
Introduction

Paul's letter to the Galatian churches is one of the most riveting and personal and rich of the apostle's writings. It is riveting because we hear Paul reaching out to what he regards as a crisis situation with the only thing at his disposal—his words. It is personal because Paul exposes his profound feelings for the Galatian believers and reveals the depth of his convictions about the correctness of his gospel. It is rich because, in the course of seeking to persuade the Galatian believers that there is no other way to be children of God than the one they had accepted from him, Paul gives startling, provocative, and creative interpretations of Scripture. He describes his relationship with the Jerusalem church; his general moral outlook; something of his understanding of the dynamic that now exists between the law, justification, and being "in Christ"; and the centrality of the crucified Christ to his faith. In a blunt and urgent style Paul addresses matters that have relevance even for readers living in different circumstances nearly two thousand years later.

The Situation That Provoked the Writing of Galatians

Today's readers of Galatians can sense Paul's attachment to the Galatian believers. His preaching of the gospel to them was in the context of a developing personal relationship. He says that he first preached the gospel "because of an illness" (4:13). During Paul's illness the Galatians treated him with care and dignity, and this beginning to Paul's relationship with them developed into a tender, honest, and privileged one in which, even in the face of their rejection of his gospel, Paul can address his readers as "my dear children" (4:19) and speak with utmost frankness. Paul writes because he wants to protect his gospel and because he cares deeply about the Galatian believers.

At the outset, Paul states that he thinks the Galatian believers are in danger of turning away from God and heeding another gospel (1:6). As we read the letter we see how dangerous Paul

considers such a move, how sensible it must have seemed to the Galatian believers, and how personally attached Paul feels to Christ, to the Galatians, and to the gospel he proclaims.

Paul thinks that a move away from the gospel he preaches is perilous first because his gospel is the only gospel. Its singular truth came to him through revelation (1:12) and dramatically changed the focus of his life (1:13–16), as it did that of the Galatians (3:1–5). Second, a move away from his gospel is dangerous because it is a move away from freedom (5:1) and from the privileges that accrue to faith (3:29–4:7). Third, to move away from his gospel is to move away from Christ (5:2–4), for Paul identifies his gospel with Christ (1:16). Faith in the gospel is faith in Christ, which is why Paul can equate the coming of faith with the coming of Christ (3:23–25).

As Paul seeks to convince his readers not to be persuaded by those he describes as confusers and agitators (1:7; 5:10; 5:12), it becomes evident that to the Galatians his opponents had a convincing and appealing point of view. It seems that the gospel preached by Paul's rivals had two main advantages over Paul's: it resonated with the general appeal Judaism held for Gentiles in the ancient world, and it presented a coherent position on Christ's relationship to Judaism.

The General Appeal of Judaism for Gentiles

There was in the Hellenistic world, just as today, an attractiveness to the Jewish way of life. Tacitus's description of the Jews gives a picture of how they appeared to a pagan. He comments that "the Jews are extremely loyal toward one another, and always ready to show compassion, but toward every other people they feel only hate and enmity. They sit apart at meals and they sleep apart . . . they adopt circumcision to distinguish themselves from other peoples by this difference."¹ The Jews' tight-knit and separate society was repulsive to some outsiders,² yet there also seems to be a grudging respect for its quality of communal life.

The central, all-encompassing nature of the Jewish law offered both protection and moral guidance. In a social world in which the rule of law often appeared arbitrary, a community that defined itself by its legal framework would have been especially attractive. In the first-century Mediterranean world, the ethical life was a topic of discussion, as witnessed by the various philo-

sophical schools of the time, and Judaism was a compelling option for the morally serious. Furthermore, the ancient heritage of the Jewish faith held an allure to the ancients, who revered the traditional.³ The antiquity of the Torah was one of its chief recommendations; Josephus writes about Moses: "our legislator is the most ancient of all legislators in the records of the whole world."⁴

There appear to have been a significant number of pagans who associated themselves with the synagogues. From ancient Jewish inscriptions, particularly those discovered recently at Aphrodisias, it is clear that some Gentiles, termed "god-fearers" (*theosebeis*), attached themselves to synagogues even though they did not wholly adopt a Jewish lifestyle.⁵ Juvenal gives a particularly interesting description of the "problem" of these god-fearers in Rome.

Some who have had a father who reveres the Sabbath, worship nothing but the clouds, and the divinity of the heavens, and see no difference between eating swine's flesh, from which their father abstained, and that of man; and in time they take to circumcision. Having been wont to flout the laws of Rome, they learn and practise and revere the Jewish law, and all that Moses handed down in his secret tome, forbidding to point out the way to any not worshipping the same rites, and conducting none but the circumcised to the desired fountain. For all which the father was to blame, who gave up every seventh day to idleness, keeping it apart from all the concerns of life.⁶

Part of the reason that the contending evangelists were able to engage the Galatians' attention was that the Galatians wanted to be attached to an ancient religion. It is evident that they were concerned about inheriting the promises to Abraham. Furthermore, it is clear that the Galatians desired moral guidance. Paul's repeated claim that faith makes one righteous and that the Spirit aids in the process of becoming righteous (5:5) is a response to a situation in which there was a desire for moral instruction.

Given that other ancient Gentiles respected and even adopted the Jewish lifestyle, the attraction to Judaism exhibited by Paul's Galatian converts should not be seen as a gullible or wayward attitude. The Galatians, like many other Gentiles, may have regarded the Jewish way of life as a particularly attractive opportunity for belonging to a respectable ancient religion that provided moral guidance.⁷ Paul's gospel seems to have appeared less than satisfactory to them in comparison with the rival evangelists' presentation of a Torah-observant gospel.

The Rival Evangelists' Gospel Appeared More Logical Than Paul's

The second main advantage that the other gospel had was that it made logical sense. Paul's rivals could argue that since Christ was the Messiah expected by Judaism, those who believed in him should observe the Jewish law, which entailed circumcision (Gen. 17:10–14).

In response to this alternate gospel Paul is at pains to present his unique understanding of the relationship between Christ and Judaism, and so between Gentiles and Jews. Paul agrees with his opponents that believers in Christ inherit the promises of God to Israel, but he does not think that this inheritance requires them to follow Jewish practice. Gentile believers receive the blessing of Abraham in the form of the Spirit rather than through covenant observance (3:29–4:7). Christ is not the Messiah expected by Judaism, but is the crucified one (2:19–3:1; 5:11; 6:14) whose scandalous and unprecedented death has changed everything for those who believe in him. Believers are in a new creation (6:15), dead to the law (2:19) and the flesh (5:24). Christ fulfills God's promise of righteousness for Gentiles (3:8) in a way unanticipated by Jews. In effect, for Paul the gospel is not logically coherent, for it does not follow directly from Jewish hopes and beliefs. This is why Paul makes the point that he received the gospel through revelation (1:12).

Paul's Opponents in Galatia

Paul may have expected that his letter would be heard by the rival evangelists as well as by the Galatian believers. These evangelists were preaching a version of the faith that was very different from Paul's and Paul views them as enemies on several levels. They are enemies of the truth of the gospel (1:7–9; 3:1; 6:12). Consequently, they are also enemies of the spiritual well-being of the Galatians (5:2–4). Finally, they are enemies of the Galatians' loyalty to Paul, their father in the faith (5:10; cf. 4:19, where Paul calls the Galatians his "dear children"). These levels are interconnected for Paul because he identifies himself completely with the truth of the gospel (1:8; 1:12; 1:19–21; 4:16) and sees himself as the one who knows what is right for the Galatians and the one in whom they should trust (4:12; 5:2; 5:10–12).

The letter gives several strong clues concerning the nature of the gospel preached by the rival evangelists. We know that it was different from the gospel that Paul preached (1:6). A brief summary of what Paul asserts about his gospel provides some indication of the nature of the opposing gospel.

Paul says that his gospel is for Gentiles (1:16; 2:2; 2:9). Gentiles are not required to become Jewish proselytes; they can remain as Gentiles (2:14), for justification comes through faith in Jesus Christ alone (2:16). The death of Christ is central to Paul's message; he says that he glories in nothing except the cross of Christ (6:14), and he summarizes his preaching to the Galatians as a public portrayal of Christ crucified (3:1). The death of Christ delivers believers from the present evil age (1:4), in which humans are caught because of sin (1:4). By believing in the efficacy of the death of Christ, believers are crucified with Christ and so die to the law (2:19–20), for Christ's death redeemed believers from the curse of the law (3:13). Believers also die to the flesh (5:24) and so become righteous through the promised Spirit (3:14; 5:5). The cross is central to Paul's gospel and is directly and inextricably linked to righteousness by faith. The option of becoming righteous exists because of Christ's death (2:21). There is little evidence from the letter to the Galatians that Paul stressed Christ's resurrection, although the resurrection is presupposed in his concept of believers being "in Christ" (e.g., 3:14, 26; 5:6).

The intruding evangelists preached a gospel that must have been almost diametrically opposed to Paul's in at least two ways. First, they were advocating that Gentile believers adopt Jewish practice. These evangelists presented Torah-observance so attractively that the Galatian men were seriously considering circumcision, a step that would unequivocally identify the Galatians with the Jewish nation and a law-observant lifestyle. In the ancient world circumcision was a clear sign of being a Jew (even though it was practiced by some pagan people such as the Egyptians). Jews were often described as "the circumcised," and Justin Martyr has the Jew Trypho call himself a "Hebrew of the circumcision."⁸

The intruding evangelists were messianic Jews who considered following the Jewish law essential for a believer in Jesus Christ. Although not all Jewish Christians took this view, as the Jewish Christians Paul and Peter demonstrate, Acts provides corroborative evidence that some did. Luke writes that "some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees [believed

that] 'The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses' " (15:5).

The second way that the gospel of the intruding evangelists differed from that of Paul was that it either deemphasized the death of Christ or understood Christ's death differently. In Galatians, Paul places a strong emphasis on the death of Christ and makes a direct connection between Christ's death and righteousness by faith (e.g., 2:21). The gospel of his rivals may have had some similarities at this point to the Jewish Christian gospel presented in 1 Peter (3:18–4:2), which does not draw a direct connection between Christ's death and righteousness by faith. For Paul, a gospel that includes law observance (at least a certain type of law observance) is a gospel in which "the offense of the cross has been abolished" (5:11).⁹ Presumably Paul describes the cross as an offense because it contradicts all previous Jewish understandings of how righteousness should be attained. For the rival evangelists, it appears that the cross and righteousness by faith are not closely connected. For the apostle, the cross and righteousness by faith are one and the same thing.

While a few scholars have suggested that the intruding evangelists were Gentiles who had themselves accepted circumcision,¹⁰ the most straightforward explanation is that the opponents were believers in Christ who were Jews. For them faith in Jesus fulfilled Jewish hopes but did not redefine Judaism. Consequently, to the rival evangelists it was unthinkable to discontinue a Jewish lifestyle after belief in Jesus. Apocryphal writings from the first two centuries of Christianity such as the *Epistle of Peter to James* and the *Testimony Regarding the Recipients of the Epistle*, give evidence for such a viewpoint. In these texts "lawless" Christianity is considered heretical¹¹ and leadership in the community is open only to "a man who as one who has been circumcised is a believing Christian."¹²

The question arises as to whether or not the intruding missionaries were preaching under the authority of the Jerusalem church.¹³ Paul is at pains to clarify for the Galatians the independence of his gospel as regards Jerusalem and that the acknowledged leaders in Jerusalem recognized the validity of his mission to Gentiles (2:9) and these facts indicate that Jerusalem was a factor in the rival evangelists' platform. They likely censured Paul's gospel by claiming that the authority of Jerusalem was not behind Paul but behind them. Paul responds to this claim by asserting that the acknowledged leaders in Jerusalem

accepted his gospel (2:7–9). From Paul’s account in 2:1–10 it appears that there was division in the Jerusalem church, but he asserts that the significant leaders accepted his understanding of the manner in which Gentiles could be included in the faith. While we cannot attain certainty as to whether the intruding evangelists were backed by Jerusalem, the most likely hypothesis is that they were acting under the authority of part of the Jerusalem church, and that another part of the church was on Paul’s side.¹⁴

When Paul writes this letter he probably expects his audience to include his opponents, who are now a significant factor in the Galatian churches. By addressing the logic of the alternate gospel—that to believe in the Jewish Messiah was to become a Jew—Paul seeks to undermine their current influence and preempt counterarguments that could result from the public reading of his letter. In effect Paul gives those still loyal to him in Galatia intellectual ammunition with which to fight the proponents of the alternate gospel.¹⁵

It is understandable why Christian Jews would want to persuade Christian Gentiles to adopt the Jewish way of life. Both theological and social factors were likely at play. For Christian Jews, Jesus was the Messiah and belief in him meant inheriting the promises to Israel. It seemed only right, then, for all Christians to act like Jews. Furthermore, it would have been difficult for Christian Jews to be part of this new group within Judaism. Close social interaction with Gentile Christians would have made their position in the Jewish community increasingly awkward. For the sake of their own consciences and so as to maintain their standing in the Jewish community, it is easy to understand why Christian Jews might have encouraged Christian Gentiles to adopt Jewish practice.

This commentary will refer to Paul’s opponents either as confusers (cf. 1:7; 5:10), agitators (cf. 5:12), troublemakers, rival or intruding evangelists, or the circumcisers (cf. 6:12).

Audience and Date

As will be explained below, this commentary will not use Acts in determining the audience of the letter. This is not because the information in Acts is considered historically unreliable but because of the notorious difficulty in squaring any chronological

information that Galatians gives us with information in Acts. Yet, many have thought it possible to harmonize the data in Acts with that in Galatians. When such a project is undertaken, the questions "Who were the Galatians?" and "When was the letter written?" become necessarily interrelated.¹⁶

Answering the first of these questions is problematic, because Acts refers to two areas within the Roman province of Galatia in which Paul journeyed and worked. In Acts 13 and 14 Luke writes that Paul visited Pamphylia and Pisidia (13:13–14) and preached in Iconium (14:1), Lystra, Derbe (14:6), and Antioch (14:21). These locations were in the southern part of the province of Galatia. Acts also refers to Paul journeying through the "region of Phrygia and Galatia" (16:6; 18:23), that is, to the northern part of the territory.

If the letter is addressed to churches in the south, then, according to the account in Acts, Galatians could be written relatively early in Paul's missionary work. Following Luke's chronology it is conceivable that Galatians was written prior to the Apostolic Council (Acts 15:1–29). If the letter were written to churches in the northern part of the region, however, then according to Acts it was written after the Apostolic Council and most probably somewhat later in Paul's missionary endeavors.

The issue of audience is usually decided on the basis of more than geography alone. For instance, those who take the position that Paul wrote to a south Galatian destination might do so because they think that an early date is the best explanation of why Paul, writing to a church in which his law-free gospel is being attacked by people with close ties to Jerusalem, does not bolster his case by reference to the Council. Paul does not mention the Council because it has not yet occurred. Another argument employed in favor of the south Galatian hypothesis is that Peter's action at Antioch, as recounted by Paul in Galatians 2:11–14, is more understandable before the Council than after.¹⁷

Those who argue in favor of the north Galatian position interpret the phrase "I first preached the gospel to you" (4:13) to mean that Paul has made a subsequent visit to the region. According to these scholars, Paul's first visit is that referred to in Acts 16:6 and the second in Acts 18:23. A case for a north Galatian destination is built also on the observation that since the letter is addressed to Gentiles it cannot have been addressed to Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, which had sizeable Jewish populations.¹⁸

By and large scholars adopt the north Galatian hypothesis, perhaps in large measure because it typically places the letter later in Paul's life.¹⁹ A later date has two main advantages. First, it allows the Jerusalem visit of Galatians 2 to be identified with the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15. Even though this creates the problem of why Paul does not use the Council's decision in his letter, it does allow the wonderful convenience of two independent accounts of the same visit. Second, a later date may explain similarities in theme between Galatians and Romans.²⁰

Yet a decision about a north or south Galatian destination, that is, a decision based on trying to square the information in Acts with that in Galatians, does not answer the puzzle of the date of the letter. It is possible that the letter is addressed to churches from Paul's earliest journey, yet written later in his career; and it is also possible that it is composed soon after Paul's second journey, making the letter one of his earliest.²¹

The questions "Who were the Galatians?" and "When was the letter written?" have also been debated apart from the information in Acts. Some argue that since Acts is both a secondhand account and one with its own agenda,²² the best course of action is to work with the letter to the Galatians alone. So several recent studies have largely ignored the evidence of Acts.²³

The position of this commentary is that the issue of the destination and date of Galatians is exegetically important primarily as it relates to the question of whether or not the letter is written after a meeting such as Luke records in Acts 15. That is, the most significant factor in answering the questions of who the Galatians were and when the letter was written is whether or not to use the information of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1–29) when interpreting Paul's meeting with the church leaders in Jerusalem, described in Galatians 2:1–10. It seems that the only way to decide this is to compare Paul's reference to this meeting in Jerusalem with Luke's record of the Council.²⁴

The Council at Jerusalem in Acts 15:1–29 Compared with the Meeting Recorded in Galatians 2:1–10

There are several similarities between the events described in Acts 15:1–29 and Galatians 2:1–10. Both involve trips to Jerusalem in which Barnabas accompanies Paul. In Acts, Luke writes that they were also accompanied by "some other believers" (15:2), and Galatians refers to Titus, who could have been among this

group. In Acts and Galatians, the law-free gospel is challenged by believers who were somewhat separate from the central leadership. In both accounts the most pivotal believers accept Paul's group and gospel. Peter plays a central role in each presentation of the meeting, and the outcome in both is agreement that Paul's gospel to the Gentiles is from God.

There are, however, some significant differences between the accounts in Acts 15 and Galatians 2. In Acts, the challenge raised at the meeting by Pharisaic believers is presented as directly related to the matter upon which Paul, Barnabas, and company have journeyed to Jerusalem, namely, whether or not it is necessary for Gentiles to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. The ensuing hearing focuses on the matter raised by these Pharisaic believers. In Galatians, however, Paul recounts a meeting much less influenced by those he calls the "false brothers." In Paul's account their view is not taken seriously by the acknowledged leaders. Furthermore, Paul's own story conveys the impression that the leaders were simply convinced by what they saw of Paul's gospel.

Some of the differences between Luke's record in Acts and Paul's in Galatians may be differences of perspective. For example, Paul would want to convey the impression that he had a significant degree of control over the proceedings as well as to discount the validity of the alternate viewpoint. Luke's concern to highlight the control of the Jerusalem leadership may have led him to present a more "top-down" portrayal of the event. Another variation that could be one of perspective is the difference in the final decisions reached at the meeting. In Paul's account the agreement reached at the meeting concerns the division of labor and responsibilities: Peter has a mission to the circumcised and Paul to the uncircumcised (Gal. 2:7-9). In Paul's record the debate focuses on the consequences of a Torah-free gospel for mission. In Acts, however, there is no decision to divide the evangelistic field. The point of the council is to debate whether Gentiles as Gentiles could be part of the church.

Another difference that might reflect varying standpoints and agendas is that in Acts Peter turns the tide by reminding his hearers that "some time ago" God had determined he should go among the Gentiles (15:7), whereas in Galatians Paul says that the acknowledged leaders recognized that Peter "had been given the task of preaching the gospel to the Jews," and he calls Peter "an apostle to the Jews" (2:7-8). In Acts the force of Peter's

argument rests on his own experience of and commitment to the Gentile mission, whereas in Galatians Peter makes the difference at the Jerusalem meeting because he is so clearly identified with a mission to the Jews.

While differences in the accounts such as those above might be explained as due to the particular perspectives and purposes in writing of Paul and Luke, there are also differences of fact. One such difference concerns the relative time of Paul's conflict at Antioch. In Acts Paul goes up to Jerusalem because of a conflict at Antioch, but in Galatians (2:11–14) Paul does not describe a confrontation at Antioch until after he has told the story of his visit to Jerusalem. Paul does not state that the incident at Antioch prompted his Jerusalem trip. Rather, Paul says that he went up because of revelation. Furthermore, there are reasons to doubt that the episode at Antioch recorded in Acts 15:1–2 is the same as that recounted in Galatians 2:11–14. In Galatians Peter is present at the Antioch incident, but Acts does not report this; in fact, it presents Peter as able to mediate the debate that arose as a result.²⁵

Another notable difference between Acts 15 and Galatians 2 is the result of the agreement of the Jerusalem Council. In Acts this is a decision that, while Gentiles are acceptable in the church, they are constrained by the command "to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood" (15:20).²⁶ This directive is to be conveyed to the church at Antioch in the form of a letter sent with Paul and Barnabas, who are accompanied on their return journey by some of the Jerusalem church leaders. In Galatians, on the other hand, there is no reference to such a command (or to Jerusalem Christians returning with Paul to Antioch). It is decided that Paul does have a mission to the Gentiles and that it should be exercised without restraint from those whose mission is to the Jews. In Galatians the acknowledged leaders require only that Paul and Barnabas "should continue to remember the poor" (2:10).²⁷

If Galatians 2 and Acts 15 are describing the same event, the only way to explain these differences of fact would be to surmise that Paul or Luke have changed facts to suit their purposes. But taking this position leads us into the realm of speculation, in which any piece of evidence can take on chameleon-like quality.

Thus, given that the Jerusalem visit of Acts 15 is so different from the one Paul describes in Galatians 2,²⁸ the most cautious approach is to regard the two accounts as referring to two separate events. The limit of our knowledge in this regard is that, when Paul wrote Galatians, he had been to a meeting in Jerusalem in which he felt his legitimate authority to exercise a Gentile mission had been recognized.²⁹

Galatians Is One of Paul's Earlier Letters

The best alternative to using Acts to date Galatians is to determine where it fits among the sequence of Paul's letters. Some have proposed that the relative chronological order of the letters may be determined by tracing development in Paul's theological thinking, particularly his thinking about eschatology.³⁰ Such proposals necessarily rely on assumptions about how Paul's thinking might have developed and often do not adequately take into account the fact that his letters are not primarily witnesses to a developing theological mind but are the apostle's responses to distinctive circumstances. Differences in Paul's statements on issues such as eschatology, the law, or justification are largely attributable to the differences in the situations he is addressing. Therefore it is problematic to trace the development of these ideas. And, as Knox has outlined, using theology to determine the order of Paul's letters has produced a wide variety of chronological schemes.³¹

However, one piece of evidence does allow us to trace something of the relative order of the letters: the collection project for the poor saints in Jerusalem.³² Tracing the evidence backwards, we find that in Romans Paul is in the final stage of the collection project. He tells his Roman readers that he is on his way to Jerusalem with money that had been contributed by the Gentiles of Macedonia and Achaia (Rom. 15:25–27). In the course of encouraging the Corinthian church, which is situated in Achaia, to give liberally to the collection project, Paul tells them that the churches of Macedonia have given generously (2 Cor. 8:1–2; 9:4). In 1 Corinthians 16:1 he mentions the collection project to the Corinthians. Macedonia is not mentioned as part of the project, since he is on his way there as he writes (16:5), but Galatia is mentioned. On the assumption that Paul would have mentioned the churches of Galatia in 2 Corinthians and Romans if they had still been participants in the project, it ap-

pears that at some point between the writing of 1 and 2 Corinthians the Galatian churches dropped out of Paul's collection project.³³

The question now becomes whether or not the letter to the Galatians was written when the Galatian churches were still involved in the project. While the letter witnesses to mounting tension between Paul and the Galatians, Paul clearly has a relationship with them and furthermore feels free to mention the collection project (2:10). This suggests that at the time of writing the churches of Galatia were involved in the collection.

Tracing references to the collection project cannot tell us whether or not the letter was written prior to 1 Corinthians, but the fact that Galatia is not mentioned as involved in the collection in 2 Corinthians 8–9 strongly suggests that the letter was written prior to 2 Corinthians.³⁴ If this interpretation of the evidence is correct, it would make Galatians one of Paul's earlier writings.

The letter does not indicate the place from which it was sent. That there are such numerous and varying proposals (e.g., Ephesus, Macedonia, and Corinth) indicates the difficulty scholars have had coming to a conclusive decision. Fortunately for us, no exegetical significance is attached to determining the place of composition.

The Galatian Churches Were Probably in Southern Galatia

It would help our historical imagination if we knew whether the letter was addressed to churches in the north or south of the Galatian province, since each region had a different cultural character. The Roman province of Galatia was in central Asia Minor (modern Turkey), extending in the north from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean in the south. The Roman presence was strong in the south, where Roman legions were garrisoned, and in the early part of the first century A.D. Roman roads connected the important Roman establishments of southern Galatia.

In the north the Roman presence was not so strongly felt. Roman roads were not built in the north until the 70s, and the Celtic tribes that had formed the basis of the kingdom of Amyn-tas, which the Romans annexed to form the province of Galatia (25 B.C.), were less affected by Roman culture.

The natives of Galatia were called both Galatians and Celts, for a group of Celts that originated in central Europe had

come to Asia Minor searching for new land in the early third century B.C. Strabo says that the three tribes that came to "Galatae" "wandered about for a long time, and after they had overrun the country that was subject to the Attalic and the Bithynian kings . . . they received the present Galatia, or Gallo-Graecia, as it is called."³⁵ Eventually this Pontic heartland in which the Celts had settled was made into a Roman province.

The Celts, or Galatians, were known for customs thought barbaric by the Greeks and Romans. The historian S. Mitchell writes:

The Galatians lived on the margin of civilized life, plundering temples, sacking cities, and inspiring fear, well-merited, among the defenseless population of the Asian countryside. The damage they caused far outweighed the contribution they provided: an unceasing supply of mercenary soldiers; and a series of assassins responsible for the murder of several Hellenistic kings.³⁶

Athenaeus records that around 90 B.C. Posidonius made this observation about Celts in Gaul:

The Celts sometimes have gladiatorial contests during dinner. Having assembled under arms, they indulge in sham fights and practise feints with one another; sometimes they proceed even to the point of wounding each other, and then, exasperated by this, if the company does not intervene, they go so far as to kill.³⁷

Viewed by the Greeks and Romans as "the archetypal barbarians,"³⁸ the Galatians were "considered to be large, unpredictable simpletons, ferocious and highly dangerous when angry, but without stamina and easy to trick."³⁹

Unfortunately, it is not possible to be certain which region of the Galatian province the recipients of Paul's letter lived in. We may, however, note three factors in favor of the southern region. First, the letter is addressed to people fluent in Greek. Although some have suggested that the Hellenized Celtic cities of the north, such as Ankyra and Pessinus, may be a likely designation,⁴⁰ the Greek language was most probably more common in the south, making a southern destination for Galatians more likely.⁴¹

The second factor making a southern Galatian destination more probable than a northern one is that at the time of Paul's missionizing the Roman roads were in the south. This would make the south by far the more convenient region for Paul's efforts.⁴² The third factor favoring a south Galatian address is that

there is no evidence for Jews in the north.⁴³ Paul's letter, however, is a response to the influence of Jewish Christian missionizing. That the Galatians were open to adopting Jewish practice strongly suggests that they knew something about Judaism prior to the arrival of the rival evangelists. It is hard to imagine how Galatian pagans who had converted to Paul's law-free gospel would be open to such a message and lifestyle or would see how it fit with their new faith unless they had some previous experience with Judaism.⁴⁴

Some have used Paul's epithet "foolish Galatians" (3:1) to argue that the letter was addressed to the northern Gauls. Yet, as Mitchell points out, it could just as well be that while this derogatory designation may seem out of place applied to the southern Galatian city dwellers, "it is part of Paul's reproach that he equates them with the barbarous people who had given their name to the province, and who themselves had a quite independent reputation for simple-mindedness."⁴⁵

The Author Paul

Modern interpretation of Galatians is affected by whether or not the reader of the letter conceives of Paul as speaking from within Judaism. If we think of Paul as remaining within Judaism, then it is legitimate to use Jewish categories and expectations in interpreting his writings. If we determine that after his conversion Paul did not consider himself part of Judaism, then we must approach his Christology and scriptural interpretation from a different framework.

Undoubtedly Paul remained an ethnic Jew all his life; during the period in which Paul lived Jews regarded themselves as Jewish by virtue of being born of a Jewish mother.⁴⁶ But Jews connected their ethnicity also with religious practice and belief, and there was a lively debate about which form of the Jewish religion was correct. The various forms of Judaism in the first century, from that evidenced at Qumran, to Pharisaic, to Sadducean, to philosophical (Philo) all witness to the diverse ways that Jews interpreted the religious aspect of their identity. Although Paul remained a Jew in the ethnic sense, the question is, did he think that his faith in Christ was another form of Judaism?

Did Paul Remain a Religious Jew?

Many scholars maintain that Paul remained an ethnic as well as a religious Jew after faith in Christ. Those who take this view diverge over the way Paul's faith in Jesus as Messiah functions within the framework of his gospel. W. D. Davies writes that, "throughout his life Paul was a practicing Jew who never ceased to insist that his gospel was first to the Jews, who also expected Jewish Christians to persist in their loyalty to the Torah of Judaism."⁴⁷ For Davies, Paul is "a Pharisee who accepted Jesus of Nazareth, crucified and raised from the dead, as the Messiah. . . . In Paul's response to Christ, the Messiah, he came to understand the Christian life as patterned after that of Judaism."⁴⁸

Some others who regard Paul as remaining within Judaism after he came to faith in Christ place less stress on Paul's belief in Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, while maintaining that Paul regarded Christ as the fulfillment of Israel's hopes. J. C. Beker writes that "Paul was and remained a Jew. . . . For Paul, Christianity is not a *nova religio* but the answer to Israel's longing for the messianic age."⁴⁹ Beker's apocalyptic and theocentric interpretation of Paul focuses attention away from Jesus as the Messiah and toward his role in initiating and guaranteeing the age of God's visibly triumphant reign. For Beker, Paul understood that the Messiah had come, although without his kingdom. He writes: "Christ is not so much the fulfillment of God's promises as the guarantee or confirmation of these promises."⁵⁰

Knox regards Paul as continuing to think of himself as a Jew, but because he believes that Jesus was the Messiah, a Jew who was "a member of a new people—new because it has a new 'spirit' and is open to all of every nation simply on the condition of faith, and yet old since it is Israel become itself, the fulfillment of God's ancient promises."⁵¹ For A. Segal, Paul is a first-century Jewish apocalypticist⁵² who leaves behind Pharisaic Judaism by joining a Gentile Christian community⁵³ and as such is "a convert from one Jewish sect to another."⁵⁴ In Segal's view, Paul converted to a "heretical form of Judaism."⁵⁵

Did Paul Break with Judaism?

The alternate view is that Paul's faith did not fit within Judaism. E. P. Sanders considers that after the revelation of God's Son, Paul, while not perceiving "that his gospel and his mis-

sionary activity impl[ied] a break with Judaism,⁵⁶ nevertheless through his belief and practice effects such a break. What Paul's faith entails is the creation of a "third entity." As Sanders puts it:

Paul . . . thought of the church as the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham. In that sense it was not at all a new religion. Jews who entered the Christian movement did not have to convert in the way Gentiles did: they did not have to renounce their god, nor, at least in theory, observance of the law. It was not established by admitting Gentiles to Israel according to the flesh . . . but by admitting all, whether Jew or Greek, into the body of Christ by faith in him.⁵⁷

In Sanders's words, Paul's religion is "basically different from anything known from Palestinian Judaism."⁵⁸ Paul "simply saw the old dispensation as worthless in comparison with the new. . . . In short, this is what Paul finds wrong in Judaism: it is not Christianity."⁵⁹ S. Mason takes Galatians as Paul's "fullest statement on Judaism to his Gentile churches" and determines that in it Paul demonstrates that he "no longer identifies himself with the Jewish people."⁶⁰

This Commentary's Position—Somewhere In Between

The vast problem of Paul's relationship to Judaism cannot be fully discussed here. It is, however, important to outline the approach taken in this commentary, which fits somewhere between those who see Paul as a messianic Jew and those who consider that he separated himself from Judaism.

To find a position that might explain all of the evidence requires a less than tidy solution. There are ways in which Paul remains connected to Judaism. Paul writes that Christ was born under the law (Gal. 4:4), that God's action in Christ was for the Jews (4:5), that faith in Christ allowed Gentiles to inherit the promises to Abraham (3:9, 14), and that the circumcised belong in the faith also (2:9). Even though Christ's death abolished the law (2:21), the law may be fulfilled through love (5:14), of which believers are especially capable (5:13). Furthermore, there are places where he seems to stress the continuity between his gospel and that of the first Jewish believers and their Jewish hopes. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 15 Paul writes that his gospel is one that came through revelation and teaching. What he received and accepted from those who were believers before him, he says, is that Christ died "according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3). Paul

maintains that the gospel he preaches emerged from Judaism, fulfills the promises of Judaism, and is for Jews.

However, there are indications that Paul thought of his faith as novel. He claims that his faith came through revelation and that he was not taught it (1:12). Paul's stress on his gospel as being about the crucified Christ and his recognition that this is a scandal to those who adhere to Jewish ways (5:11) demonstrate his appreciation of how unexpected his own faith was within Judaism. It must have been clear to Paul that a gospel to Gentiles that did not require them to adopt the Torah was at odds with Jewish expectations for the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel. This gospel did not fit with any established pattern but rather inaugurated a new creation into which the existing interpretation of Judaism did not fit (Gal. 6:15). Even Paul's apocalyptic bent⁶¹ does not fit standard Jewish apocalyptic, for there is little in Jewish apocalyptic that anticipates either a crucified messiah or a faith that speaks of being incorporated into another being ("in Christ").⁶²

Further, while there may be many circumstantial reasons to explain why Paul says the negative things he does about Judaism (see esp. 1 Thess. 2:15–16; Phil. 3:7–9; 2 Cor. 3:7–10), the fact that he says them suggests that at some level Paul regards his gospel as separate from Judaism, or at least as separate from Judaism that has not recognized Christ.

Neither the view that regards Paul as seeing faith in Christ as the fulfillment of Jewish messianic expectations nor the view that regards him as separating himself from Judaism accounts for all the evidence. Paul thinks of the gospel as a new thing with consequences for Judaism. In other words, while Paul regards his gospel as new and unexpected, he at the same time considers it a message born out of Judaism that can speak to Judaism. While it will not fit within contemporary Judaism, the gospel is nevertheless an invitation to Jews. Paul's gospel affirms God's faithfulness to the Jews throughout history (3:21–25) but requires Jews and Gentiles to see that a new thing has happened that now affects the way Judaism is to understand itself. Paul, therefore, understands his gospel as new and separate from existing Judaism, yet as also having consequences for Jewish self-understanding.⁶³

This complicated relationship witnesses to the commonplace experience of a person's separation from the people, traditions, or worldviews of his or her past. One example of such

separation is when a teenager grows up and comes to define herself independently from her parents. Part of separation is defining herself over against her parents. The teenager seeks to redefine the relationship she has with her parents. Once she discovers herself she then can invite her parents to participate in her life, on her terms. This same dynamic may be at work for Paul, who after the revelation stands apart from Judaism while still remaining in some sense connected to it. Paul wants Jews to participate in his gospel, on the terms that he sets.

And so Paul has a complex relationship with Judaism. He knows himself to be an ethnic Jew, but he is not a practicing Jew (Gal. 2:15–16). He is a Jew to whom something new has been revealed, a Jew with a mission to the Gentiles, but nevertheless a Jew who sees his message as affecting Judaism. Paul stands apart from Judaism and can speak of it as something other (1:14). And yet he considers what he preaches to be in line with the promises of God to Israel. Paul knows that his message, with the crucified Christ at its core, is unanticipated, scandalous, and even offensive (5:11) to Jews. This goes a long way toward explaining why Paul stresses the crucified Christ. This revelation entailed the creation of a new community, a community in which Jews and Gentiles live together on the basis of faith in the crucified Christ. Jews are now invited to see their faith in a whole new light, to consider that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counted for anything. Paul understood the revelation to have consequences for the religion out of which it came.

Taking such a view of Paul's relationship to Judaism affects in several ways the exegesis of Galatians. First, we may not expect Paul's interpretation of Scripture to be in line with any typical Jewish interpretation. Subsequent to his call, Paul's reading of Scripture is based on the self-understanding that to him has been revealed something entirely new. We should not expect his exegesis to correspond to existing traditions, and we may expect it to be idiosyncratic. Second, we will not presume that Paul invested the term "Christ" with first-century messianic expectations. This interpretive stance makes room for the evidence that Paul does not feel constrained to explain the glaring problem of how the crucified and risen Jesus could be a messiah, when that so obviously contradicted Jewish expectations. Though Paul considered Jesus to be the Jewish Messiah, he argues not that Jewish *messianic* expectations were fulfilled in Jesus but rather that God's fundamental promise that Israel would be a

blessing to the nations is fulfilled in Jesus. When Paul uses the term “Christ” messianically he redefines its messianic connotations (e.g., Gal. 3:16).⁶⁴

Chiefly Paul uses the designation “Christ” as a proper name rather than investing it with messianic meaning.⁶⁵ The corpus of Paul’s letters witnesses to the fact that when Paul speaks to Gentiles about Jesus Christ he speaks of Christ’s universal lordship, not of his Jewish messiahship.⁶⁶

One of Paul’s more lucid statements on the matter of the relationship of his gospel to Judaism is found in Romans: “but now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it” (Rom. 3:21, RSV).

Paul’s Gospel

This commentary accepts the view that justification by faith, while an extremely important concept in Paul, is not his most comprehensive description of the gospel. The defining shape of Paul’s gospel is what A. Schweitzer calls “the experience of union with Christ”⁶⁷ and what E. P. Sanders terms “participationist eschatology.”⁶⁸

Paul characterizes the gospel as being about the crucified and risen Son of God (e.g., Rom. 1:4; 1 Cor. 1:17), in whose death and resurrection believers now participate (e.g., Rom. 6:2–11; 2 Cor. 1:5; 5:14–15; Phil. 2:5–11; 3:10–11), to whom believers now belong (e.g., Rom. 7:4; 1 Cor. 3:23; 6:19; Phil. 3:12), in whom believers are (e.g., Rom. 8:1; 1 Cor. 6:15; 12:13; 15:58; 2 Cor. 1:21; Phil. 3:9; 4:7), who is in believers (e.g., Rom. 8:10; 2 Cor. 13:5), and whose death and resurrection allow believers to hope in the future (e.g., Rom. 5:2, 9; 6:5; 8:18–24; 1 Cor. 1:7–9; 11:26; 15:20; 2 Cor. 4:14; Phil. 1:10; 3:20–21; 1 Thess. 1:10; 4:13–18; 5:9–11; 2 Thess. 1:7–10). Perhaps the most succinct way that Paul describes his gospel is either the statement in Romans that God predestined believers “to be conformed to the likeness of his Son” (8:29; cf. 1 Cor. 15:49; 2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Thess. 2:14) or the statement in 2 Corinthians: “if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation” (5:17).

This understanding of Paul’s gospel will lend a certain nuance to this commentary’s interpretation of Galatians. For, while the letter contains the famous statement that “a man is not justified by observing the law, . . . because by observing the law no one will be justified” (2:16), this will be interpreted in the context

of a gospel shaped by the idea that “a man” is incorporated into Christ’s death and resurrection and becomes a new creation. Recognition of the scope and uniqueness of Paul’s gospel requires that when reading Galatians we intermingle the concept of justification by faith with the concepts of dying and living with Christ the Son of God (2:20), being in Christ (3:26–27), having Christ in believers (4:19) and belonging to Christ (3:29; 5:24). The doctrine of justification by faith is not Paul’s gospel in a nutshell, but it is part of the complex of his gospel.

This brings us directly to the issue of the meaning of the phrase *pistis Christou*, “faith in Christ Jesus,” since this central Pauline phrase takes on a particular shading depending on what the shape Paul’s gospel is considered to have. The phrase occurs at Galatians 2:16 and also at Galatians 3:22 (see also Rom. 3:22, 26; Eph. 3:12; Phil. 3:9). The options for translation of the Greek *pistis Christou* are either faith *in* Christ Jesus (an objective genitive) or faith *of* Christ Jesus (a subjective genitive). In recent years a strong argument has been raised in favor of the second option.⁶⁹ This commentary adopts the subjective genitive reading “faith of Christ,” or “Christ’s faith.” The significance of such a decision is that in a verse such as 2:16, where the phrase *pistis Christou* occurs twice, the translation becomes: “we know that a person is justified not by the works of law but through Christ’s faith (*pistis Christou*). And we have come to have faith in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by Christ’s faith (*pistis Christou*) and not by doing the works of law.”

My reasons for this choice do not include that advanced by A. G. Hebert⁷⁰ and T. Torrance,⁷¹ that the Hebrew idea of faithfulness underlies Paul’s term *pistis*. I am convinced by J. Barr that their proposed grammatical evidence has wrongly confused theological and linguistic argumentation⁷² and presumed that a Greek word could be “dominated by a Hebrew concept.”⁷³ Neither do my reasons include the fact that the subjective genitive translation clears up the redundancies in a verse like Gal. 2:16 (when the phrase *pistis Christou* is translated subjectively the threefold repetition of “faith in Christ” is eliminated). Repetition was an honored rhetorical strategy. Moreover, I do not think that the issue can be decided at the level of grammar. There are valid grammatical reasons for choosing either the objective or subjective reading.⁷⁴

My reason for choosing the subjective genitive translation of *pistis Christou* is that such a translation here (as well as at Gal. 3:33; Phil. 3:9; Rom. 3:22, 26) brings these verses in line with the

central message of Paul—that believers are “in Christ.” A subjective genitive translation properly lessens (while not obliterating) the focus on the act of human faith and consequently on the doctrine of justification by faith. Furthermore, a subjective genitive translation provides an appropriate parallel between Jesus’ faith and that of Abraham (3:6–9). As noted by I. G. Wallis, a proponent of the “of Christ” reading, Jesus’ faith is:

not only the context for God’s offer of renewed relationship, but also the context for response to that offer: people may believe because their faith is a function of being found in Christ and so of being a part of Christ’s response of faith to the Father. In consequence, if the faith of believers is divorced from Christ’s faith, we seem to end up with yet another permutation of humanity pulling itself up by its own bootstraps.⁷⁵

The other key element in the doctrine of justification by faith is that Christ’s sacrificial death opens the way for believers to be justified by faith. This brings us to the issue of how to understand “faith of Christ.” While some understand Christ’s faith to indicate Christ’s obedience and thereby his sacrificial death,⁷⁶ the phrase may be more helpfully understood within the framework of participating in Christ. M. D. Hooker connects the phrase “faith of Christ” to Paul’s “in Christ” theme. Echoing Irenaeus, Hooker comments, “Christ became what we are, in order that *in him*, we might become what he is.”⁷⁷ For Hooker, since we are “in Christ” through Christ’s work of interchange,⁷⁸ “faith of Christ” denotes Christ’s faith, which becomes our faith as we are in him. S. K. Williams nuances the meaning of “faith of Christ” this way:

“*Pistis Christou* [faith of Christ] is that faith which is characteristic of believers because they are ‘in Christ.’ . . . Believers’ faith, like his, is the way of death (2:19) and ‘new creation’ (6:15). This faith, the very possibility and character of which derive from Christ’s own, Paul calls *Pistis Christou*.”⁷⁹

It must further be said that Christ’s faith refers also to his humanity. While on occasion Paul refers to God’s faithfulness (e.g., 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13), faith is essentially a human action or disposition (e.g., Rom. 14:1, 22) and a most commendable one at that (e.g., Rom. 3:28). Paul may also be investing the word “faith” with its typical meaning of “proof.” In the ancient world the Greek word *pistis* meant evidence that forms the basis on which belief is based.⁸⁰ Taking the phrase as an appositive genitive, it bears the meaning “proof that is Christ.” Therefore the

phrase “Christ’s faith” refers to what Wallis calls “the fullness of the incarnate Son’s humanity”⁸¹ and to the proof of his identity. The character of Christ’s faith gives evidence that he is the archetypal human being, while not diminishing his identity also as Son of God, Lord, and Christ. When believers are “in Christ” they participate in the archetypal human being Jesus Christ and so become righteous (cf. Rom. 5:15–19). This archetypal human being is Son of God and so has God’s character—righteousness.⁸² Faith in Christ allows believers to become righteous and faithful as Christ is.⁸³

There is much more to say about the rich concepts and important issues found in Paul’s letter to the Galatians, but these must wait for the commentary on individual verses. Yet, if this introduction has not adequately whetted the appetite for focused study of Galatians, perhaps the following general observation will help.

Spending time studying Paul is a corrective to viewing Christianity as the same as certain moral frameworks, or to equating particular cultural expressions, or even patriotism, with Christianity. Paul’s argument against circumcision, which is an argument against identifying with a certain religious disposition and a particular nation, speaks to our current struggles to be shaped by Christ apart from inherited standards of behavior or national allegiance. Further, spending time studying Paul is a summons to be less attuned to the pressures and pleasures of our social context and more aware of the presence of Christ in our midst. Paul’s attempt to put into words the fundamental importance of the profound and all-encompassing knowledge of being “in Christ” speaks to the possibility of living by faith, not achievement, in our time. Paul invites us to be molded not by inner needs or external circumstances, but to know freedom—the freedom of being “in Christ.”

Notes

1. Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.1–2 (Jackson, LCL).
2. Tacitus writes: “the Jews regard as profane all that we hold sacred; on the other hand, they permit all that we abhor” (ibid., 5.4). In speaking of the temple’s fortifications he writes: “The founders of the city [Jerusalem] had foreseen that there would be many wars because

the ways of their people differed so from those of the neighbours" (ibid., 5.12). Tacitus charges the Jews with superstition (ibid., 5.1).

3. Ibid., 5.5.

4. *Against Apion* 2.154 (Thackeray, LCL).

5. For evidence of "god-fearers," see A. Segal, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 94; and P. R. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 152–66. See M. Hengel and A. M. Schwemer for a discussion of the matter of pagan sympathizers to Judaism at the time of the birth of Christianity (*Paul between Damascus and Antioch: The Unknown Years* [trans. J. Bowden; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1997], pp. 61–90).

6. Juvenal, *Satires* 14.96–106 (Ramsay, LCL).

7. John Chrysostom delivered sermons in the fourth century A.D. that testify to the fact that even after the Christian faith had existed for several generations, believers in Christ were powerfully drawn to Judaism. He declared: "I know that many have high regard for the Jews and they think that their present way of life is holy. That is why I am so anxious to uproot this deadly opinion." (*Homily 1 against the Jews* [Meeks and Wilken], p. 89.) Chrysostom speaks of those "sick with Judaism" "who belong to us and say that they believe in our teaching, [yet] attend their festivals, and even share in their celebrations and join in their feasts" (ibid., p. 86). See L. H. Feldman, who gives thirty-one reasons, including economic and social ones, why third-century Christians were still attracted to Judaism (*Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993], pp. 369–89).

8. *Dial.* 1 (ANF 1.194). Often the qualification "circumcised" was used with a strong sense of distaste. In one of his *Epigrams* the Roman poet Marcus Valerius Martial (ca. 40–103) addresses a Roman girl. He asks why no Roman is to her liking and yet she does not "shun the loins of circumcised Jews" (Martial, *Epigrams* 7.30 [Bailey, LCL]).

9. It appears that Paul can accept Jewish Christians like Peter who follow Torah, but in accordance with Jesus' interpretation of it. Paul's use of the phrase *pistis Christou* in 2:15–16a affirms an understanding shared by a portion of early Jewish Christians: Jesus' faithfulness to the law defines law observance for those who follow him. For a similar understanding, see J. D. G. Dunn, "The New Perspective on Paul," in *Jesus, Paul and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1990), pp. 183–205, esp. p. 189; idem, "The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11–18)," in *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, 129–74, esp. p. 155; and B. W. Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God: The Transformation of Identity in Galatians* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), pp. 101–3. See also Additional Notes on 2:15–16.

10. See especially J. Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (London: SCM, 1959), pp. 130–34; and L. Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987), p. 81.

11. *The Kerygmata Petrou 1, The Epistle of Peter to James*, 2:112.

12. *The Kerygmata Petrou 2, Testimony regarding the Recipients of the Epistle*, 2:113 (Hennecke).

13. For a comprehensive bibliography on the subject and a good overview of various opinions on Paul's opponents and their relationship to the Jerusalem church, see R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC 41; Dallas: Word, 1990), pp. lxxxviii–xcvi.

14. For a cogent critique of the hypothesis that there was substantial division between Paul and the Jerusalem leaders and that Paul's opponents acted under the authority of the Jerusalem church, see C. C. Hill, *Hellenists and Hebrews: Reappraising Division within the Earliest Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).

15. For a particularly interesting reconstruction of the gospel that the rival evangelists may have preached see J. L. Martyn, "A Law-Observant Mission to Gentiles: The Background of Galatians," *SJT* 38 (1985), pp. 307–24.

16. For a presentation of five different Pauline chronologies based on trying to reconcile the account in Acts with that in Paul, see F. O. Francis and J. P. Sampley, eds., *Pauline Parallels* (2d ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), pp. 67, 141, 175, 207, 223.

17. So Longenecker, *Galatians*, p. lxxii.

18. So J. C. Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), p. 42; and J. L. Martyn, *Galatians* (AB 33A; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1997), p. 16.

19. As noted by F. J. Matera, *Galatians* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), p. 24.

20. J. B. Lightfoot wrote: "The Epistle to Galatians stands in relation to the Roman letter, as the rough model to the finished statue" (*Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* [London: Macmillan, 1910], p. 55). This has suggested to some that the letters were written within a relatively short space of time.

21. See Matera, who notes that some who hold to a north Galatian hypothesis date the letter early, whereas some who argue for a south Galatian destination date the letter later (*Galatians*, p. 20).

22. J. Knox in particular articulated the importance of distinguishing between the record of Paul in Acts, which is secondhand, and Paul's own account. Knox argued that since the letters are a firsthand account, where there is any discrepancy between Acts and Paul's letters, the letters are always to be taken as the true witness to events. He further argued that Luke's concerns undoubtedly affected his shaping of the story of Paul. Luke wanted to stress the centrality of Jerusalem, the importance of the Twelve, and the political innocuousness of Christianity. In

particular Luke's desire to stress the unity of a church centralized in Jerusalem affected both the order and manner of his record of Paul's activity. Knox suggests, for instance, that for the purpose of emphasizing the harmony of the early church, Luke placed the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 "earlier in Paul's career than it belongs" (*Chapters in a Life of Paul* [New York: Abingdon, 1950], p. 67). See also G. Lüdemann (*Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles: Studies in Chronology* [trans. F. S. Jones; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984]), who uses the letters as primary evidence for constructing Paul's chronology.

23. For instance, see D. Lührmann (*Galatians: A Continental Commentary* [trans. O. C. Dean Jr.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992], p. 3). J. Murphy-O'Connor uses almost exclusively evidence from the letters in his dating of Galatians (*Paul: A Critical Life* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1996], p. 182). H. D. Betz puts it this way: "There is no real need to think that the author of Acts always had reliable or complete information. . . . Hence, we are not in the position to say with certainty on which of his journeys Paul founded the churches" (*Galatians* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979], pp. 4–5).

24. It must be said that even if we decided that the two passages chronicled the same event, this would determine only that Galatians was written after an event recorded both by Paul and Luke. It would not tell us whether it came early or late in Paul's career. Just as in his gospel, Luke may have ordered the events of Jesus' life to suit the purposes of telling the story of Jesus in a particular way, so in Acts he may have arranged the events of Paul's life in order to correspond to his agenda.

25. Noting the difference between the way Peter and Paul are presented in Acts and Galatians, F. C. Baur wrote: "The Acts passes over the occurrence at Antioch with a resolute silence" (*The Church History of the First Three Centuries* [trans. A. Menzies; vol. 1; London: Williams & Norgate, 1878], p. 55).

26. These restrictions are often referred to as the Noachian commandments, that is, commandments applicable to both Jews and to Gentiles living in contact with Jews. Depending upon how one translates "blood," it could refer to murder. For a judicious discussion of the meaning of the decree see S. G. Wilson, *Luke and the Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), esp. pp. 84–102.

27. For other comparisons of the Jerusalem Council with Gal. 2, see K. F. Nickel, *The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy* (London: SCM, 1966), pp. 40–59; and Meeks and Wilken, *Jews and Christians in Antioch*, pp. 16–18.

28. It should be noted that none of the other four visits to Jerusalem in Acts (9:26–27; 11:29–30; 12:25; 18:22; 21:15) are likely candidates for referring to the visit Paul recounts in Gal. 2:1–10. Furthermore, Paul describes his other Jerusalem visit so sparsely (Gal. 1:18–20) that it is impossible to relate it with any certainty to one of the visits in Acts. See,

however, C. J. Hemer, who thinks it possible to relate this visit to Acts 9 (*The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* [ed. C. H. Gempf; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr {Paul Siebeck}, 1989], p. 248).

29. This conclusion agrees substantially with that of Hill, *Hellenists and Hebrews*, p. 113.

30. See particularly D. M. Stanley, *Christ's Resurrection in Pauline Soteriology* (AnBib 13; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1961), pp. 60–80; and C. Buck and G. Taylor, *Saint Paul: A Study in the Development of His Thought* (New York: Scribner's, 1969), pp. 82–102.

31. J. Knox, "On the Pauline Chronology: Buck-Taylor-Hurd Revisited," in *The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul and John* (ed. R. T. Fortna and B. R. Gaventa; Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), pp. 258–74.

32. Knox, *Chapters in a Life of Paul*, esp. pp. 52–58.

33. If only on the basis of the collection project, the letter to the Romans should be viewed as later than 2 Corinthians. In Romans Paul states that he has finished his work in the east and now has his eyes on the western Mediterranean, whereas 2 Corinthians gives evidence that Paul is still involved in his missionary work in the east. Therefore, the change in the Galatian churches' participation most likely occurred between 1 and 2 Corinthians, with further evidence for this change being given in Romans.

34. As 2 Corinthians is widely recognized to be a composite of several of Paul's letters (see H. D. Betz, "Corinthians, Second Epistle to the," *ABD* 1:1148–54), it is possible that part of 2 Corinthians might precede 1 Corinthians. By and large, however, scholarship considers that 2 Corinthians contains letter fragments that were for the most part written after 1 Corinthians.

35. *Geography* 12.5.1 (Jones, LCL).

36. *The Celts in Anatolia and the Impact of Roman Rule*, vol. 1 of *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), p. 42.

37. *Deipnosophistae* 4.154b (Gulick, LCL).

38. Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul*, p. 190.

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 189–90.

40. So Martyn, *Galatians*, p. 16.

41. Mitchell demonstrates that "a majority of the inhabitants of Asia Minor were in some measure bilingual in Greek and an indigenous language" (*The Celts in Anatolia*, p. 175), yet even up to the fourth century A.D. native Galatian words survived the influence of Greece and Rome, particularly in rural areas (*ibid.*, p. 50). This suggests that there would have been a greater number of Greek speakers in the more urban south than in the north. Nevertheless, a case based simply on the distribution of the Greek language cannot be conclusively made.

42. See esp. W. M. Ramsay, *A Historical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1900), p. 160.

43. The lack of a Jewish population is noted by Martyn, who uses this as evidence for a northern destination (*Galatians*, p. 16, n. 11).

44. Cf. S. K. Williams, *Galatians* (Abingdon New Testament Commentaries; Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), p. 21.

45. *The Rise of the Church*, vol. 2 of *Anatolia*, p. 4.

46. See L. H. Schiffman, *Who Was a Jew? Rabbinic and Halakhic Perspectives on the Jewish-Christian Schism* (Hoboken, N.J.: Ktav, 1985), esp. pp. 9–17.

47. *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (4th ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), p. 321.

48. *Ibid.*, p. xxx.

49. *Paul the Apostle*, p. 343.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 345.

51. Knox, *Chapters in a Life of Paul*, pp. 135–36.

52. *Paul the Convert*, p. 34.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

55. *Ibid.*, p. xii.

56. *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), p. 207.

57. *Ibid.*, 178.

58. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), p. 552.

59. *Ibid.*, 551–52.

60. “Paul, Classical Anti-Jewish Polemic, and the Letter to the Romans,” in *Self-Definition and Self-Discovery in Early Christianity: A Study in Changing Horizons* (ed. D. J. Hawkin and T. Robinson; Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990; *Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity*, vol. 26, pp. 181–223), p. 207.

61. Recognized particularly by Beker, *Paul the Apostle*; and Segal, *Paul the Convert*.

62. Segal’s suggestion that what became known as *Merkabah* mysticism is similar to Paul’s identification between the believer and Christ is not, in fact, an adequate parallel to Paul’s talk about being “in Christ” (*Paul the Convert*, p. 11). Such mysticism was reserved for what Segal calls “certain heroes” (p. 43), whereas Paul regards all believers as incorporated into Christ. Moreover, the apocalyptic and mystical literature to which Segal points speaks of the possibility of ascending to God’s presence (p. 64) rather than, as in Paul, living both in the body and in Christ.

63. T. L. Donaldson has a similar understanding of Paul’s loyalty to his kinfolk (*Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle’s Convictional World* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997], esp. p. 306). Donaldson further considers that the “Gentile triumphalism” that resulted from Paul’s gospel ran counter to Paul’s “conscious intentions,” which were to be able to hold on to “two conflicting definitions of ‘Israel’”—one historic Israel, the other Israel defined “in Christ” (*ibid.*, p. 305).

64. Judaism and Christianity are still divided over this, of course. As G. Scholem puts it in the introduction to his excellent work on the history of the messianic idea in rabbinic Judaism, "any discussion of . . . Messianism is a delicate matter, for it is here that the essential conflict between Judaism and Christianity has developed and continues to exist" (*The Messianic Idea in Judaism* [New York: Schocken, 1971], p. 1).

65. See N. Dahl's cogent argument that Paul primarily used "Christ" as a proper name. Among his reasons are that in Paul "Christ" is never used predicatively, that is, Paul never says "Jesus is the Christ" ("The Messiahship of Jesus in Paul," in *The Crucified Messiah and Other Essays* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974], pp. 37–47, esp. p. 37). "Paul represented a strikingly advanced stage in the evolution that transformed *Christos* from a messianic designation to Jesus' second proper name" (p. 41). Note the comment by Hengel and Schwemer that "in the Greek-speaking world [Christ] became a proper name with amazing rapidity" (*Paul between Damascus and Antioch*, p. 101).

66. We might contrast Paul's use of the designation "Christ" with that of Luke, who regularly uses it to mean Messiah, e.g., Acts 3:18; 5:42.

67. A. Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (trans. W. Montgomery; London: A & C Black, 1931), p. 377.

68. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, p. 549.

69. See especially E. R. Goodenough, "Paul and the Hellenization of Christianity," in *Religions in Antiquity* (ed. J. Neusner; Leiden: Brill, 1967), pp. 35–80; Longenecker, *Galatians*, pp. 87–88; R. B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars, 1983); idem, "PISTIS and Pauline Christology: What Is at Stake?" *SBL Seminar Papers, 1991* (SBLSP 30; Atlanta: Scholars, 1991), pp. 714–29; and I. G. Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus Christ in Early Christian Traditions* (SNTSMS 84; ed. M. E. Thrall; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

70. "Faithfulness and 'Faith,'" *Theology* 58 (1955), pp. 373–79.

71. "One Aspect of the Biblical Conception of Faith," *Expository Times* 68 (1957), pp. 111–14.

72. *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 161–205.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

74. For a case in favor of the objective genitive reading, based largely on grammar, see A. J. Hulgren, "The *Pistis Christou* Formulation in Paul," *NovT* 22 (1980), pp. 248–63. For the opposite opinion see S. K. Williams, "Again *Pistis Christou*," *CBQ* 49 (1987), pp. 431–47.

75. *The Faith of Jesus Christ in Early Christian Tradition*, p. 220.

76. So R. N. Longenecker, "The Obedience of Christ in the Theology of the Early Church," in *Reconciliation and Hope* (ed. R. Banks; Exeter: Paternoster, 1974), pp. 142–52; and Hays, "PISTIS and Pauline Christology."

77. See Hooker, "PISTIS XRICTOU," *NTS* 35 (1989), pp. 321–42, esp. pp. 337–39.

78. "Interchange and Suffering," in *Suffering and Martyrdom in the New Testament: Studies Presented to G. M. Styler* (ed. W. Horbury and B. McNeil; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 70–83, esp. p. 70.

79. *Galatians*, pp. 69–70. Williams also writes: "When Paul speaks of *pistis Christou*, he has in mind that faith which is given its distinctive character by the absolute trust and unwavering obedience of Jesus, who created, in the last days, this mode of being human in the world" ("Again *Pistis Christou*," p. 446).

80. See D. M. Hay, "*Pistis* as 'Ground for Faith' in Hellenized Judaism and Paul," *JBL* 108 (1989), pp. 461–76.

81. *The Faith of Jesus Christ in Early Christian Traditions*, p. 220.

82. For a discussion of the meaning of "righteousness of God" as referring to God's character, see L. Ann Jervis, "Becoming Like God Through Christ: Romans," in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament* (ed. R. N. Longenecker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), pp. 143–62, esp. pp. 155–61.

83. Throughout his letters Paul speaks of the consequences of participating in Christ, describing believers as becoming faithful (see 1 Cor. 7:25), sharing a spirit of faith (2 Cor. 4:13), and able to participate completely in the drama of Christ's humanity (i.e., faith), death (Gal. 2:20), and resurrection (2 Cor. 4:13–14).