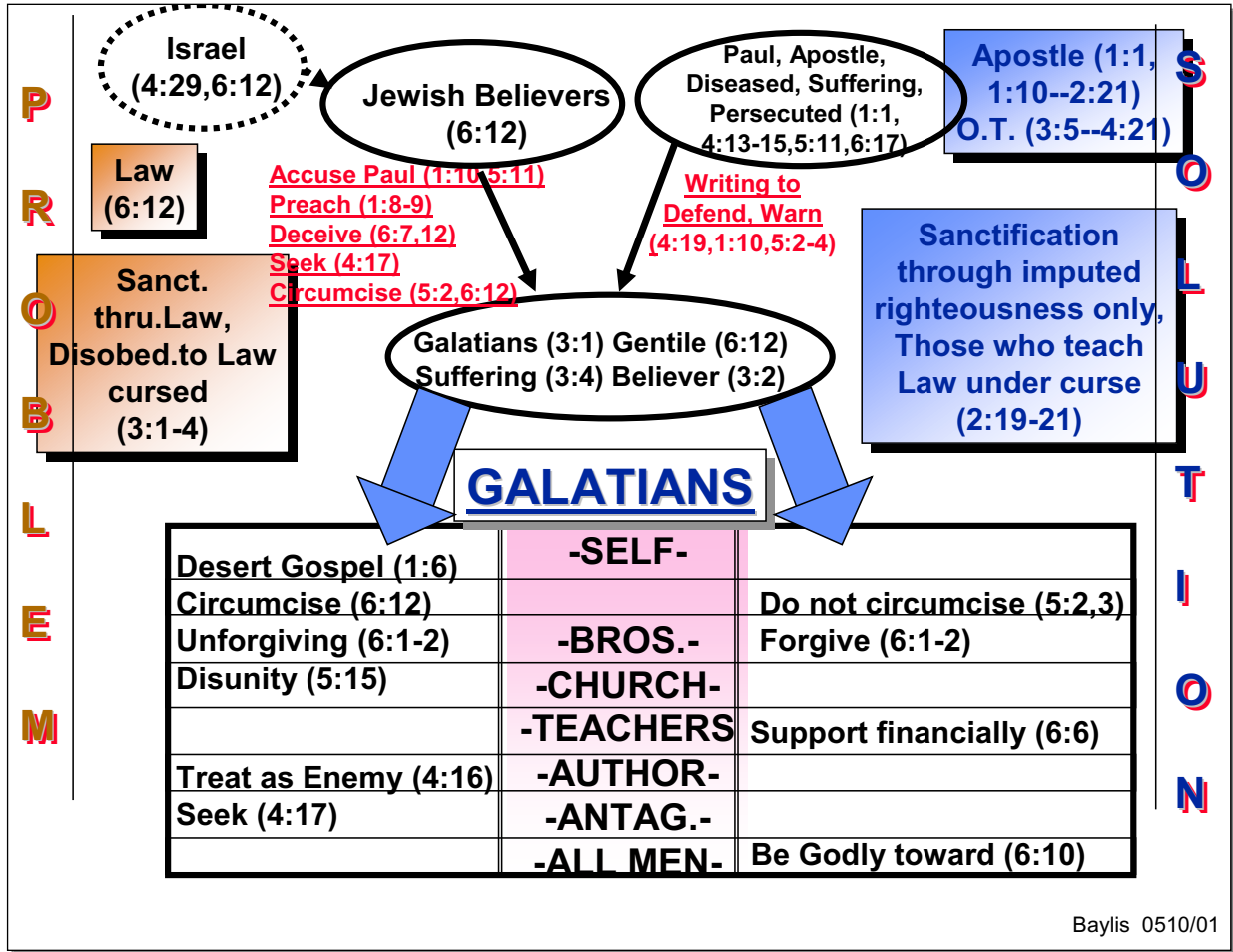
12 Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. 13 For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may boast in your flesh.

Earlier in 4:23-31 the author has introduced Israel and directly named them as a participant in the persecution of believers.

23 But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. 24 This is allegorically speaking: for these *women* are two covenants, one *proceeding* from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. 25 Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, **and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.** 26 But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. 27 For it is written, "REJOICE, BARREN WOMAN WHO DOES NOT BEAR; BREAK FORTH AND SHOUT, YOU WHO ARE NOT IN LABOR; FOR MORE ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE THAN OF THE ONE WHO HAS A HUSBAND." **28 And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. 29 But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.** 30 But what does the Scripture say? "CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE AN HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREE WOMAN." 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.

However, the issue of no inheritance has also been mentioned and that was mentioned regarding Israel in the above quotation in 4:31. Since they are not believers they have no inheritance. Thus this summarizing statement is regarding the nation Israel, who is persecuting the Israelite believers in the assembly. Paul is making it clear that one should not be influenced by their legalistic pressure since they are not "sons of God."

Observation: Problem/Solution Chart



Characters (Who?)

Antagonist(s)⁶⁸

- Physical Traits:** Jewish⁶⁹ (6:13) primarily since they are circumcised (6:12) and wanted the Galatians to be circumcised (5:11).
- 5:11 But I, brethren, if I still preach *circumcision*, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished.
- 5:12 I wish that those who are troubling you would even *mutilate themselves*.
- 6:12 Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to *compel you to be circumcised*, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.
- 6:13 For *those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves*, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh.

Theology:

Beliefs: They teach the Law as the means of sanctification.

The issue here is sanctification and not salvation, since the Galatians had already become saved and Paul's questions to them are regarding their continuance after their salvation (3:3).⁷⁰

⁶⁸ While the chart normally identifies only the direct antagonists the Book of Galatians introduces another, but indirect, antagonists. While the Jewish believers antagonize the Gentile believers at Galatia into keeping the Law, it is unbelieving Jews who are persecuting the Jewish believers into antagonizing the Galatians (see chart).

⁶⁹ It is noted that the text does not say that they were Jewish. Since they were advocating circumcision and keeping of the Law for Gentiles, it is possible that they were accompanied by Gentile converts to their Jewish beliefs including circumcision. However, 6:12 indicates that they are able to avoid persecution by including circumcision (and the Law). This could only be Israel who is doing the persecution and thus only the Jews would be affected. The nation of Israel would not be concerned whether Gentiles got circumcised or not since they don't see Gentiles as equals anyway.

⁷⁰ It has been promoted that the antagonists are teaching the Law (or circumcision) for salvation. This rests on the nature of the antagonist's spiritual condition. The verses used here are primarily those 1:8,9. It is stated from systematic

- 3:2 This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?
- 3:3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?
- 3:4 Did you suffer so many things in vain -- if indeed it was in vain?
- 3:5 So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

They teach the necessity of circumcision.

- 5:12 I wish that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves.
- 6:12 Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.
- 6:13 For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh.

Positions: Preachers of another gospel (1:8-9)

- 1:8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!
- 1:9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

theology that if one could be accursed then he would not be a believer. However, the positional stand is not under consideration here, but Paul is announcing his desire that they be separated from God. This is not such a non-understandable position as Paul is essentially saying that their speech identifies them as separated from God since they disagree with the gospel. The origin of this is Deuteronomy 13:1-6, where false teachers were to be stoned so as to be separated from the covenant

The reference here is that of Deut. 13:1 where one contradicts the word of God and thus is a false teacher. His punishment is that of death (removal from the covenant community of life). While there were false prophets in Israel, a notable one who came under this is Naomi, who was clearly a believer. She advocated that Ruth pursue after her “sister-in-law and her gods”.

Believers (6:12)

Avoiding persecution for the cross of Christ

The reference in 6:12 demonstrates that they are trying to avoid persecution from the nation Israel for becoming Christians. Thus they are including circumcision to try to keep the Law and thus please Israelites who advocate circumcision as necessary for covenant blessing. And thus they would contradict Paul who advocates Gentile inclusion without circumcision. The statement regarding “persecution for the cross of Christ” indicates they are believers, since there would seemingly be no reason why compelling believers to be circumcised would be of interest to an unbeliever in order to keep him from persecution for Christ (in whom he does not believe).

Rejection of any revelation other than that of Jesus Christ to the 12 Apostles

In addition the basis of their argument is that Paul did not receive his revelation from Jesus Christ, but from men. Unbelieving Jews would not argue this, only believing Jews would accept revelation from Jesus Christ. They seem to be accusing Paul because he was either not one of the original 12 or that he is not of their status, thus indicating that they did regard the original 12 but not Paul (not e that Paul was particularly related to Gentile inclusion).

- 1:1 Paul, an apostle (not *sent* from men, nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father,
- 11-12 11 For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but *I received it* through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

(Indirect Antagonists)

Unsaved Israel is persecuting Jewish believers into keeping the Law in addition to their belief in Christ. This is due to the theology that if they do not keep the Law (and circumcision) they will be under a curse. Thus the Jewish believers are trying to keep the Law along with their Christian belief. But, as Paul points out, if the Law must be kept then Christ died in vain. The primary evidence for this is in 4:29 where Paul states that physical Israel (unsaved) are persecuting believers presently. Also in 6:12 Paul states that the Jewish antagonists are trying to keep the Law so they will avoid persecution (from Israel).

- 4:29 But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him *who was born* according to the Spirit, **so it is now also**.
- 6:12 Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply **so that they will not be persecuted** for the cross of Christ.

Physical

Natural born Israelites (4:25, 4:29) as he refers to those persecuting the believers are based in Jerusalem present day.

- 4:25 Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and **corresponds to the present Jerusalem**, for she is in slavery with her children.
- 4:29 But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him *who was born* according to the Spirit, **so it is now also**.

Theology

These are unsaved as it is stated that their hope is based on the works of the Law (4:25,31).

- 4:25 Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and **corresponds to the present Jerusalem**, for she is in slavery with her children.
- 4:31 So then, brethren, we are not **children of a bondwoman**, but of the free woman.

Reader(s)

Physical Traits:

Heritage: Gentiles, since they require circumcision.

Whether there are Jews, and the number of them, is difficult to determine, since it would only be Gentiles who

are tempted to give into the Judaizers and become circumcised.

Location: The churches in the area known as Galatia (1:2, 3:1)

1:2 and all the brethren who are with me, **To the churches of Galatia:**

3:1 You foolish **Galatians**, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed *as* crucified?

Suffering: Suffering for the cause of the gospel

These men had at some time suffered for their faith. In view of the problem identified in this book they likely had suffered like Paul (5:17) for the sake of the gospel against those who oppose. They, like the Antagonists (6:12), are now considering avoiding that suffering by becoming ecumenical.

3:4 Did you **suffer so many things** in vain-- if indeed it was in vain?

Theology:

Beliefs: Believers in Paul's gospel (1:6, 3:1-5, 5:7)

1:6 I am amazed that you are so **quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ**, for a different gospel;

3:2 This is the only thing I want to find out from you: **did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?** 3 Are you so foolish? **Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?** 4 Did you **suffer so many things** in vain-- if indeed it was in vain?

5:7 **You were running well**; who hindered you from obeying the truth?

Author(s)

Physical Traits:

Name: Paul is identified as the author (1:1).

1:1 **Paul**, an apostle (not *sent* from men, nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead),

Appearance: The author has marks of suffering (6:17) on his body as well as a noticeable physical ailment⁷¹ (4:13-15)

4:13 but you know that it was because of a **bodily illness** that I preached the gospel to you the first time; 14 and that which was a trial to you in **my bodily condition** you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus *Himself*. 15 Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness, that if possible, **you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.**

6:17 From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for **I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus.**

Theology:

Beliefs: Paul is a believer according to his testimony (1:4) of the gospel of grace through Jesus Christ.

1:4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

Positions: Paul is an apostle⁷² (1:1) of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The apostolic office of Paul is defended specifically in 1:11—2:21 in the following manner.

1. Preached the gospel based on appointment not on public acclaim (1:11-12).

⁷¹ That this could have been an eye ailment has some support from 4:15 (“... if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me” which would indicate his large writing in 6:11 (“See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.”))

⁷² An apostles’ function was to reveal Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament requirement of righteousness. This was accomplished through direct revelation from Jesus Christ (cf. John 14--16, 1 Thess. 2:13).

2. Received the gospel and appointment directly from God, not from designated apostles⁷³ (1:13-24).
 3. His gospel and thus his apostleship recognized by the designated apostles⁷⁴ (2:1-10).
 4. His apostolic authority and gospel recognized validated by the apostle Peter's submission⁷⁵ (2:11-21)
- 1:1 Paul, *an apostle (not sent from men, nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father,* who raised Him from the dead),
- 1:11 For I would have you know, brethren, that *the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.*
- 1:17 *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.
- 1:19 *But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother.*
- 1:24 *And they were glorifying God because of me.*
- 2:9 *and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship,* that we might go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised.
- 2:11 *But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.*

⁷³ This accusation would have been that Paul was simply trying to take what apostles gave him and make something of himself. Yet he claims not to have received it from them.

⁷⁴ Paul's apostleship and revelation is submitted to the apostles to validate their stance with Paul, not vice-versa. He was afraid that if they did not agree that the apostles would have strayed, which, in fact, did happen in the instance of Peter.

⁷⁵ In fact what Paul feared did happen, Peter, through his actions, denied Paul's revelation. Yet when confronted Peter acquiesced (although not contained in the text, it might be assumed from the fact that Paul states it in this context) demonstrating that Paul was authoritative over another apostle. In fact Peter is doing what they had accused Paul of doing, that is being a man pleaser. Peter had advocated a Gentile-inclusion, yet when the Jews showed up he denied it with his actions.

Problem (What?)

Problem Physical Activities

Antagonist Action Toward Reader

Preaching false doctrine, urging circumcision,

The Judaizers were teaching a false gospel through distortions (1:7, 3:1, 5:7-8, 5:10) of the truth. They were compelling them to be circumcised as part of their sanctification (6:13)

- 1:7 which is *really* not another; only there are *some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ.*
- 1:8 But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should *preach to you* a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, *if any man is preaching to you* a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.
- 3:1 You foolish Galatians, *who has bewitched you,* before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed *as* crucified?
- 5:7 You were running well; *who hindered you from obeying the truth? 8 This persuasion* *did* not *come* from Him who calls you.
- 5:10 I have confidence in you in the Lord, that you will adopt no other view; *but the one who is disturbing you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.*
- 5:12 Would that those who are troubling you would even *mutilate themselves.*
- 6:13 For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, *but they desire to have you circumcised,* that they may boast in your flesh.

Urging rejection of Paul for not telling them the truth for his own gain

Paul had clearly been telling the Galatians that they did not need to be circumcised (nor keep the Law) as the gospel of Christ. The opposition told the Galatians that they had to be circumcised to be in a relationship with God, and that since they weren't they were unrelated to God (under a curse). However, in addition, the antagonists said that Paul actually was teaching circumcision when he was with the Jews in Jerusalem, but dropped that part out when with Gentiles in order to be appreciated more. Thus they accused him of modifying the gospel to be accepted, but in doing this he had left the Galatians out of a relationship with God, left

them as sinners (2:17). Thus he had become their enemy since he had not told them the truth.

- 1:10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.
- 2:17 "But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be!
- 4:16 Have I therefore become your enemy by telling you the truth?
- 5:11 But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished.

Reader's Actions resulting from errant theology (and Affected)

Self: They will be deceived into deserting the apostolic gospel of grace for works of the Law.

These believers, because of self-righteousness, will focus on their own well-being and not on the others since the works of the Law only provides self-righteousness, not true righteousness that is through Christ. Thus they will end up in selfishness and greediness.

- 1:6 that you are *so quickly deserting Him who called you in the grace of Christ, for a different gospel.*
- 3:3 *are you now ending with the flesh*
- 4:21 *you who want to be under Law*
- 6:7 *Do not be deceived*
- 5:13 only *do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh*, but through love serve one another.
- 5:19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: *immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these*, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Brothers:

Hate and divide

The self-righteousness moves the finger of importance to point at self. Thus the brother's importance fades into the background and

dissension grows. Not only are the people dissenting over Paul, but now the people dissent between one another based on their righteousness.

5:15 But if you **bite and devour one another**, take care lest you be consumed by one another.

5:19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, **enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying**, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

5:26 Let us not become boastful, **challenging one another, envying one another**.

Do not forgive nor restore to fellowship

Since self-righteousness requires elevation based on works, the ability for one to restore an errant brother through forgiveness is lost since he has failed to accomplish the Law.

6:1 Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted.

Antagonist(s)

Follow the antagonist and elevate him and his gospel.

The antagonists have elevated themselves, complaining of the status of Paul's listeners (under sin for not keeping the Law), thus shutting them out. These people now feel lower in status and desire to be raised in status (join the antagonists) by seeking their leadership instead of Paul's.

4:17 They eagerly seek you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out, in order that you may seek them

Author

Oppose Paul and his gospel.

Paul now has become their enemy (4:16), since according to the antagonists his gospel (of imputed righteousness instead of the Law) has made these people sinners before God (2:17.) They

believe he is their enemy since he preaches circumcision in Jerusalem to Jews but leaves it out when with them.

- 2:17 **"But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners,** is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be!
- 4:16 **Have I therefore become your enemy** by telling you the truth?
- 5:11 But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished.

Problem Theology

Source of Antagonist's Theology

Old Testament: Use the Old Testament Law as their source of God's revelation is seen in their urging toward circumcision. (In addition Paul's defense mentions the word 'law' in some form 25 times.⁷⁶)

- 5:8 This persuasion *did* not *come* from Him who calls you.
- 6:12 Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. **13 For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves,** but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may boast in your flesh. -

Content of Antagonist's Theology

The Law is the means by which one continues a holy relationship with God

The antagonists' central argument is found in Paul's explanation of 2:16-21, where he argues against justification through the Law. Justified here is in the sanctificational sense as can be seen by the fact that the antagonists themselves have not denied their salvation in Christ (6:12). In addition the verses 2:16-21 stand in contrast to the following section of 3:1-5 that defines the problem as sanctificational. Also 3:11-12 uses the term 'justified' in the sense of sanctification as can be seen by the quotation from Habakkuk referring to a sanctificational living.

If a man does not keep the Law then he is a sinner

⁷⁶ NASB English text as source.

This is the accusation of 2:17, having been saved by Christ and rejecting the Law, a man would then be a sinner, not keeping the Law.⁷⁷

- 2:16-18 nevertheless 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, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified. 17 "But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be! 18 **"For if I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor.**
- 3:11 **Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." 12 However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM."**

Problem Summary Statement

Jewish believing law-keepers are teaching the **Galatian believers** that **the works of the Law bring an ongoing status before God** which will cause **them to be prideful and divisive.**

Solution (What?)

Physical Activities

Author's Action Toward Reader

Writing to defend and to warn

Writing to defend himself and his gospel and to warn the readers of their danger. While there are no individual verbal statements that indicate Paul's reason for writing, the nature of the letter is a defense of himself as apostle (1—2) and of his gospel (3—4) since they have apparently embraced another gospel and he is imploring them to leave it.

1:6 I am *amazed*

4:19-20 My children, *with whom I am again in labor* until Christ is formed in you-- 20 but *I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.*

5:10 *I have confidence in you* in the Lord,

⁷⁷ One might note that Moses did not circumcise his child in Exodus and God sought his life.

6:11 See with what large letters *I am writing to you* with my own hand.

Reader's Actions resulting from author's theology (and Affected)

Self: Adopt the theology of grace as opposed to Law for sanctification

Paul wants them to adopt his view (5:10), which he has explained in short in 5:5, the view of grace over Law. This is the term 'walk by the Spirit' which means to follow the revelation of imputation through Jesus Christ instead of what makes sense to the fleshly mind, the elevation of the flesh through self-righteousness.

5:16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

5:25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. 26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

Humble themselves

Paul does not want them to be boastful, but humble (5:26)

26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

Brother: Support the brother humbly in forgiveness, love

The brother is of great concern since this reflects God as revealed in the Old Testament (5:14), and as followed through in the imperatives of 6:1 (restore a sinning brother who has repented), 6:2 (bear the other's burdens).

6:1 Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted.

Antagonist: No personal action is to be taken toward antagonist by the reader, only that they might be humiliated (5:12), and the reader would reject his view (5:10).

While Paul advocates judgment on the antagonists he does not seem to indicate that these men should have any activity taken on them by the readership.

5:10 that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you shall bear his judgment.⁷⁸

5:12 would that those who are troubling you would even cut themselves off.

Author: Accept him and support him

5:10 talks about having no other view than Paul's. Since he is the teacher, he advocates that they support those who teach them appropriately.

4:18 But it is good always to be eagerly sought in a commendable manner, and not only when I am present with you.

5:10 I have confidence in you in the Lord, that you will adopt no other view;

6:6 And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches.

Theology

Source of Author's Theology

Apostolic⁷⁹

Paul establishes himself as an apostle immediately (1:1). He bases this apostolic revelation on an individual call from Christ Himself and God the Father (1:1). He then defends that in 1:10—2:21. In those sections he denies that he was a man-pleaser, having a high elevation in Judaism he turned to Christ and persecution, did not consult with men, and had his

⁷⁸ The issue of judgment is interesting here. He has mentioned it before, that they might be accursed (*anathema*). It would seem here in the context of the verse that their acknowledgment of the truth (the rejection of the Law) would place the antagonists in the category of false teachers which Paul accursed earlier. Thus the antagonists judgment is the condemnation of the people of Galatia that they as false teachers are opposing God, and deserving of a curse.

⁷⁹ An apostle is one who receives revelation from God, through the Holy Spirit, which reveals the words and works of Jesus Christ (imputed righteousness through the atonement) as the fullness of the Law and the Prophets. This understanding of Jesus Christ comes only through the apostolic revelation.

gospel confirmed by the Jewish Jerusalem leadership, the twelve apostles and especially Peter, though he did not receive it from them.

- 1:1 Paul, **an apostle (not sent from men, nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father,**
- 1:11 For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. **12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.**
- 2:7 But on the contrary, seeing that **I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised 8 (for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles), 9 and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John,** who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we might go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. 10 *They only asked* us to remember the poor-- the very thing I also was eager to do.

Old Testament

The word "Scripture" is used three times (3:8, 22; 4:30) in Galatians to designate the Old Testament. In addition multiple O.T. passages and stories are related in 3:6—4:31.

Content of Author's Theology

Sanctification (right standing before God after salvation) is based upon Christ's work on the cross (2:20) and not on one's own works under the Law. The believer is righteous in God's eyes and now serves out of love by faith in what Christ has done for him.

- 2:19: "For through the Law I died to the Law, that I might live to God. 20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me. 21 "I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness *comes* through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."

Solution Summary Statement

Paul, the apostle is writing to defend himself and the gospel to the Galatian believers regarding sanctification through Christ's death and resurrection which will cause them to

- *Humble themselves before God and others,*
- *Serve the brother, forgiving him*
- *and reject the antagonist's heresy.*
- *Support Paul*