

Outline of Galatians

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I. Opening of the Letter – 1:1-10

A. 1:1-2 – Letter Participants

1. 1:1-2a – From
 - a) Paul's biological argument summary
 - b) Pauls' Christological argument summary
2. 1:2b – To
 - a) Paul's terse "To" line

B. 1:3-5 – Salutation

1. 1:3 – Standard Pauline greeting: "Grace and Peace"
2. 1:4 – Paul's soteriological argument summary
3. 1:5 – Doxology

C. 1:6-10 – Introduction of Letter's Contents (*exordium*)

1. 1:6-9 – The Galatian Problem introduced: antagonists introducing a false gospel
 - a) 1:6- astonishment at departure from the gospel
 - (1) Gospel= that which was taught by Paul when he first came, which came directly from Christ to Paul
 - b) 1:7 – Introducing the antagonists
 - (1) Antagonists are distorting the true Gospel of Christ
2. 1:8-9 – The Double Curses
 - a) 1:8 – First Curse, if any first order authority preaches false gospel
 - b) 1:9 – Second Curse, if any person preaches a false gospel
 - (1) Repeated for emphasis to show he's not being rhetorical
3. 1:10 – Transition from *exordium* to *narratio* (*body of letter*)
 - a) Pleasing God and persuading men
 - (1) The charge was that he was trying to please men and persuade God (by offering an easy gospel without the law)
 - (a) Man-pleasing is a big no-no in the classical world
 - (b) God-persuading is magic
 - (2) Paul counters that he is persuading men and pleasing God

- II. 1:11-2:14 Biographical Defense of Paul's Authority (*narratio*)
 - A. 1:11-12: Thesis statement for biographical section
 - B. 1:13-14: sub-argument – Paul's Jewish Credentials are as good as anyone else's
 - a) Reveals the argument of Paul's opponents: they are bringing a more authentically Jewish message than Paul
 - b) Paul is essentially arguing that no one is a better Jew than he is, thus he is a more accurate interpreter of Jewish theology and traditions than his opponents
 - 1. 1:13a: Paul was famous for his achievements in Judaism
 - 2. 1:13b: Paul was such a devout Pharisee that he persecuted Christians
 - 3. 1:14: Paul was a superior student of Judaism, having studied at the top school at the feet of the best teacher, Rabbi Gamaliel.
 - C. 1:15-24: Paul demonstrates his independence from the Jerusalem leaders in the years immediately following his conversion
 - a) Reveals another aspect of the anti-Pauline argument: Paul learned Christianity from the Jerusalem leaders, but he has changed their message
 - 1. 1:15-16a: Paul was called directly by Jesus and received his message directly from the risen Christ, not from Peter and the Apostles
 - a) Paul's conversion as an illustration for free grace
 - b) Paul's conversion as proof of the truth of the Resurrection of Jesus
 - 2. 1:16b-18a: Paul did not talk to any of the Jerusalem leaders for three years after his conversion, but he was already preaching Christ (Acts 9:20)
 - 3. 1:18-24: After three years Paul spent 15 days with Peter and saw no one else except for James, the Lord's brother, then he departed back to Syria
 - a) Paul surely discussed broad topics of theology with Peter during those 15 days, but he is adamant (even by swearing) that Peter added nothing to his message about the Gospel of Grace. Peter likely informed Paul about ecclesiological issues (liturgy, sacraments, church government, etc.)
 - 4. Rumors were spreading about Paul being converted, but no one in the Christian Churches of Jerusalem would be able to recognize him by sight.
 - a) They glorified God for Paul's conversion, but apparently there was still some trepidation about whether it could really be true (Acts 9:26)
 - D. 2:1-10: Fourteen years later, Paul visited Jerusalem and was widely accepted, but by then his message was cemented
 - a) Evidently some had reported back to Jerusalem about the various practices that Paul was engaging in (vs. 4-5)
 - (1) Eating "non-Kosher" foods
 - (2) Not requiring circumcision

- (a) Titus was brought to Jerusalem as evidence (vss. 2:1, 3)
 - (3) Jews and Gentiles eating together
 - b) There was also a “revelation” that caused him to make the trip
 - c) This trip is detailed also in Acts 9:27-31
 - 1. He went to get confirmation for his message (vs. 2), but the Apostles did not modify his message or compromise his independence (v. 6)
 - 2. 2:6-10: The Apostles’ confirmed his Apostolicity and his message and entrusted him with ministry to the Gentiles
 - a) They did not force Titus to be circumcised (vs. 3)
 - b) 2:6: “seemed to be influential” “God shows no partiality” “what they are means no difference to me”
 - (1) These phrases continue to demonstrate that Paul’s message is independent of the Apostles because he received it directly from Christ. It hearkens back to 1:8-9
- E. 2:11-14: The Superiority of Paul’s Message even over Peter – The Incident at Antioch
- 1. 2:11: Paul’s independence further confirmed in standing up to Peter.
 - a) The implication is that Paul’s message is superior even to that of Peter’s, though he is not drawing a rivalry with Peter
 - b) Further demonstration of 1:8-9, even if Peter, the head of the Apostles, should preach to you a different message...
 - 2. 2:12: the same type of folks who are stirring up the Galatians tried this at Antioch and Paul was victorious.
 - 3. 2:13: Peter led many astray, even Barnabas! But not Paul. Paul was firm.
 - 4. 2:14: Paul’s message to Peter regarding his hypocrisy.
 - a) This also serves, with verse 15, as the transition to the first major theological section

III. 2:15-4:31: Theological Argument – The Abrahamic Covenant Supersedes the Mosaic Covenant; Christ fulfills the Mosaic

- A. 2:15-21: The Proposition – Justification by Faith Alone (2:16)
 - 1. Jews and Gentiles are the same
 - 2. Jews and Gentiles are both sinners
 - 3. Jews and Gentiles both need to be justified (declared righteous) before God
 - 4. No one can be declared righteous except by Faith in Christ
 - 5. The Law (Torah) only condemns (it reveals our sin), no one can be justified by keeping Torah

6. Grace is not a license to sin. Obedience to God is still required
 7. Christ fulfilled the Law (Torah) through his perfect Lawkeeping and his crucifixion.
 8. In union with Christ we were also crucified with him and thus are dead to keeping Torah.
 9. In union with Christ, it is no longer our righteousness that matters before God, but Christ living in us (alien righteousness)
 10. We now live in obedience to Christ in gratitude for what he has done for us
 11. And yet, our call to obey Christ does not nullify grace because righteousness could never have come through Torah. If so, Christ died for no purpose (why did Christ die then?)
- B. The Proofs
1. 3:1-5 Main Point 1: an argument from facts and experience – you first experienced the Holy Spirit and mighty works by my proclamation of faith, not through Torah
 - a) 3:1- Someone has given them the “Evil Eye,” but their own eyes witnessed the proclamation of Christ crucified
 - b) 3:2 – They experienced great joy (Acts 13:48, 52) and miracles (Acts 14:3, 14:8f) through Paul’s preaching of faith in Christ, before anyone had ever told them about keeping Torah
 - c) 3:3 – Appeal to them to answer his question, testify on Paul’s behalf, he presents them with an undeniable fact that what they experienced was by the work of the Spirit, not through doing works in their flesh.
 - d) 3:4: “Did you *experience* such things in vain?” – Was it for nothing that you had those experiences? Were they not real? But if you follow after the works of Torah, then they were in vain (for no purpose).
 - e) 3:5 – appeal to the ongoing work of the Spirit among them, another indisputable fact. Do these mighty works occur because of keeping Torah or because of the work of the Spirit due to the proclamation of the faith?
 2. 3:6 –14 Main Point 2: appeal to the Abrahamic Covenant
 - a) 3:6-8: The promise of Abraham preceded the giving of the Mosaic law, further, in Genesis, faith (Gen 15) precedes circumcision (Gen 17).
 - (1) The gentiles are brought in through the Abrahamic Covenant, not through the Mosaic Covenant (Gen. 12:3).
 - (2) Abraham was credited (numerical calculation) as righteous (Justified) because he believed God (faith)
 - (3) The Abrahamic Covenant then is about faith: believing God and being calculated as righteous
 - (4) Anyone who believes God becomes a child of Abraham, in fulfilment of the Gen. 15:6 promise

- (5) Abraham had the Gospel of Christ preached to him before the time of Christ. (Hebrews 11:8-19). All the OT saints had faith in Christ by looking forward to the fulfillment of the promise (Hebrews 11:13)
- b) 3:9-12: Blessing comes through faith in God via the Abrahamic Covenant, but a curse comes through adherence to the Mosaic Law
 - (1) If you want to adhere to Torah, then you are bound to the entire Torah, and if you do not keep every aspect of Torah perfectly, then you are accursed (Deut. 27:26)
 - (2) Justification comes through the Abrahamic, not Mosaic (Gen 15:6, Hab. 2:4)
- c) 3:13-14: THE WONDERFUL EXCHANGEⁱ — Christ by being hanged on a tree, became a curse, and he gave us his righteousness in exchange for our curse that we bear because of the Law
 - (1) Flow of logic:
 - (a) We are born in sin and have failed to obey the Law perfectly, therefore we are cursed (Deut. 27:26)
 - (b) Christ was born perfect and obeyed the Law perfectly, therefore he is not under a curse
 - (c) Christ voluntarily became cursed by being crucified (Deut: 21:23)
 - (d) Christ exchanges his righteousness attained by obeying the law for our curse. He takes our curse and gives us his righteousness in return.
 - (e) “Redeem” is a term of commerce: to buy back. He paid the penalty that we owed (perfect righteousness by the Law), to buy us back from being under a curse.
 - (f) This economic transaction enables the blessing of the Abrahamic Covenant to come to everyone, including non-Israelite persons.
 - (g) The purpose of this transaction was not so we could continue by the Torah – the Torah’s purpose has been fulfilled – but so that all people could receive the promised Spirit through faith via the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12:3, 15:6)
- 3. 3:15-18: Main Point Three – An example from legal contracts
 - a) 15: No one can add to a contract after it is ratified unless both parties agree
 - b) 16: The parties to the Abrahamic Covenant were Yahweh, Abraham and Abraham’s heir, Jesus Christ.
 - c) 17: The Mosaic Law, which came 430 years later, cannot nullify or amend the Abrahamic Covenant.
 - (1) Nullification would mean that there is no longer a promised blessing to the Gentiles.

- (2) Amendment is not possible because Abraham is dead.
 - (3) Judaism taught that Abraham kept Torah, but Paul refutes that.
- d) 18: The giving of Torah does not nullify that Abraham was justified by faith and that the Gentiles come in through Abraham, the man of faith.
 - (1) The inheritance of the Gentiles comes through Abrahamic promise, not through Torah observance.
- 4. 3:19-25: Main Point Four – The Purpose of the Law in Light of Faith
 - a) If the promise is by faith and excludes those who rely on the Torah, then why does the Torah exist?
 - (1) Opponents argue that Paul is an enemy of Torah
 - b) 3:19: Paul's definition of The Law
 - (1) It was added for the purpose of [revealing] transgressions
 - (a) Added on top of Abrahamic Covenant
 - (i) Also added for Gentiles (Natural Law)
 - (b) To reveal sins and make them illegal
 - (2) Until The Seed came, to whom the Abrahamic promise had been made
 - (a) The Seed is Jesus Christ
 - (b) This puts a temporal limitation on Mosaic Torah, from Sinai to Christ.
 - (c) Judeans viewed the Torah as eternal.
 - (3) Ordered and detailed by angels
 - (a) διατάσσω- to give (detailed) instructions as to what must be done
 - (b) The Abrahamic Covenant was spoken by God himself to Abraham, not spoken and directed by angels.
 - (4) By the hand of an intermediary
 - (a) ἐν χειρὶ - by the work of an acting agent
 - (b) μεσίτης - one who mediates between two parties to remove a disagreement or reach a common goal
 - (c) This mediator is no doubt Moses
 - (5) Other Definitions of the Law
 - (a) Greco-Roman: a divine gift to man as an indispensable instrument for controlling criminal acts
 - Judaic: a fence of protection around them
 - c) 3:20: The existence of a intermediary shows the inferiority of the Mosaic Covenant to the Abrahamic Covenant
 - d) 3:21: The Mosaic Covenant and Abrahamic Covenants are not opposed to each other

- (1) 3:21b: because the Mosaic Law can't bring life, then righteousness would be by The Law and the promise of Christ wouldn't have been needed
 - (a) The Law cannot produce life, but it shows us we need the Promise given to Abraham
- (2) Paul's opponents ironically do place the two Covenants in contradiction, because they provide the same thing and are both still active. Paul is the one who puts the Torah in its proper place and does not make the two covenants contradict.
- e) 3:22-25: The Temporary Role of the Torah – The Guardian
 - (1) 22: Scripture placed everything under sin to reveal the need for Jesus Christ to deliver us from sin
 - (a) Deliverance from sin comes through faith in Christ for those who trust in him
 - (b) Torah is a servant of Scripture
 - (2) 23: Before Christ the world was imprisoned under The Law
 - (a) Both Hellenists and Judeans affirmed the necessity of The Law
 - (i) Greco-Romans – The Law of Nature
 - (ii) Judeans – Torah
 - (3) 24: The Torah is a Pedagogue (Guardian) to lead us until Christ
 - (a) παιδαγωγός - pedagogue: Orig. 'boy-leader', the man, usu. a slave), whose duty it was to conduct a boy or youth to and from school and to superintend his conduct gener.; he was not a 'teacher' (despite the present mng. of the derivative 'pedagogue')
 - (b) 24b: Christ came to lead us back to Abraham, who was justified by Faith
 - (4) 25: Since Abraham's promised Seed of faith, Jesus Christ, has come, Guardian Law is no longer needed.
 - (a) It has served its purpose
 - (b) It was a noble purpose
- f) Conclusions:
 - (1) Paul can't be charged with denigrating or doing away with the Law.
 - (a) The Law serves as a negative backdrop for the coming of Jesus Christ
 - (2) Just like a guardian goes away when a boy reaches maturity, so the Torah
 - (a) Torah as eucatastrophe
 - (3) Paul is not advocating for a new religion, but a continuation of the Abrahamic faith.

5. 3:26-29: Main Point Five – Argument from Christian Baptism
6. 4:1-7: Main Point Six – Argument from Greek Pedagogy
7. 4:8-11: Main Point Seven – Argument from Soteriology
8. 4:12-20: Main Point Eight – Argument from Paul’s ministry among them
9. 4:21-31: Main Point Nine – Argument from OT Allegory

IV. Exhortation

- A. 5:1-12: Warning against circumcision
- B. 5:13-15: Call to Christian Freedom
- C. 5:16-26: The Two Ways – Flesh and Spirit
 1. 5:16-18: The Call to walk by the Spirit
 2. 5:19-21: The works of the flesh
 3. 5:22-23: The Fruit of the Spirit
 4. 5:24-26: Concluding exhortation to the way of the Spirit
- D. 6:1-10: Doing Good
 1. 6:1-5: The basis for doing good – The Law of Christ
 2. 6:6-10: The Specifics of doing good
 - a) 6:6: Doing good to teachers
 - b) 6:7-9: Sowing and reaping by doing good
 - c) 6:10: Doing good to everyone, especially those in the church

V. Paul’s valediction and signature

- C. 6:11: Paul’s Signature
- D. 6:12-15: Paul’s final personal warning against circumcision
- E. 6:16-18: Paul’s benedictions and final wish
 1. 6:16: First benediction
 2. 6:17: Final wish
 3. 6:18 Final benediction

ⁱ Commonly called “The Great Exchange,” it is hard to find direct reference to this in Luther’s writings. In his commentary on Psalm 22:1, Luther calls it a “Wonderful Exchange,” Lat. *admirabili commertio*. Luther, *Werke*, Vol. 5: On the Psalms, p. 608 <https://archive.org/details/werkekritischege0005luth/page/608/mode/2up>