Introduction to Paul's Letter to the Galatians

Preface

Paul's letters are not abstract theological treatises, they are letters written from the heart and addressed to churches for which Paul had an intimate concern. They formed a vital part of Paul's ministry, representing one element of the pastoral oversight of the apostle for churches founded through his ministry. They reflect much of the man and his passion for Christ while equally reflecting the situation and concerns of the congregations to which they were written. Of none is this more evident that the letter to the Galatians.

In introducing what may be the first of Paul's letters[1], we will trace the story of Paul, from his origins as the Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, through conversion and commencement of missionary activity, down to the time when he dashed off this letter to the churches of Galatia. I do not apologise for this lengthy introduction; it is my conviction that the letter to the Galatians cannot rightly be understood apart from the experiences which Paul personally had suffered and the controversies which surrounded the birth of the first Gentile churches. In the words of Longenecker:

> "Whatever its place in the lists of antiquity, the letter to the Galatians takes programmatic primacy for (1) an understanding of Paul's teaching, (2) the establishing of a Pauline chronology, (3) the tracing out of the course of early apostolic history, and (4) the determination of many NT critical and canonical issues. It may even have been the first written of Paul's extant letters. Possibly as well, excluding the confessional portions incorporated throughout the NT, it antedates everything else written in the NT. It is necessary, therefore, to understand Galatians aright if we are to understand Paul and the rest of the NT aright."

No construction of Paul's story can avoid controversy concerning the order of various events, and this is particularly the case when seeking to relate the narrative of Acts to Paul's account in Galatians 1-2. I have put the story together in accordance with my assessment of the evidence, but take the trouble to assess the issues for yourself.

On the related issue concerning the identity of the Galatian churches, I hold to what is commonly known as the *South Galatian* theory, namely that the reference is to the Roman province of Galatia rather than the smaller territory of that name[2]. Paul is writing therefore to the churches planted during his first missionary journey, namely those of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.

Saul the Pharisee

Saul was born in Greek university city of Tarsus to Jewish parents who were also Roman citizens. He was later educated in Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Paul would therefore have had a good understanding of Greek culture and philosophy (see, for instance, Acts 17:28), while also being proud of belonging to the party of the Pharisees.

The Pharisees were a political group which exercised considerable influence in the last two centuries BC. Wright argues that with the loss of control over the Temple in the second century BC, the focus within this group began to shift from national purity with its focus on Temple ceremony to personal purity. The careful observance of the distinctives of detailed personal purity (such as the food laws) constituted a form of political action or protest. Concern for such purity led in turn to detailed study of and commentary upon the law and to the development of the Mishnah. The Pharisees were thus the precursors of the rabbis.

---

[1] In accordance with the view taken here of the churches to which the letter was written. Older commentators, such as Lightfoot, thought Galatians was written at much the same time as Paul's letter to the Romans due to similarities in the theme and argument of the two letters.

[2] A theory most ably argued by Ramsay.

With the arrival of Roman rule in 63 BC, the ability of the Pharisees to exert any political power was curtailed and the focus of their concern shifted even more towards personal piety – though they still embraced political action such as refusing to swear allegiance to new rulers. They viewed themselves as guardians of the traditions of Israel and saw their mission as that of summoning Israel to return to its ancestral traditions and her independent theocratic status. While there were occasions when Pharisees supported revolutionary action, their chief hope seems to have been that God himself would act to vindicate his people, sending the Messiah, gathering the dispersed Israelites, destroying Israel's enemies and restoring Jerusalem and the Temple. Such waiting for God to act could sometimes verge on fatalism (see Gamaliel's words recorded in Acts 5:33-39). On the whole, these expectations appear to have been for a distant rather than imminent act of God.

In contrast with the Sadducees, Pharisees believed that history had a goal or purpose, for it was the arena in which God is working out his purposes. They believed in a future life and in the resurrection of the body and in the reality of the spiritual realm, the reality of both angels and demons. Many of *these* elements of Pharisaic teaching are evident in the subsequent teaching of Paul, though now always having their focus in Christ and his cross and resurrection.

Hellenists and Hebrews

In Palestine, the period between the death of Herod the Great (4 BC) and the destruction of the Temple (70 AD) was one marked by Jewish nationalistic fervour. Frequent revolts against the Roman occupying powers were commonly answered with brutal repression. It was within such a context that the church in Jerusalem was born with conflicting implicit pressures to:

- Identify itself as a movement within Judaism rather than one foreign to Judaism with consequent arousal of nationalistic antagonism;
- Demonstrate that the Christian message offered no political threat to the governing power of Rome.

The latter of these concerns is clearly part of the sub-text of the book of Acts, but it is just as important to recognise the former, particularly as it forms part of the background to the delicate relationship between the church at Jerusalem and the developing Gentile mission and is also (I would suggest) a significant element in the background to the letter to the Galatians.

There appears to have been some tensions in the Jerusalem church between Jewish believers whose first language was Greek (Hellenists) and those whose first language was Hebrew, or more properly, Aramaic (Acts 6:1f.), this may have reflected broader divisions within the Jerusalem Jewish community generally[3].

Stephen was a gifted preacher from among the Hellenists. His preaching of Christ represented a direct attack upon the Jewish traditions which venerated Jerusalem and the Temple. As such, they seem particularly to have angered certain Hellenistic Jews. Acts 6:9 states that, "Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called) – Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia." There is some debate whether there is a single synagogue spoken of here or several. Bruce thinks that it was a single synagogue made up of Jewish freedmen from these various regions, and this is also reflected in the NIV translation cited above. This may well have been the synagogue attended by Paul since he was a freedman from Cilicia. Members of this synagogue had chosen to settle in Jerusalem presumably because they viewed Jerusalem and its Temple as holy places, central to their faith. Stephen's preaching so stirred up their anger that they stoned him to death while Paul stood by and watched, "giving approval to his death" (Acts 8:1).

---

[3]　The tensions led to the election of the 'Seven' of whom Bruce writes, "The Seven were originally the leaders of the Hellenists in the Jerusalem church, and after the death of Stephen the survivors probably took a leading part among the Hellenists of the dispersion."

From the earliest years of the Jerusalem church we see that Jews from those very areas where Paul was later to travel as a missionary were the most fervent defenders of Judaism and the keenest opponents of any teaching they deemed an attack upon the traditions of the fathers.

Stephen's death triggered a more general persecution of the church in Jerusalem causing many of the disciples to flee from the city. However, the apostles were able to stay in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). It is perhaps not entirely speculative to suggest that those who suffered persecution were Hellenistic believers while Hebrew Christians were able to remain in the city largely unmolested. The Hebrew Christians seem to have lived alongside their Jewish neighbours with little conflict.

Having witnessed the preaching and execution of Stephen, Paul was concerned to stamp out the growing Christian movement, particularly the spread of Christianity beyond Jerusalem through the agency of the scattered Christians. Paul saw the Christian message as a direct attack upon the traditions for which he was most zealous and a threat to the preservation of a pure remnant covenant community:

- Preserved by means of personal purity involving careful and detailed lawkeeping;
- Awaiting the coming of the Messiah which would be accompanied by the destruction of Roman rule, the restoration of Jerusalem and the Temple and return of the theocracy.

Conversion

The circumstances of Paul's conversion are recorded in three separate passages in Acts (9:3-19; 22:6-16; 26:9-23).

Damascus had a sizeable Jewish community and many of the Christians who fled the persecution that followed Stephen's death may have settled there (though there seems already to have been a Christian presence in the city). With letters of authority from the High Priest, Paul travelled from Jerusalem towards Damascus, intent on seizing Christians and bringing them back to Jerusalem in chains.

On the road he was confronted by the risen Christ. He saw 'a light from heaven, brighter than the sun' and heard Christ demanding, 'Why do you persecute me?' He was blinded and broken and had to be led by the hand into Damascus. He was so overwhelmed by the experience that he could neither eat nor drink for three days. All he could do was pray.

In Damascus, Ananias was directed by Christ to visit Paul. Ananias, greeting him as 'Brother Paul', delivered a message from Christ and restored Paul's sight. Paul was then baptised.

It is hard to underestimate the impact of this experience on Paul. His whole life and understanding was turned upside down. This conversion experience was a formative influence in Paul's theology:

- Paul understood from this encounter that Jesus was the Christ, a crucified and risen Messiah and 'Lord of glory';
- He knew now that all the prophecies of Scripture find their focus and fulfilment in Jesus Christ;
- He understood that the divine Messiah had come not as a warrior to defeat the Romans but as the Suffering Servant, that his kingdom was not of this world;
- He understood that Christ and his people form one body – to persecute Christians is to persecute Christ;
- He understood that Christians, however different their backgrounds, are brothers in Christ – it is they, not the Jews zealous for the traditions of the fathers, who are the covenant community of the Messiah;

- He knew that he had received a commission to preach the Gospel directly from the risen Saviour;

- He believed that his own conversion experience was, in one sense, normative for believers (see 2 Cor. 4:3-6).

Damascus and Return to Jerusalem

Paul stayed at Damascus for two to three years, except for a short trip into 'Arabia' (Gal 1:17), probably the Nabatean kingdom near Damascus. Paul's preaching in Damascus stirred up opposition from the Jews in the city who, with the support of Aretas, the Nabatean king, sought to destroy Paul (Acts 9:23-25; 2 Cor. 11:32f.). Paul made his escape by being let down from the city wall in a basket and returning to Jerusalem.

This visit to Jerusalem (Acts 9:26-30) is that also described in Galatians 1:18-24 (so F.F. Bruce, John Drane). Barnabas introduced Paul to the apostles and he spent time with Peter and also met James the Lord's brother.

In Jerusalem, Paul began preaching particularly to the Hellenists (Acts 9:29), a group with which he was familiar. Just as Stephen's preaching to this group had stirred up violent opposition so also did the preaching of Paul – the themes of Paul's preaching may well have been very similar to those of Stephen. With the encouragement of the Jerusalem Christians, and through instruction from Christ in a vision (Acts 9:29f.; 22:17-21), Paul left for Tarsus via Caesarea. He spent the next eleven years in Cilicia (of which Tarsus was the capital) and Syria, probably still unknown to many Christians. We have no clear information on the period of Paul's life between Acts 9:30 and 11:25. "Probably during this period he 'suffered the loss of all things' (Phil 3:8) and endured some of the trials encountered in 2 Cor. 11:23ff." (Bruce)

With the departure of Paul, the church at Jerusalem (indeed, in the whole of Judea, Galilee and Samaria) enjoyed a period of peace and prosperity (Acts 9:31). The life of the Palestinian church depended upon good relationships with the larger world of Judaism.

Ministry at Antioch

The first church containing a substantial portion of Gentiles sprang up at Antioch through the witness of Greek speaking Jewish Christians, scattered after the persecution that followed Stephen's death (Acts 11:19-21). First century Antioch was a city which prided itself on toleration, with even its Jewish population more open to Gentiles than anywhere else in the Jewish diaspora. Many Gentiles were associated with the Jewish synagogues in the city. "So when the Christian gospel came to Antioch, it was received not only by Jews but also by Gentiles who had been mentally and spiritually prepared by Judaism. A great number of people at Antioch, Acts tells us, accepted the gospel message and committed themselves to Jesus. Since, however, this group was made up of both Jews and Gentiles, the city's population had to find a name for them that would distinguish them from Jews and from all the devotees of the various pagan religions of the city. So they nicknamed them 'Christians'." (Longenecker)

When the church at Jerusalem heard news of Antioch they sent Barnabas to discover what was going on[4]. He immediately recognised that these infant Christians needed encouragement and teaching and so went to Tarsus in search of Paul. For a year Paul, once a proud Pharisee, laboured with Barnabas in the instruction of young Christians, both Jew and Gentile, showing them that all of Scripture finds its focus and fulfilment in Jesus the Christ, the Saviour of the world. We should not underestimate the formative nature of this period in developing Paul's understanding of the missionary purposes of God and the character of the Gospel and of its demands upon the Gentiles.

---

[4]   Is it reading too much into these verses to suggest that there may have been some at Jerusalem who were troubled, or at least concerned, when they heard that in Antioch Gentiles were professing faith in Jesus the Christ?

At some point during this year, Agabus, a prophet from Jerusalem, came to Antioch predicting famine. In response, the church at Antioch decided to collect and send money to the church at Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas took the gift to Jerusalem (Acts 11:27-30). This visit appears to be the one of which Paul speaks in Galatians 2:1ff. (in which he speaks of taking Titus as well as Barnabas[5]). Paul speaks of having gone up to Jerusalem 'in response to a revelation', i.e. the prophecy of Agabus.

Barnabas had originally been sent to Antioch from Jerusalem and it would seem likely that he took advantage of the return visit to speak of the progress of the work. It would seem that there was a significant group within the church at Jerusalem who were unhappy with what was going on in Antioch and were suspicious of the ministry of Paul (perhaps particularly because of the presence of Titus, an uncircumcised Gentile)[6]. This group would seem to have been of the view that for a Gentile to become a Christian, a follower of the Messiah, they must be circumcised and obey the Mosaic law (Galatians 2:2,4). Paul therefore sought a private meeting with the leaders of the Jerusalem church, among whom James, Peter and John are mentioned by name (Galatians 2:9). Paul outlined the gospel he was preaching among the Gentiles and received the commendation of the apostles, "They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews." (Galatians 2:9). The only request made of Paul and Barnabas was that they should continue to remember the poor (Gal. 2:10). The 'collection' remained an important element in Paul's missionary activity.

It is important to understand the significance of this meeting: it did not provide apostolic authority (from Peter, John and perhaps James), for Paul's ministry – Paul is insistent that he received his commission and authority directly from God (Galatians 1:1,11-12). At this meeting the Jerusalem apostles recognised that Paul had been commissioned by Christ for the work just as they had been. Furthermore, their commendation of Paul acknowledged the legitimacy of Gentile mission and recognised that the gospel imperative was for obedience to Christ (Romans 1:5) rather than to Moses.

First Missionary Journey

Paul's pattern of missionary work and church planting seems to have developed during his early ministry at Antioch[7]. The teaching ministry of Paul and Barnabas seems from the first to have been designed to create a mature fellowship of believers among whom there would be several who would be able to take on the work of teaching and of pastoral oversight. At the beginning of Acts 13 we read that the church possessed a number of gifted prophets and teachers. It may not be reading too much into the Acts account to suggest also that the church at Antioch was already the centre of missionary outreach into the surrounding region since the letter from the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 was addressed to "the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia." This, I suggest, is the background against which the church at Antioch heard the call of God for Paul and Barnabas to be set apart for more extensive missionary work (Acts 13:2).

Paul and Barnabas set out accompanied by John Mark, a cousin of Barnabas who had accompanied them on their return from Jerusalem (Acts 12:25). They travelled first to

---

[5]   This view of other commentators that the Jerusalem visit of Galatians 2 was the visit associated with the convening of the Jerusalem Council is rejected primarily because it would seem unlikely that Peter's would have behaved as described in Gal 2:11 after that council. To suppose that his lapse was later than the Council is to make him guilty, in Ramsay's words, of "meaningless tergiversation." Longenecker says, "The situation at Syrian Antioch, it seems, could only have arisen where there were no clear guidelines to govern table fellowship between Jewish and Gentile Christians."

[6]   See comment in fn2, also cf. Acts 11:2-3.

[7]   It may have begun even before that with his undocumented years of ministry around Tarsus, in Cilicia and Syria (Galatians 1:21, cf. Acts 9:30; 11:25). Indeed, it is evident that on the occasion of Paul's visit to Jerusalem recorded in Gal 2:9 – which we have argued to be the visit of Acts 11:30 – Paul was already recognised as having a ministry to the Gentiles.

Cyprus, the native island of Barnabas (Acts 4:36) and the place from which Christians had first come to preach to the Gentiles at Antioch (Acts 11:20). In each town the missionaries visited they first sought out the Jewish community and made use of the opportunity afforded by the synagogue to preach Christ. It is at this stage that Paul became the clear leader of the missionary band and references to 'Barnabas and Paul' now become 'Paul and Barnabas'.

Having traversed Cyprus from east to west, Paul and his companions sailed north to Perga where Mark left them to return to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas continued to travel north, now overland, crossing the Taurus range of mountains and, after 100 miles, arriving at Pisidian Antioch. Paul's preaching in the synagogue aroused considerable interest, initially both among Jews and Gentiles. However, such was the interest among the Gentiles[8] that the Jews were moved with jealousy and spoke out strongly against Paul's preaching. Eventually, as the message of the gospel began to effect the surrounding region (Acts 13:49), the Jews stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and expelled them from that area.

From Pisidian Antioch Paul and Barnabas travelled east to Iconium where they again preached in the synagogue and many Jews and Gentiles became believers. Though there were Jews who opposed Paul's preaching and stirred up opposition, Paul and Barnabas were able to stay some while in Iconium ministering the word and performing acts of healing. Eventually, however, the opposition became so heated that they had to leave the city for Lystra.

Paul and Barnabas seem to have ministered quietly in Lystra for some time and to have won over a number of disciples. However, Paul's healing of a man crippled from birth aroused considerable popular excitement, even to the point of the people wishing to recognise them as gods. Jews who opposed Paul's ministry travelled from Pisidian Antioch and Iconium to Lystra[9] and took advantage of the public excitement to turn the crowd against Paul. Paul was stoned, dragged outside the city and left for dead, where many of the disciples gathered around him. Paul revived and, getting up, went back into the city. The following day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

Many years later, Paul still had vivid memories of the persecutions and suffering he endured at Antioch, Iconium and Lystra (2 Timothy 3:11). The stoning at Lystra may have occasioned the 'marks' (στιγματα) Paul refers to in Galatians 6:17.

Having seen many converted in Derbe, Paul and Barnabas returned to Lystra, Iconium and Pisidian Antioch. This was certainly not the most direct route home. From Derbe they could have continued southeast to Paul's home town of Tarsus and then on overland to Syrian Antioch. Their route was dictated by their determination to revisit the churches they had planted, strengthen the disciples and encourage them to remain true to the faith in the face of opposition and persecution (Acts 14:22). In each of the churches they appointed elders who would watch over and care for the young believers.

When Paul and Barnabas returned to Syrian Antioch they shared with the church all that God had done through them and particularly the remarkable response of the Gentiles to the gospel (Acts 14:27). Paul and Barnabas then remained for some time ministering in Antioch.

Antioch and Jerusalem

The following reconstruction of events is of necessity tentative. Nevertheless, after careful consideration of the New Testament evidence and the various arguments of scholars and commentators, I would suggest that it was after Paul's first missionary journey and during this

---

8   Luke, perhaps with a touch of exaggeration, says that "on the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord."

9   The strength of opposition may be judged from the fact that Pisidian Antioch was 100 miles from Lystra.

---

extended period of ministry at Antioch that the events occurred which prompted Paul's letter to the Galatian churches of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe[10].

The New Testament evidence does not allow us to be dogmatic concerning every nuance of the relationship between the churches at Jerusalem and Syrian Antioch. Nevertheless, a number of points may be made:

- The church at Jerusalem viewed itself/was viewed as the centre of the Christian movement. It was the church of the apostles, 'mother church' to other churches and viewed itself as having some responsibility towards other congregations. This much is seen in the sending of Barnabas to Antioch, the visit of Peter (which we shall consider below), and the subsequent Council of Jerusalem. From the perspective of Jerusalem, church government was, quite naturally, modelled on Judaism.

- The church at Antioch was developing in a manner independent of and distinct from the church at Jerusalem. It was a single church of both Jews and Gentiles and had become the centre for outreach into the Gentile world.

- There were some among the church in Jerusalem who were suspicious of and unhappy with the developments at Antioch and of the growing Gentile churches. Gentile converts in Pisidian Antioch, Iconium and Lystra had resulted in a Jewish backlash with the consequent persecution of Christian believers. Maybe they feared a similar backlash in Jerusalem. Their chief concern seems to have been to persuade Gentile Christians to fully identify with Judaism (Gal 2:3-4,12).

In Galatians 2:11-21 we read of a visit by Peter to Antioch. At first he was content to eat with the Gentile believers, conforming, one would assume, with the general practice of the church at Antioch where believers, Jew and Gentile, enjoyed full fellowship with one another. No doubt Peter recalled the lesson he had been taught through his vision on the housetop in Joppa and his visit to the house of Cornelius, Acts 10:1-11:18[11]. However, when "certain men came from James" Peter withdrew and would no longer eat with the Gentiles.

Little more is told us of these visitors but it is perhaps not entirely fanciful to suggest that here the issue was both cultural and pragmatic. The church at Jerusalem under the leadership of James, identified strongly with its Jewish roots, carefully keeping the law both as a matter of practice and as a basis for mission to its own community. The Jerusalem church would not have been in the habit of eating with Gentiles. The visitors from James were acting in accordance with their culture and practice when they scrupled at eating with Gentiles. They may also have been concerned that close fellowship with Gentiles might provoke zealot minded Jews in Jerusalem to fresh persecution of Jewish Christians (see note on 2:12 *ad loc*). Peter, placed in the difficult position of having to side with those from Jerusalem or with those at Antioch decided to eat with the those who had come from James, leading other Jews at Antioch, including even Barnabas, to follow his example.

---

[10]   Longenecker makes much of the fact that no mention is made of Timothy in this letter whereas Barnabas is mentioned three times. He writes, "Now if the recipients of the Galatian letter were residents of northern Galatia, it must be assumed that Timothy was as involved in their evangelization as he was in the founding of the churches in the provinces of Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia. Yet Paul does not mention him in Galatians. And that failure to mention Timothy (also, of course, Silas, though without as strong circumstantial support), along with his repeated references to Barnabas, argues strongly against a North Galatian hypothesis. Not only so, but it also speaks against the classical form of the South Galatian hypothesis (which places the writing of Galatians after Acts 16:6), for it is virtually unthinkable that Paul would have addressed a letter to Christians in an area that included Lystra without sending news or making any mention of their native son. Thus the absence of Timothy in Galatians is strong circumstantial evidence in favour of the view that Paul wrote before Timothy joined the missionary party and that the addressees of the letter lived in the southern portion of the province – necessitating that ... the letter was sent before Paul made his return trip to the region as recounted in Acts 16:1-5."

[11]   The extensive reporting of this incident in the book of Acts underlines its central importance to the development of the mission of the risen Christ.

Paul publicly and roundly condemned Peter for his actions. For Paul the issue lay at the heart of the gospel and amounted simply to this: on what basis were Gentiles to be accepted as part of the covenant community of the people of God? Was it on the basis of entry into Judaism with its lawkeeping or simply on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ? We are not told of the outcome of this rebuke. Did Peter and the visitors from James subsequently eat with the Gentile believers? Longenecker suggests that the issue was still not resolved when Paul wrote to the Galatians (see Gal 2:11-14 *ad loc*).

At much the same time it would seem that there were 'Judaisers' who were creating problems for the Gentile Christians of the new churches in Galatia. They were seeking to persuade them to observe the Jewish law, arguing particularly that they should be circumcised. The teaching of these Judaisers seems to have included the following elements:

- The Jewish persecution being experienced by these Galatian Christians could be averted if only they would identify themselves with the Jewish community by being circumcised (Gal 6:12-13)[12];

- They suggested that Paul lacked apostolic authority, or at least that his authority was secondary to and derived from that of the Jerusalem apostles[13];

- They insisted that to be part of Abrahamic covenant community a person must be circumcised and must keep the law;

- They suggested that the adoption of the whole gamut of Jewish legal code was the only way to avoid the sinful lifestyle common among the Gentiles, the only way to curb the flesh.

[12] Longenecker concludes that Paul's opponents were Jewish Christians from Jerusalem who were motivated by a concern for the welfare of Palestinian Christians amidst the rising pressures of Jewish nationalism. "We conclude, therefore, that Paul's opponents were Jewish Christians – or, more accurately, Christian Jews – who came from the Jerusalem church to Paul's churches in Galatia with a message stressing the need for Gentiles to be circumcised and to keep the rudiments of the cultic calendar, both for full acceptance by God and as a proper Christian lifestyle. Undoubtedly they presented their message as being theologically based and claimed to be only interested in Gentiles being fully integrated into the chosen people of Israel, and so full recipients of the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. Probably, as well, they claimed not to be opposing Paul but to be completing his message, and so bringing the Galatian Christians to perfection. Perhaps they also claimed to be representing James' pastoral concerns regarding Jewish-Gentile relations in Christian communities outside Palestine. Paul, however, accuses them of being primarily motivated by a desire to avoid persecution, and so to boast about Gentiles being circumcised (6:12-13)... For, as Jewett points out, in the rising tide of Jewish nationalism in Palestine, with the antagonism of the Zealots being directed against all who had Gentile sympathisers: 'If they could succeed in circumcising the Gentile Christians, this might effectively thwart any Zealot purification campaign against the Judean church!'"

[13] Bruce suggests that the argument of the Judaisers went something along these lines, "The Jerusalem leaders are the only persons with authority to say what the true gospel is, and this authority they received direct from Christ. Paul has no comparable authority: any commission he exercises is derived by him from the Jerusalem leaders, and if he differs from them on the content or implications of the gospel, he is acting and teaching quite arbitrarily. If fact, they may have added, Paul went up to Jerusalem shortly after his conversion and spent some time with the apostles there. They instructed him in the first principles of the gospel, seeing that he was a man of uncommon intellect, magnanimously wiped out from their minds his record as a persecutor and authorised him to preach to others the gospel which he had learned from them. But when he left Jerusalem for Syria and Cilicia he began to adapt the gospel to make it palatable to Gentiles. The Jerusalem leaders practised circumcision and obeyed the law and the customs, but Paul struck out on a line of his own, omitting circumcision and other ancient observances from the message he preached, and thus he betrayed his ancestral heritage. This law-free gospel has no authority but his own; he certainly did not receive it from the apostles, who disapproved of his course of action. Their disapproval was publicly shown on one occasion at Antioch, when there was a direct confrontation between Peter and him on the necessity of maintaining the Jewish food-laws."

It would seem that when Paul heard news of this propaganda among the Galatian churches the believers had not yet been won over by it (the appeal to "stand firm" in 5:1 suggests that they had not yet been circumcised), but clearly they were being swayed. It may even have been that Paul heard of the problem because they sent to Antioch asking his advice.

At much the same time we read in Acts 15:1 that "Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: 'Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.'". It is tempting to speculate concerning the relationship between the three groups mentioned above, the 'certain men' who came from James, those who were troubling the Galatian churches and these 'men [who] came down from Judea to Antioch'. Is there one party who travelled from Jerusalem through Antioch and on into Galatia before returning to Antioch, or are there two or three groups? We can at least suppose that all were part of a common movement which was fomenting a crisis for the churches, even if we conclude that the various groups occupied differing positions within that movement.

The crisis provoked a twofold response:

- Paul dashed off his Letter to Galatians seeking to call them back to the simplicity of the gospel he had preached to them[14];

- Paul and Barnabas, along with other believers from the church at Antioch, were sent off to Jerusalem to meet with the church there and to resolve the issues once and for all.

On their way to Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas travelled through Phoenicia and Samaria telling the various churches of the conversion of the Gentiles – almost as if they drummed up support for their cause as they travelled to the Council

The Council of Jerusalem

For an excellent summary of the Jerusalem Council, its background, decisions and consequences, see the note from FF Bruce included in the notes for Acts 15 (Day 174 – June 23rd). Here I intend only to summarise the council as follows:

- The council stated that those who had gone out from Jerusalem and had caused disturbance among the churches had done so without the any authorisation from the apostles at Jerusalem;

- They affirmed that Gentile converts need not be circumcised nor need they seek to comply with the Jewish law;

- They exhorted Gentile believers to "abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality." The intent of these requirements, with the exception perhaps of the last, would seem to have been to encourage Gentile converts to accommodate to the sensitivities of their Jewish brothers and sisters.

The decision was formulated in terms of a letter that was sent "To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia." (Acts 15:23)[15].

The letter from the Council was sent back to the church at Antioch with Paul and Barnabas who were also accompanied by Judas and Silas, two leaders from Jerusalem. When the message was conveyed to the church it was the cause of much rejoicing. Judas and Silas also encouraged the church through their ministry.

---

[14] Longenecker says, "It seems best... to conclude that Paul wrote Galatians on the eve of the Jerusalem Council, before the issues arising from the Antioch episode had been fully resolved."

[15] These seem to have been the areas of Paul's ministry prior to his first missionary journey (cf. Galatians 2:21).

The Council put an end to the formal question of whether Gentile converts should be circumcised. It also endorsed the legitimacy of different patterns of church life such as the Jewish church at Jerusalem and the predominantly Gentile churches of the Diaspora. It emphasised the mutual obligation of Christians one to another and also of separate churches one to another.

Postscript: The Start of Paul's Second Missionary Journey

Some time later Paul determined to revisit the churches planted in his first missionary journey (Acts 15:36). After an argument over Mark, Paul and Barnabas parted company – there is no suggestion that the disagreement was connected with Barnabas' conduct in withdrawing from table fellowship with the Gentile Christians. Silas, one of the delegates from Jerusalem who had conveyed the decision of the council, now accompanied Paul, underlining the support of the church at Jerusalem for the missionary work of Paul.

Paul and Silas visited the churches of Galatia, beginning with Derbe and then travelling on to Lystra and beyond. They informed the churches of the decisions reached by the council at Jerusalem which must greatly have encouraged them. We read that the churches "were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers." (Acts 16:5).

One incident requires particular attention. At Lystra, a young believer called Timothy was commended to Paul by the leaders of the churches at Lystra and Iconium. Timothy's mother was a Jew who had brought him up in the faith but his father was a Greek. Paul wished Timothy to accompany him in his journey and assist in his work but before doing so he had him circumcised 'because of the Jews who lived in that area' (Acts 16:3). Paul was ready to regularise Timothy's status as a Jew by having him circumcised, so avoiding unnecessary offence concerning Timothy's ministry. Bruce says, "That he did so is striking, in view of such passages as Gal 2:3; 5:3 etc., but Timothy's was an exceptional case. Paul's readiness to conciliate Jewish opinion is seen elsewhere in Ac., e.g., 21:26; cf. 1 Cor 9:19-22 for his justification of such action." The situation was very different from that addressed by Paul in his letter to the Galatians: there *Gentiles* were being told that circumcision was essential to their salvation and that without it they could not be part of the covenant community of the people of God. The circumcision of Timothy does not require a later dating of the letter to the Galatians[16]. Indeed, had Paul circumcised Timothy before the Galatian crisis arose, this would surely have formed an important element in the argument of Paul's opponents and would have required explicit treatment by Paul in his letter to the Galatians (cf. Longenecker's comments cited in footnote 10).

By the time Paul commenced his second missionary journey, the crisis which formed the focus of the letter to the Galatians, had passed[17].

The Structure of Paul's Letter to the Galatians

Paul's letters reflect something of the common epistolary forms of his day, though Paul is not a slave to any rigid form. Speaking particularly of his letter to the Galatians, Longenecker says that it is made up of a "combination of Hellenistic epistolary structures, Greco-Roman

---

[16] A second chronological problem relates to fitting in the three and fourteen year timespans of Gal 1:18 and 2:1. Longenecker says, "At least two of the following three assumptions must be made:
   i)   That the three years and fourteen years are concurrent, not consecutive – that is, that both are to be measured from Paul's conversion, and not that the fourteen years of Gal 2:1 are to be counted from Paul's first visit;
   ii) That Paul in Gal 1:18 and 2:1 is using a method of computation wherein parts of years are counted as full years; and
   iii) That Jesus' crucifixion took place in AD 30, with Paul's conversion two or three years afterwards."

[17] Although Judaisers remained a problem among the churches associated with Paul (cf. Phil 3:2f.), and suspicion of Paul continued among a sizable group in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 21:20-21).

---

rhetorical forms, Jewish exegetical procedures, and Christian soteriological confessions – together, of course, with Paul's own revelatory experiences and pastoral concerns." His letters are usually structured after the following pattern:

- *Opening* (sender, addressee or addressees, greeting);

- *Thanksgiving* or *Blessing* (often with intercession);

- *Body* (formal opening, connective and transitional formulae, eschatological climax, and sometimes a travelogue);

- *Paranesis* (with vocatives prevalent);

- *Closing* (greetings, doxology, benediction, with a reference to the writing process sometimes includes).

Longenecker suggests that the letter to the Galatians falls into the following sections:

1:1-5	Salutation;
1:6-4:11	Rebuke Section, with the inclusion of autobiographical details and theological arguments;
4:12-6:10	Request Section, with the inclusion of personal, scriptural, and ethical appeals;
6:11-18	Subscription.

Barrett suggests a rather simpler division:

Chs 1-2	*History*	– Paul defends his own history in order to gain a hearing;
Chs 3-4	*Theology*	of Freedom;
Chs 5-6	*Ethics*	of obligation.

Here then is the letter to the Galatians: a letter written in about 48 AD in the heat of a crisis which threatened Gentile mission and indeed challenged the very character of the Gospel. It is a passionate letter, written in defence of the Gospel of Grace and written to save the Galatian Christians from a return to slavery.

Longenecker sums up its significance when he writes, "Historically, Galatians has been foundational for many forms of Christian doctrine, proclamation and practice. And it remains true today to say that how one understands the issues and teaching of Galatians determines in large measure what kind of theology is espoused, what kind of message is proclaimed, and what kind of lifestyle is practised."

Referenced Works – on the above Introduction

Bruce, FF	*The Acts of the Apostles*, Tyndale Press, London, 2nd ed., 1952
Drane, John	*Paul*, Lion Publishing, Berkhamstead, 1976
Wright, NT	*The New Testament and the People of God*, SPCK, London, 1992

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Galatians

Barrett, CK	*Freedom and Obligation*, SPCK, London 1985
Longenecker, Richard N	*Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary Vol 41, Word Books, Dallas, 1990
Machen, J Gresham	*Notes on Galatians*, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Philadelphia, 1973
Ramsay, WM	*Historical Commentary on the Galatians*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1899
Ridderbos, Herman N	*The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1953

Galatians 1:1-3

The letter begins with the conventional form of salutation, "A to B, greetings".

Galatians 1:1

Παῦλος ἀπόστολος, οὐκ ἀπ᾽ ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ δι᾽ ἀνθρώπου ἀλλὰ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν,

"In the NT the noun ἀπόστολος connotes personal, delegated authority; it speaks of being commissioned to represent another." Longenecker
"He means that the Lord Jesus has given to him, as to the original twelve, a very special authority to speak, in Christ's name, for the guidance of the church." Machen

οὐδε neither, nor

Paul's opponents would seem to have claimed that any authority Paul possessed was delegated from the true apostles in Jerusalem.

πατρὸς Noun, gen s πατηρ, πατρος m
    father

Longenecker argues that the sense is 'through Jesus Christ and [from] God the Father.' He continues, "Probably Paul had in mind his Damascus Road experience when referring to Jesus Christ as the agent in his apostleship, for it was the risen and exalted Jesus who commissioned him to be God's missioner to the Gentiles (cf. Acts 9:15-16; 22:21; 26:16-18)."

ἐγείραντος Verb, aor act ptc, m gen s ἐγειρω
    raise
νεκρος, α, ον dead

Galatians 1:2

καὶ οἱ σὺν ἐμοὶ πάντες ἀδελφοί, ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Γαλατίας·

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγω
πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας, πασα, παν
    gen παντος, πασης, παντος each, every
    (pl = all)
ἐκκλησια, ας f congregation, church

Note the plural here: Galatians was written to a group of churches – each congregation being referred to as a church.

Galatians 1:3

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,

εἰρηνη, ης f peace
πατρὸς Noun, gen s πατηρ, πατρος m
    father

"Such a joining of Christ with God is a reflection of the exalted place that the risen Christ had in Paul's thought. And while this almost unconscious association of Christ with God is here principally functional in nature, it very soon begins to assume a more elevated and Christocentric focus in Paul's other letters (cf. esp. the bipartite reference of 1 Thess 1:12 and the tripartite reference of 2 Cor 13:14) – which, of course, furnished important data for the Church's later trinitarian creeds." Longnecker

Galatians 1:4

τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν ὅπως ἐξέληται ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστῶτος πονηροῦ κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν,

Longenecker suggests that this verse, and perhaps also the next, reflect "one of the early confessions of the Christian church."

δόντος Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s διδωμι
    give

Cf. Mk 10:45.

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον reflexive pronoun,
    himself, herself, itself
ἁμαρτια, ας f sin
ὅπως (or ὅπως ἀν) that, in order that
ἐξέληται Verb, aor midd subj, 3s ἐξαιρεω
    pull out, midd rescue, deliver, save

A Pauline *hapax legomenon*, but cf. Acts 7:10,34; 12:11; 23:27; 26:17.

αἰῶνος Noun, gen s αἰων, αἰωνος m age,
    world order, eternity
ἐνεστῶτος Verb, perf act ptc, m & n gen s
    ἐνιστημι be present
πονηρος, α, ον evil, bad, wicked

"The Pharisees looked on 'this age' as coming to a climax in a period of awful 'messianic travail', which would usher in the 'age to come' and/or 'the Messianic Age.' ... [cf Rom 12:2]... Paul's use here of this confessional portion (if, indeed, this is what it is), with its stress on Christ's having rescued us from this present *evil* world, is, in fact, particularly relevant to his argument in Galatians, for later he makes the point that the law to which his converts are being urged to submit belongs to this present age and so can be characterised as one of 'the weak and miserable elementary principles of the world' (4:3,9)." Longenecker

θελημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

"The phrase ... underscores the fact that Christ's redemptive work and mankind's salvation are to be understood in the context of God's will and fatherly concern." Longenecker

Galatians 1:5

ᾧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν.

δοξα, ας f glory

εἰς τους αἰωνας των αἰωνων 'for ever and ever', the plural indicates endlessness.

Postscript

Note that, in this salutation, Paul speaks of God and of Christ in functional rather than ontological terms.

Galatians 1:6

Θαυμάζω ὅτι οὕτως ταχέως μετατίθεσθε ἀπὸ τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς ἐν χάριτι Χριστοῦ εἰς ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον,

Paul's letters usually include a thanksgiving section after the salutation but none appears in this letter.

θαυμαζω   wonder, be amazed

"A conventional expression in Greek letters from the third century BC through the fourth century AD to signal astonishment, rebuke, disapproval, and disappointment – even at times irony and irritation." Longenecker

ταχεως adv. (formed from ταχυς) quickly, at once, soon

Cf. LXX of Ex 32:8; Judg 2:17.

μετατιθημι remove, take back; midd desert, turn away

"The present tense of the verb μετατίθεσθε indicates clearly that when the apostle wrote, the apostasy of the Galatians was as yet only in process. They were, so to speak, on the point, or more exactly, in the very act of turning." Burton

τοῦ καλέσαντος the reference is most likely to God, cf. 1:15; 5:8.

χάριτι Noun, dat s χαρις

Dative of means.

The inclusion of Χριστου is supported by p[51] ℵ A B Byz vg syr[pesh] cop[bo]; Ἰησου Χριστου by D 326 it[d,e] syr[hel]; Χριστου Ἰησου by it[z] cop[sa]. Apparently the Chester Beatty papyrus (p[46vid]) omits χριστου (and variants), as do also G H[vid] it[ar,g] Mcion Tert Cyp Ambst Ephr Pel. There is also some evidence for θεου in the place of Χριστου (327 Or[lat]).

ἑτερος, α, ον other, another, different
εὐαγγελιον, ου n   good news, gospel

Galatians 1:7

ὃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο· εἰ μή τινές εἰσιν οἱ ταράσσοντες ὑμᾶς καὶ θέλοντες μεταστρέψαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

ἀλλος, η, ον another, other

Longenecker, following Burton, suggests that here ἀλλος bears the sense of another *of the same kind* whereas ἑτερος means another *of a different kind*. Hence the meaning is that they have been drawn away to another gospel which is not at all the same as that which Paul preached and which they first believed.
"The idiomatic use of εἰ μη ('except that'; cf. πλην ὁτι of Acts 20:23) suggests that no one would ever think of calling the Judaisers' message a 'gospel' *except* with the intention of confusing the Christians of Galatia." Longenecker

ταρασσω   trouble, disturb, confuse
θελω wish, will
μεταστρέψαι Verb, aor act infin μεταστρεφω   turn, alter, change

τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ "appears a number of times elsewhere in his letters as well (cf. Rom 15:19; 1 Cor 9:12; 2 Cor 2:12; 4:4; 9:13; 10:14; Phil 1:27; 1 Thess 3:2; see also 2 Thess 1:8), being used synonymously with το εὐαγγελιον του θεου ('the gospel of God'; Rom 1:1-3; 15:16; 1 Thess 2:2, 8-9; 1 Tim 1:11). The genitive του Χριστου is undoubtedly both objective (referring to Christ as its content) and subjective (referring to Christ as its source)." Longenecker

Galatians 1:8

ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐὰν ἡμεῖς ἢ ἄγγελος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ εὐαγγελίζηται ὑμῖν παρ᾽ ὃ εὐηγγελισάμεθα ὑμῖν, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.

"The και, 'even,' is intensive, signalling the extreme nature of the supposition to follow." Longenecker

ἐὰν Conjunction ἐαν   if, even if, though

ἀγγελος ἐξ οὐρανου carries a note of irony.

εὐαγγελίζηται Verb, pres midd subj εὐαγγελιζω act. and midd   proclaim the good news
παρα preposition with acc = beside, by, rather than, contrary to

"Paul saw the preacher's authority as derived from the gospel and not vice versa." Longenecker

ἀναθεμα, τος n cursed, under the curse of God

"In the NT ἀνάθεμα is used in Luke 21:5 in the sense of something dedicated or consecrated to God. Paul, however, uses ἀνάθεμα here and in Rom 9:3; 1 Cor 12:3; 16:22 (cf. Acts 23:14; also the intensified κατάθεμα of Rev 22:3) along the lines of the LXX emphasis on destruction. The basic idea in Paul's usage, as Johannes Behm points out, is 'delivering up to the judicial wrath of God'..." Longenecker

ἔστω   Verb, pres act imperat, 3s εἰμι

Galatians 1:9

ὡς προειρήκαμεν, καὶ ἄρτι πάλιν λέγω, εἴ τις ὑμᾶς εὐαγγελίζεται παρ᾽ ὃ παρελάβετε, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.

προειρήκαμεν   Verb, perf act ind, 1pl
   προλεγω   say beforehand, warn in advance

It is unclear whether the reference is to the warnings given on a previous visit or whether it is a literary device introducing emphatic repetition of what was said in the previous verse.

ἀρτι   again
παλιν   again, once more
παρελάβετε   Verb, aor act ind, 2pl
   παραλαμβανω   take, receive, accept

Galatians 1:10

Ἄρτι γὰρ ἀνθρώπους πείθω ἢ τὸν θεόν; ἢ ζητῶ ἀνθρώποις ἀρέσκειν; εἰ ἔτι ἀνθρώποις ἤρεσκον, Χριστοῦ δοῦλος οὐκ ἂν ἤμην.

πειθω   persuade, convince, win over

Here, 'seek the favour of'. "Evidently the Judaisers were claiming that Paul only presented half a gospel in his evangelistic mission in Galatia, purposely trimming his message so as to gain a more favourable response." Longenecker

ζητεω   seek, search for, look for, attempt, ask, investigate
αρεσκω   please, seek to please

"The Judaisers, it seems, had told the Galatians that Paul really did believe in and preach the necessity of circumcision (5:11) – at least, he preached it elsewhere in his mission. Undoubtedly, therefore, they were saying that his failure to do so to Gentiles in Galatia was because he did not want to offend them, but rather wanted to win their favour. Paul, of course, does not deny that he himself continued as a Christian to live a basically Jewish lifestyle (cf. 1 Cor 9:19-23), or that he saw it legitimate for Jewish believers in Jesus to continue to express their faith in the traditional forms of Judaism (cf. 1 Cor 7:17-20). But he made a distinction between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians with regard to the Mosaic law. And so, he insists, he was attempting no subterfuge by not bringing in the law in his Galatian mission, either as a means of acceptance before God or as the normative expression of the Christian life." Longenecker

ἔτι   still, yet
ἤρεσκον   Verb, imperf act ind, 1s & 3pl
   ἀρεσκω
ἂν   particle indicating contingency

Galatians 1:6-10 Postscript

"Paul seems able to be magnanimous with regard to certain matters (the so-called *adiaphora*) only because he knows what the fundamental issues are. Where, however, foundational matters are at stake, he is prepared, without hesitation, to draw clear lines and to speak with fervour in defence of 'the truth of the gospel' (2:5,14). And this is what he does here, as well as elsewhere in his letters where the gospel itself is at stake (cf. 2 Cor 11:13-15; Col 2:8)." Longenecker

Galatians 1:11

Γνωρίζω γὰρ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν ὑπ᾽ ἐμοῦ ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν κατὰ ἄνθρωπον·

γνωριζω   make known, disclose, know

Commonly used in contemporary Greek letters to introduce a disclosure.

The reading γαρ after γνωριζω appears in B D* G it cop[sa]. Longenecker considers the better reading to be δε which is supported by p[46] ℵ* A Byz syr cop[bo]

"In Galatians even amidst tones of sternness and severity Paul speaks of his wayward converts as 'brothers' (see also 3:15; 4:12,28,31; 5:11,13; 6:1,18) – in effect, therefore, reminding them of his and their fraternal relationship, even though they were beginning to forget it." Longenecker

κατα prep with acc = according to

I.e. it is not simply human.

Galatians 1:12

οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐγὼ παρὰ ἀνθρώπου παρέλαβον
αὐτό, οὔτε ἐδιδάχθην, ἀλλὰ δι᾽ ἀποκαλύψεως
Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

οὐδε neither, nor
παρα with gen = from, of

Often used in NT in sense of ultimate source.

παρέλαβον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl
    παραλαμβανω take, receive, accept
οὐτε not, nor (οὐτε ... οὐτε neither ... nor)
ἐδιδάχθην Verb, aor pass ind, 3s διδασκω
    teach
ἀποκαλυψις, εως f revelation

"Paul's thesis, therefore, in line with his
affirmation of 1:1, is that he received authority
for preaching Christ in law-free terms to
Gentiles by means of a revelation of which
Jesus Christ was the agent. In all probability he
had his encounter with Christ on the Damascus
road in mind, with that revelation including (at
least embryonically) a mission to Gentiles...
[though cf. 1 Cor 11:23-26; 15:3-11 for Paul's
acknowledgement of his debt to an agreement
with others.] ... Paul could not claim the usual
apostolic qualifications as expressed in John
15:27 and Acts 1:21-22. He was dependent on
those who were believers before him for much
in the Christian tradition, as his letters frankly
indicate. But he had been confronted by the
exalted Lord, directly commissioned an apostle
by Christ himself, and given the key to the
pattern of redemptive history in the present
age. The Jerusalem apostles had the key to
many of the prophetic mysteries and were the
living canons of the data in the gospel
proclamation. He, however, had been entrusted
with a further aspect of that message, which
came to him 'by revelation through Jesus
Christ' and so was uniquely his. Together, the
apostolic kerygma and the mystery revealed to
Paul regarding a law-free gospel for Gentiles
combined to enhance the fullness of the
Christian message." Longenecker

Galatians 1:11-12 Postscript

J Christian Becker develops the suggestion of
Jeremias that these two verses state the themes
which are subsequently unfolded chiastically
in the rest of the letter:
"1. *'The apostle': Gal 1:13-2:21*. Paul's gospel
    does not derive 'from a human source'
    (παρα ἀνθρωπου); to the contrary, it is
    directly from God, and this constitutes his
    apostleship.

2. *'The gospel': Gal 3:1-5:25*. Paul's gospel is
    not 'according to human standards' (κατα
    ἀνθρωπου); to the contrary, it is according
    to Scripture (κατα γραφην, Gal 3:1-4:31)
    and verified by the Spirit (Gal 5:1-15)."
Longenecker doubts that this analysis can be
sustained.

Galatians 1:13

Ἠκούσατε γὰρ τὴν ἐμὴν ἀναστροφήν ποτε ἐν
τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ, ὅτι καθ᾽ ὑπερβολὴν ἐδίωκον
τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐπόρθουν αὐτήν,

Ἠκούσατε Verb, aor act ind, 2pl ἀκουω

An epistolatory disclosure formula.

ἐμος, η, ον 1st pers possessive adj my, mine
ἀναστροφη, ης f manner of life, conduct
ποτε enclitic particle once, fomerly, at one
    time
Ἰουδαισμος, ου m Judaism (Jewish religion
    or way of life)
ὑπερβολη, ης f surpassing; καθ ὑ. =
    beyond measure, to an extreme

"καθ᾽ ὑπερβολὴν 'intensely' is a classical
comparative that signals an excess of either
quality or character (or both) over what might
be expected. It appears in the NT only in
Paul's letters (cf. Rom 7:13; 1 Cor 12:31; 2 Cor
1:8; 4:17)." Longenecker

διωκω persecute, seek after, pursue,
    follow
ἐκκλησια, ας f congregation, church

Note that as well as using ἐκκλησια of
particular congregations (1:2), Paul here uses
the term to signify all such communities
together making up the one church of God. In
context, the 'church of God' is viewed as a
single entity standing over against 'Judaism'.

ἐπόρθουν Verb, imperf act ind πορθεω
    destroy, try to destroy, kill

Note the imperfects signifying past repeated
action.
Longenecker says that, "the keeping of the
Mosaic law was considered by Pharisaic Jews
to be the vitally important prerequisite for the
coming of the Messianic Age" and he views
this as the impetus behind Paul's persecution of
Christians. "Probably he reasoned that in the
light of Israel's rising messianic hopes the
nation must be unified and faithful in its
obedience to the law and kept from schism or
going astray. And in this task he doubtless
expected to receive God's commendation."

Galatians 1:14

καὶ προέκοπτον ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ ὑπὲρ πολλοὺς συνηλικιώτας ἐν τῷ γένει μου, περισσοτέρως ζηλωτὴς ὑπάρχων τῶν πατρικῶν μου παραδόσεων.

προκοπτω advance, progress

ὑπερ prep. with acc = beyond, more than.

πολυς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου much, many

συνηλικιωτης, ου m contemporary, person of one's own age

γένει Noun, dat s γενος, ους n family, race, people, nation, offspring

περισσοτερως adv. (from περισσοτερος) all the more, especially, to a greater degree

ζηλωτης, ου m one who is zealous

ὑπαρχω be (equivalent to εἰμι)

πατρικος, η, ον coming from ones (fore)fathers

παραδοσις, εως f tradition

"'The traditions of my fathers,' refers to
i)   the teachings and practices developed in the Pharisaic schools of Second Temple Judaism, which later became codified in the Mishnah, Palestinian and Babylonian Gemaras, Midrashim, and the various individual halakhic and haggadic collections of rabbinic lore, and
ii) the interpretations of a more popular nature that arose within the synagogues of Paul's day, as represented in the extant Targumim.
What Paul is insisting on is that as far as his standing in Judaism is concerned, his credentials are impeccable (cf. Acts 22:3; Phil 3:5-6)." Longenecker

Galatians 1:15

ὅτε δὲ εὐδόκησεν ὁ ἀφορίσας με ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου καὶ καλέσας διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ

"'But when the one who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace was pleased.' The crux of Paul's argument in vv. 15-17 comes near the end: 'I did not consult immediately thereafter with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before me' (vv. 16b-17a). He prepares for these assertions, however, by first setting out in positive fashion the bases for his ministry – i.e., God's good pleasure (εὐδοκησεν), ordination (ἀφορισας), and call (καλεσας)." Longenecker

ὁτε conj when, at which time

εὐδοκεω be pleased, take delight/pleasure in

ὁ θεος, included by ℵ A D *et al*, would appear to be a scribal gloss making explicit the implied subject of εὐδοκησεν.

ἀφορίσας Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ἀφοριζω separate, take away, set apart, appoint

κοιλια, ας f stomach, womb

Cf. Jer 1:5; Rom 1:1. "suggests that he thought of his apostleship not just along the lines of a Jewish understanding of *saliah* (i.e. representative messenger of envoy...), but also in terms of Israelite prophetology."
Longenecker

Galatians 1:16

ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, εὐθέως οὐ προσανεθέμην σαρκὶ καὶ αἵματι,

ἀποκαλυπτω   reveal, disclose

Cf. 1 Cor 9:1; 15:8 and Acts 9:1-19; 22:3-16; 26:12-18.
"What Paul received by revelation on his way to Damascus was
i)   a new understanding of Jesus Christ, which he shared with others who had come into contact with the resurrected Lord, and
ii) a new understanding of God's strategy of redemption (or, God's 'redemptive logistics') for this final age, which included his law-free mission to the Gentiles, but which he found was not always appreciated by others.
These two features of that one revelation always went together in Paul's mind, though at times depending on context he emphasised one over the other." Longenecker

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγω

ἔθνεσιν Noun, dat pl ἐθνος, ους n nation, people; τα ἐ. Gentiles

Cf. Rom 1:5. "The logic of 'the gospel according to Paul' was implicit in his Damascus-road experience. Paul grasped this in essence there and then, although the fuller implications of the experience became plain to him more gradually." Bruce

προσανεθέμην Verb, 2nd aor midd ind, 1s προσανατιθεμαι go (to someone) for advice; add to

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body, human nature

"The issue at Galatia had to do with where Paul got his message and how he received certification as an apostle, with his opponents claiming that he was dependent on and subordinate to the apostles at Jerusalem. So it is understandable that the thrust of his argument in these verses should be on the negative aspects of his thesis statement of 1:11-12 – as it is, in fact, throughout the remainder of his autobiographical *narratio*. In this context, then, εὐθέως makes eminent sense at the beginning of his negative assertions. It should probably be translated 'immediately thereafter,' so tying together Christ's revelatory encounter (vv 15-16a) and the crux of the polemic of this passage (vv 16b-17a)." Longenecker

Galatians 1:17

οὐδὲ ἀνῆλθον εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα πρὸς τοὺς πρὸ ἐμοῦ ἀποστόλους, ἀλλὰ ἀπῆλθον εἰς Ἀραβίαν, καὶ πάλιν ὑπέστρεψα εἰς Δαμασκόν.

οὐδε neither, nor
ἀνῆλθον Verb, 2nd aor act ind, 1s & 3pl
    ἀνερχομαι go or come up

Arabia probably means here the Nabatean kingdom neighbouring Damascus. Longenecker states that we cannot "tell from Paul's brief statement why he went to Arabia. Many have supposed that it was for the purpose of missionary outreach. But it could just as well be argued that it was principally for solitude to rethink his life and learning from the perspective of Christ's revelatory encounter, away from Jewish jurisdiction and pressures."

παλιν again, once more
ὑποστρεφω return, turn back

Galatians 1:18

Ἔπειτα μετὰ ἔτη τρία ἀνῆλθον εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἱστορῆσαι Κηφᾶν, καὶ ἐπέμεινα πρὸς αὐτὸν ἡμέρας δεκαπέντε·

ἐπειτα then, afterwards
ἔτη Noun, nom & acc pl ἐτος, ους n year
τρεις, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three

I.e. three years after Paul's Damascus road experience. "The exact interval of time between the revelatory experience and his first visit as a Christian to Jerusalem, however, cannot be determined – and so the precise length of time spent in either Arabia or Damascus cannot be calculated – for 'after three years' is probably to be understood in an inclusive manner 'in the third year' rather than 'after three full years' (cf. μετα τρεις ἡμερας, 'after three days,' of Mark 8:31; 10:34 par.)." Longenecker

ἀνῆλθον Verb, 2nd aor act ind, 1s & 3pl
    ἀνερχομαι go or come up
ἱστορεω visit, get to know
Κηφας, α m Cephas (Aramaic equivalent of Πετρος, rock).

The Western MSS generally read Πετρον rather than the less familiar Κηφαν – the latter being Paul's general usage.

ἐπιμενω remain, stay, persist in

"They discussed, without doubt, matters pertaining to their common commitment to Christ. And it is not beyond the range of reasonable probability to believe that such discussions included Peter's accounts of Jesus' ministry, and that from such accounts Paul learned much. But to learn about the details of Jesus' earthly life from Peter and to be subordinate to or dependent on Peter for his apostleship and Gentile mission are clearly quite different matters. Paul is willing to acknowledge the former, but he is adamant in his rejection of the latter." Longenecker

Galatians 1:19

ἕτερον δὲ τῶν ἀποστόλων οὐκ εἶδον, εἰ μὴ Ἰάκωβον τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ κυρίου.

ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different
εἶδον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl ὁραω see, observe, perceive

The natural sense of εἰ μη would suggest that Paul is numbering James among the apostles.

Longenecker provides the following cameo of James: "James, τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ κυρίου, 'the Lord's brother,' is in all probability the James named first among the four brothers of Jesus in Mark 6:3 (cf. Matt 13:55). He is not to be confused with Jesus' two disciples of the same name, James the son of Zebedee and James the son of Alphaeus (cf. Mark 3:17-18, par.; Acts 1:13; 12:2). During Jesus' ministry, James seems to have been sceptical of his brother's activities and so was not a follower of Jesus (cf. Mark 3:21, 31-35, par.; John 7:3-5). He was, however, converted by an appearance of the resurrected Christ (1 Cor 15:7), and along with others of Jesus' family became a member of the Jerusalem church (Acts 1:14). He rose to prominence quickly in the church (cf. Acts 15:13; 21:18-19; Gal 2:1-10), and after Peter's departure from Jerusalem (cf. Acts 12:17) became the leading figure within that church. It would be unfair to attribute his rank in the Jerusalem church simply to a veneration of one who was physically related to Jesus. Probably it is more accurate to say that his prominence came about as a result of the need for someone to lead the growing number of scrupulously minded Christians in the Jerusalem church, and that his physical relation to Jesus, his Davidic descent, and his personal qualities fitted him for the task... His death as a martyr took place in AD 62 when the High Priest Annas, during an interim between two Roman governors, persecuted Christians in Jerusalem... He was known for his deep, ascetic piety, and so bore the title ὁ δικαιος... Later the Ebionites (Symmachians) thought of him as the twelfth apostle..., which opinion may have been held by some Jewish Christians earlier." Longenecker says "there appears to be no reason to regard James as anything other than Jesus' uterine brother."

Galatians 1:20

ἃ δὲ γράφω ὑμῖν, ἰδοὺ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι.

ἐνωπιον prep with gen before, in the presence of, in front of
ψευδομαι lie, speak untruth, deceive

Cf. 2 Cor 1:23; 11:31; 1 Thess 2:5.
"His use of an oath here in Galatians suggests that his judaising opponents were claiming in particular that it was during his first visit to Jerusalem that Paul both learned the gospel from the Jerusalem leaders and received his authority to be an apostle. Against such claims, Paul affirms in the strongest manner possible the surety of his two lines of defence and puts his readers on guard against any challenge to what he has said." Longenecker

Galatians 1:21

ἔπειτα ἦλθον εἰς τὰ κλίματα τῆς Συρίας καὶ τῆς Κιλικίας.

ἐπειτα then, afterwards
κλιμα, τος n region, district

"By the district of Syria he probably means the area around Antioch and by the district of Cilicia the area around his hometown of Tarsus (cf. Acts 9:30; 11:25-26). What Paul did [during this period]... can be inferred from the verb εὐαγγελιζεται ('he is preaching') of v 23. So it may be concluded that this was a period of evangelisation, though probably not a full-blown Gentile mission as he later took up." Longenecker

Galatians 1:22

ἤμην δὲ ἀγνοούμενος τῷ προσώπῳ ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Ἰουδαίας ταῖς ἐν Χριστῷ,

ἀγνοούμενος Verb, pres pass ptc, m nom s ἀγνοεω not know

Imperfect periphrastic carries the sense 'I remained unknown'

ἐκκλησια, ας f congregation, church
Ἰουδαιος, α, ον a Jew, Jewish, Judean

Cf. 1 Thess 2:14 for a similar phrase.

Galatians 1:23

μόνον δὲ ἀκούοντες ἦσαν ὅτι Ὁ διώκων ἡμᾶς ποτε νῦν εὐαγγελίζεται τὴν πίστιν ἥν ποτε ἐπόρθει,

μονος, η, ον i) adj only, alone; ii) adv μονον only, alone

'They kept hearing'.

διωκω persecute, seek after, pursue, follow
ποτε enclitic particle once, fomerly, at one time
εὐαγγελιζω act. and midd proclaim the good news
πορθεω destroy, try to destroy, kill

"Paul is now preaching the very same gospel that the Judean Christians held, which earlier he had opposed." Longenecker

Galatians 1:24

καὶ ἐδόξαζον ἐν ἐμοὶ τὸν θεόν.

δοξαζω praise, honour, glorify, exalt
ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγω

"The use of ἐν (so 'because of') as the ground or basis of an action is paralleled in Rom 1:24; 9:7 (based on Gen 21:12; cf. Heb 11:18) and 1 Cor 7:14. The thought and language of this verse are similar to God's statement regarding his Servant Israel in Isa 49:3 LXX: ἐν σοι δοξασθησομαι, 'because of you I shall be praised.'" Longenecker

Galatians 2:1

Ἔπειτα διὰ δεκατεσσάρων ἐτῶν πάλιν ἀνέβην εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα μετὰ Βαρναβᾶ συμπαραλαβὼν καὶ Τίτον·

ἐπειτα then, afterwards

Cf. εὐθεως 1:16, ἐπειτα 1:18,21.

δεκατεσσαρες fourteen
ἐτος see v.18

Longenecker considers that the 3 years of 1:18 and 14 years here are to be understood concurrently – each measured from Paul's conversion.

παλιν see v.16

παλιν is omitted by a few MSS.

συμπαραλαβων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s
    συμπαραλαμβανω take or bring along with

Cf. Acts 11:27-30. At this time Barnabas would have been Paul's senior colleague.

Galatians 2:2

ἀνέβην δὲ κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν· καὶ ἀνεθέμην αὐτοῖς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ κηρύσσω ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, κατ᾽ ἰδίαν δὲ τοῖς δοκοῦσιν, μή πως εἰς κενὸν τρέχω ἢ ἔδραμον.

ἀνέβην Verb, aor act ind,1s ἀναβαινω
ἀποκαλυψις, εως f revelation

The reference may well be to the prophecy of Agabus in Acts 11:28.

ἀνεθέμην Verb, aor midd ind, 1s ἀνατιθεμαι
    lay before, present
κηρυσσω preach, proclaim

The present tense suggests that the gospel he preached then is the gospel he still preaches now.

ἔθνεσιν Noun, dat pl ἐθνος, ους n nation,
    people; τα ἐ. Gentiles
ἰδιος, α, ον one's own; κατ᾽ ἰδιαν privately
δοκεω think, suppose; intrans be
    recognised, have reputation

"Paul, probably in reaction to the Judaisers' inflated adulation of the Jerusalem leaders..., recognises in his use of the expression the legitimate role of the Jerusalem apostles in the church, yet without compromising his claim that his gospel stems from God and Christ apart from any human authority (cf. 1:1,12,15-16)... It seems hard to ignore at least a certain 'dismissive' tone in Gal 2... – a dismissal, however, not of the Jerusalem apostles themselves, but of the Judaisers' claims for them." Longenecker

πως i) interrog. particle how? in what way?
    ii) enclitic particle somehow, in some
    way
τρεχω run, exert oneself
ἔδραμον Verb, aor act indic, 1s τρεχω

"His commission was not derived from Jerusalem, but it could not be executed effectively except in fellowship with Jerusalem. A cleavage between his Gentile mission and the mother-church would be disastrous: Christ would be divided, and all the energy which Paul had devoted, and hoped to devote, to the evangelising of the Gentile world would be frustrated." Bruce
"Any rupture between Paul and the Jerusalem apostles on the essentials of the gospel – as distinct from differing understandings of the logistics of Christian outreach – would be disastrous both for the mission to the Jews and that to Gentiles. The unity of the church even amidst its diversity was of great importance to Paul, as his strenuous efforts with regard to the Jerusalem collection clearly indicate (cf. Rom 15:25-32; 1 Cor 16:1-3; 2 Cor 9:12-15)." Longenecker

Galatians 2:3

ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ Τίτος ὁ σὺν ἐμοί, Ἕλλην ὤν, ἠναγκάσθη περιτμηθῆναι·

Verses 3-5 are an extended parenthesis to the main argument.

οὐδε neither, nor
ἠναγκάσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3s
    ἀναγκαζω force, compel, urge
περιτμηθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin περιτεμνω
    circumcise

Galatians 2:4

διὰ δὲ τοὺς παρεισάκτους ψευδαδέλφους, οἵτινες παρεισῆλθον κατασκοπῆσαι τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἡμῶν ἣν ἔχομεν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα ἡμᾶς καταδουλώσουσιν –

'Now this happened (i.e. the pressure for Titus' circumcision) because certain false brothers infiltrated our ranks.'

παρεισακτος, ον   brought in under false
   pretences

"For Paul... they were false brothers since they could not accept Gentile Christians as true brothers apart from circumcision and so denied the universality of the gospel." Longenecker

οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις whoever,
   whatever
παρεισερχομαι   come in, slip in

Cf. 2 Peter 2:1; Jude 4.

κατασκοπῆσαι Verb, aor act infin
   κατασκοπεω   spy on, spy out
ἐλευθερια, ας f freedom, liberty

A key word in Galatians.

καταδουλωσουσιν Verb, fut act indic
   καταδουλοω make a slave of, take
   advantage of

καταδουλωσουσιν, 'they might make us slaves' (future active indicative), is well supported by ℵ A B* C D etc.; καταδουλωσωσιν, 'they might make us slaves' (aorist active subjunctive), appears in B² and G; καταδουλωσωνται, 'they might make us slaves to themselves' (aorist middle subjunctive), in TR.

Galatians 2:5

οἷς οὐδὲ πρὸς ὥραν εἴξαμεν τῇ ὑποταγῇ, ἵνα ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου διαμείνῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

ὥρα, ας f   hour, moment, instant, period
   of time

I.e. 'not for a moment'.

εἴξαμεν Verb, aor act ind, 1pl ἐικω   yield,
   give in to
ὑποταγη, ης f   obedience, submission
ἀληθεια, ας f   truth, reality; ἐν ἀ. truly
εὐαγγελιον, ου n   good news, gospel

I.e. "the gospel in its integrity" Lightfoot.

διαμείνῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3s διαμενω
   stay, remain, continue

"Paul's purpose in refusing to give in to the demands of the false brothers at Jerusalem was so that (ἱνα) the truth of the gospel might remain intact, particularly for the benefit of his Galatian converts." Longenecker

Galatians 2:6

ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν δοκούντων εἶναί τι – ὁποῖοί ποτε ἦσαν οὐδέν μοι διαφέρει· πρόσωπον θεὸς ἀνθρώπου οὐ λαμβάνει – ἐμοὶ γὰρ οἱ δοκοῦντες οὐδὲν προσανέθεντο,

δοκούντων Verb, pres act ptc, m & n dat pl
   δοκεω think, suppose; intrans be
   recognised, have reputation

See also vv 2&9. These verses are not ironical, but may rather take up a term used of the leaders at Jerusalem (Peter, John and James) by Paul's opponents in Galatia. Paul does not question the authority and reputation of these apostles but rather argues that his own authority, and that of his teaching, is one and the same with theirs. Paul stresses his agreement with the Jerusalem apostles and criticises those who want to cite their authority to undermine his own.

ὁποιος, α, ον correlative pronoun   of what
   sort, such as; ὁποιος ποτε whatever

Burton suggests that the reference is to past relationships, 'whatever once they were – close followers and friends of Jesus or his brother ...' Longenecker sums it up, "So Paul's point in the parenthesis of verse 6 is that one cannot be unduly influenced by past relationships or physical proximity, whatever they may have been. For to restate his theological axiom more colloquially, 'God does not take into account human credentials.'"

οὐδέν Adjective, n nom & acc s οὐδεις,
   οὐδεμια, οὐδεν   no one, nothing; οὐδεν
   not at all
διαφερω impers. matter to, be of concern
   to

πρόσωπον [ὁ] θεὸς ἀνθρωπου οὐ λαμβάνει cf.
Dt 10:17.

προσανέθεντο Verb, aor midd indic, 3pl
   προσανατιθεμαι add to

Galatians 2:7

ἀλλὰ τοὐναντίον ἰδόντες ὅτι πεπίστευμαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας καθὼς Πέτρος τῆς περιτομῆς,

τουναντιον (το ἐναντιον) on the contrary,
   rather

The idiom ἀλλὰ τοὐναντίον marks a strong contrary to what had previously been stated, cf. 2 Cor 2:7; 1 Peter 3:9.

ἰδόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl ὁραω
   see, observe, perceive, recognise
πεπίστευμαι Verb, perf pass ind, 1s πιστευω;
   pass = be entrusted with

A common Pauline expression, cf. Rom 3:2; 1 Cor 9:17; 1 Thess 2:4; 1 Tim 1:11; Titus 1:3.

ἀκροβυστια, ας f uncircumcision, non-Jews
περιτομη, ης f circumcision, those
   circumcised, Jews

Longenecker suggests that Paul may here be using the phrases and words of others when he speaks of 'the gospel of the uncircumcised' and 'the gospel of the circumcised' and in using the name 'Peter' rather than Cephas. Paul may be reminding his readers of the words of a formal agreement.

Galatians 2:8

ὁ γὰρ ἐνεργήσας Πέτρῳ εἰς ἀποστολὴν τῆς περιτομῆς ἐνήργησεν καὶ ἐμοὶ εἰς τὰ ἔθνη,

This verse explains what they had 'seen' i.e. perceived and recognised.

ἐνεργήσας   Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s
   ἐνεργεω work, be at work (in)
ἀποστολη, ης f apostleship, mission
ἔθνη Noun, nom & acc pl ἔθνος, ους n
   nation, people; τα ἐ. Gentiles

It is the one God who, by his Spirit, furthers his one work through the various apostles.

Galatians 2:9

καὶ γνόντες τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι, Ἰάκωβος καὶ Κηφᾶς καὶ Ἰωάννης, οἱ δοκοῦντες στῦλοι εἶναι, δεξιὰς ἔδωκαν ἐμοὶ καὶ Βαρναβᾷ κοινωνίας, ἵνα ἡμεῖς εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, αὐτοὶ δὲ εἰς τὴν περιτομήν·

γνόντες   Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl γινωσκω

Reflects the earlier ἰδοντες v.6.

δοθεῖσάν   Verb, aor pass ptc, f acc s διδωμι
   give

Not, as some suppose, that they saw he had received the grace of apostleship but, "Paul had been graced by God for an effective ministry among Gentiles, just as Peter 'as an apostle' (εἰς ἀποστολην [v.8]) was graced by God to work among Jews... Thus την χαριν should be understood here simply as 'divine grace,' with the aorist passive adjectival participle δοθεισαν ('had been given') signalling God as the subject and Paul as the object." Longenecker.

Κηφας, α m Cephas (Aramaic equivalent of
   Πετρος, rock).
δοκεω see v.6
στυλος, ου m pillar, column

The Talmud refers to the three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as the three 'pillars' on which God had built the covenant community of Israel. The Jewish Christians of Jerusalem may have used this term in a similar way of James, Cephas and John as the three pillars of the new covenant community. Paul had no objection to the title *as such*, but only to "the Judaisers' inflated adulation of the Jerusalem leaders and their use of the title, setting both them and it against Paul." Longenecker

δεξιος, α, ον right, δεξια right hand; δεξιας
   ἐδωκαν they shook hands
ἔδωκαν   Verb, aor act indic, 3pl διδωμι
κοινωνια, ας f fellowship, sharing in,
   participation

I.e. recognition that they were engaged in a common task.

Galatians 2:10

μόνον τῶν πτωχῶν ἵνα μνημονεύωμεν, ὃ καὶ ἐσπούδασα αὐτὸ τοῦτο ποιῆσαι.

μονος, η, ον i) adj only, alone; ii) adv μονον
   only, alone
πτωχος, η, ον poor, pitiful
μνημονεύωμεν   Verb, pres act subj, 1pl
   μνημονευω remember, keep in mind

"What the Jerusalem apostles seemed to have asked for is that Paul, in exercising his freedom to carry on an independent strategy for the evangelisation of the Gentiles, 'continue to keep the welfare of the Jerusalem believers in Jesus also in mind' – i.e., that he do nothing in the exercise of his freedom that would impede their outreach to Jews and that he take into consideration the special circumstances of their Jewish mission, supporting them whenever possible. 'To remember the poor,' therefore, seems to be something of an idiomatic expression or *Stichwort* meant to signal the special relationship that existed between Gentile churches and the Jewish Christian congregation at Jerusalem which both parties recognised. It undoubtedly included Paul's later collection of money from his churches for the Jewish believers of Jerusalem, which Paul meant to be a concrete expression on his part of that special relationship. But it cannot be confined to such a monetary gift, either on the part of the Jerusalem apostles or Paul." Longenecker

ἐσπούδασα   Verb, aor act indic, 1s σπουδαζω
   work hard at, be eager
αὐτο τουτο   this same, 'this very thing'

"Paul means not only that he henceforth adopted this policy, but that he had already done so – he thinks of the famine relief which he and Barnabas brought to Jerusalem from Antioch, according to Acts 11:30." Bruce

Postscript to Galatians 2:1-10

"There is much in this account of significance for Christians today, living, as we do, in a pluralistic society and amidst many representations of the Christian faith. 'False brothers' and 'Judaisers' of all sorts abound, who, motivated by their own agenda, attempt to conform the gospel to their own vision and purposes. Christians today need to be discerning. Furthermore, we need to appreciate how various practical concerns and speculative ideologies can distort 'the truth of the gospel,' whether they be those of others or ourselves. But Christians today also need to understand that there can be differences among true believers, and that such differences – particularly when involving different understandings of redemptive logistics or differences of culture – need not tear us apart. Indeed, where there exists a basic agreement in the essentials of the Gospel, Gal 2:1-10 sets before us a prototype of mutual recognition and concern for one another, despite our differences. It teaches us, in fact, something of how to distinguish between things that really matter and things of lesser importance (the so-called *adiaphora*), where to stand firm and where to concede, and even when to defy people and pressures and when to shake hands and reciprocate with expressions of mutual concern." Longenecker

Galatians 2:11-14

"There is much in 2:11-14 that we are not told about the situation at Antioch and much of which we are told mostly by way of allusion. What complex of events led up to Paul's rebuke of Peter? What was the Antioch church like before this incident? When and why did Peter come to Antioch? What issues were at stake – not only from Paul's perspective, but also from Peter's and those Christians at Antioch who joined him in his withdrawal? How did Barnabas view matters? Who really 'won' the dispute? And what was Antioch Christianity like after this episode? Indeed, as James Dunn rightly observes, 'Here is one of the most tantalizing episodes in the whole of the NT. If we could only uncover the full picture of what happened here, what led up to it and what its sequel was, we would have gained an invaluable insight into the development of earliest Christianity" (*Unity*, 253)...

"The account stands in apparent contrast to the affirmations of unity in 2:7-10, particularly 'the right hand of fellowship' extended in v.9. Its purpose, however, is the same as all the other accounts in the *narratio* – to demonstrate Paul's lack of dependence on the Jerusalem apostles, particularly Peter, while at the same time affirming his essential agreement with them." Longenecker

Galatians 2:11

Ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν Κηφᾶς εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτῷ ἀντέστην, ὅτι κατεγνωσμένος ἦν·

ὅτε conj when, at which time

The timing of Peter's visit is uncertain. However, it would seem best to understand that Paul continues a sequential narrative.

κατα προσωπον   to the face

Does not necessarily imply hostility, but only direct encounter, cf. Acts 25:16; 2 Cor 10:1.

ἀντέστην   Verb, 2 aor act ind, 1s ἀνθιστημι
    resist, oppose, withstand
κατεγνωσμένος   Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom s
    καταγινωσκω condemn

I.e. he stood condemned *before God*.

Galatians 2:12

πρὸ τοῦ γὰρ ἐλθεῖν τινας ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου μετὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν συνήσθιεν· ὅτε δὲ ἦλθον, ὑπέστελλεν καὶ ἀφώριζεν ἑαυτόν, φοβούμενος τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς.

ἐθνος, ους n nation, people; τα ἐ. Gentiles
συνεσθιω eat with

The Greek text used in these notes is that of the of Society of Biblical Literature. See SBLGNT

Probably refers to ordinary meals in homes but may refer to the Lord's Supper.

ἦλθον – a number of ancient MSS read ἦλθεν (p⁴⁶ ᵛⁱᵈ ℵ B D* G *et al*) which appears to be a primitive transcriptional error. This reading resulted in a few of the same MSS reading τινα rather than τινες.

ὑποστελλω draw back; midd turn back, shrink back, hold back
ἀφοριζω separate, take away, set apart, appoint

The imperfect suggests gradual separation.

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον reflexive pronoun, himself, herself, itself
περιτομη, ης f circumcision, those circumcised, Jews

Of whom was Peter afraid? Does this refer to Jews in general, Jewish Christians or a circumcision party? Longenecker thinks that the reference is to non-Christian Jews and comments, "What seems to have concerned believers at Jerusalem vis-à-vis Gentile believers was the rising tide of Jewish nationalism in Palestine and its growing antagonism directed against any Jew who had Gentile sympathies or who associated with Gentile sympathisers. Such a concern seems to have been shared by all Jewish believers at Jerusalem... Building on such a background, we can posit a somewhat different scenario for the Antioch episode than is usually assumed: when the delegation from James came (ἦλθον) with this practical concern of how unrestricted table fellowship of Jews and Gentiles within the Christian community at Antioch would appear to non-Christian Jews of Palestine, Cephas began to draw back (ὑπεστελλεν) and to separate (ἀφοριζεν) from Gentile believers because he feared (φοβουμενος) the reaction of those more zealot-minded Jews and the effects of their antagonism toward the Jerusalem church in allowing Jewish believers at Antioch to fraternise with Gentiles... The picture thus presented in v 12b is that of a misguided tactical manoeuvre made under pressure... He had no theological difficulties with such table fellowship himself. But when confronted by the practical concerns of James and the delegation he sent, Cephas seems to have become confused. And in his endeavours to deal with this extremely important practical concern of the Jerusalem church, he took a course of action that, in effect, had dire theological consequences: that there could be no real fellowship between Jewish believers and Gentile believers in Jesus unless the latter observed the dietary laws of the former. Such a tenet, of course, would have serious implications for the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles and for a doctrine of the oneness of the body of Christ. But Cephas seems not to have realised all of this at the time, being more conscious of the Jewish zealot pressures on the Jerusalem church and its mission to the Jews."

Galatians 2:13

καὶ συνυπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ Ἰουδαῖοι, ὥστε καὶ Βαρναβᾶς συναπήχθη αὐτῶν τῇ ὑποκρίσει.

συνυπεκρίθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3pl συνυποκρινομαι join in acting with insincerity/deceit
λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other

The Greek text used in these notes is that of the of Society of Biblical Literature. See SBLGNT

'the rest of the Jewish believers joined in playing the hypocrite'.

ὥστε so that, with the result that

Barnabas was the last person one might expect to have gone along with this separation from Gentile believers.
"It was this act of desertion at Antioch that seems to have rankled Paul the most. In effect, it put an end to their close association, probably causing Paul to speak reticently about Barnabas in Gal 2:1-10 and ultimately leading to their separation (Acts 15:39-41), even though the tone of Paul's reference to Barnabas in 1 Cor 9:6 (perhaps also 2 or 8:18-19) suggests that they remained friends."
Longenecker

συναπήχθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3s
    συναπαγομαι be carried away, led astray
ὑποκρισις, εως f hypocrisy, pretence

Galatians 2:14

ἀλλ' ὅτε εἶδον ὅτι οὐκ ὀρθοποδοῦσιν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, εἶπον τῷ Κηφᾷ ἔμπροσθεν πάντων· Εἰ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὑπάρχων ἐθνικῶς καὶ οὐκ Ἰουδαϊκῶς ζῇς, πῶς τὰ ἔθνη ἀναγκάζεις Ἰουδαΐζειν;

εἶδον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl ὁραω see, observe, perceive
ὀρθοποδεω be consistent, act consistently with
ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality; ἐν ἀ. truly

Cf. 2:5

ἐμπροσθεν prep with gen before, in front of
ὑπαρχω be (equivalent to εἰμι)
ἐθνικως adv like a Gentile
οὐχι (emphatic form of οὐ) not, no; used in questions expecting an affirmative answer.
Ἰουδαικως adv like a Jew, as a Jew
ζαω live, be alive

The present tense signifies normal or continuing action. It clearly implies that Peter had abandoned the rigour of Jewish legal observances and it highlights his present inconsistency.

πως interrog. particle how? in what way?
ἀναγκαζω force, compel, urge
ιουδαΐζω live as a Jew, become a Jew, adopt a Jewish way of life.

Galatians 2:11-14 Postscript

"While we may believe that Paul's case was right in the conflict at Antioch, we do not know how the situation was actually resolved in the church there. Paul tells us what he said to Peter... but he does not tell us how Peter, Barnabas, or the Antioch church reacted to what he said. If the matter had been amicably resolved by the time he wrote to the Galatians, we would have expected him to say so. Furthermore, it would have been a very significant point to make in his argument against the Galatian Judaisers to say that the outcome of the episode was that Peter recanted and the Antioch church as a whole supported him, but he does not. The omission of such statements in Paul's account has led many to conclude that actually Paul lost and Peter triumphed at Antioch... It may very well have been the case that at the time Paul wrote Galatians the Antioch church was siding more or less with Peter rather than Paul, and so Paul could only report what he said and the logic of his case. But from the high regard evidenced for Paul in Acts and the letters of Ignatius, it is difficult to believe that such continued to be true for long.
"The juxtaposition of Paul's accounts in 2:1-5 and 2:11-14 makes an obvious point: just as Paul withstood the pressures of the 'false brothers' at Jerusalem, so Peter should have withstood those exerted by the delegation of James. There may have been a common practical concern behind such pressures. But to turn that concern into a theologically based call for Gentile Christians to practice a Jewish lifestyle was tantamount to a denial of the Christian gospel. Paul saw this clearly at Jerusalem; Peter should have seen it as well at Antioch. And the same is true for Gentile believers of Galatia." Longenecker

Galatians 2:15-21

Are verses 15-21 a summary of what Paul said to Peter at Antioch or do they consist of a precis of Paul's theological argument against the Galatians – an introduction to 3:1-4:11? Longenecker follows Betz in arguing the latter, partly on the basis of the formal structure of apologetic letters. He believes that vv.15-21 set out a proposition which is then argued in detail in the chapters which follow. "So it should not be considered just as part of Paul's speech to Peter, though it springs immediately from that, but as the summary of all that Paul has argued in 1:11-2:14 and as the introduction to 3:1-4:11."

Galatians 2:15

Ἡμεῖς φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἁμαρτωλοί,

φύσει Noun, dat s φυσις, εως f nature, natural condition

ἁμαρτωλος, ον sinful, sinner

ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἁμαρτωλοι seems to be a colloquialism used by Jews with reference to Gentiles, cf. Matt 26:45; Lk 6:32-33.

Galatians 2:16

εἰδότες δὲ ὅτι οὐ δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν, ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σάρξ.

εἰδότες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl οἰδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand

δικαιοῦται Verb, pres pass indic, 3s δικαιοω justify, acquit, declare & treat as righteous, put into a right relationship (with God).

The use of ἀνθρωπος is indefinite, 'a person'.

ἐὰν μη   unless, except

ἐὰν μη properly has exceptive force (cf. 1:19) though it can be adversative (cf. 1 Cor 7:17; also Matt 12:4; Lk 4:26-27.). The sense here is 'but only'.

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body, human nature

Excursus on Galatians 2:16

Longenecker comments, The really crucial features of v.16... have to do with four matters: (1) Paul's use of the δικαι- cluster of words, with the verb δικαιοω ('justify,' 'make righteous') appearing three times in this verse and once in v 17 and the noun δικαιοσυνη ('justification,' 'righteousness') taking centre stage in the conclusion of v 21; (2) Paul's understanding of νομος ('law'), which he contrasts in some manner with Jesus Christ; (3) what Paul means by ἐργων νομου ('the works of the law'); and (4) what he means by πιστεως Ἰησου Χριστου ('faith in Jesus Christ' or 'the faith/faithfulness of Jesus Christ'). If, as we believe, 2:15-21 serves as the propositional statement of Galatians – and further, v 16 expresses what Paul and all Jewish believers held in common – then it becomes vitally important to have some appreciation of what Paul means by these terms and expressions." Longenecker argues the following:

(1) On Paul's use of the δικαι- cluster of words he thinks that J.A.Zielsler's work *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul* demonstrates that Paul uses the verb δικαιοω forensically and relationally, but that the noun δικαιοσυνη and adjective δικαιος also have behavioural nuances. In v 16 the aorist ἐπιστευσαμεν refers to a once-for-all response that results in a transfer of status but "the four uses of the verb in vv 16-17 and the noun in v 21 cannot be treated as simply 'transfer terms' when the issue at both Antioch and Galatia had to do with the lifestyle of those who were already believers in Jesus. So here in 2:15-21, as well as throughout Galatians (and Paul's other letters), we must treat the δικαι- cluster of words as having both forensic and ethical significance, though ... over all such terms stands the relational, participatory concept of being 'in Christ'."

In his book *Justification*, Markus Barth argues that 'justification' is a relational concept. "Sharing in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the means of justification: only in Christ's death and resurrection is the new man created." A new man, he argues, in which all the old barriers are broken down between Jew and Gentile, male and female, slave and free. "Justification in Christ is thus not an individual miracle happening to this person or that person, which each may seek or possess for himself. Rather justification by grace is a joining together of this person and that person, of the near and the far; ... it is a social event."

(2) Where, as here, Paul speaks of the law in a negative sense, he has in mind "the Mosaic law as a *religious system* associated in some manner with righteousness," and so opposed to Christ. He is opposing more than legalism, he is setting up an opposition to the Mosaic religious system which has now been superseded. Elsewhere Paul can speak of the law in positive terms as the revelation of God and his character (eg. Rom 7:12,14; 1 Tim 1:8).

(3) Longenecker argues that Paul uses the phrase ἐργων νομου "not just to refer to 'the badges of Jewish covenantal nomism,' [i.e. circumcision, dietary regulations, and sabbath observance] though that may have been how other Jewish believers thought of them, but as a catch phrase to signal the whole legalistic complex of ideas having to do with winning God's favour by a merit-amassing observance of Torah. Paul takes pains to point out, however, that such a legalistic use of the Mosaic law was not a tenet of true Jews, whether Jewish Christians or (by implication) non-Christian Jews... And on this, Paul believes, he and all other Jewish believers in Jesus are in agreement."

(4) πιστεως Ἰησου Χριστου is generally understood as an objective genitive, 'faith *in* Jesus Christ.' However, Longenecker says, "The expression πιστεως Ἰησου Χριστου appears in Paul's letters only seven times (in addition to twice here at 2:16, see Gal 3:22 [also 3:26 in p[46]]; Rom 3:22,26; Eph 3:12; Phil 3:9). It is admittedly a difficult expression. But when πιστις is understood in terms of the Hebrew אמונה *emuna*, which means both 'faith' and 'faithfulness,' then it is not too difficult to view Paul as using πιστις Ἰησου Χριστου much as he uses πιστις του θεου ('the faithfulness of God') in Rom 3:3 and πιστις Ἀβρααμ ('the faith of Abraham') in Rom 4:16... In effect, then, Paul uses πιστις Ἰησου Χριστου in his writings to signal the basis for the Christian gospel: that its objective basis is the perfect response of obedience that Jesus rendered to God the Father, both actively in his life and passively in his death. Thus in three places by the use of πιστις Ἰησου Χριστου Paul balances out nicely the objective basis of the Christian faith ('the faith/faithfulness of Jesus Christ') and mankind's necessary subjective response ('by faith'): Rom 3:22, 'this righteousness of God is δια πιστεως Ἰησου Χριστου ('through the faith/faithfulness of Jesus Christ') εἰς παντας τους πιστευοντας ('to all who believe')"; Gal 3:22, 'so that the promise, ἐκ πιστεως Ἰησου Χριστου ('which is based upon the faith/faithfulness of Jesus Christ') δοθη τοις πιστευουσιν ('might be given to those who believe')"; and Phil 3:9, 'a righteousness την δια πιστεως Χριστου ('that is based on the faith/faithfulness of Christ') and την ἐπι τη πιστει ('that depends upon faith').' These are not just redundancies in Pauline vocabulary, as so often assumed, but Paul's attempts to set out both the objective and the subjective bases of the Christian life."

"και ἡμεις εἰς Χριστουν Ἰησουν ἐπιστευσαμεν, ἱνα δικαιωθωμεν ἐκ πιστεως Χριστου καιν ουκ ἐξ ἐργων νομου... The explicative use of και ('even') makes the pronoun ἡμεις ('we') emphatic and serves to recall the beginning of the sentence in v15, 'we who are Jews by birth.' The historical aorist ἐπιστευσαμεν ('we believed') signals a once-for-all response, which in tandem with εἰς ('into,' 'in') expresses in its fullest and most definitive form the act of Christian faith, i.e. commitment of oneself Christ. The purpose of their act of commitment is stated in the ἱνα clause that follows: 'in order that we might be justified [forensically, with ethical implications] on the basis of the faithfulness of Christ [ἐκ πιστεως Χριστου] and not on the basis of the works of the law [ἐξ ἐργων νομου].'"

Galatians 2:17

εἰ δὲ ζητοῦντες δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ εὑρέθημεν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἁμαρτωλοί, ἆρα Χριστὸς ἁμαρτίας διάκονος; μὴ γένοιτο·

ζητοῦντες   Verb, pres act ptc, m nom s ζητεω

ἐν Χριστω appears frequently in Paul's letters to signal the sphere within which the believer lives and the intimacy of personal fellowship that exists between the believer and Christ (see also 1:22; 2:4; 3:14,26,28; 5:6,10). While often the local idea in the phrase is emphasised, here, in parallel with and reflecting the expressions δια πιστεως Ἰησου Χριστου and ἐκ πιστεως Χριστου of v 16, its dynamic factor ('by Christ') comes to the fore." Longenecker

εὑρέθημεν   Verb, aor pass indic, 1pl εὑρισκω
ἆρα Interrogative particle expecting a
      negative response [to be distinguished
      from the conjunction ἄρα then]

"We have argued that Paul faced two problems in Galatia: (1) that brought about by the Judaisers, who argued for the necessity of Gentile Christians living according to the Jewish law, and (2) that arising from among the Galatian believers themselves, who tolerated libertinism. And in attempting to gather up the diverse features of the Judaisers' message, we have suggested that on a purely practical basis they laid stress on the Torah as the divinely appointed way to check libertinism within the Christian church – i.e. they offered a rather straightforward and seemingly God-honouring solution to libertinism within Paul's congregations: accept a Jewish nomistic lifestyle and you will have clear guidance as to what is right and wrong, and so be able to live a life that pleases God... In line with such an interpretation, it is not too difficult to suppose that in saying 'we are found to be sinners' Paul is responding to a charge of his opponents and granting the truth of their underlying observation: that Christians, though claiming a higher standard for living, yet sin. For while forensic righteousness and ethical righteousness are intrinsically part and parcel of one another, the latter, sadly, is not always worked out in life as it should be. The premise of the sentence, therefore, is true in both its parts – the first is what it proclaims; the second is what it acknowledges. The conclusion that 'Christ is a minister of sin' and so actually 'promotes sin' or 'furthers sin's interests,' however, is assuredly not true." Longenecker

γένοιτο   Verb, aor opt, 3s γινομαι; μη
     γενοιτο   may it not be — a strong
     assertion or oath form.

Galatians 2:18

εἰ γὰρ ἃ κατέλυσα ταῦτα πάλιν οἰκοδομῶ, παραβάτην ἐμαυτὸν συνιστάνω.

καταλυω destroy, tear down

ἁ καταλυσα i.e. living by the law-code. "The aorist tense of the verb, as a historical aorist, has in mind a past, once-for-all act – that time of conversion when one ceased to rely on the Mosaic law for either justification or the supervision of life, but turned to Christ for both acceptance before God and the pattern for living." Longenecker

παλιν   again, once more
οἰκοδομεω build, build up, encourage
παραβατης, ου m one who breaks God's
     law, transgressor

"To go back to the law (as a Christian) after having been done with the law ... is what really makes one a lawbreaker... Paul has in mind Peter and certain other Jewish Christians who in one way or another seemed to be doing just that." Longenecker

ἐμαυτὸν, ἐμαυτου, ης reflexive pronoun (not
     used in nom) myself, my own
συνιστανω   show, prove

Galatians 2:19

ἐγὼ γὰρ διὰ νόμου νόμῳ ἀπέθανον ἵνα θεῷ ζήσω· Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι·

"In vv 19-20 Paul presents in encapsulated form the essence of his own theology vis-à-vis Jewish nomism: (1) the law's purpose was to work itself out of a job and point us beyond itself to a fuller relationship with God; (2) Christ's death on the cross and our spiritual identification with his death effects freedom from the jurisdiction of the Mosaic law; and (3) the Christian's focus is to be on Christ, who lives within us and to whom we look for direction in life. In effect, while Jews and Christians deny the validity of a legalistic use of the law, Jews hold to a nomistic or Torah-centred lifestyle in expressing their faith and Christians are to be Christ-centred in expressing theirs." Longenecker

ἀπέθανον   Verb, aor act indic, 1s & 3pl
     ἀποθνησκω die, face death, be mortal
ζήσω   Verb, aor act subj ζαω live, be alive

"In Pauline usage, 'to die to' something is to cease to have any further relation with it (cf. Rom 6:2, 10-11; 7:2-6). Conversely, 'to live to' someone means to have a personal, unrestricted relationship with that one (cf. Rom 6:10-11; 14:7-8; 2 Cor 5:15)." Longenecker

συνεσταύρωμαι   Verb, perf pass indic, 1s
     συσταυροομαι be crucified together
     (with someone else)

When Paul speaks here of having 'died to the law' he is speaking of more than a subjective attitude of mind. The perfect tense indicates a once-for-all act with continuing implications. Christ, in his death died in accordance with the law's demands (though they were demands not upon him but upon us) and so he 'died to the law' – it no longer has any demand upon him (cf. Romans 6:6-11). Paul, through union with Christ, can speak of himself as having died to the law and now being alive in and to Christ.

"Through this union with Him I satisfied the law, yielded to it the obedience which it claimed, suffered its curse, died to it, and am therefore now released from it – from its accusations and penalty, and from its claims on one to obey it as the means of winning eternal life." Eadie

Galatians 2:20

ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῇ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός· ὃ δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν σαρκί, ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ.

οὐκέτι adv no longer, no more

"Crucifixion with Christ implies not only death to the jurisdiction of the Mosaic law (v19), but also death to the jurisdiction of one's own ego. The 'I' here is the 'flesh' (σαρξ) of 5:13-24, which is antagonistic to the Spirit's jurisdiction." Longenecker

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγω

"In Pauline parlance, that reality of personal communion between Christians and God is expressed from the one side of the equation as being 'in Christ,' 'in Christ Jesus/Jesus Christ,' 'in him,' or 'in the Lord' (which complex expressions ... [appear more than] 164 times in Paul's letters...) – or, at times, being 'in the Spirit' (cf. Rom 8:9). Viewed from the other side of the equation, the usual way for Paul to express that relation between God and his own is by some such phrase as 'Christ by his Spirit' or 'the Spirit of God' or simply 'the Spirit' dwelling 'in us' or 'in you,' though a few times he says directly 'Christ in me' (as here in 2:20; cf. Col 1:27,29; see also Eph 3:16-17) or 'Christ in you' (cf. the interchange of expressions in Rom 8:9-11)." Longenecker

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body

Here simply 'physical body' – though bearing the sense of mortality.

πίστει Noun, dat s πιστις

"The variant reading θεου και Χριστου ('God and Christ') receives support from such excellent external sources as p^45 and B (also D* G and two Old Latin manuscripts). As well, it certainly is the 'harder reading,' for nowhere else in Paul's writings is God spoken of expressly as the object of Christian faith. Yet the fact that it is *hap. leg.* in Paul makes it probable that υιου του θεου ('Son of God') contained in ℵ A C and almost all versions and patristic witnesses was original." Longenecker

ἀγαπήσαντός Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ἀγαπαω
παραδόντος Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s παραδιδωμι hand or give over, deliver up

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον   reflexive pronoun, himself, herself, itself
ὑπερ with gen. for, on behalf of

"Paul closes his statement as to the essence of the gospel here in 2:20 with an emphasis on Christ's love and sacrificial self-giving, much as he began the Galatian letter in 1:4 – which, of course, highlights what gripped his own heart when he thought of the work of Christ." Longenecker

Galatians 2:21

οὐκ ἀθετῶ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰ γὰρ διὰ νόμου δικαιοσύνη, ἄρα Χριστὸς δωρεὰν ἀπέθανεν.

ἀθετεω reject, set aside, refuse
δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness, what is right, what God requires, justice
δωρεαν without cost, freely, for nothing, needlessly

Here the meaning is 'without cause'.
"The central proclamation of the gospel concerns the atoning efficacy of the death of Christ. To argue for righteousness as being 'through the law,' therefore, whether that righteousness is understood forensically (2:15-16) or ethically (2:17-20), is to call into question the necessity of Christ's death; and, conversely, to base one's life on 'Christ crucified' is to put an end to attempts to be righteous by observing the law (as Paul argues immediately following in 3:1)." Longenecker

Galatians 3:1-4:11

Longenecker considers this section to be "the most important argumentative section of Paul's letter, for here Paul moves beyond the negative arguments of the *narratio* of 1:11-2:14 to take the offensive by spelling out positive arguments in support of the *propositio* of 2:15-21... The first part, that of 3:1-18, sets out the experimental, scriptural, and theological arguments in support of the thesis that the law plays no positive role in becoming a Christian (contra 'legalism'), explicating the affirmations of 2:17-20 and the conclusion of 2:21. Appended to these two main parts are statements found in 4:8-11 expressing Paul's concern for his Galatian converts."

Galatians 3:1

Ὦ ἀνόητοι Γαλάται, τίς ὑμᾶς ἐβάσκανεν, οἷς κατ᾽ ὀφθαλμοὺς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς προεγράφη ἐσταυρωμένος;

ὦ O!
ἀνοητος, ον foolish, ignorant

The Greek text used in these notes is that of the of Society of Biblical Literature. See SBLGNT

Repeated in v3, highlighting the sharpness of Paul's address and expressing his deep concern, exasperation and perplexity (cf. 4:11,20).

Γαλατης, ου Galatian

ἐβάσκανεν Verb, aor act indic, 3s βασκαινω bewitch, place under a spell

Here alone in the NT. A term commonly used in the Greek world: it was part of the rhetoric of the day for characterising opponents and their strategies. Here it is used figuratively to mean 'to pervert,' 'to confuse the mind'.

The Textus Receptus, following C D^c K L P Ψ most minuscules vg^{mss} syr^h goth eth *al*, adds τη ἀληθεια μη πειθεσθαι from 5:7.

κατ ὀφθαλμος 'before the eyes'

A reference to the power of the preaching which made real what was preached.

προεγράφη Verb, aor pass indic, 3s προγραφω write beforehand, put on public display

The sense here is 'clearly portray'. "It is best, therefore, to understand Paul here as describing his preaching to the Galatians under the figure of a public announcement or placarding of Jesus before them. What he had preached to them was so openly and clearly proclaimed that Paul is at a loss to know how his converts could ever have failed to see its significance or to appreciate its implications for the question at hand." Longenecker

ἐσταυρωμένος Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom s σταυροω crucify

"The participle ἐσταυρωμενος, being in the perfect tense, lays emphasis on the crucifixion as an accomplished fact with present results, and so should be translated 'having been crucified.' The phrase 'Christ crucified' was on Paul's lips an abbreviated form of the gospel (cf. 1 Cor 1:23; 2:2; also 1 Cor 1:13; 2:8; 2 Cor 13:4)." Longenecker

Galatians 3:2

τοῦτο μόνον θέλω μαθεῖν ἀφ᾽ ὑμῶν, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου τὸ πνεῦμα ἐλάβετε ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως;

μονος, η, ον i) adj only, alone; ii) adv μονον only, alone

μαθεῖν Verb, aor act infin μανθανω learn, find out

ἐξ ἔργων νόμου (cf. 2:16) "is Paul's catch phrase to signal the whole legalistic complex of ideas having to do with winning God's favour by merit-amassing observance of Torah." Longenecker

ἐλάβετε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl λαμβανω

ἀκοῆς Noun, gen s ἀκοη, ης f report, news, hearing

ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως the sense would seem to be 'by believing what you heard.'

Galatians 3:3

οὕτως ἀνόητοί ἐστε; ἐναρξάμενοι πνεύματι νῦν σαρκὶ ἐπιτελεῖσθε;

ἐναρχομαι (deponent) begin, make a beginning

The aorist refers to the moment of conversion. "It does not have in mind anything consequent to the beginning of the believer's new life, but rather takes it for granted that the beginning of the Christian life and the reception of God's Spirit are coterminous." Longenecker

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body, human nature

ἐπιτελεῖσθε Verb, pres midd/pass indic, 2 pl ἐπιτελεω complete, accomplish

"The present infinitive passive verb ἐπιτελεῖσθε with the adverbial particle νυν stresses the Galatian Christians' present orientation: 'now trying to attain perfection.' ... What Paul wants his converts to see is that the Christian life is one that starts, is maintained, and comes to culmination only through dependence on the activity of God's Spirit (cf. 5:25; also see Phil 1:6, where the same verbs ἐναρχομαι and ἐπιτελεω appear and where the point is made that completion of the Christian life comes about on the same basis as its inception, viz. by God's working." Longenecker

Galatians 3:4

τοσαῦτα ἐπάθετε εἰκῇ; εἴ γε καὶ εἰκῇ.

τοσουτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative adj so much, so great, so large; pl so many

ἐπάθετε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl πασχω suffer, experience

Elsewhere in NT the verb is always used in the sense of 'experience suffering.' Longenecker considers, however, that in this context the *sensu bono* would appear more likely. "So τοσαῦτα ἐπάθετε ('have you experienced so much') should probably be taken as a recollection of the Galatian believers' past, positive spiritual experiences – perhaps even should be translated 'have you had such remarkable experiences' ..., or at least understood as 'the great experiences through which the Galatians had already passed in their life as Christians' (so Burton ...)." Longenecker

εἰκη adv. in vain, for nothing

"Paul's question is: Are all your past, positive spiritual experiences of no significance to you when faced with the option of going on with the Spirit or turning to the Jewish law?" Longenecker

γε enclitic particle adding emphasis to the word with which it is associated

Galatians 3:5

ὁ οὖν ἐπιχορηγῶν ὑμῖν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις ἐν ὑμῖν ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως;

ἐπιχορηγεω supply
ἐνεργεω work, be at work (in)

The question of v.2 repeated, though now with reference to the experience of the Galatian Christians subsequent to conversion spoken of in v.4. The phrase ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις ἐν ὑμῖν in context most naturally refers to the Galatians themselves working miracles rather than Paul working miracles among them.

Galatians 3:6-25

The Promise to Abraham fulfilled in Christ and the Gospel.
First circle of argument – vv.6-14
vv6-9 Statement of the covenant to Abraham – he was blessed through faith and the Gentiles are likewise blessed through faith.
vv10-12 The law, on the contrary, proves no source of blessing.
vv13-14 Christ redeemed us (Jewish believers) from the curse of the law in order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles: Jew and Gentile both receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. This section thus links back to vv1-5, returning to the theme of the gift of the Spirit.
Second circle of argument – vv 15-29
vv15-17 The Abrahamic covenant, as a binding covenant, could not be overthrown: it is a covenant marked by *promise* and *inheritance*; a covenant which finds its fulfilment in Christ.
v18 Thus the law cannot have been the ground of the inheritance promised to Abraham.
vv19-24 The function of the law:
    a) given because of transgressions (vv19-20);
    b) directs to the promise (vv21-22)
vv23-25 Now that Christ has come, the promise has been fulfilled and the law has been brought to an end.

Galatians 3:6

καθὼς Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.

Paul is undoubtedly picking up themes from the Judaisers who were arguing that without obedience to all of the law, these Gentile Christians were not sons of Abraham – not fully part of the family of God.

Longenecker suggests that καθως Ἀβραὰμ should be understood as 'take Abraham as an example.'

ἐλογίσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3s λογιζομαι reckon, count, calculate, credit, suppose

Galatians 3:7

Γινώσκετε ἄρα ὅτι οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, οὗτοι υἱοί εἰσιν Ἀβραάμ.

γινωσκετε could be either indicative or imperative. Most think it imperative, but Longenecker suggests that γινωσκετε ἀρα ὁτι is "a typical disclosure formula in ancient Hellenistic letters that serves to remind readers of what is known than to exhort."

ἐκ πιστεως 'those who rely on faith'

The expression υιοι Ἀβρααμ "is probably to be seen as polemically based. The Judaisers' message focused on being rightly related to Abraham and God's covenant with Israel." Longenecker. Cf. 'Abraham's seed' (3:16,29) and 'the Israel of God' (6:16).

Galatians 3:8

προϊδοῦσα δὲ ἡ γραφὴ ὅτι ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοῖ τὰ ἔθνη ὁ θεὸς προευηγγελίσατο τῷ Ἀβραὰμ ὅτι Ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.

προιδοῦσα Verb, aor act ptc, f nom s προοραω see ahead of time
δικαιοῖ Verb, pres act indic, 3s, δικαιοω justify, declare righteous

A present tense functioning as a future.

ἔθνη Noun, nom & acc pl ἐθνος, ους n nation, people; τα ἐ. Gentiles
προευηγγελίσατο Verb, aor midd indic, 3 s προευαγγελιζομαι proclaim the good news beforehand
ἐνευλογηθήσονται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 pl ἐνευλογεω bless

The Judaisers probably also quoted the texts which spoke of the blessings promised to Abraham. "Their emphasis undoubtedly was on being related to Abraham – i.e., on the synonymous expressions 'in you' (Gen 12:3), 'in your seed' (Gen 22:18; 26:4), 'in you ... even in your seed' (Gen 28:14), and 'in him [Abraham]' Gen 18:18. Paul's emphasis, however, is on the fact that 'all the nations of the earth' (Gen 18:18; 22:18; 26:4) or 'all the tribes of the earth' (Gen 12:3; 28:14) are included in that foundational blessing." Longenecker

Paul found God's saving purpose to the Gentiles everywhere in the OT. Cf. Rom 15:9-12 where he cites Ps 18:49; 2 Sam 22:50; Deut 32:43; Ps 117:1; Isa 11:10.

Galatians 3:9

ὥστε οἱ ἐκ πίστεως εὐλογοῦνται σὺν τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ.

ὥστε so that, with the result that

οἱ ἐκ πίστεως 'those who rely on faith', contrasted with ἐξ ἔργων νομου of the next verse '[all who] rely on the works of the law'

εὐλογοῦνται Verb, pres pass indic, 3 pl εὐλογεω bless

συν "lays stress on the believer's vital connection with Abraham." Longenecker

πιστος, η, ον faithful, trustworthy, reliable, believing

'Abraham, the man of faith.'

Galatians 3:10

Ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσὶν ὑπὸ κατάραν εἰσίν, γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι Ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά.

ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as, how much, how far; pl. as many as, all

Those whose lives are governed by observance of the Mosaic law.

καταρα, ας f curse, something accursed

"Israel had willingly placed herself under the stipulations of the covenant (cf. Ex 24:3,7), and in so doing had accepted the threat of being cursed for non-fulfilment... Coming under a curse was therefore inextricably bound up with receiving the law, and Paul seeks to make that point explicit in his treatment of Deut 27:26." Longenecker

ἐπικαταρατος, ον under a curse
ἐμμενω remain faithful to, obey, stay
γεγραμμένοις Verb, perf pass ptc, m & n dat pl γραφω

"We may assume that the premise of the Judaisers' argument was that one who faithfully observes the Mosaic law will live a full and acceptable life before God which is what is stated as the principle of the law in v12 quoting Lev 18:5: 'The one who does these things shall live by them'... Paul's premise, however, though unstated, is that no one is capable of keeping the law." Longenecker

Galatians 3:11

ὅτι δὲ ἐν νόμῳ οὐδεὶς δικαιοῦται παρὰ τῷ θεῷ δῆλον, ὅτι Ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται,

δε ... δηλον 'clearly however'.

ἐν νομῳ is a shorthand way of expressing the same as ἐξ ἐργων νομου

οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν   no one, nothing; οὐδεν not at all

δικαιοῦται Verb, pres pass indic, 3s δικαιοω

The passive emphasises that righteousness is given by another.
τῳ θεῳ means 'in the sight of God'.

παρα preposition with dat with, in the presence of

δηλος, η, ον evident δηλον (ὁτι) it is evident (that)

δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just, conforming to the standard, in a right relationship with God

ζήσεται Verb, fut mid indic, 3s ζαω live, be alive

The Hebrew of Hab 2:4 וְצַדִּיק בֶּאֱמוּנָתוֹ יִחְיֶה 'the righteous shall live by his faith' is ambiguous and the LXX translated it in two different ways: "either ὁ δικαιος ἐκ πιστεως μου ζησεται ('the righteous shall live on the basis of my [God's] faithfulness,' so LXX[B]) or ὁ δικαιος μου ἐκ πιστεως ζησεται ('my righteous one shall live on the basis of faith/faithfulness,' so LXX[A])." Paul does not pick up the issue of the pronominal suffix. "The point he is making here is that righteousness in this pivotal text is associated with faith alone – not with the law! Paul himself may have read the text 'the one who is righteous by faith shall live' (as the close association of ὁ δικαιος and ἐκ πιστεως in the word order might suggest) or 'the righteous one shall live by faith' (which is the more traditional reading, both then and today). Either way, however, in v 11 Paul sets up a sharp antithesis to v 10: righteousness is to be associated with faith alone; curse is the result of trying to observe the law in order to gain righteousness." Longenecker

Galatians 3:12

ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως, ἀλλ᾽· Ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς.

'Law' and 'faith are mutually exclusive as bases of righteousness. The quotation here is from Lev 18:5. The law has to do with *doing*.

Galatians 3:13

Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα, ὅτι γέγραπται· Ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὁ κρεμάμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου,

ἐξαγοραζω   set free, release, redeem

The aorist points to a historic event.

καταρα, ας f see v.10
γενόμενος   Verb, aor ptc, m nom s γινομαι
ἐπικαταρατος see v.10

"Thou Christ art my sin and my curse, or rather, I am thy sin, thy curse, thy death, thy wrath of God, thy hell; and contrawise, thou art my righteousness, my blessing, my life, my grace of God and my heaven." Luther

κρεμάμενος   Verb, pres midd ptc, m nom s
    κρεμαννυμι hang, midd intrans. hang
ξυλον, ου n wood, tree, cross, stocks

Dt 21:23. "For Jews, the proclamation of a crucified Messiah was scandalous (cf. 1 Cor 1:23; Gal 5:11), 'a blasphemous contradiction in terms' (Bruce...). Undoubtedly the central problem for all Jewish Christians was how to understand Jesus as God's Messiah and yet as cursed by God, with the magnitude of the problem only heightened by the pronouncement of Deut 21:23. The process as to how early Christians came to understand Jesus as both Messiah and accursed may be obscure, but their conclusion is clear: the curse of the cross was 'an exchange curse' wherein Christ became a curse for us (cf. esp. 2 Cor 5:21). And it is just such an assertion that appears in 3:13a, which we believe is probably an early Christian confession used by Paul... In all likelihood, therefore, what Paul is doing here in v13 is citing a traditional confessional portion, presumably known to his Galatian converts (also to the Judaisers, though they may not have used it themselves), to show how Christ's bearing of mankind's curse nullifies all thoughts of legalism and to set up his conclusion regarding the blessing of Abraham and the promise of the Spirit in v14." Longenecker

Galatians 3:14

ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως.

The two ἵνα clauses are coordinate rather than one being subordinate to the other.

εὐλογια, ας f   blessing
γένηται   Verb, aor subj, 3 s γινομαι

ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ all that comes to us from God comes to us 'in Christ'. No blessing can be obtained from any other source.

ἐπαγγελια, ας f   promise, what is promised

A few ancient MSS read εὐλογιαν rather than ἐπαγγελιαν.

λάβωμεν   Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl λαμβανω

It is the Spirit, received by faith, who makes us part of the community of the people of God and thereby heirs of Abraham.

Galatians 3:15

Ἀδελφοί, κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω· ὅμως ἀνθρώπου κεκυρωμένην διαθήκην οὐδεὶς ἀθετεῖ ἢ ἐπιδιατάσσεται.

ἀδελφοι "functions as an epistolatory convention signalling certain breaks in the letter structure of Galatians, as well as expressing Paul's sincere affection." Longenecker

κατα ἀνθρωπον λεγω 'speaking in human terms'

Cf. Rom 3:5; 6:19; 1 Cor 9:8. The meaning here is 'let me take an example from everyday life.'

ὁμως   even, nevertheless
κεκυρωμένην   Verb, perf pass ptc, f acc s
    κυροω put into effect (of a covenant)

The perfect reflects the fact that a covenant once set up is fixed – of permanent effect.

διαθηκη, ης covenant, will, testament

The Greek term commonly meant a 'will' but is used to translate the Hebrew ברית ('covenant') in 270 of 286 occurrences in the LXX. "It appears, therefore that in developing his *minori ad maius* type of argument, Paul has both secular and theological connotations for διαθηκη in mind and that he is working from that of 'testament' or 'will' to that of 'covenant.'" Longenecker

ἀθετεω reject, set aside, refuse
ἐπιδιατασσομαι add to (a will)

Galatians 3:16

τῷ δὲ Ἀβραὰμ ἐρρέθησαν αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι καὶ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ· οὐ λέγει· Καὶ τοῖς σπέρμασιν, ὡς ἐπὶ πολλῶν, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐφ' ἑνός· Καὶ τῷ σπέρματί σου, ὅς ἐστιν Χριστός.

ἐρρέθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl λεγω
ἐπαγγελια, ας f promise, what is promised

Gen 12:3; 13:15; 15:18; 17:8; 22:16-18 etc.

σπερμα, τος seed, offspring

Paul's argument based on the use of the singular term 'seed' is not artificial or false. Paul is well aware that seed, as much in Greek as in English, is a collective noun (see v.29). His point is that the promise, like the recipients, is *one*: neither the promise itself, nor the recipients is capable of division. That unity is evident from the fact that Christ is *the* promised seed (see also Gen 3:15), the one in whom all of the promises of God find their focus and to whom alone they rightfully belong (see 2 Cor 1:20). He is *the* son of God and heir to the promises; he is the true Israel of God. The promises are therefore possessed by the one seed which is Christ, and with him all who are found in him Jew and Gentile. "Paul is here invoking a corporate solidarity understanding of the promise to Abraham wherein the Messiah, as the true descendant of Abraham and the true representative of the nation, is seen as the true 'seed' of Abraham – as are, of course, also the Messiah's own, as v29 insists." Longenecker
Paul's argument refutes the Judaisers' advocacy of Christ plus ...: to possess Christ is to possess all of the promises of God – nothing else is needed and nothing more is possible. Equally, Paul's argument disallows any form of dispensationalism which would seek to establish two separate people of God and two separate bodies of promise.

Galatians 3:17

τοῦτο δὲ λέγω· διαθήκην προκεκυρωμένην ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ μετὰ τετρακόσια καὶ τριάκοντα ἔτη γεγονὼς νόμος οὐκ ἀκυροῖ, εἰς τὸ καταργῆσαι τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν.

The conclusion to vv 15 and 16.

προκεκυρωμένην Verb, perf pass ptc, f acc s
    προκυροω make previously

Cf. the perf pass ptc of κυροω in v.15.

"After θεου the TR, following the late uncials and most minuscules ... continues with εἰς Χριστον... Apparently the interpretative gloss was added in order to introduce into the argument a reference to Χριστος of the preceding verse. The shorter text is strongly supported..." *UBS Textual Commentary*

τετρακοσιοι, αι, α four hundred
τριακοντα thirty

"The rabbis found the difference between Gen 15:13 ('400 years') and Ex 12:40 ('430 years') somewhat perplexing ... and there are many places in their writings where the matter is dealt with. Usually they solved the problem by taking 430 years as the time between God's covenant with Abraham and Moses' reception of the law and 400 years as the period Israel spent in Egypt... And so Paul here is probably not relying on Ex 12:40 versus Gen 15:13, but only repeating the traditionally accepted number of years for the time span between the Abrahamic covenant and the Mosaic law." Longenecker

ἔτη Noun, nom & acc pl ἐτος, ους n year
γεγονως Verb, perf act ptc, m nom s γινομαι
ἀκυροω cancel, disregard

εἰς with infinitive 'so as to be'

καταργεω render ineffective, cancel, do
    away with; pass be cut off from, be
    released from

Galatians 3:18

εἰ γὰρ ἐκ νόμου ἡ κληρονομία, οὐκέτι ἐξ ἐπαγγελίας· τῷ δὲ Ἀβραὰμ δι' ἐπαγγελίας κεχάρισται ὁ θεός.

κληρονομια, ας f inheritance, what is
    promised

"'Inheritance' is introduced by Paul into the discussion here for the first time, though subsequently it plays a major role (κληρονομια, 'inheritance,' here; κληρονομος, 'heir,' at 3:29; 4:1,7; κληρονομεω, 'inherit,' at 4:30; 5:21; with the idea being prominent in the illustration of 4:1-7, the allegory of 4:21-31, and the blessing of 6:16). It stems, of course, from references to the promise(s) contained in the Abrahamic covenant of vv 16-17." Longenecker

οὐκετι adv no longer, no more
κεχάρισται Verb, perf indic, 3s χαριζομαι
    grant, give, bestow

"The verb χαριζομαι ('graciously give') lays stress on the character of the inheritance given – that is, it was an expression of God's grace and not a commercial transaction. The perfect tense (κεχαρισται) identifies the inheritance as still being in force, so bringing to the fore Paul's underlying argument throughout vv 15-17." Longenecker

---

The Greek text used in these notes is that of the of Society of Biblical Literature. See SBLGNT

Galatians 3:19-4:7

Many treat these verses as a digression, but Longenecker says that they are vital to Paul's argument. "If, as we have argued ..., the Judaisers of Galatia were not presenting themselves as opposing Paul's message of faith in Christ (i.e., not overtly advocating 'legalism'), but rather claiming to be complementing his proclamation so as to bring his converts to perfection (i.e., advocating Jewish 'nomism'), then Paul's treatments of (1) the purpose and function of the law (3:19-25, particularly as a *paidagogos* in the supervision of one's life of faith), (2) the new relationship established by God of being 'in Christ' (3:26-29), and (3) how relationships under the supervision of the law and being 'in Christ' are to be seen (4:1-7) are directly related to issues in the churches of Galatia."

Galatians 3:19

Τί οὖν ὁ νόμος; τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν προσετέθη, ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα ᾧ ἐπήγγελται, διαταγεὶς δι᾽ ἀγγέλων ἐν χειρὶ μεσίτου·

παραβασις, εως f overstepping, transgression, disobedience, sin

The word bears the sense of overstepping a mark. In adding the law, the boundaries for human conduct were clearly marked out and transgression exposed. The law was added to bring about a knowledge of sin (cf. Rom 3:20).

χαριν prep with gen, for the sake of, because of

Though referred to as a preposition, χαριν generally occurs after the noun to which it belongs.

προσετέθη   Verb, aor pass indic, 3s προστιθημι add, add to, increase, proceed

"Suggests that the law was not of the essence of God's redemptive activity with humankind." Longenecker

ἀχρι (and ἀχρις): i) prep with gen until, as far as; ii) conj until; ἀχρι οὑ until, as, when, as long as

ἐπαγγελλομαι promise, profess, claim

I.e. it had a shelf life which expired with the coming of Christ. "Thus the covenant of promise is presented to the mind as of permanent validity, both beginning before and continuing through the period of the law and afterwards, the law on the other hand as temporary, added to the permanent covenant for a period limited in both directions." Burton

διαταγεὶς   Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s διατασσω command, give instructions

χειρ, χειρος f hand, power

μεσιτης, ου m mediator, intermediary

The argument of the latter part of verse 19 and of verse 20 is difficult partly because of lack of any explicit mention in the OT of angels being involved in the giving of the law (though cf. Deut 33:2; Ps 68 (LXX 67):18 which were elaborated in later Jewish tradition). It raises the question of whether ἀγγελων might here be used in the more general sense of messenger (WD Davis suggests that the reference is to prophets or priests).
Longenecker suggests that, "the Judaisers were citing the angels' presence at Sinai as evidence of the law's glory and God's approval. Paul, however, turns this tradition in *ad hominem* fashion against them."
Whatever the intent of the words, the meaning is clear. In giving the law, God acted through intermediaries and the recipients were left with the task of fulfilling the law's demands. In contrast, in bringing redemption, God has acted alone, acting in Christ.
Paul's argument here underlines the superiority of the gospel to the giving of the law and is similar to the argument at the beginning of the letter to the Hebrews.

Galatians 3:20

ὁ δὲ μεσίτης ἑνὸς οὐκ ἔστιν, ὁ δὲ θεὸς εἷς ἐστιν.

This is a difficult verse but would seem to mean 'a mediator, however, does not just represent one party; but God is one!' The point is that "the process of divine redemption requires conformity to the oneness of God!" Betz. It must be unilateral.

Galatians 3:21

Ὁ οὖν νόμος κατὰ τῶν ἐπαγγελιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ; μὴ γένοιτο· εἰ γὰρ ἐδόθη νόμος ὁ δυνάμενος ζῳοποιῆσαι, ὄντως ἐκ νόμου ἂν ἦν ἡ δικαιοσύνη.

κατα prep with i) acc according to; ii) gen against, throughout

ἐπαγγελια, ας f promise, what is promised

του θεου is omitted by p[46] B and a few versions.

γένοιτο   Verb, aor opt, 3s γινομαι

μη γενοιτο 'by no means,' 'certainly not'

ἐδόθη   Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s διδωμι give

ζῳοποιεω give life, make alive

ὀντως really, certainly, indeed

ἀν particle indicating contingency

δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness, what is right, what God requires, justice

---

The Greek text used in these notes is that of the of Society of Biblical Literature. See SBLGNT

No law has power to give spiritual life "and so righteousness in whatever dimension, whether forensic or ethical, cannot be based on any law." Longenecker

Galatians 3:22

ἀλλὰ συνέκλεισεν ἡ γραφὴ τὰ πάντα ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν ἵνα ἡ ἐπαγγελία ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοθῇ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν.

συνέκλεισεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s
    συγκλειω make/ keep (someone) a
    prisoner

"Paul's normal use of the singular γραφη ... and the presence of the article ἡ ... suggest that he had a particular passage in mind, probably the immediate antecedent of 3:10, i.e. Deut 27:26." Longenecker

"The neuter τα παντα (lit: 'all things') used of people has the effect of obliterating every distinction and referring to all humanity as an entity (so 'all people' or perhaps better 'everyone without distinction'; cf. Eph 1:10; Col 1:20). Longenecker

ἁμαρτια, ας f sin

"Paul saw the law functioning in a negative fashion vis-à-vis God's promise: it brought about a knowledge of sin, perhaps even an intensified knowledge by actually increasing sin, and it brought condemnation by bringing all humanity under its curse. In effect, it was, as Lutheran theologians often call it, 'God's strange work' instituted in order to bring us to 'God's proper work.' It was not opposed to God's promises, for it operated in the economy of God on a different level or plane than did God's promises." Longenecker

ἐπαγγελια, ας f promise, what is promised

On the expression ἐκ πιστεως Ἰησου Χριστου ('based on the faithfulness of Christ' Longenecker) cf. the comments on 2:16.

δοθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3s διδωμι give

"Paul saw two strands of God-given material running throughout the Scriptures: (1) the law of God, which was given to highlight the true nature of sin and so bring sinful humanity under its curse; and (2) the promises of God, which have always called for a response of faith and are now focused in the faithfulness or obedience of Jesus Christ. In terms of how these two strands operate in our standing before God: the one brings us down; the other raises us up. Ultimately, the strands are united in a common, overall purpose." Longenecker

Galatians 3:23

Πρὸ τοῦ δὲ ἐλθεῖν τὴν πίστιν ὑπὸ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα συγκλειόμενοι εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι.

Verse 23 repeats the thought of v22 but the focus now shifts from 'everyone without distinction' to the Jews.

ἐλθεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἔρχομαι
φρουρεω guard, hold prisoner

Explained more fully in v24.

συγκλειόμενοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl
    συγκλειω see v.22
μέλλουσαν Verb, pres act ptc, f acc s μελλω

"Paul means not faith generically, but the particular faith referred to in v22b that has to do with 'the faithfulness of Jesus Christ' and humanity's response of faith." Longenecker

ἀποκαλυφθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin
    ἀποκαλυπτω reveal, disclose

Galatians 3:24

ὥστε ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν, ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν·

ὥστε so that, with the result that
παιδαγωγος, ου m guardian, teacher

The term 'teacher' is misleading. "The παιδαγωγος, though usually a slave, was an important figure in ancient patrician households, being charged with the supervision and conduct of one or more sons in the family. He was distinguished from the διδασκαλος, for he gave no formal instruction but administered the directives of the father in a custodial manner, though, of course, indirectly he taught by the supervision he gave and the discipline he administered." Longenecker

γέγονεν Verb, perf act indic, 3s γινομαι

εἰς Χριστον is either:
i)   'to lead us to Christ' (NIV), perhaps as the
     παιδαγωγος took the child to the teacher;
     or,
ii) 'until Christ came', parallel to the use of εἰς
     in v23b.
Longenecker argues that the second is required by the context since Paul is speaking of successive periods of salvation history.

δικαιωθῶμεν Verb, aor pass subj, 1pl
    δικαιοω

Galatians 3:25

ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως οὐκέτι ὑπὸ παιδαγωγόν ἐσμεν.

ἐλθούσης Verb, aor act ptc, f gen s ἔρχομαι
οὐκετι adv no longer, no more

"Here Paul delivers the *coup de grace* to the Judaisers' argument for Gentile Christians to live a lifestyle governed by the Mosaic law. For with the coming of the Christian gospel (της πιστεως) as effected by Christ, the law no longer has validity as a παιδαγωγος regulating the life of faith. One may, of course, as a Jew continue to live a Jewish nomistic lifestyle for cultural, national or pragmatic reasons. To be a Jewish believer in Jesus did not mean turning one's back on one's own culture or nation. Yet no longer could it be argued that circumcision, Jewish dietary laws, following distinctly Jewish ethical precepts, or any other matter having to do with a Jewish lifestyle were requisite for the life of faith... The Christian church today has many who formally oppose legalism but hold firmly to nomism. Theirs is a religion of piety that they believe to be God-honouring. What they fail to realise, however, is that in many ways they are recapitulating the error of the Judaisers." Longenecker.

Galatians 3:26-29

Longenecker suggests that "The 'sayings' statement of v26 and the confessional portions of vv27-28 probably stem from the early church, being quoted here by Paul; the concluding statement of v29 is in Paul's own words in application of these early Christian affirmations to the question at hand."

Galatians 3:26

πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

"'In Christ Jesus' there is a new universality of oneness and a new relationship of being God's children." Longenecker

Galatians 3:27

ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε·

For vv27-28 as part of a baptismal confession of the early church, cf. similar phrases in 1 Cor 12:13 and Col 3:11 (the latter passage though not explicitly mentioning baptism immediately follows verses on that subject).

ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as;
   pl. as many as, all
ἐβαπτίσθητε Verb, aor pass indic, 2 pl
   βαπτιζω baptise, wash

"The passive form of the verb ... suggests action done by another, certainly those baptising but more importantly God himself." Longenecker

ἐνεδύσασθε Verb, aor midd indic, 2 pl ἐνδυω
   dress, clothe; midd put on, wear

"The figurative use of ἐνδυω ('put on' or 'clothe') with a personal object means to take on the characteristics, virtues, and/or intentions of the one referred to, and so to become like that person... It may be as well that the metaphorical sense of clothing one's self with Christ was suggested to early Christians by baptismal candidates divesting themselves of clothing before baptism and then being reclothed afterwards." Longenecker

Galatians 3:28

οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλλην, οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος, οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ· πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

ἐνι there is (equivalent to ἐνεστιν)
Ἰουδαιος, α, ον a Jew, Jewish, Judean
οὐδε neither, nor
ἐλευθερος, α, ον free, free person
ἀρσην, εν gen ενος male, man
θῆλυ Adjective, n nom & acc s θηλυς, εια, υ
   female, woman

These three couplets may express a deliberate contrast with the 'blessings' that appear at the beginning of the Jewish cycle of morning prayers, thanking God he did not make me a Gentile, a slave or a woman. "Christians saw it as particularly appropriate to give praise in their baptismal confession that through Christ the old racial schisms and cultural divisions had been healed." Longenecker

Galatians 3:29

εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς Χριστοῦ, ἄρα τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ σπέρμα ἐστέ, κατ᾽ ἐπαγγελίαν κληρονόμοι.

κατα prep with i) acc according to
ἐπαγγελια, ας f promise, what is promised
κληρονομος, ου m heir, one who receives
   what is promised (by God)

Galatians 4:1-7

"There is much that needs to be said regarding the form, provenance, meaning and use of many of the individual items within this passage. But whatever one may conclude with regard to its details, Paul's overall meaning in the illustration is clear: the guardianship of the Mosaic law was meant to be for a time when God's people were in their spiritual minority; but now with the coming of Christ, the time set by the Father has been fulfilled and Christians are to live freely as mature sons 'in Christ,' not under the law's supervision." Longenecker

Galatians 4:1

Λέγω δέ, ἐφ᾽ ὅσον χρόνον ὁ κληρονόμος νήπιός ἐστιν, οὐδὲν διαφέρει δούλου κύριος πάντων ὤν,

λεγω δε 'what I am saying is this ...' introducing an illustrative analogy.

ὁσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as, how much, how far

ἐφ ὁσον χρονον 'as long as'

νηπιος, α, ον baby, infant, child
οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν   no one, nothing
διαφερω intrans. be worth more than, be superior to, differ from

"The picture he draws is of a boy in a home of wealth and standing who is legally an heir (ὁ κληρονομος) and so the 'young master' (κυριος, lit. 'lord' or 'owner') of the family estate, but who is still a minor (νηπιος) and so lives under rules very much like a slave (δουλος)." Longenecker

Galatians 4:2

ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ ἐπιτρόπους ἐστὶ καὶ οἰκονόμους ἄχρι τῆς προθεσμίας τοῦ πατρός.

ἐπιτροπος, ου m   steward, guardian, foreman

A synonym for παιδαγωγος

οἰκονομος, ου m   steward, manager

It is not clear why Paul adds this second term or what its particular intent. The two terms have prompted much discussion. Having outlined a variety of views, Longenecker says, "It is difficult to determine exactly what legal system Paul had in mind when he said, 'but he is under guardians and administrators until the time set by the father.' It is entirely possible, in fact, that Paul, being more interested in application than precise legal details, made the specifics of his illustration conform to his purpose."

ἀχρι (and ἀχρις): i) prep with gen   until, as far as;   ii) conj   until
προθεσμια, ας f   set time

Galatians 4:3

οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς, ὅτε ἦμεν νήπιοι, ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου ἤμεθα δεδουλωμένοι·

οὑτως signals the application of the illustration.

ἡμεις "The first person plural of 4:3, as well as that of 4:5, ought to be understood as referring primarily to Jewish believers: in v3 as Paul's application of his illustration of the Jewish experience under the custodianship of the law and in vv 4-5 as Paul's quotation of an early Jewish Christian confessional portion, with vv 6-7, then, applying the thrust of the confession cited in vv 4-5 to his Gentile converts' situation and therefore reverting back to his usual second person plural 'you.'" Longenecker

στοιχεια, ων n   elements (of which the world is made), basic principles

"Building on the view of τα στοιχεια as being 'first principles' or 'elemental teachings,' he asserts here in 4:3 that the Mosaic law comprised in the Jewish experience those 'basic principles' given by God in preparation for the coming of Christ. His use of του κοσμου ('of the world') seems also somewhat unique. For while στοιχεια του κοσμου would have been taken by Greek writers cosmologically (e.g., the elements of the natural world), Paul takes κοσμος in an ethical sense to mean 'worldly' with its synonym being 'fleshly,' as opposed to 'spiritual' (cf. ... 5:13-26)...
"When talking about the Gentile experience, it was paganism with its veneration of nature and cultic rituals that made up the Gentiles' 'basic principles' of religion. The use of τα στοιχεια του κοσμου in Col 2:8, 20 is to be distinguished from its use here in Gal 4:3 and that of τα ἀσθενη και πτωχα στοιχεια ('the weak and miserable basic principles') in 4:9. For while Paul is speaking about first principles or rudimentary teachings in all four passages, his meaning varies in each of those passages in terms of the specific context (cf. also τα στοιχεια in Heb 5:12 and 2 Peter 3:10,12)." Longenecker

δεδουλωμένοι   Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl
δουλοω enslave, make (someone) a slave

Galatians 4:4

ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός, γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον,

Longenecker suggests that vv 4-5 incorporate confessional material from the early church. "Gal 4:4-5 is admittedly notoriously difficult to analyse as to its structure and provenance. Our own evaluation of the data and weighing of the various hypotheses offered in explanation is that what we have here is an early Christian confessional portion that Paul has drawn, either in whole or in part, from the Church's proclamation – a confession which, as narrative analysis suggests ... was based on the gospel story as told by the earliest Christians."

πληρωμα, τος n fulness, completeness, fulfilment

ἐξαπέστειλεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἐξαποστελλω send out, send away, send forth

Suggests the preexistence of the Son.

γενόμενον Verb, aor ptc, m acc & n nom & acc s γινομαι

"The aorist middle use of γινομαι('be,' 'become') for γενναω ('beget'; in the passive 'be born') was common in Jewish circles." Longenecker

γυνη, αικος f woman, wife

Stresses Jesus' true humanity and his full identification with the situation of the Jews. "The early church spoke of Christ not only as being truly human and possessing a representative quality ('the Man') but also as 'born under the law' to offer a perfect obedience to God the Father on behalf of those under the law ('the Jew')." Longenecker

Galatians 4:5

ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ, ἵνα τὴν υἱοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν.

ἐξαγοραζω redeem, rescue
υἱοθεσια, ας f adoption, sonship

A word unique to Paul within the biblical writings.

ἀπολάβωμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1pl ἀπολαμβανω

"The statements ... are probably to be interpreted as complementary facets of what Jewish believers in Jesus had experienced: (1) redemption from both the law's condemnation (cf. 3:13) and the law's supervision (cf. 3:23-25), and (2) reception of a new relationship with God, which involved primarily the enjoyment of full sonship rights." Longenecker

Galatians 4:6

ὅτι δέ ἐστε υἱοί, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν, κρᾶζον· Αββα ὁ πατήρ.

ἐξαπέστειλεν see v.4

Most later MSS read ὑμων, conforming the pronoun to the earlier verb ἐστε. The shift to the second person plural in the verb arises from Paul's application of the confessional material in vv 4-5 to the Galatians. By then reverting to the first person plural pronoun, Paul identifies himself with his Galatian converts.

κραζω cry out, call out

"Paul is not here setting out stages in the Christian life, whether logical or chronological. Rather, his emphasis is on the reciprocal relation or correlational nature of sonship and the reception of the Spirit...
"The primary function of the Spirit in one's life ... is not to cause a believer in Jesus to become a 'spiritual' or 'charismatic' person, as is so often popularly assumed, but to witness to the filial relation of the believer with God that has been established by the work of Christ – a witness both to the believer (so 3:2,5) and to God the Father (so here)... As a neuter participle κραζον ('crying') agrees in gender with το πνευμα ('the Spirit'), so identifying its subject. It is the Spirit who cries out to God the Father on behalf of the believer, though synonymously Paul can also say that the believer cries out to God the Father as energised by the Spirit (Rom 8:15).
"The content of the cry or acclamation epitomises the believer's new relationship with God: 'Father.'... The acclamation 'Father' stemmed primarily from Jesus' own consciousness and usage, with the early Christians' remembrance of Jesus' usage giving expression to their new realisation of a more intimate relationship with God 'in Christ'." Longenecker

Galatians 4:7

ὥστε οὐκέτι εἶ δοῦλος ἀλλὰ υἱός· εἰ δὲ υἱός, καὶ κληρονόμος διὰ θεοῦ.

ὥστε so that, with the result that

Summarises and concludes the argument of the previous verses and repeats the assertion of 3:26.

οὐκετι adv no longer, no more

The second person singular εἰ "has the effect of bringing matters home to each individual person in view, without, of course, changing the persons designated." Longenecker

κληρονομος, ου see 3:28

Cf. Rom 8:17.

The unusual expression δια θεου, well supported by early witnesses, gave rise to a number of variants, including θεου δια Χριστου (Byz, TR).
"The addition of the prepositional phrase δια θεου ('through God') serves the twofold purpose of (1) reminding Paul's readers that their status as heirs is entirely the result of God's grace, not of their works or merit, and (2) assuring them of the certainty of their possession of that status, since it is the result of God's work on their behalf and not their own endeavours." Longenecker

Galatians 4:8

Ἀλλὰ τότε μὲν οὐκ εἰδότες θεὸν ἐδουλεύσατε τοῖς φύσει μὴ οὖσι θεοῖς·

τοτε then, at that time

'formerly'

εἰδότες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl οιδα
    (verb perf in form but with present
    meaning) know, understand

"A rare instance of the classical use of οὐ with the participle." Bruce

δουλοω enslave, make (someone) a slave

"Though the pre-Christian experiences of Jews and Gentiles were decidedly different, Paul thinks of both in terms of enslavement. So he uses the illustration of vv 1-2 and the perfect passive participle δεδουλωμενοι ('enslaved') in v 3 of the Jewish experience; so likewise the noun δουλος ('slave') in v 7 and the aorist verb ἐδουλευσατε ('you were enslaved') here in v 8 appear with respect to that of the Gentiles." Longenecker

φύσει Noun, dat s φυσις, εως f nature,
    natural condition
οὖσιν Verb, pres ptc, m & n dat pl εἰμι

Galatians 4:9

νῦν δὲ γνόντες θεόν, μᾶλλον δὲ γνωσθέντες ὑπὸ θεοῦ, πῶς ἐπιστρέφετε πάλιν ἐπὶ τὰ ἀσθενῆ καὶ πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα, οἷς πάλιν ἄνωθεν δουλεύειν θέλετε;

νυν in contrast to τοτε of the previous verse.

γνόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl γινωσκω

The aorist has the force, 'having come to know'.

μαλλον adv more; rather, instead, more
    than that
γνωσθέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom pl
    γινωσκω

"Here, as elsewhere throughout Scripture, experiential relationships between God and his people are set out in terms of God's initiative and mankind's response. Relationship with God does not have its basis in man's seeking (mysticism) or doing (legalism) or knowing (gnosticism), but it originates with God himself and is carried on always by divine grace." Longenecker

πως interrog. particle how? in what way?
ἐπιστρεφω turn back, return, turn round,
    turn
παλιν again, once more
ἀσθενῆ Adjective, n nom & acc pl ἀσθενης,
    ες sick, weak, helpless
πτωχος, η, ον poor, pitiful
στοιχεια, ων n elements (of which the
    world is made), basic principles
ἀνωθεν from above, again, from the
    beginning
θελω wish, will

Paul implies that the religion of the Judaisers is like the paganism of the Galatians before they were converted.
"Not, of course, that paganism and the Mosaic law are qualitatively the same, but that both fall under the same judgment when seen from the perspective of being 'in Christ' and that both come under the same condemnation when favoured above Christ
"Beyond question, Paul's lumping of Judaism and paganism together in this manner is radical in the extreme. No Judaiser would ever have accepted such a characterisation of Torah observance; nor would those in Galatia who acceded to their message. By accepting circumcision and the observance of Torah that went with it, they had no thought of returning to paganism. Such a move, they believed, would bring them closer to perfection in their Christian lives. In fact, they might even have thought that obedience to the Jewish law was their only real protection against the ethical perversions associated with their former paganism. For Paul, however, whatever leads one away from sole reliance on Christ, whether based on good intentions or depraved desires, is sub-Christian and therefore to be condemned. Martin Luther (taking up the imagery of one of Aesop's fables) is true to Paul's thought here when he speaks of one who desires to supplement faith by works as being like 'the dog who runs along a stream with a piece of meat in his mouth, and deceived by the reflection of the meat in the water, opens his mouth to snap at it, and so loses both the meat and the reflection'." Longenecker

---

The Greek text used in these notes is that of the of Society of Biblical Literature. See SBLGNT

Galatians 4:10

ἡμέρας παρατηρεῖσθε καὶ μῆνας καὶ καιροὺς καὶ ἐνιαυτούς.

παρατηρεω (act & midd) watch, watch closely, observe, keep
μην, μηνος m month
καιρος, ου m time (viewed as occasion raher than an extent), appointed/proper time, season, age
ἐνιαυτος, ου m year

I.e. observing the Jewish religious calendar.

Galatians 4:11

φοβοῦμαι ὑμᾶς μή πως εἰκῇ κεκοπίακα εἰς ὑμᾶς.

φοβεομαι trans fear, be afraid of, reverence; intrans be afraid
πως here, enclitic particle somehow, in some way

For μη πως cf. 2:2; 1 Thess 3:5.

εἰκη adv. in vain, for nothing
κοπιαω work, work hard, labour, become tired

Galatians 4:12ff

4:12 marks the beginning of a new major section in which Paul now turns to appealing to the Galatians. "In 4:12ff. Paul is no longer so much concerned to accuse or defend as to persuade his Galatian converts to adopt a certain course of action." Longenecker
The remainder of Galatians falls roughly into two sections:
i)   4:12-5:12 Exhortations against the Judaising Threat;
ii) 5:13-6:10 Exhortations against Libertine Tendencies.

Galatians 4:12

Γίνεσθε ὡς ἐγώ, ὅτι κἀγὼ ὡς ὑμεῖς, ἀδελφοί, δέομαι ὑμῶν. οὐδέν με ἠδικήσατε·

κἀγω a compound word = και ἐγω

'Become like me, for I *became* like you', cf. 1 Cor 9:20-21.

δεομαι ask, beg, pray
οὐδέν Adjective, n nom & acc s οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing; οὐδεν not at all
ἀδικεω wrong, treat unjustly, harm

This last phrase could be interpreted in a number of ways. Longenecker says "Paul should probably be understood as affirming: 'I grant, whatever your views and proposed actions, that I have not been personally wronged by what has gone on among Christians at Galatia."

But in vv 13-16 Paul speaks of his relationship with the Galatians when he first visited them and in v 11 he has spoken of his fear that his labours might have been in vain. The thought here may therefore be 'you have *not yet* done me any wrong', i.e. 'turn back before your actions amount to a rejection of both me and my ministry.'

Galatians 4:13

οἴδατε δὲ ὅτι δι᾽ ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν τὸ πρότερον,

οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand
ἀσθενεια, ας f weakness, illness
σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body, human nature

The phrase δι᾽ ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς means 'because of an illness.' "It was an illness, Paul tells us, that served as the occasion for his original ministry in Galatia, either by causing him first to go into the province or by detaining him there longer than he originally planned." Longenecker
The nature of the illness is uncertain. Longenecker suggests that it may have been the result of one or more of the afflictions mentioned in 2 Cor 11:23-25 or that it is perhaps to be equated with his 'thorn in the flesh' referred to in 2 Cor 12:7-10. Ramsay suggested that Paul contracted malaria in the marshes of Pamphylia and came to the plateau area of Pisidian Antioch at first only to recuperate. Others suggest on the basis of v 15 that Paul suffered from some affliction of the eyes. We have insufficient information to be definite as to the nature of the illness.

εὐαγγελιζω act. and midd proclaim the good news
πρότερον and το π. Adverb, before, previously, formerly, first of all, at first, originally

In context το προτερον should probably be contrasted with the implied νυν rather than being seen as a reference to the first of two (or more) visits.

Galatians 4:14

καὶ τὸν πειρασμὸν ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου οὐκ ἐξουθενήσατε οὐδὲ ἐξεπτύσατε, ἀλλὰ ὡς ἄγγελον θεοῦ ἐδέξασθέ με, ὡς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν.

πειρασμος, ου m period or process of testing, trial, test, temptation
σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body, human nature

τὸν πειρασμὸν ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου "that which was a temptation to you in my flesh" – Paul is saying that because of his bodily frailty they might have been tempted to despise him. The awkwardness of the grammar has given rise to a number of textual variants which seek to ease the expression. The text used above is strongly supported by good, ancient and varied witnesses.

ἐξουθενεω despise, treat with contempt
οὐδε neither, nor
ἐξεπτύσατε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl ἐκπτυω despise, reject

Here only in NT.

"Illness would probably have been interpreted by them as demonic in nature and so they could easily have been tempted to dismiss both Paul and his message." Longenecker

ἀγγελον Longenecker says should be understood as 'angel' rather than simply 'messenger'. He adds, "The exaggerated comparisons are used to praise the Galatians with regard to their earlier response to Paul and his evangelistic ministry, and not to extol Paul himself."

ἐδέξασθέ Verb, aor midd (dep) indic, 2pl δεχομαι

Galatians 4:15

ποῦ οὖν ὁ μακαρισμὸς ὑμῶν; μαρτυρῶ γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι εἰ δυνατὸν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ὑμῶν ἐξορύξαντες ἐδώκατέ μοι.

μακαρισμος, ου m happiness, blessing

"The question is rhetorical, implying that a former state had come to an end, but without good reason." Longenecker – 'where then is your [former state of] blessedness?'

μαρτυρεω bear witness, testify

ὑμιν here a 'dative of advantage' – 'I testify concerning you.' Paul is encouraging them to think back to the way in which they viewed his presence among them and words to them as their greatest blessing.

δυνατος, η, ον possible, strong, powerful, able
ἐξορύξαντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl ἐξορυσσω dig out, gouge out
διδωμι give

This phrase leads some to suggest that Paul's weakness or illness was connected with his sight. However, Longenecker thinks that "'to tear out one's eyes for someone' is a graphic and significant idiom for going to the extreme for another's welfare. Certainly it is more telling than our modern idiom of 'giving the shirt off one's back'!"

Galatians 4:16

ὥστε ἐχθρὸς ὑμῶν γέγονα ἀληθεύων ὑμῖν;

ὥστε so that, with the result that
ἐχθρος, α, ον enemy, one hated
γέγονα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s γινομαι
ἀληθευω speak the truth, be honest

Longenecker thinks that the verse is an indignant exclamation: 'So, [it seems,] I have become your enemy because I am telling you the truth!'

Galatians 4:17

ζηλοῦσιν ὑμᾶς οὐ καλῶς, ἀλλὰ ἐκκλεῖσαι ὑμᾶς θέλουσιν, ἵνα αὐτοὺς ζηλοῦτε.

ζηλοω be jealous of, be very concerned about
ἐκκλεῖσαι Verb, aor act infin ἐκκλειω exclude, shut out
θελω wish, will

Longenecker says that ζηλοω was used in the language of love to mean 'take an interest in' or 'earnestly court another's favour'. These false teachers want to cut the Galatians off from all other influences so that the Galatians will view them 'jealously' – as their exclusive guides.

Galatians 4:18

καλὸν δὲ ζηλοῦσθαι ἐν καλῷ πάντοτε, καὶ μὴ μόνον ἐν τῷ παρεῖναί με πρὸς ὑμᾶς,

ζηλοῦσθαι Verb, pres pass infin ζηλοω
παντοτε always

'but good is always to be courted in a good way.' Longenecker says that the first part of the verse has every appearance of being an aphorism of the day which Paul simply quotes for his own purpose when talking about ζηλοω.

μονος, η, ον i) adj only, alone; ii) adv μονον only, alone
παρεῖναί Verb, pres infin παρειμι be present

Note: παρειναι is the aorist infin of two different verbs:
i) παρειμι 'to be present' (Acts 24:19; Gal 4:18,20);
ii) παριημι 'to neglect' (Lk 11:42).

The second half of the verse evidently refers to the Galatians' attitude to Paul and is an implied rebuke that they loved him so much when he was present but seem to despise him now that he is absent from them.

Galatians 4:19

τέκνα μου, οὓς πάλιν ὠδίνω μέχρις οὗ μορφωθῇ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν·

τεκνον, ου n child

The Greek text used in these notes is that of the of Society of Biblical Literature. See SBLGNT

A number of MSS read τεκνια 'little children' which Longenecker thinks may be the original reading which scribes conformed to Paul's more normal τεκνα.

παλιν again, once more
ὠδινω suffer birth pangs

"The verb ὠδινω ('suffer the pains of childbirth') presents imagery that is somewhat startling, for nowhere else in Paul's letters does he portray himself as a pregnant mother giving birth to his converts. Indeed, in 1 Thess 2:7 he compares himself to 'a mother caring for her children,' with that figure then coupled in 2:11 with that of a father dealing with his children. But elsewhere in his letters the birth simile is that of a father begetting children (cf. 1 Cor 4:15; Philem 10)... Here ... we get a glimpse into the heart of a true evangelist and pastor, for whom the waywardness and struggles of those committed to his charge are his agonies as well." Longenecker

μεχρι and μεχρις i) prep with gen until, to, to the extent, as far as; ii) conj until
μορφωθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s μορφοω form, fashion

Compare 2:20 "The reactionary step which the Galatians are in danger of taking, forces upon the apostle the painful repetition of that process by which he first brought them into the world of faith in Christ, and his pain, he declares, must continue till they have really entered into vital fellowship with Christ." Burton

Galatians 4:20

ἤθελον δὲ παρεῖναι πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἄρτι, καὶ ἀλλάξαι τὴν φωνήν μου, ὅτι ἀποροῦμαι ἐν ὑμῖν.

ἄρτι adv. now
ἀλλάξαι Verb, aor act infin ἀλλασσω change, alter, exchange

Longenecker suggests that the meaning is 'exchange my voice [for this letter].' "The phrase ἀλλαξαι την φωνην μου (lit.: 'to exchange my voice') may be understood as expressing Paul's desire either to change the tone of his admonitions (so RSV, NEB, NIV) or to change their content (so JB). More likely, however, it has in mind the contrast between Paul's voice as expressed in a letter and Paul's voice as expressed in person, and so it is to be understood as expressing Paul's desire to talk with his converts directly rather than through the substitute of a letter."

ἀπορεω act & midd be at a loss, be disturbed, perplexed

Galatians 4:21-31: Hagar and Sarah

Those who pride themselves on being sons of Abraham, children of the covenant, need to remember that Abraham had not one son but two. The mark of a child of the covenant is the Spirit given freedom of the child of God (see Ch 5), not the legalistic bondage of the slave. It is possible that the Judaisers likened Gentile converts to children of Hagar – children of Abraham maybe but not legitimate children like themselves. If this is so, then Paul turns their argument on its head. The children of Hagar are those who want to live under law, for Sinai is in Arabia and Arabia is the land of Hagar's children.

Longenecker suggests that the Judaisers "claimed that Paul's preaching represented an 'Ishmaelian' form of truth. Their argument probably was that while Ishmael was, indeed, the first son of Abraham, it was only Isaac who was considered the true son of Abraham, with the conclusion being that only as Paul's converts are related to Isaac and so to the Jewish nation, and not Ishmael the non-Jewish representative, can they legitimately be called 'sons of Abraham'.

"Paul's allegorical treatment of the Hagar-Sarah story is for polemical purposes, countering, it seems, the Judaisers' own contemporisation of that story in an ad-hominem fashion. In effect, he is saying that not his but their message is the Ishmaelian form of the truth."

Longenecker includes a lengthy excursus on the Hagar-Sarah story in Jewish writings and in Paul.

Galatians 4:21

Λέγετέ μοι, οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι, τὸν νόμον οὐκ ἀκούετε;

Longenecker says that the church as a whole is being addressed, not a particular group within the church. Cf vv 26, 28, 31.

"Paul's challenge is that if the Galatians would really 'hear' the law – that is, understand it fully and respond to it aright – they would not regress to Jewish nomism, for, as he argued earlier, the law's purpose as a pedagogue was to function until the coming of Christ." Longenecker

Galatians 4:22

γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι Ἀβραὰμ δύο υἱοὺς ἔσχεν, ἕνα ἐκ τῆς παιδίσκης καὶ ἕνα ἐκ τῆς ἐλευθέρας·

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

γέγραπται is normally used for direct citation of OT Scripture. "Here, however, what follows is not a direct quotation from the OT, but rather a statement summarising the stories about Abraham as found in several chapters of Genesis. This departure from Paul's usual exegetical procedure, as CK Barrett points out..., is one hint that Paul is here responding to the scriptural arguments of his opponents, for here 'it is written' does not identify a specific text but rather it 'allows the genuine Old Testament foundation of the Judaisers' argument.'" Longenecker

δυο gen & acc δυο dat δυσιν two
ἔσχεν   Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἐχω
παιδισκη, ης f maid, slave-girl
ἐλευθερος, α, ον free, free person

Galatians 4:23

ἀλλ᾽ ὁ μὲν ἐκ τῆς παιδίσκης κατὰ σάρκα γεγέννηται, ὁ δὲ ἐκ τῆς ἐλευθέρας δι᾽ ἐπαγγελίας.

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body, human nature
γεγέννηται   Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γενναω be father of; pass be born
ἐπαγγελια, ας f promise, what is promised

Cf. Gen 15:4-6; 17:15-21.

Galatians 4:24

ἅτινά ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα· αὗται γάρ εἰσιν δύο διαθῆκαι, μία μὲν ἀπὸ ὄρους Σινᾶ, εἰς δουλείαν γεννῶσα, ἥτις ἐστὶν Ἀγάρ,

ἅτινά   pronoun, n nom & acc pl ὁστις
ἀλληγορεω f speak of allegorically

Allegory – not in the sense in which this was later used by the 'church fathers' to find hidden meaning in Scripture. Paul's use of Scripture, even when used here in a highly original way, is not arbitrary but is informed and undergirded by a clear Biblical Theology which controls his exegesis.
"Paul is not here trying to emancipate the meaning of the passage from its historical content and transmute it into a moral sentiment or a philosophical truth, which is the almost invariable function of Alexandrian allegory ... [Rather,] he is envisaging a critical situation which took place under the Old Covenant (or, to be strictly accurate, before it but in prefiguration of it) as forecasting and repeated by a situation under the New Covenant." RPC Hanson

"CK Barrett has proposed that Paul's exegetical practices throughout Galatians 'can be best explained if we may suppose that he is taking up passages that had been used by his opponents, correcting their exegesis, and showing that their Old Testament proof-texts were his side rather than on theirs'... In line with such a proposal, Barrett's further point here is apropos: 'His [Paul's] so-called allegorical treatment of Abraham and the two women was evoked not by a personal love of fantastic exegesis but by a reasoned case which it was necessary that he should answer'." Longenecker

διαθηκη, ης   covenant, will, testament

"What he means by 'two covenants,' of course, are the Old Covenant that is Torah-centred, under which the Judaisers were attempting to subsume the faith of Galatian Christians, and the New Covenant that is Christ-centred, which Paul proclaimed." Longenecker

ὁρος, ους n   mountain, hill
δουλεια, ας f slavery
γεννῶσα   Verb, pres act ptc, f nom s γενναω

"The affirmative particle μεν ('indeed') probably operates here as in v23 – that is, to acknowledge the correctness of a statement before going on to draw different conclusions. If so, then Paul is here acknowledging a connection made by the Judaisers between Hagar, Mt Sinai and slavery, which was made in Jewish tradition when talking about the Ishmaelites (Hagar's posterity) and their settling in the desert regions to the south. But while acknowledging such a connection, Paul goes on in what follows to turn it to his own advantage." Longenecker

Galatians 4:25

τὸ δὲ Ἀγὰρ Σινᾶ ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ, συστοιχεῖ δὲ τῇ νῦν Ἰερουσαλήμ, δουλεύει γὰρ μετὰ τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς·

"το ... Ἀγαρ Σινα ὀρος ἐστιν ('Hagar is Mount Sinai') is supported by A B D K L Byz etc.; το ... Σινα ὀρος ἐστιν ('Sinai is a mountain') by p[46] א C F G etc. The external evidence is almost equally divided, as have been text critics and commentators through history. The former reading, however, is more susceptible to scribal modification (i.e., the harder reading') and therefore more likely the original, whereas there is nothing of either form or meaning in the latter to make its conversion the more likely." Longenecker.

Accepting this reading, how can Hagar be identified with Mt Sinai? Longenecker suggests that Paul is associating Hagar with Sinai on the grounds that the Ishmaelites were believed to have settled in the region of Petra and that Sinai was also thought to be located in that region. He adds that the Galatians may well have been familiar with Hagar and her associations from the Judaisers explanation of the story to which Paul is here responding.

συστοιχεω correspond to, be a figure of
δουλευω here in sense of be enslaved
τεκνον, ου n child; pl descendants

"For Jews generally, the salvation-historical line of Scripture began with Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac, extended on through Moses and the Torah given at Mt Sinai, and came to focus in the present city of Jerusalem as the epitome of Israel's hopes regarding the law, the land, and the temple... This is how the Judaisers, evidently, set out associations as well. For Paul, however, slavery and freedom were the most important factors to be taken into consideration when asking how the various participants in salvation history were to be understood. So Paul, in what undoubtedly was a shocking realignment of personages and places in a Jewish understanding of salvation history, set out the line of slavery as follows: Hagar and her son Ishmael, who have to do with Mt Sinai, are to be associated with the present city of Jerusalem and her children, from whence the Judaisers came. For, says Paul, Jerusalem, like Hagar, 'is in slavery with her children.'" Longenecker

Galatians 4:26

ἡ δὲ ἄνω Ἰερουσαλὴμ ἐλευθέρα ἐστίν, ἥτις ἐστὶν μήτηρ ἡμῶν·

ἄνω from above, again, from the beginning, from the first

"The idea of a 'heavenly Jerusalem' ('the Jerusalem that is above') has a rich Jewish background. The concept has to do with the culmination of God's redemptive purposes in human history, the realisation of God's reign in its totality. As such, it is an eschatological concept that describes Jerusalem as it will be at the end of time, often in contrast to what the city is at present." Longenecker

On Jerusalem as 'our mother' cf. Ps 87. "Here in his Hagar-Sarah allegory, therefore, Paul conflates two Jewish traditions: the first, that of Sarah, the barren freeborn wife of Abraham, who was destined to be the mother of nations; the second, that of the holy city Jerusalem, the eschatological Zion, who symbolically is the mother of God's own." Longenecker

A number of later MSS read παντων ἡμων which is followed by the TR.

Galatians 4:27

γέγραπται γάρ· Εὐφράνθητι, στεῖρα ἡ οὐ τίκτουσα, ῥῆξον καὶ βόησον, ἡ οὐκ ὠδίνουσα· ὅτι πολλὰ τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐρήμου μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς ἐχούσης τὸν ἄνδρα.

Cf. Is 54:1.

εὐφράνθητι Verb, aor pass imperat, 2s εὐφραινω make glad, cheer up; pass be glad, rejoice
στειρα, ας f barren, a woman incapable of having children
τικτω bear, give birth to, produce
ῥῆξον Verb, aor act imperat, 2s ῥηγνυμι and ῥησσω burst, tear in pieces (of an animal), break forth (of a shout)
βόησον Verb, aor act imperat, 2s βοαω call, cry out, shout
ὠδίνουσα Verb, pres act ptc, f nom s ὠδινω suffer birth pangs
πολυς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου much, many
ἐρημος, ου f deserted place, uninhabited region, desert; also ἐρνμος, ον adj lonely, deserted, uninhabited, desolate
μαλλον adv more; rather, instead, more than that
ἄνδρα Noun, acc s ἀνηρ, ἀνδρος m man, husband

"In Paul's allegorical treatment of the Hagar-Sarah story, Sarah is spiritual mother to Gentile Christians in Galatia as well as Jewish Christians ('our mother'), for she as the freeborn wife of Abraham bears children who are born free because of God's promise to Abraham... Since, therefore, 'the Jerusalem that is above,' is an eschatological term expressing a reality that will exist in the future, Paul's use of it here for the experience of the Galatian believers implies that, as Paul understood matters, the Galatian believers had come into the eschatological situation of already participating in that future reality, in that the promise made to Abraham was fulfilled in Christ (cf. 3:16; 5:1)." Longenecker

Galatians 4:28

ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀδελφοί, κατὰ Ἰσαὰκ ἐπαγγελίας τέκνα ἐστέ·

A number of MSS read ἡμεις but "the personal pronoun ὑμεις ... is not only well supported externally ... but is also required by the thrust of Paul's argument." Longenecker

Galatians 4:29

ἀλλ' ὥσπερ τότε ὁ κατὰ σάρκα γεννηθεὶς
ἐδίωκε τὸν κατὰ πνεῦμα, οὕτως καὶ νῦν.

ὥσπερ as, even as
τοτε then, at that time
σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body, human
    nature
γεννηθεις see v.23
διωκω persecute, seek after, pursue,
    follow

Paul uses κατα πνευμα in a roughly
synonymous fashion with δι' ἐπαγελιας (v23)
and ἐπαγγελιας τεκνα (v28).

Paul would seem to draw on Jewish traditions
which elaborated on the story of Ishmael and
Isaac and spoke of them arguing about who
had a right to the inheritance. With "reference
to what he sees as a confirming historical
parallel, Paul identifies the Judaisers with
Ishmael, who is 'of the flesh' and a persecutor,
and the Gentile believers of Galatia with Isaac,
who is 'of the Spirit' and persecuted."
Longenecker

Galatians 4:30

ἀλλὰ τί λέγει ἡ γραφή; Ἔκβαλε τὴν παιδίσκην
καὶ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς, οὐ γὰρ μὴ κληρονομήσει ὁ
υἱὸς τῆς παιδίσκης μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς
ἐλευθέρας.

"Here Sarah's uncharitable words in Gen 21:10
are applied to the situation in Galatia, though
Paul attributes them not to Sarah but to 'the
Scripture' and adapts to the Galatian context by
changing 'my son Isaac' (LXX: του υιου μου
Ἰσαακ) to 'the son of the free woman' (του υιου
της ἐλευθερας). Probably the Judaisers of
Galatia had themselves used Gen 21:10 against
Paul, whose theology in their view was an
'Ishmaelian' form of truth and so should be
'cast out.' Paul, however, having re-allegorised
the Hagar-Sarah story from his own
perspective, now uses the same exhortation
against them 'to enshrine the basic gospel
truth: legal bondage and spiritual freedom
cannot coexist' (Bruce...)...
"The Galatian believers should cast out the
Judaisers and their influence from the
Christian congregations of Galatia."
Longenecker

ἔκβαλε Verb, aor act imperat, 2s ἐκβαλλω
    throw out, expel, cast out
παιδισκη, ης f maid, slave-girl
κληρονομεω receive, gain possession of,
    inherit
παιδισκη, ης f maid, slave-girl
ἐλευθερος, α, ον free, free person

Galatians 4:31

διό, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἐσμὲν παιδίσκης τέκνα ἀλλὰ
τῆς ἐλευθέρας.

διο therefore, for this reason

"The question that comes directly to the fore in
Paul's use of Abraham in 3:6-9, and that
underlies all of his argumentation thereafter in
3:10-4:11, is: Who are Abraham's true children
and heirs? Likewise in his hortatory use of the
Hagar-Sarah story in 4:21-31 it is this question
that permeates all the discussion. So in
concluding his allegorical interpretation of the
Hagar-Sarah story, Paul makes an affirmation
that serves as the conclusion of 4:21-31."
Longenecker

Galatians 5:1

τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ ἡμᾶς Χριστὸς ἠλευθέρωσεν·
στήκετε οὖν καὶ μὴ πάλιν ζυγῷ δουλείας
ἐνέχεσθε.

5:1 can be seen as an exhortation concluding
the previous verses or as the opening
exhortation of vv 1-6. "It seems best ... to take
the indicative statement of 5:1a as the
summary of all that Paul has argued and
exhorted regarding the Judaising threat from
1:6 through 4:31, with then 5:1b-12 being his
concluding exhortations vis-à-vis that threat in
which he urges his converts to hold fast to the
freedom they have in Christ." Longenecker

The abruptness of this verse has given rise to a
number of textual variants. "The weight of
external evidence ... strongly favours τῇ
ἐλευθερίᾳ ἡμᾶς Χριστὸς ἠλευθέρωσεν·
στήκετε οὖν, and the originality of this reading
is confirmed by the fact that it accounts for all
the rest." Burton
Westcot and Hort suggested that there may be
'a primitive error' or early scribal corruption
for ἐπ ἐλευθερια 'for freedom'.

ἐλευθερια, ας f freedom, liberty

τη ἐλευθερια was used in manumission
procedures of the day to signal destiny or
purpose and so can be translated 'for freedom'
(cf. τη ἐλπιδι ἐσωθημεν Rom 8:24, which
picks us the expression ἐφ ἐλπιδι of 8:20).

ἐλευθεροω free, set free

Christ is the one who sets **us** free – whether as
Paul from Jewish legalism or as the Galatians
from pagan bondage.

στήκετε Verb, perf act imperat, 2 pl ἱστημι
    and ἱστανω intrans in perf stand, stop,
    stand firm, hold ground.
παλιν again, once more

Not that they had before been under the 'yoke' of the Jewish law but they had been enslaved. "In Paul's view, from the perspective of being 'in Christ,' Judaism and paganism could be lumped together under the rubric 'the basic principles of the world' (see comment on 4:9), and so a leaving of Christian principles for either one or the other was a renunciation of freedom and a return 'again' to slavery." Longenecker

ζυγος, ου m yoke, balance scale

Cf. Acts 15:10.

δουλεια, ας f slavery
ἐνεχω have a grudge against, be hostile to
 pass be subject to

"The whole sentence states in a very concise form both the 'indicative' and the 'imperative' of Christian salvation in the Pauline sense." Betz

Galatians 5:2

Ἴδε ἐγὼ Παῦλος λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐὰν περιτέμνησθε Χριστὸς ὑμᾶς οὐδὲν ὠφελήσει.

"ἰδε is properly the imperative of εἰδον ('see,' 'look,' 'perceive') and could easily be considered identical to ἰδου ('behold,' 'look'), but it came to function in rather a stereotyped fashion as an opening particle meaning something like 'you see' or 'mark my words' (cf. the use of ἰδετε in 6:11)." Longenecker

ἐὰν Conjunction ἐαν if, even if, though

Implies that the Galatians were considering circumcision but had not yet been circumcised.

περιτέμνησθε Verb, pres pass subj, 2 pl
 περιτεμνω circumcise
οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing;
 οὐδεν not at all
ὠφελεω gain, profit, achieve, benefit

"For Gentiles to revert to the prescriptions of the Jewish law as a necessary form of Christian lifestyle is, in effect, to make Christianity legalistic rather than Christocentric, and so not to have Christ's guidance in one's life." Longenecker

Galatians 5:3

μαρτύρομαι δὲ πάλιν παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ περιτεμνομένῳ ὅτι ὀφειλέτης ἐστὶν ὅλον τὸν νόμον ποιῆσαι.

παλιν again, once more

Could be a reference back to things he taught when he was with them, though Longenecker thinks "here παλιν probably has generally in mind what has just been said in v 2 and so calls attention to v 3 as a reinforcement of what was said there, much as παλιν of 1:9 sets up a parallel between what is said in 1:8 and what is said in 1:9, with the latter reinforcing the former. For as Bruce points out: 'When he was with them there was probably no occasion to mention circumcision. The occasion to mention it had only recently arisen.'"

ὀφειλετης, ου m debtor, one indebted
ὁλος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire

Cf. Jas 2:10.

Galatians 5:4

κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε, τῆς χάριτος ἐξεπέσατε.

κατηργήθητε Verb, aor pass indic, 2 pl
 καταργεω render ineffective, cancel;
 pass be cut off from, be released from
οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὁστις

ἐν νομῳ is either locative ('in the sphere of the law') or instrumental ('by law').

δικαιοω acquit, justify

The οἱτινες introduces an indefinite element – "any of you who would (seek to be) justified by means of the law ..."

ἐξεπέσατε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl ἐκπιπτω
 fall off, fall away, lose, fail

"The Judaisers must have assured the Galatians that in accepting supervision for their lives from the prescriptions of the Mosaic law they were not forsaking Christ or renouncing grace, but rather were completing their commitment to both. Paul, however, tells them just the opposite: commitment to Christ and commitment to legal prescriptions for righteousness, whether that righteousness is understood in forensic terms (i.e. 'justification') or ethical terms (i.e. 'lifestyle' and expression) are mutually exclusive; experientially, the one destroys the other." Longenecker

Galatians 5:5

ἡμεῖς γὰρ πνεύματι ἐκ πίστεως ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης ἀπεκδεχόμεθα.

'For we by the Spirit through faith eagerly await the righteousness for which we hope.'

ἐλπις, ιδος f hope, ground of hope, what
 is hoped for
δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness, what is
 right, what God requires, justice
ἀπεκδεχομαι look for, wait for

Galatians 5:6

ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ οὔτε περιτομή τι ἰσχύει οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ πίστις δι᾽ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη.

οὔτε not, nor (οὔτε ... οὔτε neither ... nor)
περιτομη, ης f circumcision, those circumcised, Jews
ἰσχυω be strong, be able, be sufficient

Here in the sense of being able to accomplish something

οὔτε not, nor (οὔτε ... οὔτε neither ... nor)
ἀκροβυστια, ας f uncircumcision, non-Jews

Longenecker says that vv5-6a are a concise summary of all that he has taught and 6b an additional thought, "though no less important because of that."

ἐνεργεω work, be at work (in)

"Anticipating the objection that freedom from the law leaves the life without moral dynamic, he answers in a brief phrase that faith begets love and through it becomes operative in conduct." Burton
Compare Romans 13:10 and 1 Corinthians 7:19. Faith's work of love corresponds to the requirements of God's law. See also vv 13 & 14 below.

Galatians 5:7

Ἐτρέχετε καλῶς· τίς ὑμᾶς ἐνέκοψεν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ μὴ πείθεσθαι;

τρεχω run, exert oneself

Imperfect meaning 'you were running [well]'

ἐνέκοψεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἐγκοπτω prevent, hinder, detain

In the context of a race suggests tripping or otherwise hindering a runner. Longenecker translates 'who cut in on you'.

ἀληθεια, ας f   truth, reality; ἐν ἀ. truly
πείθεσθαι Verb, pres pass infin πειθω persuade, convince; pass obey, listen to, be a follower of.

Continuous sense 'to be keeping you from obeying'.

Galatians 5:8

ἡ πεισμονὴ οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς.

πεισμονη, ης f persuasion

Here alone in NT. Longenecker says that the sense is '[humanly] contrived persuasiveness.'

The mind set they now have is not the work of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:9

μικρὰ ζύμη ὅλον τὸ φύραμα ζυμοῖ.

These exact words occur in 1 Cor 5:6, suggesting that Paul is quoting a proverbial saying, here applied to false theology pervading and perverting the Galatian churches.

ζυμη, ης f yeast
φυραμα, τος n lump
ζυμοω cause to rise

Galatians 5:10

ἐγὼ πέποιθα εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν κυρίῳ ὅτι οὐδὲν ἄλλο φρονήσετε· ὁ δὲ ταράσσων ὑμᾶς βαστάσει τὸ κρίμα, ὅστις ἐὰν ᾖ.

πέποιθα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s πειθω perf act & pass trust, rely on, have confidence, be confident
ἄλλος, η, ο another, other
φρονεω think, have in mind

'I am confident in the Lord regarding you that you will take no other view'
"Paul ... found the basis for his hopes and the ground of his confidence not in the way the situation seemed to be working itself out but 'in the Lord' (for similar expressions of confidence 'in the Lord' see Rom 14:14; Phil 2:24; 2 Thess 3:4)." Longenecker

ταρασσω trouble, disturb, frighten, stir up

Here a generic singular.

βασταζω carry, bear, endure
ἐὰν Conjunction ἐαν if, even if, though

In Koine, ἐαν is often (as here) equivalent to ἀν indicating contingency. ἐαν ᾖ 'whoever he might be'

ᾖ Verb, pres subj, 3s εἰμι

Galatians 5:11

ἐγὼ δέ, ἀδελφοί, εἰ περιτομὴν ἔτι κηρύσσω, τί ἔτι διώκομαι; ἄρα κατήργηται τὸ σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ.

περιτομη, ης f circumcision, those circumcised, Jews
κηρυσσω preach, proclaim

Suggests that the Judaisers were saying that Paul still advocated circumcision in his preaching elsewhere (as he had done before his conversion), though he had withheld it from the Galatians in order to win their approval (cf. 1:10).

ἔτι still, yet, moreover
διωκω persecute, seek after, pursue, follow
κατήργηται Verb, perf pass indic, 3s καταργεω render ineffective, cancel, do away with

---

The Greek text used in these notes is that of the of Society of Biblical Literature. See SBLGNT

σκανδαλον, ου n that which causes sin/
    offence, obstacle

σταυρος, ου m cross

"The phrase το σκανδαλον του σταυρου ('the offence of the cross') is probably one that Paul coined himself (cf. 1 Cor 1:23), stemming from his own pre-Christian reactions as a Pharisaic Jew and encapsulating several essential features of his theology of the cross (cf. 3:1; 5:24; 6:12-14)." Longenecker

Galatians 5:12

ὄφελον καὶ ἀποκόψονται οἱ ἀναστατοῦντες ὑμᾶς.

ὀφελον would that, I wish that

"The form ὀφελον probably arose as the first person singular second aorist of the verb ὀφειλω ('owe,' 'be indebted'), but came to be treated as a fixed term expressing a wish ('O that,' 'I would that') – an unattainable wish with an imperfect or aorist indicative verb, but a wish viewed as perhaps attainable with a future indicative verb. In Pauline usage the wish is always set in an ironic context (cf. 1 Cor 4:8; 2 Cor 11:1)." Longenecker

ἀποκοπτω cut off, cut away; midd mutilate
    oneself

'O that they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves.'
"The crudest and rudest of all Paul's extant statements... Underling the sarcasm and crudity of the comment, however, is Paul's understanding of circumcision as purely a physical act without religious significance (cf. 5:6; 6:15), which when done for societal or physical reasons is acceptable but when done either to gain acceptance before God or to achieve a more acceptable lifestyle becomes simply bodily mutilation (cf. Phil 3:2)." Longenecker

ἀναστατοω agitate, unsettle, incite to revolt

Galatians 5:13-6:10

"Two dangers threatened Christian freedom in Galatia: the first was the acceptance of Jewish nomism as a lifestyle for Gentile Christians, which in effect brought one right back to the basic question of whether righteousness was to be gained by 'works of the law' or by a response of faith to 'the faithfulness of Jesus Christ' (cf. 2:16); the second was the corruption of the Christian life by reliance on 'the flesh' rather than 'the Spirit.' The most immediate danger was that of Jewish nomism, which was brought in from outside the church by the Judaisers. So Paul deals with that first and most extensively in 1:6-5:12. The danger of libertinism, however, was also present within the Galatian churches, being there in an indigenous fashion from the very first. And Paul must also have dealt with that as a threat to the freedom that believers have in Christ, which he does in the remainder of the body of Galatians in 5:13-6:10.
"Most often Galatians is viewed as the great document of justification by faith. What Christians all too often fail to realise is that in reality it is a document which sets out a Christ-centred lifestyle – one that stands in opposition to both nomism and libertinism. Sadly, though applauding justification by faith, Christians frequently renounce their freedom in Christ by espousing either nomism or libertinism, and sometimes (like the Galatians) both. So Paul's letter to the Galatians, though directly relevant to the Galatian situation, speaks also to our situation today." Longenecker
The key themes of 5:13-6:10 are Christian *freedom*, living by the *Spirit* and a life directed by *love*.
"Loveless strife was evidently present within the Galatian churches, with such attitudes and actions evidencing the dominance of 'the flesh' and certain libertine tendencies within the church – probably not 'libertinism' as a conscious, articulated philosophy, but libertine tendencies which took the form of self-promotion, self-vindication, and disregard of others, with the result that Christian freedom was not being expressed in loving service to others. So Paul in upholding Christian freedom, not only speaks of the Spirit as the effective answer to the Judaisers' call for a nomistic lifestyle, but also argues for the Spirit as the effective power for overcoming the flesh and such libertine attitudes as have arisen within the church. For Paul, in fact, the Christian life is wholly determined by the presence and activity of the Spirit." Longenecker

Galatians 5:13

Ὑμεῖς γὰρ ἐπ᾽ ἐλευθερίᾳ ἐκλήθητε, ἀδελφοί· μόνον μὴ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν εἰς ἀφορμὴν τῇ σαρκί, ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις·

The γαρ marks a reintroduction of the theme of freedom declared in v 1a.

ἐλευθερια, ας f freedom, liberty

ἐπι with the dative is used to express purpose, cf. Eph 2:10; 1 Thess 4:7.
The freedom spoken of here is freedom from Jewish nomism.

ἐκλήθητε Verb, aor pass indic, 2pl καλεω call

μονος, η, ον i) adj only, alone; ii) adv μονον only, alone

ἀφορμη, ης f occasion, opportunity

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body, human nature

Here σαρξ is used in an ethical sense, signifying fallen humanity of sinful nature. "The flesh is what man has made himself in contrast with man as God made him. The flesh is man as he has allowed himself to become in contrast with man as God meant him to be. The flesh stands for the total effect upon man of his own sin and of the sin of his fathers and of the sin of all men who have gone before him. The flesh is human nature as it has become through sin... The flesh stands for human nature weakened, vitiated, tainted by sin. The flesh is man as he is apart from Jesus Christ and his Spirit." Barclay
"Paul speaks of 'the flesh' [human nature] not as itself the culprit, but as captive of sin. Nevertheless, 'flesh' as a captive also acts in behalf of its captor, and so produces 'desires and passions' (cf. 5:16-17, 19-21) that are at work against the Spirit. Indeed, the Christian has 'crucified the flesh with its passions and desires' (5:24). Yet the Christian continues to exist, anthropologically speaking, 'in the flesh,' and so, ethically speaking, 'the flesh' continues to be a potential threat. Thus the Christian may choose to use his or her freedom in Christ either as 'an opportunity for the flesh' or in response to 'the Spirit.' Paul calls on his converts to renounce the former, thereby being open to the latter." Longenecker

With ἀγαπη Paul picks up the theme of 5:6, though the definite article may also point back to *that* love which has appeared in Christ (cf. 2:20).

δουλευω serve, be a slave

Paul deliberately highlights something of the paradox of the Christian life in the juxtaposition of freedom and servitude. "A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone." Luther

ἀλληλων, οις, ους reciprocal pronoun one another

Galatians 5:14

ὁ γὰρ πᾶς νόμος ἐν ἑνὶ λόγῳ πεπλήρωται, ἐν τῷ· Ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν.

Longenecker follows Betz and Westerholm in emphasising that Paul does not speak of the Christian *doing* the law but of *fulfilling* the law. He quotes Westerholme's conclusions that:
i)   Paul never derives appropriate Christian behaviour by simply applying relevant precepts from Torah;
ii) Paul never claims that Christians 'do' (ποιειν) the law; they – and they alone – are said to 'fulfil' (πληρουν) it;
iii) Paul never speaks of the law's fulfilment in prescribing Christian conduct, but only while describing its results.
Longenecker continues, "The focus of Paul's statement in Gal 5:14, as also in Rom 13:8-10, is not on law but on love. So it is love – love that responds to Christ's love and that expresses a new existence in Christ (cf. 2:20) – that motivates the ethical life of a Christian, with the results of that love ethic fulfilling the real purport of the Mosaic law."

πληροω fulfill, make come true, bring about, accomplish

"The perfect indicative passive πεπληρωται ('it is fulfilled') signals past completion with a present result, probably having in mind what Jesus did in fulfilling the law (cf. Matt 5:17). So, in effect there remains no more necessity for commandments." Longenecker

ἀγαπήσεις Verb, fut act indic, 2 s ἀγαπαω

πλησιον i) prep with gen near; ii) ὁ π. neighbour, fellow man.

σεαυτου, ης reflexive pronoun yourself

Galatians 5:15

εἰ δὲ ἀλλήλους δάκνετε καὶ κατεσθίετε, βλέπετε μὴ ὑπ᾽ ἀλλήλων ἀναλωθῆτε.

δακνω bite

κατεσθιω and κατεσθω eat up, devour, prey upon

βλεπω see, look, be able to see, beware of

ἀναλωθῆτε Verb, aor pass subj, 2 pl ἀναλισκω and ἀναλοω consume, destroy

"The hyperbole pictures wild beasts fighting so ferociously with one another that they end up annihilating each other. The implication of the portrayal is that this was what was happening – or at least, what Paul thought was happening – in the churches of Galatia... Perhaps their fighting stemmed from differing attitudes toward the Judaisers' activities among them. More likely, however, it was an expression of their own indigenous and loveless libertine attitudes. So in a comment similar to that of 5:12 Paul here sarcastically denounces the libertine tendencies present among his Galatian converts just as he earlier castigated the Judaisers in their midst." Longenecker

Galatians 5:16

Λέγω δέ, πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκὸς οὐ μὴ τελέσητε.

περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

Frequently used by Paul and John in the sense, 'live' – a Hebrewism. The present imperative implies keep on doing what you are already doing.

ἐπιθυμια, ας f desire, longing, lust, passion
τελέσητε Verb, aor act subj, 2 pl τελεω complete, finish, fulfill, carry out

Galatians 5:17

ἡ γὰρ σὰρξ ἐπιθυμεῖ κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα κατὰ τῆς σαρκός, ταῦτα γὰρ ἀλλήλοις ἀντίκειται, ἵνα μὴ ἃ ἐὰν θέλητε ταῦτα ποιῆτε.

ἐπιθυμεω long for, desire, lust after
κατα prep with i) acc according to; ii) gen against, throughout
ἀντικειμαι oppose, be against

"Here in v 17 Paul gives a precis of his basic soteriological anthropology, which underlies not only what he has said in v 16 but also his whole understanding of humanity before God since 'sin entered the world' (cf. Rom 5:12): 'the flesh' and 'the Spirit' are diametrically opposed to one another, with the result that one cannot do what he or she knows to be right in 'the flesh' (i.e., when living only humanly according to one's own guidance and the direction of whatever is simply human) but only when 'in the Spirit' (i.e., when living in the new reality of being 'in Christ' and directed by God's Spirit)." Longenecker
The dualism is neither cosmological nor anthropological, it is ethical.

ἐὰν see v.10
θελω wish, will

"In effect, Gal 5:17 sets out in rudimentary fashion what is later spoken of more fully in Rom 7:14-25, with both passages expressing the plight of humanity 'of itself' (cf. αὐτος ἐγω, 'I of myself' or 'dependent on my own resources,' of Rom 7:25)." Longenecker

Galatians 5:18

εἰ δὲ πνεύματι ἄγεσθε, οὐκ ἐστὲ ὑπὸ νόμον.

"The phrase ὑπο νομον ('under the law') is undoubtedly to be read, as elsewhere throughout the Galatian letter (e.g., 3:23; 4:4, 5, 21), as referring to the nomistic lifestyle advocated by the Judaisers, against which Paul argued and exhorted from 2:15 through 5:12... The antidote to license in the Christian life is not laws, as the Judaisers argued, but openness to the Spirit and being guided by the Spirit. For being 'in Christ' means neither nomism nor libertinism, but a new quality of life based in and directed by the Spirit." Longenecker
"Life by the Spirit constitutes for the apostles a third way of life distinct both on the one hand from legalism and on the other from that which is characterised by a yielding to the impulses of the flesh. It is by no means a middle course between them but a highway above them both, a life of freedom from statutes, of faith and love." Burton

Galatians 5:19-26

Catalogues of virtues and vices were common in Paul's day though Paul may also be influenced by Jewish 'two ways' teaching.

Galatians 5:19

φανερὰ δέ ἐστιν τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός, ἅτινά ἐστιν πορνεία, ἀκαθαρσία, ἀσέλγεια,

φανερος, α, ον known, evident, plain, visible
ἅτινά pronoun, n nom & acc pl ὁστις

There are some additions to this list. A number of MSS, followed by the TR, add μοιχεια at the head of the list of vices.

πορνεια, ας f sexual immorality

In the Greek world of the NT sexual immorality was not considered a serious fault – it was a commonplace.

ἀκαθαρσια, ας f impurity, immorality, uncleanness
ἀσελγεια, ας f sensuality, vice

Galatians 5:20

εἰδωλολατρία, φαρμακεία, ἔχθραι, ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθεῖαι, διχοστασίαι, αἱρέσεις,

εἰδωλολατρια, ας f idol worship, idolatry

"In Paul's usage, not only is the worship of an image or the god represented by an image idolatry, but also eating food that had idolatrous associations (1 Cor 10:7, 14) and being covetous or greedy (Clo 3:5)." Longenecker

φαρμακεια, ας f sorcery, witchcraft
ἐχθρα, ας f enmity, hostility, hatred

Perhaps particularly hostilty towards God (cf. Rom 8:7; Eph 2:14; Jas 4:4).

ἐρις, ιδος f strife, rivalry
ζηλος, ου m, and ους n jealousy, envy

TR reads ἐρεις, ζηλοι. "The textual tradition shows that many scribes attempted to make the list uniform by recasting the singulars into plurals, but external attestation is not strong enough to warrant our acceptance." Longenecker

θυμος, ου m anger, rage, fury
ἐριθεια, ας f selfishness, selfish ambition, self-seeking
διχοστασια, ας f division, dissension
αἱρεσις, εως f religious party, faction, false teaching

Galatians 5:21

φθόνοι, μέθαι, κῶμοι, καὶ τὰ ὅμοια τούτοις, ἃ προλέγω ὑμῖν καθὼς προεῖπον ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες βασιλείαν θεοῦ οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν.

φθονος, ου m envy, jealousy, spite

A large number of MSS include φονοι (murders) after φθονοι. Metzger writes in the Textual Commentary on the UBS text, "Although the shorter reading may have originated in accidental omission due to homoeteleuton, a majority of the Committee, impressed by the age and quality of the witnesses supporting φθονοι, was inclined to think that φονοι was added by copyists who recollected Rom 1:29."

μεθη, ης f drunkenness
κωμος, ου m orgy, revelry, carousing
ὁμοιος, α, ον like, of the same kind as

Suggests that the list is intended to provide a number of examples; it is not intended to be comprehensive.

προλεγω say beforehand, warn in advance
τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative pronoun and adjective such, of such kind, similar, like
πρασσω practice, do
κληρονομεω receive, gain possession of, inherit

Longenecker says, "The language of the statement, 'Those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God,' seems not quite Pauline at a number of points... So what we probably have here is a ὅτι *recitativum* used to introduce a portion of the catechetical instruction of the early church given by Paul to his converts when he was with them and now repeated by way of warning, the purpose being, of course, that they might again realise the seriousness of allowing their freedom in Christ to degenerate into only 'an opportunity for the flesh' (cf. 5:13b)."

Galatians 5:22

Ὁ δὲ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματός ἐστιν ἀγάπη, χαρά, εἰρήνη, μακροθυμία, χρηστότης, ἀγαθωσύνη, πίστις,

καρπος, ου m fruit, harvest, outcome

Note the singular, καρπος – one fruit with many evidences. The fact that the list begins with 'love' highlights the unity of the fruit, for Paul has stressed in 5:14 that love is the source of all Christian virtues (cf. 5:6).
"Perhaps also the last of the items on the list, that is, ἐγκρατεια ('self-control'), should be seen as being emphasised as well, for the final position in a Greek structure is also where one would expect to find anything being stressed. And 'self-control,' which became by the time of Paul a central virtue in Hellenistic ethics, certainly makes an important, positive contrast to the vices of 'drunkenness' and 'orgies' that conclude the catalogue of vv 19-21." Longenecker

χαρα "'In the Holy Spirit' joy is associated with 'righteousness,' 'peace' and hope (cf. Rom 14:17; 15:13, 32-33) and not just with pleasant circumstances." Longenecker

εἰρηνη, ης f peace

Reflects the OT understanding of Shalom but now with its focus in the work of Christ which has brought peace with God and has made peace a hallmark of the Christian life in all its relationships.

μακροθυμια, ας f longsuffering, patience

"Most commonly ... it occurs in the NT in the sense of patient endurance of wrong without anger or taking vengeance (so 2 Cor 6:6; Eph 4:2; Col 1:11; 3:12; 2 Tim 3:10; 4:2; Heb 6:12; Jas 5:10), with Paul urging his readers to live out their faith in terms of μακροθυμια toward one another and toward all people (so Eph 4:2; Col 1:11; 3:12; cf. also the verb μακροθυμεω of 1 Thess 5:14)." Longenecker

χρηστοτης, ητος f kindness, goodness, mercy

ἀγαθωσυνη, ης f goodness

"πιστις, though used repeatedly elsewhere in Galatians to signify a person's response of trust regarding God's salvation provided in Christ Jesus (cf. 2:20; 3:6ff.; 5:6), here undoubtedly means the ethical virtue of 'faithfulness.'" Longenecker

Galatians 5:23

πραΰτης, ἐγκράτεια· κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος.

πραυτης, ητος f gentleness, humility
ἐγκρατεια, ας f self-control

"The position of the word here corresponding to that of μεθη, κωμοι in the list of the works of the flesh, suggests a special reference in this case to control of the appetite for drink and of the consequent tendency to unrestrained and immodest hilarity. But this parallelism does not warrant the conclusion that the apostle had exclusive reference to this form of self-control." Burton

τοιουτων   see v.21

"In the context of Paul's argument throughout Galatians, the statement 'against such things there is no law' is probably best understood as an understatement given for rhetorical effect. As such, it reiterates in a latent manner the assertion made in 5:14 that 'such things' fully satisfy the requirements of the law, for they go beyond the law's requirements. Furthermore, the statement makes it clear that the list of enumerated virtues is not given as a set of legal prescriptions – that is, it is not to be taken as some kind of new law for Christians, as though by setting such goals and seeking to put them into practice believers can present themselves as acceptable before God." Longenecker

Galatians 5:24

οἱ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ τὴν σάρκα ἐσταύρωσαν σὺν τοῖς παθήμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις.

σταυροω crucify
παθημα, τος n suffering, passion, desire
ἐπιθυμια, ας f desire, longing, lust, passion

"The self-giving of Christ through death on a cross is the central soteriological theme of Galatians (cf. 1:4; 3:1, 13; 6:12, 14), just as it was the focus of early Christian preaching (cf. the sermons recorded in Acts and the passion narratives of the Gospels). Identification with Christ in his crucifixion means a new type of existence for the believer, for now 'Christ lives in me' (2:20). Likewise, just as the proclamation of 'Christ crucified' has implications for issues having to do with legalism and nomism (cf. comment on 3:1), so identification with Christ in his crucifixion has implications for issues having to do with libertinism (so here at v 24). For Paul, to claim identification with Christ in his crucifixion means that one cannot espouse a lifestyle that expresses either a legalistic or a libertine orientation. For in being crucified with Christ both the demands of the law and the impulses of the flesh have been crucified as well (cf. Rom 7:1-6; Col 2:13-15)." Longenecker

Galatians 5:25

εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν.

A precis of Paul's message.

ζαω live, be alive
στοιχεω walk, conduct oneself

"The verb στοιχεω has as its basic meaning the idea of 'stand in a row' (cf. comment on the cognate expression τα στοιχεια at 4:3; also 4:9), and so came to connote 'be in line with' or 'agree with.' Its use elsewhere by Paul, however, suggests 'walking in the footsteps' of another (cf. Rom 4:12) or 'living in accordance with a standard' (cf. Gal 6:16; Phil 3:16; also Acts 21:24). So here by exhorting his converts to 'be in line' or 'keep in step' with the Spirit, Paul is asking those who claim to live by the Spirit to evidence that fact by a lifestyle controlled by the Spirit. That he exhorts believers to do what is the work of the Spirit to produce (cf. vv 22-23) is typical of Paul's understanding of Christian ethics, for Paul never views the ethical activity of the believer apart from the Spirit's work nor the Spirit's ethical direction and enablement apart from the believer's active expression of his or her faith." Longenecker

Galatians 5:26

μὴ γινώμεθα κενόδοξοι, ἀλλήλους προκαλούμενοι, ἀλλήλοις φθονοῦντες.

κενοδοξος, ον conceited, boastful
ἀλληλων, οις, ους reciprocal pronoun one another
προκαλεομαι irritate, make angry
φθονεω envy, be jealous of

Longenecker suggests that 6:1-10 unpacks what Paul has in mind in this verse.

Galatians 6:1-10

Practical instructions spelling out what it means to live by the Spirit. These verses take the form of a series of exhortations regarding personal and corporate responsibilities. "Throughout Paul endeavours to remind the Galatians of their accountability to God and their responsibilities to one another, and he is especially concerned with the problems of pride and dissention in the Galatian churches which threaten to destroy them altogether. He appeals to them to sow to the Spirit, having shown that only the fruit of the Spirit can counteract and overcome these problems in their midst." JMG Barclay

Galatians 6:1

Ἀδελφοί, ἐὰν καὶ προλημφθῇ ἄνθρωπος ἔν τινι παραπτώματι, ὑμεῖς οἱ πνευματικοὶ καταρτίζετε τὸν τοιοῦτον ἐν πνεύματι πραΰτητος, σκοπῶν σεαυτόν, μὴ καὶ σὺ πειρασθῇς.

ἐὰν Conjunction ἐαν if, even if, though
προλημφθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s
    προλαμβανω do (something) ahead of
    time, catch (in sin)

The passive generally has the sense 'taken by surprise,' 'overtaken' or 'entrapped'.

παραπτωμα, τος n sin, wrongdoing

A 'false step'. Longenecker suggests that Paul uses this word here rather than ἁμαρτια "because of its etymological imagery ('fall beside,' 'false step') that would be in sharp contrast to the imagery of the verb στοιχωμεν ('walk in a straight line,' 'conform to a standard,' 'keep in step') of 5:25."

πνευματικος, η, ον spiritual, pertaining to
    the spirit

"Paul has repeatedly spoken elsewhere in Galatians of all Christians as being possessed by and being in possession of God's Spirit (cf. 3:2-5, 14; 4:6, 29; 5:5, 16-18, 22-23, 25; 6:8). There is, therefore, no reason to doubt and abundant reason to believe that Paul here uses this designation with approval in speaking about *all* his converts in Galatia. They are, despite their legal and libertine enticements, 'true spirituals' simply because by being 'in Christ' they have become the recipients of God's Spirit. So by reminding his converts of their status as πνευματικοι Paul calls on them to live up to their status." Longenecker

καταρτιζω mend, restore, make complete
τοιουτον   see 5:21

"The accusative singular τον τοιουτον ('such a one,' 'that one') parallels the nominative plural τα τοιαυτα ('such ones') that functions as a correlative adjective in 5:21, and so signals that what is in mind here in 6:1 is a person who engages in such 'works of the flesh' as those listed in 5:19-21." Longenecker

πραυτης see 5:23

There is no room for pride since none is beyond falling – hence the following exhortation.
"Significantly, it is more the attitudes and actions of 'those who are spiritual' that Paul deals with here than the attitudes and actions of those who have sinned. Libertinism among the Galatian Christians evidently expresses itself in pride, aloofness, and conceit (as sadly it does also among Christians today)." Longenecker

σκοπεω pay attention to, watch out (for),
    be concerned about
σεαυτου, ης reflexive pronoun yourself
πειρασθῇς Verb, aor pass subj, 2 s πειραζω
    test, put to the test, tempt

Galatians 6:2

ἀλλήλων τὰ βάρη βαστάζετε, καὶ οὕτως ἀναπληρώσετε τὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

"Central to the believers' new existence 'in Christ' is the concept of mutuality. Such a concept is highlighted here in v 2 by the emphatic position of ἀλληλων ('one another') at the beginning of the sentence." Longenecker

βάρη Noun, nom & acc pl βαρος, ους n
    burden, weight
βασταζω carry, bear, endure
ἀναπληροω complete the full measure of,
    meet (the requirements)

The aorist imperative ἀναπληρωσατε is strongly supported but the future indicative was preferred by the UBS committee "on the basis of early and diversified external attestation as well as transcriptional probabilities."

"ὁ νομος του Χρισου here (cf. ἐννομος Χριστου of 1 Cor 9:21) stands in Paul's thought for those prescriptive principles stemming from the heart of the gospel (usually embodied in the example and teachings of Jesus), which are meant to be applied to specific situations by the direction and enablement of the Holy Spirit, being always motivated and conditioned by love... Paul is not setting forth Jesus as a new Moses. Nor does he view Jesus' teachings as ethical prescriptions to be carried out in a rabbinic fashion." Longenecker

Galatians 6:3

εἰ γὰρ δοκεῖ τις εἶναί τι μηδὲν ὤν, φρεναπατᾷ ἑαυτόν·

Longenecker suggests that this is a traditional maxim of the Greco-Roman world which Paul uses by way of general support for the directive of v.2.

δοκεω think, suppose

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing; no;
    μηδεν adverb not at all, in no way

εἰ γαρ δοκει τις εἰναι τι μηδεν ὠν "If anyone thinks that he is something when he is not ..."

φρεναπαταω fools, deceives

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον   reflexive pronoun, himself, herself, itself

Galatians 6:4

τὸ δὲ ἔργον ἑαυτοῦ δοκιμαζέτω ἕκαστος, καὶ τότε εἰς ἑαυτὸν μόνον τὸ καύχημα ἕξει καὶ οὐκ εἰς τὸν ἕτερον,

ἑκαστος, η, ον each, every

δοκιμαζω   test, examine, prove

τοτε then, at that time

μονος, η, ον i) adj only, alone; ii) adv μονον
    only, alone

καυχημα, τος n ground for boasting, object of boasting, boasting, pride

ἑξει fut ἑχω

ἑτερος, α, ον other, another, different

"The warning here is not to live as spiritual people in a state of pride or conceit, always comparing one's own attainments to those of others and so feeling superior, but rather to test one's own actions and so to minimise the possibility of self-deception. Christian feelings of exultation and congratulation should spring from one's own actions as seen in the light of God's approval and not derive from comparing oneself to what others are or are not doing." Longenecker

Galatians 6:5

ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον φορτίον βαστάσει.

ἰδιος, α, ον one's own

φορτιον, ου n burden, load

βασταζω see v.2

Again, Longenecker suggests this is a traditional maxim (as also vv 7,9). "Paul ... uses the maxim in general support of his directive that 'each one should test his own actions' in v 4, with ἑκαστος ('each one,' 'everyone') as the subject of both the directive and the maxim, tying these two statements together and the content of the maxim being generally confirmatory, though admittedly used out of context."

Galatians 6:6

Κοινωνείτω δὲ ὁ κατηχούμενος τὸν λόγον τῷ κατηχοῦντι ἐν πᾶσιν ἀγαθοῖς.

κοινωνεω share, take part, contribute

κατηχεω inform, instruct

The situation in the Galatian churches that called for this exhortation is unclear, but it forms part of Paul's exhortations urging mutual helpfulness among Christian believers.

Galatians 6:7

μὴ πλανᾶσθε, θεὸς οὐ μυκτηρίζεται· ὃ γὰρ ἐὰν σπείρῃ ἄνθρωπος, τοῦτο καὶ θερίσει·

πλαναω lead astray, mislead, deceive

μη πλανασθε is used as an interjection before a solemn warning, cf. 1 Cor 6:9; 15:33; Jas 1:16 also Lk 21:8.
"The warning implies a liability to deception or error." Eadie.

μυκτηριζω mock, make a fool of

Literally 'to turn up the nose at', to sneer at'. Longenecker suggests that θεὸς οὐ μυκτηρίζεται was a proverbial statement of warning. "Paul's point in the warning statement of v 7 followed by the explication of v.8 is that one cannot expect to sow to the flesh and then reap eternal life, and so mock the justice of God, for 'God is not mocked.'"

ἐὰν see 5:10

θεριζω reap, harvest

Appears to be another traditional maxim.

τουτο is emphatic. "Let him sow what he like ... that and that only, that and nothing else, shall he also reap... The reaping is not only the effect of the sowing but is necessarily of the same nature with it." Eadie
"Our liberality is restrained by the supposition that whatsoever passes into the hands of another is lost to ourselves, and by the alarm we feel about our own prospects in life. Paul meets these views by a comparison drawn from seed-time, which, he tells us, is a fit representation of acts of beneficence... How 'very gladly' would we 'spend and be spent' (2 Cor 12:15) for the good of our neighbours, encouraged by the hope of the coming harvest! No operation is more cheerfully performed by husbandmen than throwing the seed into the ground." Calvin

Galatians 6:8

ὅτι ὁ σπείρων εἰς τὴν σάρκα ἑαυτοῦ ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς θερίσει φθοράν, ὁ δὲ σπείρων εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος θερίσει ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

εἰς την σαρκα Eadie suggests that the εἰς here has the sense of that for the gratification of which the seed is sown. But Longenecker thinks that the picture is of "casting seed into two entirely different fields, and from these two different fields he reaps a harvest that corresponds to the nature of the fields themselves: either φθοραν ('destruction') from 'the flesh' or ζωην αιωνιον ('life eternal') from 'the Spirit.'"

σαρξ, σαρκος f **flesh, physical body, human nature**
ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον   reflexive pronoun, **himself, herself, itself**
φθορα, ας f **decay, corruption, depravity**

Galatians 6:9

τὸ δὲ καλὸν ποιοῦντες μὴ ἐγκακῶμεν, καιρῷ γὰρ ἰδίῳ θερίσομεν μὴ ἐκλυόμενοι.

το καλον **that which is good, lovely, beautiful**

Cf. Mt 12:12. "The expression το καλον ποιουντες ('doing the good'), as Betz observes, 'includes everything the Christian is responsible for doing,' and so 'is identical with the concepts of the 'fruit of the Spirit' (5:22-23) and of 'following the Spirit' (5:25; cf. 5:16)'... In particular, it has reference to those matters commanded in 6:1-6: restoring someone entrapped by sin (v 1), bearing the oppressive burdens of others (v 2), and sharing materially with those who teach the gospel message (v 6)." Longenecker

ἐγκακεω **become discouraged, tire of**

The TR has ἐκκακεω ('lose heart') in all six places where ἐγκακεω is the better attested reading – evidently because the latter unfamiliar to many scribes.

καιρῳ ἰδιῳ **in due time, in the appropriate time**

ἐκλυομαι **give up, faint**

"Those who do not persevere resemble indolent husbandmen who, after ploughing and sowing, leave the work unfinished, and neglect to take the necessary precautions for protecting the seed from being devoured by birds, or scorched by the sun, or destroyed by the cold. It is to no purpose that we begin to do good if we do not press forward to the goal." Calvin

Galatians 6:10

ἄρα οὖν ὡς καιρὸν ἔχομεν, ἐργαζώμεθα τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς πάντας, μάλιστα δὲ πρὸς τοὺς οἰκείους τῆς πίστεως.

ἄρα signals the conclusion of the main point of discussion, cf. Rom 5:18; 7:3,25; 8:12; 9:16,18 etc.

ὡς καιρὸν ἔχομεν "Paul qualifies his exhortation for believers to 'do good' in a manner suggesting that such actions be viewed as availing oneself of God-given opportunities and be undertaken as part of a Christian's redemptive mandate. Paul is certainly not relegating ethics to some incidental or optional category of Christian living, as some seem to read his words here. Rather, he is highlighting through his use of the noun καιρος the divinely given and strategic nature of opportunities set before the Christian for doing good." Longenecker

πρὸς πάντας "The universal character of God's redemption corresponds to the universality of Christian ethical and social responsibility. If God's redemption in Christ is universal, the Christian community is obliged to disregard all ethnic, national, cultural, social, sexual, and even religious distinctions within the human community. Since before God there is no partiality, there cannot be partiality in the Christian's attitude towards his fellow man." Betz

μαλιστα **especially**
οἰκειος, ου m **member of the household**

Cf. Jn 13:34-35. "For Paul, 'in Christ' believers make up τους οικειους της πιστεως ('the household of faith'), which speaks metaphorically of the corporate unity of Christians, and the members of such a household are to be cared for in particular." Longenecker

William Tyndale, arguing from God's undeserved goodness pouroured out upon us, writes, "When thou hast done thy duty to thy household, and yet hast further abundance of the blessing of God, that owest thou to the poor that cannot labour, or would labour and can get no work, and are destitute of friends … If thy neighbours which thou knowest be served, and thou yet have superfluity, and hearest necessity to be among the brethren a thousand miles off, to them art thou debtor. Yea, to the very infidels we be debtors, if they need, as far forth as we maintain them not against Christ or to blaspheme Christ … [T]hey have a good right in thy goods as thou thyself." *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon*

Galatians 6:11-18

Lightfoot observes that 6:11-18 functions by way of "summing up the main lessons of the epistle in terse eager disjointed sentences." Betz says of these closing section, "It contains the interpretive clues to the understanding of Paul's major concerns in the letter as a whole and should be employed as the hermeneutical key to the intentions of the apostle." Longenecker provides the following analysis, "The subscription of Galatians (6:11-18) highlights three matters that are to the fore in all that Paul has written regarding the judaising threat previously in the letter: (1) the motivation of the Judaisers as Paul saw it (vv 12-13); (2) the centrality of the cross in the Christian gospel (v 14); and (3) the nature of a proper Christian lifestyle as believers attempt to express their faith in the circumstances of their day (v15). Then there is an expanded peace benediction pronounced on all those who view the Christian life in such a way as set out in v 15 (v 16), which is followed by a further comment of warning and authority (v 17) and a grace benediction (v 18). Thus the subscription provides important clues for understanding the issues discussed throughout Galatians, particularly those having to do with the judaising threat brought into the churches by certain legalistically oriented Jewish Christians, for it not only summarises the main points dealt with earlier in the letter but also allows us to cut through all of the verbiage and see matters in their essence as Paul saw them."

Galatians 6:11

Ἴδετε πηλίκοις ὑμῖν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρί.

ἴδετε   Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s ὁραω trans
    see, observe, perceive, recognise;
    intrans make sure, see to
πηλικος, η, ον how large, how great
γραμμα, τος n letter (of alphabet), letter,
    communication, learning

γραμμασιν must here refer to Paul's handwriting. If Paul had been speaking of the length of his communication the word would have been in the singular, or rather, he would have used the term ἐπιστολη. Longenecker follows Lightfoot and Burton in suggesting that the large handwriting is most probably intended to emphasise the importance of what was written (like bold faced type) and was not due to some infirmity in Paul.

ἔγραψα is an epistolatory aorist, cf. Rom 15:15; 1 Cor 5:11; 9:15; Philemon 19,21.

ἐμος, η, ον 1st pers possessive adj my, mine
χειρ, χειρος f hand, power

"The phrase τῇ ἐμῃ χειρι ('in my own hand') not only alerts Paul's converts to a change of handwriting but also signals for them where the body of the Galatian letter ends and its subscription begins. Such a phrase rarely appears in the extant Hellenistic letters of Paul's day, for any difference of script would have been immediately obvious to the recipients of those letters as they read them. Paul's letters, however, were to be read aloud in the churches to which he sent them (so, e.g. 1 Thess 5:27) – even at times to be read aloud to other churches (cf. Col 4:16) – so there was need for him to make such an explicit reference as to where the body of the letter ended and the subscription began, for not everyone would have been in a position to observe the change of script itself."
Longenecker

Galatians 6:12

ὅσοι θέλουσιν εὐπροσωπῆσαι ἐν σαρκί, οὗτοι ἀναγκάζουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμνεσθαι, μόνον ἵνα τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Χριστοῦ μὴ διώκωνται·

ὁσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as,
    how much, how farr; pl. as many as,
    all
θελω wish, will
εὐπροσωπῆσαι Verb, aor act infin
    εὐπροσωπεω make a good showing

A rare Greek word, here alone in NT.

ἐν σαρκι 'in the realm of the flesh'

ἀναγκαζω force, compel, urge
περιτεμνω   circumcise
σταυρος, ου m cross

τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Χριστοῦ 'for the sake of the cross of Christ'

διωκω persecute, seek after, pursue,
    follow

"What the Judaisers wanted, as Paul reads their motives, was to lay the religious compulsion of circumcision on Gentile believers in Galatia – thereby bringing Gentile Christians within the orbit of the Jewish nation on a proselyte basis – and so to relieve themselves and Jewish Christendom generally from persecution at the hands of fellow nonbelieving Jews (cf. 1 Thess 2:14b-16). For, as Robert Jewett observes, in the rising tide of Jewish nationalism in Palestine, with the antagonism of the Zealots being directed against all who had Gentile sympathies and all who associated with Gentiles on a nonproselyte basis, 'If they could succeed in circumcising Gentile Christian, this might effectively thwart any Zealot purification campaign against the Judean church!'" Longenecker

---

The Greek text used in these notes is that of the of Society of Biblical Literature. See SBLGNT

Galatians 6:13

οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι αὐτοὶ νόμον
φυλάσσουσιν, ἀλλὰ θέλουσιν ὑμᾶς
περιτέμνεσθαι ἵνα ἐν τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ σαρκὶ
καυχήσωνται.

οὐδε neither, nor

Some suggest that the reference is to those
'getting themselves circumcised', i.e. the
Gentiles who had acceded to the pressure of
the Judaisers, but most commentators
(including, for instance, Eadie and
Longenecker) believe this to be a designation
of the party of the Judaisers.

φυλασσω keep, guard, defend

"Probably ... Paul means here ... that despite
the loftiness of their assertions and their rigid
theology, the Judaisers, at least in Paul's eyes,
fell short of keeping all the law scrupulously
themselves. For, as Paul hints in the *propositio*
of Gal 2:15-21 and develops extensively in his
letter to the Roman Christians, no one has ever
been able to keep the law fully (cf. Rom 1:8-
3:21; 3:23; 7:7-25; 8:3...)." Longenecker

ὑμετερος, α, ον possessive adj of 2 pl your
καυχαομαι boast, boast about

Galatians 6:14

ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο καυχᾶσθαι εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ
σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, δι᾽
οὗ ἐμοὶ κόσμος ἐσταύρωται κἀγὼ κόσμῳ.

ἐμοι is emphatic, 'but as for me'

γένοιτο Verb, aor opt, 3s γινομαι
καυχαομαι boast, boast about
σταυρος, ου m cross

"Paul expresses the fervent wish that he may
never exult in matters having to do with 'the
flesh' – that is, merely human attainments, with
particular application here to counting converts
and success in ministry – but only in that
which has to do with the cross of Christ.
"... For Paul the central feature of the Christian
gospel and the focus of the gospel's
proclamation is 'Christ crucified.' By
metonymy, such associated terms as 'cross' and
'death' were used by him to represent the basic
Christian κηρυγμα (cf. 1 Cor 1:17-18; 15:3;
Phil 2:8; 3:18; Col 1:20; 2:14-15). Thus, as
noted at 3:1, the gospel of Christ crucified so
completely rules out any other supposed means
of being righteous before God that Paul found
it utterly incomprehensible for anyone who has
once embraced such a gospel to ever think of
supplementing it in any way.

"... What Paul means by boasting 'in the cross
of our Lord Jesus Christ' is spelled out in Rom
5:3b-5,11 (where the deponent verb καυχαομαι
appears three times) and 1 Cor 1:18-31 (where
καυχαομαι appears twice)." Longenecker

ἐσταύρωται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s
    σταυροω crucify
κἀγω a compound word = και ἐγω

"The perfect indicative passive form of the
verb σταυροω ('crucify') lays stress on a past
action with present results. κοσμος ('world')
here connotes not the physical world, the
world of humanity, or even the world of sinful
humanity alienated from God, but rather, as
Burton aptly puts it, 'the mode of life which is
characterised by earthly advantages, viewed as
obstacles to righteousness.'... cf. Matt 16:26;
Jas 1:27; 4:4; 1 Jn 2:15." Longenecker
"Each had been nailed to the cross, each to the
other was dead. Christ's cross effected this
separation." Eadie

Galatians 6:15

οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἐστιν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία,
ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις.

This verse may have been a traditional maxim
which circulated in Christian circles and with
which the Galatians would have been familiar.
Paul takes it up and uses it to reinforce his
message.

οὔτε not, nor (οὔτε ... οὔτε neither ... nor)
περιτομη, ης f circumcision, those
    circumcised, Jews
ἀκροβυστια, ας f uncircumcision, non-Jews

Cf. 5:6.

καινος, η, ον new
κτισις, εως f creation, what is created, act
    of creation

What is important is not whether or not a
person is circumcised but whether a person has
become a new creation through the work of the
Spirit which unites the believer to the risen
Christ.

"All external expressions of the Christian faith are to be understood as culturally relevant but not spiritually necessitated, for all that really matters is that the Christian be 'a new creation' and that he or she expresses that new work of God in ways reflective of being 'in Christ' and directed by 'the Spirit.' ... It is not just 're-creation' that God effects 'in Christ' and 'by the Spirit,' thereby taking believers back to some primordial state. Rather, what God has done 'in Christ' and by 'the Spirit' is to effect a 'new creation.' Therefore, 'all that matters' (ἀλλα) for the Christian is the fact of being 'a new creation,' with that newness of creation reflected externally in culturally relevant lives of worship and service." Longenecker

Galatians 6:16

καὶ ὅσοι τῷ κανόνι τούτῳ στοιχήσουσιν, εἰρήνη ἐπ᾽ αὐτοὺς καὶ ἔλεος, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ.

ὅσος, η, ον see v.12
κανων, ονος m   limits, rule, principle

Again, the use of this term suggests v 15 is a traditional maxim.

στοιχεω walk, conduct oneself

Cf. 5:25.

εἰρηνη, ης f   peace
ἐλεος, ους n   mercy, compassion

Israel of God can be understood in at least three ways: i) The και has the sense of 'even', the two groups spoken of are the same, the Israel of God is the company of born-again believers from Jew and Gentile (so Calvin, Luther, Ridderbos ...); ii) The και means 'and also', the Israel of God refers to Jewish believers, those who are not merely Jews outwardly but who also live by faith in the promises of God (so Eadie, Elicott, Bengel). iii) Given the unusual order εἰρηνη ... και ἐλεος the verb should be repunctuated to read, 'Peace on all those who follow this rule, and mercy on the Israel of God,' the latter blessing being pronounced on pious Jews who may yet come to accept the gospel (so Richardson, following suggestions by Burton).

In the context of Paul's argument in this letter, the first of these seems the most likely meaning. "In a letter where Paul is concerned to treat as indifferent the distinctions which separate Jewish and Gentile Christians and to argue for the equality of Gentile believers with Jewish believers, it is difficult to see him at the very end of the letter pronouncing a benediction (or benedictions) that would serve to separate groups within his churches – whether he means by 'the Israel of God' a believing Jewish remnant within the broader Church of both Jews and Gentiles, a non Judaising group of Jewish Christians in Galatia, or an eschatological Israel that is to be saved at the time of Christ's return. Certain elements within Paul's other letters may be used to support one or the other of these views, but Galatians itself cannot easily be used in such a manner.

"Rather, it seems better to argue that here Paul is using a self-designation of his Jewish-Christian opponents in Galatia – one that they used to identify their type of fulfilled Judaism vis-à-vis the official Judaism of their national compatriots (so tentatively, Betz...). Furthermore, this was a self-designation that they must have included in their message to Paul's Gentile converts, assuring them that by observing the God-given Jewish laws they would become fully 'the Israel of God.' Their phrase itself is not found in the extant writings of Second Temple Judaism or later rabbinic Judaism, and does not appear elsewhere in Paul's letters. So it may be postulated that it arose amongst the Judaisers and became part of their message to Paul's Galatian converts. If that be the case, then Paul here climaxes his whole response to the judaising threat in something of an ad hominem manner, implying in quite telling fashion that what the Judaisers were claiming to offer his converts they already have 'in Christ' by faith: that they are truly children of Abraham together with all Jews who believe, and so properly can be called 'the Israel of God' together with all Jews who believe." Longenecker

Galatians 6:17

Τοῦ λοιποῦ κόπους μοι μηδεὶς παρεχέτω, ἐγὼ γὰρ τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματί μου βαστάζω.

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other;   του
    λοιπου henceforth, finally
κοπος, ου m   work, labour, trouble
μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing
παρεχω act & midd cause, bring about, do,
    offer

The present imperative suggests action already in progress.

στιγμα, τος n   mark, scar, brand

A brand placed on a slave to mark ownership.

σωμα, τος n body
βασταζω carry, bear, endure, tolerate,
    remove, support

"What Paul had in mind by the use of τα στιγματα here were the scars and disfigurements left on his body as the effects of his sufferings as an apostle (cf. 2 Cor 6:4-6; 11:23-30; perhaps also Gal 4:13-14). That these were physical scars and disfigurements is made clear by the phrase ἐν τῷ σωματι μου ('on my body'). And that Paul took them to be identifying marks of his Christian apostleship is suggested by the possessive genitive τοῦ Ἰησου ('of Jesus').
"There is no self-indulgent pity here in Paul's statement. Rather, it is a statement that highlights Paul's relationship to Jesus and his apostleship established by Jesus. Furthermore, the statement gives a warning regarding any continuing judaising threat within his Galatian churches. For what takes place in those churches affects him personally as the Galatian Christians' apostle and evangelist. So he warns that he should not be troubled further since he is Christ's 'marked man,' with markings suggesting, positively, that he is under Christ's ownership and protection, as well as, negatively, that those who try to harass him will come under Christ's judgment and retribution." Longenecker

Galatians 6:18

Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί· ἀμήν.

"The addition of the vocative ἀδελφοι ... highlights Paul's continued affection for his converts even amidst his tones of sternness and severity." Longenecker

Conclusion

"Historically, Paul's letter to the Galatians has been foundational for many forms of Christian thought, proclamation and practice. Likewise, today, how one understands the issues and teaching of Galatians determines in large measure what kind of theology one espouses, what kind of message one proclaims, and what kind of lifestyle one lives. May it be, by God's Spirit, that what Paul has written so long ago in this letter finds a new home in our lives, thereby establishing, encouraging, challenging, and transforming us for God's glory." Longenecker