

# EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

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**Approximate date:** 48-49 C.E. or 50-52 C.E.

**Time period:** season of great confusion among many new non-Jewish Believers, and their integration into the community of faith

**Author:** the Apostle Paul

**Location of author:** Macedonia, Ephesus, or Antioch

**Target audience and their location:** mostly non-Jewish Believers in the province/region of Galatia

Genuine Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Galatians is something that all conservative and liberal examiners today accept. The message of Galatians, the exact audience of the Galatians, and some of the theological and historical background surrounding Galatians, however, have all been vigorously debated by examiners in the past century. Without question, the major theme of the letter to the Galatians is a warning about a perversion of the good news. Some contemporary Christian theologians have likened Galatians to be the “Magna Carta of Christian freedom” (further comparing Romans to being the “Constitution”). Consequently, any proper Messianic handling of Paul’s letter to the Galatians has to keep these various points of view—and many others, in fact—in mind. Within Galatians, the Apostle Paul does have to respond to some drastic, negative circumstances which have arisen, among a group of Believers who he has just spent some significant time with, helping them get started in their new Messiah faith and onto the right path of maturity. Outsiders had come in and had decided to ruin much of what Paul had started, questioning his apostolic authority and discipleship of the Galatians.

There is debate present in Galatians examination, as to who the exact audience of the letter is.<sup>1</sup> Up until the Twentieth Century, it was generally agreed that the target audience of Paul’s letter, while obviously known as the Galatians, were actually those who originally migrated from Gaul

into what is today Northern Turkey. These were ethnic Celts, who later integrated into the local population. Called today the **Northern Galatian Theory**, Paul’s audience primarily consisted of ethnic Galatians. Sir William Ramsay is often credited with challenging this theory in the mid-Nineteenth Century, advocating instead that Paul’s target audience was not ethnic Galatians, but rather Southern Galatians. Known as the **Southern Galatian Theory**, any reference to Galatia by Paul is to the Roman province in what is today Central Turkey. Much of the debate, over whether the Galatians Paul writes in his letter were ethnic Galatians from North Galatia or provincial Galatians from South Galatia, pertains to how Luke in the Book of Acts tends to use local designations of places (Acts 16:3; 18:23), whereas Paul in his letters uses the Roman provincial names. Among a large number of conservative examiners of Galatians today, the Southern Galatian Theory is what is generally adhered to, with the audience of Galatians being those Paul ministered to during his First Missionary Journey (Acts 13:13-14:28). This would more easily account for Paul’s intimate relationship with the congregations of Galatia, as indicated throughout his letter.<sup>2</sup>

It is notable that of all Paul’s letters, Galatians is the only letter for sure written to a group of assemblies, as opposed to a specific congregation or individual.<sup>3</sup> The date of composition for the Epistle to the Galatians is often tied to that of when the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 convened.<sup>4</sup> Concurrent with Paul’s traveling through Galatia, a composition date of either 48-49 C.E. or 50-52 C.E. is often estimated. Given the debate present over the intended audience, if the Galatians Paul writes to are those from South Galatia, then it is probable that the letter was written prior to the Jerusalem Council—

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<sup>1</sup> J. Knox, “Galatians, Letter to the,” in *IDB*, 2:341-342; H.N. Ridderbos, “Galatians, Epistle to the,” in *ISBE*, 2:380-381; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, pp 465-472; Hans Dieter Betz, “Galatians, Epistle to the,” in *ABD*, 2:872; G.W. Hansen, “Galatians, Letter to the,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, pp 323-326; Carson and Moo, pp 458-461.

<sup>2</sup> Ridderbos, “Galatians, Epistle to the,” in *ISBE*, 2:379.

<sup>3</sup> Ephesians is widely agreed to be a circular epistle as well, given the manuscript evidence in Ephesians 1:1 lacking “in Ephesus” (see RSV rendering).

<sup>4</sup> Ridderbos, “Galatians, Epistle to the,” in *ISBE*, 2:382-383; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, pp 472-480; Carson and Moo, pp 462-465.

possibly even a bit close to its assembling—because no appeal is made in the letter to the Apostolic decree of Acts 15:19-21, 29. Many theologians believe that Galatians was the first letter that Paul wrote (1 Thessalonians being another candidate for his first letter). Where Paul wrote Galatians from has been debated, as some favor a composition locus of Macedonia or Ephesus, while advocates of the Southern Galatian Theory tend to favor Syrian Antioch.

One thing we can be certain of is that Paul's Galatian audience was Greek speaking. While there are some Messianics who actually claim that Paul wrote to them in Hebrew or Aramaic, as an Eastern Roman province Greek would have been the predominant language in Galatia, other than a regional dialect like Phrygian.

The common, most widespread theological approach toward Galatians witnessed among readers and interpreters, at least since the Protestant Reformation, is that the non-Jewish Galatians were trying to keep the Law of Moses in order to earn their salvation before God—and for this the Apostle Paul was desperately worried. While some kind of human Torah-keeping to earn salvation can definitely be detected as an element within the letter, whether this is the *only issue*, and determining if there are some more specific, targeted phenomena occurring, has been a significant debate over the past half-century.

Questions that have been visited and revisited many times by those examining the Epistle to the Galatians, especially in the past twenty to thirty years, include: Who were the opponents of Paul in Galatia? Who were those being led astray? What were the “works of law” spoken against? What are the different dynamics of “justification” that need to be considered? What is the big issue with “circumcision”? Many of these questions have been spurred on by what has been termed the New Perspective of Paul (NPP) in Biblical Studies, as particularly found in the various writings and proposals of theologians like James D.G. Dunn and N.T. Wright. Their proposals have tried to take into closer consideration ancient Jewish issues regarding the Torah, and the community's relationship to the larger pagan world. Three areas, where NPP proposals have altered a few traditional views of sections of the Epistle to the Galatians, would be in how:<sup>5</sup>

- **“Righteousness” or “justification” in Galatians can include a corporate status as a member of God's people, every bit as it regards personal justification and remission of sin.** As a direct result

of expressing faith in Yeshua the Messiah, individual Believers are made a part of God's corporate people. One's righteousness is to come via *faith and trust* in the gospel.

- **“Circumcision” in Galatians is not so much an emphasis on a physical operation, but instead is more of an emphasis on the ritual of becoming a proselyte to Judaism.** In undergoing “circumcision,” the non-Jewish Galatians would have discounted the power of the gospel and faith in Yeshua as being the entryway to God's covenant people, but instead an act of the flesh. (And if “circumcision” is used as a shorthand for “ritual proselyte conversion”—it can include women equally as much as men [i.e., the use of the generic *anthrōpos*, ἄνθρωπος or “human being” in 5:3].)
- **“Works of the Law” do not concern obedience to God's Torah, as much as they concern a specific way of following the Torah as determined by a sectarian Jewish community,** as is witnessed in the document 4QMMT in the Dead Sea Scrolls. By Paul asserting that righteousness does not come via “works of law,” while right to conclude that one's personal forgiveness does not come by human action, he is more specifically stating that inclusion among God's people does not come by following the Torah according to a specific group's set of values.<sup>6</sup>

No reader of Galatians disputes how justification by faith is a major theme of the letter. Faith in God, and now in the Messiah He has sent, is the way that people are to be redeemed of their sins. Trust in what the Messiah has accomplished is also to form the core identity of who His followers are. Yet, whether some places of Galatians where these themes have been traditionally viewed to set faith in God against keeping the Law of Moses for salvation (i.e., 2:16; 3:2, 5; 9-10), or whether some ancient First Century Jewish issues are in view, has become a great debate. Even if some ancient issues are in view in a few places, requiring “works of law,”

<sup>5</sup> These have been listed from the blog post, “Three Silver Bullets for Understanding Galatians” by J.K. McKee.

<sup>6</sup> Consult the article “What Are ‘Works of the Law?’” by J.K. McKee, appearing in his book *The New Testament Validates Torah*.

for example, to be something a bit more specific than just Torah-keeping in general—the fact is that faith in the Lord is required for salvation (2:20; 3:7-8, 11, 14, 24-26). No one should think that traditional interpretations being challenged *in a few places* merits a complete dismissal of all traditional views of Galatians since the Reformation.

One of the recurring subjects, in Paul's letter to the Galatians, is the identity of the group that is most commonly called the "Judaizers." Generally speaking, they are agreed to have been "Jewish Christians who insisted that it was necessary to belong to the Jewish nation in order to receive the blessing of God" (Hansen),<sup>7</sup> and the process of membership they required for non-Jewish Believers was far from just expressing faith in Israel's God and the Messiah. These were individuals who made circumcision and Torah observance required prerequisites for salvation (cf. Acts 15:1) and inclusion among God's people. They perverted the simplicity of the gospel by adding requirements to it. Translated as "to Judaize" (2:14, YLT), the verb *loudaizō* (Ἰουδαῖζω), is often defined as "**live as bound by Moasic ordinances or traditions, live in Judean or Jewish fashion**" (BDAG).<sup>8</sup> The challenge with interpreting this properly is that today, largely because of Jewish-Christian dialogue, a renewed interest in Hebraic studies, and an examination of broad sectors of First Century Judaism—is what "Judaize" meant to Paul. In Esther 8:17 in the Septuagint, the verb *loudaizō* renders the Hebrew *yahad* (יָהַד), as "many among the peoples of the land **became Jews**, for the dread of the Jews had fallen on them" (NASU).<sup>9</sup> Another important usage of the verb *loudaizō* appears in Josephus' account of the Jews fighting the Romans, and how a Roman general named Metilius was spared from death, because he promised to be circumcised and become a Jew (*Wars of the Jews* 2.454).<sup>10</sup> The verb *loudaizō*, "to Judaize," is something which tends to occur in instances of force or coercion. Yet, due to the pejorative nature of a term like "Judaizer" in much of Christian thought, Paul's opponents in Galatia have been more frequently referred to as "Influencers" by some interpreters, and some commentators just call them "agitators" or even the more basic "(false) teachers."

The Apostle Paul addresses his Galatian audience as being former pagans, yet they have "more than a mere passing acquaintance with the Jewish religion and the OT (cf. 3:6-22; 4:21-31)"

(*ISBE*).<sup>11</sup> The Galatians, to whom he speaks, were largely a group of non-Jewish people who were still maturing in their Messianic faith, although they had received the good news and Paul himself with great enthusiasm (4:13-15). Much of what Paul says in Galatians, likely repeats those things that he had discussed with them while in person, which can make various parts of the letter a bit difficult to understand. At the very least, this requires some patience when reading through discussions that had previously transpired between Paul and the Galatians he had helped guide.

There is a minority opinion, largely relating to the discussion of what Paul meant by employing the term "elemental spirits" (4:3, 9) or *stoicheia* (στοιχεῖα), as to whether or not the Judaizers/Influencers somehow advocated practices connected to ancient syncretistic or mystical Jewish ideas, which later made their way into the full blown Gnosticism of the Second Century.<sup>12</sup> While the entry disagrees, it at least has to be noted that "'The elemental spirits of the universe' of which Paul spoke in 4:3, 9 in connection with the observance of days, months, seasons, and years, are seen [by some] as having reference to Gnostic ideas" (*ISBE*).<sup>13</sup> The only other place where this same terminology appears is in Colossians 2:8, where how syncretistic, proto- or incipient-Gnostic ideas had infected the local Judaism in Colossae, is widely agreed to be the problem (see the entry on **Colossians**). Paul's opponents in Galatia, then, could have been those who—in addition to pushing ritual proselyte circumcision on the non-Jewish Believers—held to some errant, mystical ideas surrounding the Torah. This could easily account for Paul rightly accusing them, "For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves" (6:13, NASU), as well as his question to the Galatians, "how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things?" (4:9, NASU). The "days and months and seasons and years" (4:10, NASU) would not be the appointed times of the Torah, per se, as much as they would be the appointed times saturated with ungodly rituals, like those from astrology or witchcraft, that the Galatians should have left behind in paganism.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Ridderbos, "Galatians, Epistle to the," in *ISBE*, 2:380.

<sup>12</sup> And by extension, would parallel many things witnessed in the Jewish mystical tradition of the Kabbalah.

<sup>13</sup> Ridderbos, "Galatians, Epistle to the," in *ISBE*, 3:382; cf. the mention of it in Samuel J. Mikolaski, "Galatians," in *NBCR*, 1100; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 484; Betz, "Galatians, Epistle to the," in *ABD*, 2:874; Gundry, "The Early Epistles of Paul," in *A Survey of the New Testament*, 344 fn#1.

<sup>14</sup> This is examined more fully in the commentary on Galatians 4:9-11, in the article "**Does the New Testament Annul the Biblical Appointments?**" by J.K. McKee, appearing in his book *Torah In the Balance, Volume I*.

Also consult the further analysis of Galatians 4:8-11 in the *Messianic Sabbath Helper* by Messianic Apologetics.

<sup>7</sup> Hansen, "Galatians, Letter to the," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, pp 327; cf. Carson and Moo, 465.

<sup>8</sup> BDAG, 478.

<sup>9</sup> "And many of the nations were circumcised and **became** Judeans [*loudaizō*] out of fear of the Judeans" (Esther 8:17b, NETS).

<sup>10</sup> "And thus were all these men barbarously murdered, excepting Metilius; for when he entreated for mercy, and promised that he would turn Jew, and be circumcised, they saved him alive, but none else" (*Wars of the Jews* 2.454; *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*, 626).

It is not agreed among examiners whether or not Paul composed the Epistle to the Galatians prior to, or immediately after, the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15. Much of this is determined by the intended audience of the letter. Some view Paul's references to Jerusalem in Galatians 1:17-18 as speaking of the events of Acts 11, as opposed to Acts 15. Many conservatives are in agreement on a South Galatian audience and the letter composed sometime (immediately) prior to the Jerusalem Council. Whether or not Galatians was written before the Jerusalem Council, the decree of the Jerusalem Council would be spread into the Mediterranean basin, and the early mixed groups of Jewish and non-Jewish Believers in Yeshua would have to adhere to it. Among Galatians resources, though, one can see a huge gulf often present between conservative and liberal interpreters, as the former believes that Paul and the Jerusalem Council were in agreement with Paul conforming by the Apostolic decree (Acts 15:19-21), whereas the latter tends to portray Paul and Jerusalem at odds. Today's conservatives tend to view the Galatians 2:1-10 Jerusalem meeting as the relief mission of Acts 11:27-30. Paul's statements concerning what to do with the non-Jewish Believers in Galatians, even if probably written before the Council, must be interpreted in the light of the Apostolic decree as he readily submitted to Jerusalem's authority (cf. 2:9). The Apostolic conference was agreed that the non-Jewish Believers did not have to be circumcised and keep the Torah for salvation (contra. Acts 15:1, 5).

Since the Protestant Reformation, Galatians has understandably been used as a major source of support for the doctrine of justification by faith. It was used extensively by Martin Luther in his refutations of Medieval Catholicism. Freedom or liberty for Believers is also a major theme of Galatians (cf. 5:1). Such freedom is often viewed, though, as more than just the redeemed being released from the penalties of sin (3:13), and is thought to also mean that the Galatians—and by extension all Believers since—do not have to obey God's Torah any longer. As is summarized by most Christians, "Certain Jewish teachers, who professed to be Christians and acknowledged Jesus as Messiah, were obscuring the simplicity of the gospel of free grace with their propaganda. They insisted that to faith in Christ must be added circumcision and obedience to the Mosaic Law" (*NIDB*).<sup>15</sup> More specifically, and even a bit disturbingly, a typical Lutheran reading of Galatians will seek to split up Christianity from its Jewish origins, as Martin Luther did believe that God's Law and God's grace were polar opposites: "the letter separates in principle and as far as we know, for the first time, Christianity

from Judaism" (Betz, *IDBSup*).<sup>16</sup> Among many Christian examiners today, the letter to the Galatians is thought to portray how the Torah of Moses was something temporary, only for the pre-resurrection era,<sup>17</sup> and probably only for the Jewish people at that (cf. the main view on 3:24).<sup>18</sup> A number of Galatians interpreters will even view Paul as depicting the Torah of Moses and paganism as being quantitatively indifferent.

Do not be fooled: Galatians can be a difficult text for many contemporary Christian laypersons to read. Too many evangelical Christians' engagement level with Galatians is only evident via a selection of verses here or there, without any sizeable consideration for the original position and setting of the audience. Too many laypersons who read through Galatians, do not also consider that they need to read Galatians in concert with the rest of the Bible—including Paul's other letters, and especially his letter to the Romans. "It is evident that the same thoughts [seen in Galatians] were developed in a more thorough and perhaps more balanced manner in the Epistle to the Romans...The Epistle to the Galatians, although it is more abrupt and less systematic, has a great appeal in that in addition to being a document of deep theological insight, it gives a picture of Paul's great humanity and emotion in one of the most critical moments of his apostolic activity" (*ISBE*).<sup>19</sup> Reading some further remarks, in the later letter to the Romans, may be necessary to shed some light on difficult sections of the letter to the Galatians. Furthermore, it needs to be recognized that while many conservative Christian readers of Galatians do not believe that the Apostle Paul or James the Just are at odds—as they instead present their points from different positions—many liberal readers absolutely consider them at odds.<sup>20</sup>

While Galatians is often viewed as being anti-Law, a wide number of Christians in history have viewed Galatians as *only* opposing Law-keeping for salvation. This does not include obeying God's commandments as a matter of proper living, per Paul's direction to follow "the law of Christ" (6:2), which would necessarily be centered around love (5:14; cf. Leviticus 19:18) and focused on the Messiah's Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chs. 5-7). Such Christians have recognized that the Torah's authority, in matters of morality and ethics at least, remains in force for the post-resurrection era.

One of the biggest features of the Epistle to the Galatians, which can be significantly overlooked by readers, is Paul's reliance upon the Tanach (Old

<sup>16</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, "Galatians, Letter to the," in *IDBSup*, 352.

<sup>17</sup> Beverly R. Gaventa, "Galatians," in *ECB*, 1374.

<sup>18</sup> Be aware of the different renderings for the clause *eis Christon* (εἰς Χριστόν) as either "to Christ" (NASU) or "until Christ came" (RSV/NRSV/ESV).

<sup>19</sup> Ridderbos, "Galatians, Epistle to the," in *ISBE*, 3:385; cf. Betz, "Galatians, Epistle to the," in *ABD*, 2:872.

<sup>20</sup> Betz, "Galatians, Epistle to the," in *ABD*, 2:875.

<sup>15</sup> D. Edmond Hiebert, "Galatians, Letter to the," in *NIDB*, 367; cf. Ridderbos, "Galatians, Epistle to the," in *ISBE*, 2:381.

Testament) for his arguments. Statements about Abraham or Hagar or Ishmael, or the different assertions or analogies seen, cannot make any sense without understanding the Tanach's narratives. Even understanding something like "It was added because of transgressions..." (3:19, NASU), requires one to know some of the specificities of Torah jurisprudence. The role of Habakkuk 2:4, "Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith" (NASU), in Galatians 3:11, is frequently missed by your average Bible reader.

The Epistle to the Galatians is easily the most difficult text of Scripture for today's Messianic movement to read and interpret properly. For Messianics today, Galatians often proves to be a problem text, as a surface reading of Galatians may appear to be quite negative toward a lifestyle of Torah obedience. Coupled with this are a whole host of readings of Galatians that separate Biblical "freedom" from not only a release from the penalties of sin for the redeemed, but also how obeying God's Torah is to bring about freedom (Psalm 119:45). Giving Galatians its proper due, and treating the text with a high level of integrity for the ancient circumstances it addressed, are unfortunately quite difficult for far too many within the broad Messianic community. Fortunately, there have been a number of Galatians commentaries released from a Messianic perspective, although their conclusions on a selection of topics have been a bit varied.<sup>21</sup>

Even though the great majority of contemporary Messianic Believers do not think that obeying the Torah will merit them eternal salvation, Torah-keeping as a matter of sanctification, holiness, and demonstrating good works is something affirmed. Due to the various views of Galatians present in today's Christianity, our faith community will be often accused of *adding* to the simplicity of the gospel, with statements issued from various verses in Galatians.<sup>22</sup> The frequency of this occurring will only increase, as the Messianic movement grows and expands.

Having more refined views of Galatians, and/or more targeted examinations into its various vignettes, is undoubtedly required of today's Messianic movement. Galatians will be used by many outside opponents of the Messianic movement, who believe that the Torah was just something temporary for the pre-resurrection era, viewing the Torah as a cause of division and contention among people. Internally, though, among different groups of Messianics, there will be debates

over the place of the Torah in the lives of non-Jewish Believers versus those of Jewish Believers, per the diversity of views present on 5:2-3.<sup>23</sup> Likewise, if "works of law" were ancient Jewish identity barriers that defined sects of the Jewish community, then what were they *and* what might we see today that somehow parallels them? And not to be overlooked at all, are the (strong) internal disagreements among complementarian and egalitarian perspectives to be expected of Galatians 3:28, not just over its assertion of equality for Jews and non-Jews, but especially males and females.<sup>24</sup> Ultimately, Galatians asks the emerging Messianic movement whether it will develop into something that is focused around what makes us different, or the common element of Yeshua's sacrifice for human sin.

Regardless of one's position on some of the specific statements encountered in the Epistle to the Galatians, all readers should be in **full agreement** on the requirement for us as born again Believers to all love others, and so fulfill what is labeled as "the law of Messiah" (6:2). The *EDB* entry's statements should be very well taken:

"Paul argues that the whole law is fulfilled in the statement, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' (5:14, quoting Lev. 19:18). Consequently, the Galatians must serve each other through love (5:13). If they bear one another's burdens they will fulfill 'the law of Christ' (6:2). This expression, which occurs only in Galatians, probably refers to the law as it was lived by Christ, i.e., in accord with the principle of self-sacrificing love (cf. 1:3-4; 2:20). To summarize, the Galatians will fulfill the law if they live in the realm of the Spirit in accord with the law of Christ."<sup>25</sup>

It is obvious, though, that today's Messianics might think of such a "Torah of Messiah" to involve more than just the "love command." Galatians does have many ethical and spiritual lessons that people within our faith community has overlooked far too many times. It does communicate the need for Jewish and non-Jewish Believers in Yeshua to come together, *in mixed communities*, in unity and in one accord. It also asks various questions about the motives for Torah obedience on the part of all. Are today's Messianic Believers Torah obedient out of a true, Spirit-led need to be holy—or for some other, self-serving reason? Is the Torah ever misused as a means to keep people out, or from feeling welcome in the assembly? How to properly approach and apply the Epistle to the Galatians will certainly be an ongoing challenge for the Messianic movement until Yeshua returns!<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Consult the FAQ, "Galatians 5:2-3.

<sup>24</sup> Consult the exegesis paper by J.K. McKee on Galatians 3:28, "**Biblical Equality and Today's Messianic Movement**," appearing in his book **Confronting Critical Issues**.

<sup>25</sup> Frank J. Matera, "Galatians, Letter to the," in *EDB*, 478.

<sup>26</sup> A useful Messianic commentary on Galatians is Tim Hegg, *A Study of Galatians* (Tacoma, WA: TorahResource, 2002); another

<sup>21</sup> These include, but are not limited to: Tim Hegg, *A Study of Galatians* (Tacoma, WA: TorahResource, 2002); D. Thomas Lancaster, *The Holy Epistle to the Galatians: Sermons on a Messianic Jewish Approach* (Marshfield, MO: First Fruits of Zion, 2011).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Carson and Moo, 466.

Consult the commentary *Galatians for the Practical Messianic* by J.K. McKee for a more detailed examination of Galatians.

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resources is D. Thomas Lancaster, *The Holy Epistle to the Galatians: Sermons on a Messianic Jewish Approach* (Marshfield, MO: First Fruits of Zion, 2011).

# 1

## **Salutation**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle (not from mortals, neither through human agency, but through Yeshua the Messiah, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead),

<sup>2</sup> and all the brothers and sisters who are with me, to the assemblies of Galatia:

<sup>3</sup> Grace to you and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Yeshua the Messiah,

<sup>4</sup> 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,

<sup>5</sup> to whom *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen.

## **There is No Other Good News**

<sup>6</sup> I am amazed that you are so quickly turning away from Him who called you in the grace of Messiah, to a different good news;

<sup>7</sup> which is not another *good news*, except there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the good news of Messiah.

<sup>8</sup> But even if we, or an angel from Heaven, should proclaim to you a good news other than that which we proclaimed to you, let him be anathema.

<sup>9</sup> As we have said before, so now I say I again, if anyone is proclaiming to you a good news other than that which you received, let him be anathema.

<sup>10</sup> For am I now seeking the favor of mortals, or of God? Or am I striving to please mortals? If I were still pleasing mortals, I would not be a servant of Messiah.

## **How Paul Became an Apostle**

<sup>11</sup> For I would have you know, brothers and sisters, that the good news which was proclaimed by me, is not according to human origin.

<sup>12</sup> For I neither received it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but *it came to me* through a revelation of Yeshua the Messiah.

<sup>13</sup> For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I persecuted the assembly of God beyond measure, and ravaged it;

<sup>14</sup> and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age, among my fellows<sup>a</sup>, being more extremely zealous for the traditions of my ancestors.

<sup>15</sup> But when it was the good pleasure of God, who had set me apart from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace,

<sup>16</sup> to reveal His Son in me, that I might proclaim Him among the nations, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood,

<sup>17</sup> nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away into Arabia, and again I returned to Damascus.

<sup>18</sup> Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days.

<sup>19</sup> But I saw none of the other of the apostles, except James, the Lord's brother.

<sup>20</sup> (Now about the things which I am writing to you: behold, before God, I do not lie.)

<sup>21</sup> Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.

<sup>22</sup> And I was *still* unknown by face to the assemblies of Judea which were in Messiah;

<sup>23</sup> but only, they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now proclaiming the faith which he once ravaged."

<sup>24</sup> And they were glorifying God because of me.

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<sup>a</sup> Grk. *en tō genei mou* (ἐν τῷ γένει μου); lit. "in my race" (LITV).

## 2

**Paul Accepted by the Other Apostles**

<sup>1</sup> Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also with me.

<sup>2</sup> And I went up because of a revelation; and I set before them the good news which I proclaim among the nations, but privately before those who were of repute, lest somehow I might be running, or had run, in vain.

<sup>3</sup> But not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

<sup>4</sup> But *it was* because of the false brethren<sup>a</sup> secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy out our liberty which we have in Messiah Yeshua, in order to bring us into bondage

<sup>5</sup> –to whom we did not yield in subjection, not even for an hour, that the truth of the good news might continue with you.

<sup>6</sup> But from those who were reputed to be something (whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)–they, I say, who were of repute contributed nothing to me.

<sup>7</sup> But on the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the good news to the foreskinned, just as Peter *had been* to the circumcised

<sup>8</sup> (for He who worked for Peter in *his* apostleship to the circumcised worked for me also to the nations),

<sup>9</sup> and perceiving the grace that was 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 *should go* to the nations, and they to the circumcised.

<sup>10</sup> *They only asked* us to remember the poor, which very thing I was also eager to do.

**Paul Rebukes Peter at Antioch**

<sup>11</sup> But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

<sup>12</sup> For before certain individuals came from James, he ate with the nations; but when they came, he *began* to withdraw and separated himself, fearing the party of the circumcision.

<sup>13</sup> And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

<sup>14</sup> But when I saw that they were not acting in line according to the truth of the good news, I said to Cephas before *them* all, “If you, being a Jew, live like the nations, and not like the Jews, how can you compel the nations to Judaize?<sup>b</sup>”

<sup>a</sup> Grk. *pseudadelphous* (ψευδοἀδέλφους); “false believers” (NRSV/TNIV).

<sup>b</sup> While theologically complex, the rendering of the Greek followed here is rather literal:

*ei su Ioudaios huparchōn ethnikōs kai ouchi Ioudaikōs zēs, pōs ta ethnē anagkazeis Ioudaizein?* (εἰ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὑπάρχων ἐθνικῶς καὶ οὐχὶ Ἰουδαϊκῶς ζῆς, πῶς τὰ ἔθνη ἀναγκάζεις Ἰουδαῖζειν;), “If you being a Jew, live heathen-like, and not as the Jews, why do you compel the nations to Judaize?” (LITV); “If thou, being a Jew, in the manner of the nations dost live, and not in the manner of the Jews, how the nations dost thou compel to Judaize?” (YLT).

2:14 is the text of Scripture where the common designation “the Judaizers” comes from, yet by his usage of the verb *Ioudaizō* (Ἰουδαῖζω), Paul is making an important point to the Jewish Believers in Antioch which need not be overlooked. *BDAG* defines this verb as to “**live as one bound by Mosaic ordinances or traditions, live in Judean or Jewish fashion**” (p 478). But what one considers to be Jewish customs or traditions has considerable variance among the First Century branches of Judaism.

Perhaps the most significant usage of the verb *Ioudaizō* outside of Galatians is seen in the Septuagint rendering of Esther 8:17, where we see that “in every city and province wherever the ordinance was published: wherever the proclamation took place, the Jews had joy and gladness, feasting and mirth: and many of the Gentiles were circumcised, and became Jews [*Ioudaizon*, Ἰουδαῖζον], for fear of the Jews” (LXE). The Greek verb *Ioudaizō* renders the Hebrew *yahad* (יָהַד), meaning “to **pose as a Jew**” or “to embrace Judaism” (*HALOT*, 1:393). As Richard N. Longenecker, *Word Biblical Commentary: Galatians*, Vol. 41 (Nashville: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 1990), 63 renders 2:14, “If you, a Jewish believer, can live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel Gentile believers to become Jews?” Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 112 well summarizes the issue of 2:14: “In Paul’s view...it describes forcing one to become a Jewish convert...”

**Jewish people, like those of the Nations, are Saved by Faith**

<sup>15</sup> “We are Jews by nature, and not sinners from the nations,

<sup>16</sup> “yet knowing that a person is not justified by works of law<sup>a</sup> but through the faithfulness of Yeshua the Messiah<sup>b</sup>, even we have believed in Messiah Yeshua<sup>c</sup>, that we might be justified by the faithfulness of Messiah, and not by works of law; since by works of law will no flesh be justified<sup>d</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> “But if, while seeking to be justified in Messiah, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Messiah *then* a minister of sin? May it never be!

<sup>18</sup> “For if I build up again those things which I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor.

<sup>19</sup> “For through the Torah I died to the Torah, that I might live to God.

<sup>20</sup> “I have been excuted with Messiah on a wooden scaffold; and it is no longer I who live, but Messiah living in me; and that *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me.

<sup>21</sup> I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness *comes* through the Torah, then Messiah died for nothing.”

**3****Works of Law or Faith?**

<sup>1</sup> O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Yeshua the Messiah was publicly portrayed *as* executed on a wooden scaffold<sup>e</sup>?

Another important usage of the verb *loudaizō* appears in Josephus’ account of the Jews fighting the Romans, and how a Roman named Metilius was spared from death, because he promised to be circumcised and become a Jew:

“And thus were all these men barbarously murdered, excepting Metilius; for when he entreated for mercy, and promised **that he would turn Jew, and be circumcised** [*peritomēs loudaisein*, περιτομῆς loudaΐσειν], they saved him alive, but none else” (*Wars of the Jews* 2.454).

The verb *loudaizō*, “to Judaize,” is something which tends to occur in instances or situations of force.

<sup>a</sup> Grk. *ergōn nomou* (ἔργων νόμου); left with the improper form “works of law,” given the likely influence of the *ma’asei haTorah* (התורה מעשי) of 4QMMT from the Dead Sea Scrolls, where the *halachah* or orthopraxy of the Qumran Community is in view: “Now we have written to you some of the works of the Law [Heb. *miqsat ma’asei ha-Torah*, מִקְצַת מַעֲשֵׂי הַתּוֹרָה], those which we determined would be beneficial for you and your people, because we have seen [that] you possess insight and knowledge of the Law” (4Q399; Michael Wise, Martin Abegg, Jr., and Edward Cook, trans., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* [San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996], 364).

<sup>b</sup> Grk. *dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou* (διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ); the rendering “through the faithfulness of Yeshua the Messiah” treats the genitive clause as subjective (cf. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 115); it has been more traditionally approached as an objective genitive: “through faith in Jesus Christ” (NASU).

The subjective “faithfulness” is employed to represent the Son’s willful obedience to the Father, to be submissive to die for the sins of humanity.

<sup>c</sup> Grk. *hēmeis eis Christon Iēsoun episteusamen* (ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπίστευσάμεν); or, “have put our faith in Christ Jesus” (NIV).

<sup>d</sup> The CJB has bolded “no one will be declared righteous” for 2:16, noting a possible allusion to Psalm 143:2: “Don’t bring your servant to trial, since in your sight no one alive would be considered righteous” (CJB).

<sup>e</sup> Grk. noun *stauros* (σταυρός) or verb equiv. *stauroō* (σταυρώω); “to fasten to a cross, crucify” (BDAG, 941). History fully attests that criminals in the Roman Empire were crucified upon some kind of a cross. It was an extremely brutal, humiliating, and painful way to suffer and die. It was intended to serve as a public warning to others not to infuriate the Roman state:

“Under the Roman Empire, crucifixion normally included a flogging beforehand. At times the cross was only one vertical stake. Frequently, however, there was a cross-piece attached either at the top to give the shape of a ‘T’ (*crux comissa*) or just below the top, as in the form most familiar in Christian symbolism (*crux immissa*). The victims carried the cross or at least a transverse beam (*patibulum*) to the place of the execution, where they were stripped and bound or nailed to the beam, raised up, and seated on a *sedile* or small wooden peg in the upright beam. Ropes bound the shoulders or torso to the cross. The feet or heels of the victims were bound or nailed to the upright stake. As crucifixion damaged no vital organs, death could come slowly, sometimes after several days of atrocious pain” (Gerald G. O’Collins, “Crucifixion,” in *ABD*, 1:1208-1209).

A Messianic version the CJB often uses an alternative like “execution-stake,” instead of the more traditional “cross” for *stauros*, some of which is intended to counter traditional Jewish hostility to the sign of the cross. A Messianic version like the TLV, however, will frequently use the traditional “cross” for *stauros*, although it may also use “execution-stake” as well. The PME uses the new alternative, “wooden scaffold.”

<sup>2</sup> This is the only thing I want to learn from you: did you receive the Spirit by works of law<sup>a</sup>, or by the hearing of faith<sup>b</sup>?

<sup>3</sup> Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected<sup>c</sup> by the flesh?

<sup>4</sup> Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?

<sup>5</sup> Does He then, who supplies the Spirit to you, and works miracles among you, *do it* by works of law<sup>d</sup>, or by the hearing of faith?

<sup>6</sup> Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS [Genesis 15:6]<sup>e</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Therefore, know that those who are of faith, these ones are children of Abraham.

<sup>8</sup> And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, proclaimed the good news beforehand to Abraham, *saying*, “IN YOU WILL ALL THE NATIONS BE BLESSED” [Genesis 12:3]<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> So then, those who are of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham<sup>g</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> For as many as are of works of law<sup>h</sup> are under a curse; for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE IN ALL THINGS THAT ARE WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE TORAH, TO DO THEM” [Deuteronomy 27:26]<sup>i</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Now that no one is justified by the Torah before God is evident; for, “THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL LIVE BY FAITH” [Habakkuk 2:4]<sup>j</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> And the Torah is not of faith; yet, “HE WHO DOES THEM SHALL LIVE IN THEM<sup>k</sup>” [Leviticus 18:5]<sup>l</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Messiah redeemed us from the curse of the Torah, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE” [Deuteronomy 21:23]<sup>m</sup>—

<sup>14</sup> in order that in Messiah Yeshua the blessing of Abraham might come to the nations, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

<sup>a</sup> Grk. *ergōn nomou* (ἐργων νόμου); left with the improper form “works of law,” given the likely influence of the *ma’asei haTorah* (מעשי התורה) of 4QMMT from the Dead Sea Scrolls.

<sup>b</sup> Grk. *akoēs pisteōs* (ἀκοῆς πίστεως); more often rendered as something like “hearing with faith” (NASU); the rendering of the ASV, “the hearing of faith,” has been left intact here.

<sup>c</sup> Grk. verb *epiteleō* (ἐπιτελέω); widely meaning “to bring about a result according to plan or objective, complete, accomplish, perform, bring about” (BDAG, 383); in some versions rendered as “ending” (RSV/NRSV), but in the CJB/TLV as “reach the goal.”

<sup>d</sup> Grk. *ergōn nomou* (ἐργων νόμου).

<sup>e</sup> “Then he believed in YHWH; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness” (Genesis 15:6, PME).

<sup>f</sup> “And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the Earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12:3, PME).

<sup>g</sup> Grk. *sun tō pistō Abraam* (σὺν τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ); this clause has been rendered a variety of ways, including: “with Abraham who had faith” (RSV); “with Abraham, the believer” (NASU); “with Abraham who had faith” (NRSV); “with Abraham, the faithful one” (TLV).

<sup>h</sup> Grk. *ergōn nomou* (ἐργων νόμου).

<sup>i</sup> “Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this Torah by doing them.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen’” (Deuteronomy 27:26, PME).

<sup>j</sup> “Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith” (Habakkuk 2:4, PME).

<sup>k</sup> Grk. *all’ ho poiēsas auta zēsetai en autois* (ἀλλ’ ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς).

Frequently, the conjunction *alla* (ἀλλά) is thought to be adversative, i.e., “on the contrary” (NASU, NIV). With Leviticus 18:5, though, describing the good, blessed condition of God’s people living “in them” or within the Torah’s sphere of instruction/commandments, *alla* employed in 3:12 can instead be viewed as “forming a transition to someth. new,” such as another “matter for additional consideration” (BDAG, 326). The purpose of God’s Torah is not to provide faith, but its purpose is to provide a sanctified way of living on Planet Earth. Hence, “when whole clauses are compared, ἀλλά can indicate a transition to someth. different or contrasted: the other side of a matter or issue, **but, yet**” (Ibid.), with “yet” chosen for the rendering of 3:12 to introduce the Leviticus 18:5 quotation.

<sup>l</sup> “So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a person may live if he does them; I am YHWH” (Leviticus 18:5, PME).

<sup>m</sup> “his corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day (for he who is hanged is accursed of God), so that you do not defile your land which YHWH your God gives you as an inheritance” (Deuteronomy 21:23, PME).

### **The Torah and the Promise**

<sup>15</sup> Brothers and sisters, I speak in terms of human affairs<sup>a</sup>: even though it is a mortal's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside, or adds conditions<sup>b</sup> to it.

<sup>16</sup> 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” [Genesis 12:7<sup>c</sup>; 13:15<sup>d</sup>; 17:7<sup>e</sup>; 24:7<sup>f</sup>], which is Messiah.

<sup>17</sup> Now what I am saying is this: the Torah, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise.

<sup>18</sup> For if the inheritance is by the Torah, it is no longer by promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by a promise.

<sup>19</sup> Why the Torah then? It was added<sup>g</sup> because of transgressions<sup>h</sup>, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made; and it was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator.

<sup>20</sup> Now a mediator is not of one; but God is one.<sup>i</sup>

### **Slaves to Sin and Redeemed Children**

<sup>21</sup> Is the Torah then against the promises of God? May it never be! For if there had been a law given which was able to make alive, then righteousness would have been by the Torah.

<sup>22</sup> But the Scripture has shut up all things under sin, so that the promise by the faithfulness of Yeshua the Messiah<sup>j</sup> might be given to those who believe.

<sup>23</sup> But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the Torah<sup>k</sup>, being shut up to the faith intending to be revealed.

<sup>24</sup> Therefore the Torah became our pedagogue<sup>a</sup> to lead us to Messiah<sup>b</sup>, so that we might be justified by faith.

<sup>a</sup> Grk. *kata anthrōpon legō* (κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω); more lit. “after the manner of men” (ASV); rendered less literally as “I give an example from daily life” (NRSV) or “let me take an example from everyday life” (NIV).

<sup>b</sup> Grk. verb *epidiatassomai* (ἐπιδιατάσσομαι); “to add to, with implication of supplementary or modifying instructions, legal t.t. **add a codicil** to a will” (BDAG, 370).

<sup>c</sup> “Then **ADONAI** appeared to Abram, and said, ‘I will give this land to your seed.’ So there he built an altar to **ADONAI**, who had appeared to him” (Genesis 12:7, TLV).

<sup>d</sup> “For all the land that you are looking at, I will give to you and to your seed forever” (Genesis 13:15, TLV).

<sup>e</sup> “Yes, I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, in order to be your God and your seed’s God after you” (Genesis 17:7, TLV).

<sup>f</sup> “**ADONAI**, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from my native land and who spoke to me and made a pledge to me saying, ‘To your seed I will give this land’—He will send His angel before you and you will take a wife for my son from there” (Genesis 24:7, TLV).

<sup>g</sup> Grk. verb *prostithēmi* (προστίθημι); “to add to someth. that is already present or exists, **add, put to**” (BDAG, 885).

<sup>h</sup> Grk. *tōn parabaseōn charin* (τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν); “the transgressions for the sake of” (Brown and Comfort, 659); “added in response to transgressions” (The Messianic Writings).

The purpose of the Torah being codified at Mount Sinai was to regulate and provide atonement for human sin, not modify and change the unconditional promise of the Abrahamic Covenant (3:15).

<sup>i</sup> Grk. *ho de mesitēs henos ouk estin, ho de Theos heis estin* (ὁ δὲ μεσίτης ἑνὸς οὐκ ἔστιν, ὁ δὲ θεὸς εἷς ἔστιν); given the scope of the many (over three hundred!) interpretations of 3:20, a more literal rendering has been followed here, consistent with “now~the mediator of one not is, - but God is~one” (Brown and Comfort, 660).

<sup>j</sup> Grk. *ek pisteōs Iēsou Christou* (ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ); the rendering “by the faithfulness of Yeshua the Messiah” treats the genitive clause as subjective (cf. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 115); it has been more traditionally approached as an objective genitive: “by faith in Jesus Christ” (NASU).

The subjective “faithfulness” is employed to represent the Son’s willful obedience to the Father, to be submissive to die for the sins of humanity.

<sup>k</sup> Grk. *hupo nomon* (ὑπὸ νόμου); “under Torah” (TLV).

The Greek clause *hupo nomon* (ὑπὸ νόμου), commonly rendered as “under [the] law” appears in: **Galatians 3:23; 4:4-5, 21; 5:18; 1 Corinthians 9:20 [4x]; Romans 6:14-15**. As detailed by Douglas J. Moo, “We do not presume that ‘under the law’ must connote the same idea in each of its occurrences, although the stereotypical flavor of the phrase may point in this direction. Three general meanings of the phrase are popular: (1) under the condemnation pronounced by the law; (2) under a legalistic perversion of the law; and (3) under the law as a regime or power in a general sense” (“The Law of Christ as the Fulfillment of the Law of Moses: A Modified Lutheran View,” in Wayne G. Strickland, ed., *Five Views on Law and Gospel* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 361). The perspective argued in the mini-book *What Does “Under the Law” Really Mean?* by J.K. McKee, is that “under the Law” means being subject to the Torah’s condemnation upon sinners, which redeemed Believers in Israel’s Messiah have obviously been freed from.

<sup>25</sup> But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a pedagogue.

<sup>26</sup> For you are all children of God through faith in Messiah Yeshua.

<sup>27</sup> For as many of you as were immersed<sup>c</sup> into Messiah have clothed yourselves with Messiah.

<sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is no male and female; for you are all one in Messiah Yeshua.

<sup>29</sup> And if you are Messiah's, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise.

## 4

<sup>1</sup> Now I say, as long as the heir is a minor, he is no different from a slave, though he is lord of all,

<sup>2</sup> but is under guardians and stewards until the date set by the father.

<sup>3</sup> So also we, while we were minors, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world.

<sup>4</sup> And when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Torah<sup>d</sup>,

<sup>5</sup> in order that He might redeem those who were under the Torah<sup>e</sup>, that we might receive the adoption of children.

<sup>6</sup> Now because you are children, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

<sup>7</sup> So you are no longer a slave, but a child; and if a child, then an heir through God.

### **Paul's Concern for the Galatians**

<sup>8</sup> However at that time, when you were not knowing God, you were in bondage to those which by nature are no gods.

<sup>9</sup> But now that you have come to know God, or rather be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be in bondage all over again?

<sup>10</sup> You observe days and months and seasons and years.

<sup>a</sup> Grk. *paidagōgos* (παιδαγωγός); invariably translated as "tutor" (NASU), "custodian" (RSV/CJB), "child-conductor" (YLT), "guardian" (HCSB), or "schoolmaster" (KJV), comparable to the English word "pedagogue."

Many examiners are in rightful agreement that "tutor" is not the best rendering for *paidagōgos*, as there is something specific to be understood from this term in antiquity. The *paidagōgos* was "Orig. 'boy-leader', the man, usu.[ally] 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'...When the young man became of age, the π[αιδαγωγός] was no longer needed" (BDAG, 748). In a classical sense, the *paidagōgos* was a protector who was to guard young boys on their way to school until they reached a certain age. This "disciplinarian" (NRSV) or "guardian" (ESV) would try to instill within them a basic sense of who a responsible citizen was, until they arrived at a point when they were old enough to take care of themselves.

<sup>b</sup> There is considerable theological debate over the clause *eis Christon* (εἰς Χριστόν), which here follows a rendering consistent with the NASB/NASU: "to lead us to Christ"; the KJV/NKJV: "to bring us (un)to Christ"; the NIV: "to lead us to Christ"; and the TLV: "to lead us to Messiah." Other versions notably have something different, such as "until Christ came" (RSV/NRSV/ESV) or "until Christ" (HCSB).

The different vantage points are that (1) the Torah is viewed as condemning the sin of an individual on the path to salvation, revealing his or her need for a Savior, who is Yeshua. Or, (2) the Torah was a temporary pedagogue for the Jewish people, until the arrival of the Messiah, and now it is to be considered widely irrelevant for their direction (much less the direction of anyone else).

<sup>c</sup> Grk. noun *baptisma* (βάπτισμα); verb equiv. *baptizō* (βαπτίζω), more neutrally meaning, "wash ceremonially for purpose of purification, wash, purify, of a broad range of repeated ritual washing rooted in Israelite tradition," but more theologically meaning "to use water in a rite for purpose of renewing or establishing a relationship w. God, plunge, dip, wash, baptize. The transliteration 'baptize' signifies the ceremonial character that NT narratives accord such cleansing" (BDAG, 164).

Perhaps due to some of the varied and diverse Christian traditions—across the spectrum—regarding "baptism," Messianic people prefer to speak in terms of "immersion." This is not because the term "baptism" is at all wrong, but more because of the intense amount of Christian-cultural associations or baggage that can come with it. A common term that you will hear across the Messianic community is *mikveh* (מִקְוֵה), which is a "gathering of water, esp. the ritual bath of purification" (Jastrow, 829).

<sup>d</sup> Grk. *hupo nomon* (ὑπὸ νόμον).

<sup>e</sup> Grk. *hupo nomon* (ὑπὸ νόμου).

<sup>11</sup> I am afraid for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.

<sup>12</sup> I beseech you, brothers and sisters, become as I *am*, for I also *have become* as you *are*. You have done me no wrong;

<sup>13</sup> but you know that it was because of a physical infirmity that I proclaimed the good news to you the first time;

<sup>14</sup> and that which was a trial to you in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as a messenger<sup>a</sup> of God, as Messiah Yeshua *Himself*.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?

<sup>17</sup> They are zealous for you, in no good way; but they wish to shut you out, in order that you may be zealous for them.

<sup>18</sup> But it is good always to be zealous in a good manner, and not only when I am present with you.

<sup>19</sup> My little children, with whom I am again in labor pains until Messiah is formed in you—

<sup>20</sup> but I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

### ***The Allegory of Hagar and Sarah***

<sup>21</sup> Tell me, you who to be under the Torah<sup>b</sup>, do you not listen to the Torah?

<sup>22</sup> For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and one by the free woman.

<sup>23</sup> However, the *son* by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, and the *son* by the free woman through promise.

<sup>24</sup> These things are allegorically speaking: for these *women* are two covenants, one from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar.

<sup>25</sup> Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.

<sup>26</sup> But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother.

<sup>27</sup> For it is written, “REJOICE, BARREN ONE 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” [Isaiah 54:1]<sup>c</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise.

<sup>29</sup> 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.

<sup>30</sup> But what does the Scripture say? “CAST OUT THE SLAVE WOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THE SON OF THE SLAVE WOMAN SHALL NOT INHERIT WITH THE SON OF THE FREE WOMAN” [Genesis 21:10]<sup>d</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> So then, brothers and sisters, we are not children of a slave woman, but of the free woman.

<sup>a</sup> Grk. *angelos* (ἄγγελος); or “angel.”

<sup>b</sup> Grk. *hupo nomon* (ὑπὸ νόμου).

<sup>c</sup> “Shout for joy, O barren one, you who have borne no child; break forth into joyful shouting and cry aloud, you who have not travailed; for the children of the desolate one will be more numerous than the children of the married woman,” says YHWH” (Isaiah 54:1, PME).

<sup>d</sup> “Therefore she said to Abraham, ‘Drive out this slave woman and her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be an heir with my son Isaac’” (Genesis 21:10, PME).

# 5

## **Freedom for those in Messiah**

<sup>1</sup> For freedom Messiah has set us free; stand fast therefore and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

<sup>2</sup> Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Messiah will profit you nothing.

<sup>3</sup> And I testify again to every person<sup>a</sup> who receives circumcision, that one is a debtor<sup>b</sup> to do the whole Torah.

<sup>4</sup> You have been severed from Messiah, you who would be justified by the Torah; you have fallen away from grace.

<sup>5</sup> For we through the Spirit, by faith, wait for the hope of righteousness.

<sup>6</sup> For in Messiah Yeshua neither circumcision avails anything, nor foreskin, but faith working through love.

<sup>7</sup> You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?

<sup>8</sup> This persuasion *did* not *come* from Him who calls you.

<sup>9</sup> A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough.

<sup>10</sup> I have confidence toward you in the Lord, that you will think no other way; but he who is troubling you will bear his judgment, whoever he is.

<sup>11</sup> But I, brothers and sisters, if I still proclaim circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the wooden scaffold has been abolished.

<sup>12</sup> I wish that those who are unsettling you would even mutilate themselves.

<sup>13</sup> For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only *do* not *turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another.

<sup>14</sup> For the whole Torah is fulfilled in one word, in the *statement*: “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF” [Leviticus 19:18]<sup>c</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you are not consumed by one another.

<sup>a</sup> Grk. *panti anthrōpō* (παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ) or “every human being”; this terminology includes the generic term *anthrōpos* (ἄνθρωπος) for humankind, meaning that the “circumcision” in view is not so much a medical procedure, as much as it is the ritual of a proselyte to Judaism, which would include those of both sexes. The rendering followed here is similar to that of the 2011 Kingdom New Testament, which has “every person.”

<sup>b</sup> Grk. noun *opheiletēs* (ὀφειλέτης); “a debtor” (LS, 580), akin to “one who is in debt in a monetary sense,” as well as “one who is guilty of a misdeed, one who is culpable, at fault,” “in relation to God, sinner” (BDAG, 742-743).

Many English versions render this as something like “under obligation” (NASU), “obligated” (NIV, ESV), or “bound” (RSV). It may be said that the rendering of *opheiletēs* as “debtor” (KJV/NKJV, YLT, ASV, LITV) is required because of how 5:2 previously uses *ouden ὀφελῆσει* (οὐδὲν ὀφελήσει) as “no profit,” an obvious wordplay. The rendering of “debtor” also has to be kept in mind in view of the loss of salvation posited in 5:4 following.

Paul’s word here can be very confusing if the result of the action described is not kept in view: a falling away from grace (5:4). How would the non-Jewish Believers in Galatia being circumcised as proselytes merit this condition? By making themselves “debtor[s] to do the whole Torah” (5:3), and thusly subjected to the curse of the Torah, from which the work of the Messiah has released the redeemed (3:13). New proselytes to Judaism were supposed to be made aware of penalties to be incurred from Torah violation (b. *Yevamot* 47a-b). It is also not at all difficult to see how Jewish authorities circumcising new proselytes, would make them swear some sort of an oath of allegiance to keep all the Torah, and if broken be subjected to its curse—something having been performed by the returned exiles in Nehemiah 10:28-29, as well as having been required by the new members of the Qumran community (1QS 5.7-13).

Far from God’s Torah being a debt to the redeemed in Yeshua, they are to fulfill it via the supernatural compulsion of the Holy Spirit, with its penalties having been remitted (cf. Romans 8:1-4). For the Galatians to turn Torah-keeping into some debt with penalties via proselytization, such would be tantamount to claiming that Yeshua’s grace and mercy were insufficient to be redeemed and reckoned as God’s own, and for them to return to a curse that He had broken over all who receive Him.

For a further review of relevant details, consult the FAQ, “Galatians 5:2-3.”

<sup>c</sup> “You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am YHWH” (Leviticus 19:18, PME).

***The Fruit of the Spirit and the Works of the Flesh***

- <sup>16</sup> But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the lust of the flesh.
- <sup>17</sup> For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you would want.
- <sup>18</sup> But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Torah<sup>a</sup>.
- <sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: fornication, impurity, licentiousness,
- <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions,
- <sup>21</sup> envying, drunkenness, carousing, and the like, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God.
- <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
- <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law.
- <sup>24</sup> And those who belong to Messiah Yeshua have executed the flesh on a wooden scaffold, with its passions and lusts.
- <sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.
- <sup>26</sup> Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

**6*****Bear One Another's Burden***

- <sup>1</sup> Brothers and sisters, even if a person is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, lest you also be tempted.
- <sup>2</sup> Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the Torah of Messiah<sup>b</sup>.
- <sup>3</sup> For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.
- <sup>4</sup> 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.
- <sup>5</sup> For each one will bear his own load.
- <sup>6</sup> And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches.
- <sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a person sows, this he will also reap.
- <sup>8</sup> For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.
- <sup>9</sup> And let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.
- <sup>10</sup> So then, as we have opportunity, let us work toward the good of all people, and especially toward those who are of the household of the faith.

***Final Warning and Benediction***

- <sup>11</sup> See with what large letters I write to you with my own hand.
- <sup>12</sup> As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, they compel you to be circumcised, *and* only so that they may not be persecuted for the wooden scaffold of Messiah.
- <sup>13</sup> For those who are circumcised do not even themselves keep the Torah, but they desire to have you circumcised, so that they may glory in your flesh.
- <sup>14</sup> But far be it from me to glory, except in the wooden scaffold of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, through which the world has been executed on a wooden scaffold to me, and I to the world.

<sup>a</sup> Grk. *hupo nomon* (ὑπὸ νόμον).

<sup>b</sup> Grk. *ton nomon tou Christou* (τὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ); "the Torah of Messiah" (TLV); "the Torah's true meaning, which the Messiah upholds" (CJB).

<sup>15</sup> For neither is circumcision anything, nor foreskin, but a new creation.

<sup>16</sup> And as many as will walk by this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

<sup>17</sup> Henceforth let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Yeshua.

<sup>18</sup> The grace of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.