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The social and religious setting of Galatians

Oh, Boon-Leong

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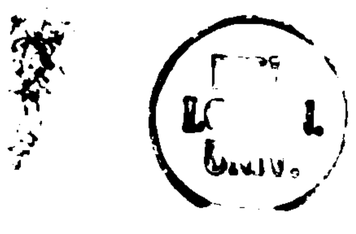
THE SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS SETTING OF GALATIANS

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Abstract

The thesis argues that one major issue facing Paul in Galatians is the extent to which his converts have been influenced by Graeco-Roman and Anatolian religious and socio-cultural outlooks. Drawing on insights gleaned from epigraphic and literary sources, it is suggested that their conduct was linked to the fact that they attached toponymic significance to Mount Sinai and the city of Jerusalem and associated them and the law with God and the temple/cultic state. Their behaviour also betrayed their superstitious outlook, believing that they could influence the divine and cosmic realm.

Paul, on the other hand, highlighted the proper way, according to the gospel, to relate to and live before God. After demonstrating that his gospel had links with antiquity, he emphasises the primacy of faith and inverts the Galatians' perspectives and clarifies the (non)significance of the law, the mountain and the city. He also warns that their seeming ignorance of Christ crucified and their law-observance would bring them under the curse of the God of Justice and would effectively lead them back to their (previous) religious enslavement.

The Galatians have also employed categories drawn from certain socio-cultural conventions of the day in their evaluation of Paul. Enamoured of the agitators' persuasive rhetoric, Paul was perceived and judged unfavourably as a mere orator. They also questioned the constancy and integrity of his character and preaching. In response, Paul distanced himself from any perception that he was a crowd pleaser or an orator peddling his own message. At the same time, he sought to discredit the agitators' rhetoric, motives and character.

It is also suggested that the Galatians were engaged in divisive and secular behaviour. The factions were basically socio-political in nature, stemming from a desire to pursue glory and primacy. Paul therefore urged them to work toward love and unity.

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Abbreviations

In the text and footnote citations, when the name of a scholar is not followed by a title, the reference is to a commentary on Galatians. The abbreviations used are as listed in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107 (1988), 579-96, with the following additions:

ABD — *Anchor Bible Dictionary*

ANRW — *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*

CCCA — *Corpus Cultus Cybelae Attidisque*

CMRDM — *Corpus Monumentorum Religionis Dei Menis*

CPhil — *Classical Philosophy*

CPJ — *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*

IG — *Inscriptiones Graecae*

IGRR — *Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes*

Le Bas-Wadd. — Le Bas, P. and Waddington, W.H., *Voyage archéologique en Grèce et en Asie Mineure*

MAMA — *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua*

OGIS — *Orientis Graecae Inscriptiones Selecta*

OMS — *Opera Minora Selecta*

RECAM ii — *Regional Epigraphic Catalogues of Asia Minor,* II, *The Inscriptions of North Galatia*

Hellenica — *Hellenica: Recueil d'épigraphie, de numismatique et d'antiquités grecques.*

SEG — *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecarum*

SIG — *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*

TAM — *Tituli Asiae Minoris*

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction to the issue

In recent years there has been a growing concern in New Testament scholarship to place Paul and his letters within their historical socio-cultural setting. That this is a relatively new area of research may seem somewhat surprising,[1] but the reasons are not hard to discern.[2] One factor may have been a tendency since the middle of the twentieth century to dismiss the Hellenistic influence on Paul's theological thinking in favour of his indebtedness to Jewish traditions.[3] This is linked, on the one hand, to a growing dissatisfaction with the history-of-religions approach for its failure to recognise the historical singularity of early Christianity[4] and, on the other, to fresh studies of Jewish materials, which have led to a greater appreciation of the Jewish background of the New Testament as well as a renewed interest in reading Paul and his theology as part of his Jewish milieu.[5]

Nevertheless, various attempts have been made in recent years to locate Paul and his letters in their Hellenistic or Graeco-Roman literary, cultural and social environment.

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[1] At the beginning of the last century, A. Deissmann's *Light from the Ancient East* (trans. L.R.M. Strachen; London: Hodder and Stoughton, rev. edn., 1927) gave new impetus for the investigation of the character of the New Testament world, language as well as the social status of the early Christians; nevertheless, New Testament scholarship has been slow to follow up its leads.

[2] Among the reasons Malherbe explains are the neglect in the study of Hellenistic period, inadequate classical education as well as the absence of new discoveries. See A.J. Malherbe, 'Greco-Roman Religion and Philosophy and the New Testament' in E.J. Epp and G.W. MacRae (eds.), *The New Testament and its Modern Interpreters* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 7

[3] So Malherbe, 'Greco-Roman Religion', 7.

[4] E.A. Judge, 'St. Paul and Classical Society', *JAC* 15 (1972), 23. This stems in part from a critical reaction against the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* which had turned towards the Hellenistic mystery religions in an attempt to elucidate the mystical aspects of Paul's religious motifs.

[5] At least since the publication of E.P. Sanders's *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London: SCM) in 1977, the trend to read Paul and his theology within his Jewish heritage has gained momentum.

For instance, much effort has been devoted to the study of Hellenistic philosophical and religious issues with the aim of elucidating the extent to which Paul's religious concepts may (or may not) have been influenced by them.[6] The social setting of the Pauline texts has also been examined in some detail. In particular, studies of the Roman, Corinthian and Philippian communities have employed socio-historical research into Graeco-Roman society and have clarified the situation in the Pauline communities.[7] A fresh look at Graeco-Roman sources has been fruitful in helping New Testament readers to appreciate the importance of the social character of the communities and its bearing on the life and thinking of the early Pauline Christians. This has led to an increasing awareness of the influence of contemporary Graeco-Roman society which contributed to the social conditions as well as the theological issues that called forth Paul's writings. Hence one might reasonably expect to learn that the conduct and outlook of the Galatians may also have been influenced by their own religious and socio-cultural outlook and practices.

However, little work has been done on the Graeco-Roman context of the Galatians. Any discussion of the addressees of this letter is generally confined to the political and ethnic history of the Galatians.[8] Debate in particular often centres on the question

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[6] See, for example, A.J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians. The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987); idem., 'Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament', *ANRW* II.26.1, 267-333. See also the collected essays in T. Engberg-Pedersen (ed.), *Paul in his Hellenistic Context* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994). Cf. also A.J.M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection. Studies in Pauline Theology against its Graeco-Roman Background*, WUNT I.44 (Tübingen: J.C.B Mohr, 1987).

[7] These studies include E.A. Judge, *The Social Pattern of Christian Groups in the First Century* (London: Tyndale, 1960); M. Reasoner, *The Strong and the Weak. Romans 14.1-15.13 in Context,* SNTSMS 103 (Cambridge: CUP, 1999); G.W. Peterman, *Paul's Gift from Philippi. Conventions of Gift-Exchange and Christian Giving,* SNTSMS 92 (Cambridge: CUP, 1997); G. Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982); A. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983); T.B. Savage, *Power Through Weakness: Paul's Understanding of the Christian Ministry in 2 Corinthians,* SNTSMS 86 (Cambridge: CUP, 1996); P. Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians,* WUNT II.23 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1987); A.C. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth. A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1-6* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993); J.K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth,* JSNTSupp. 75 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992).

[8] Bruce, 3-5; Longenecker, lxii-lxiii; Betz, 1-2; Witherington, 2-8; Mussner, 1-3; Oepke, 1-5.

of destination, whether the Galatian churches were located in the north or the south, and even here there seems no consensus on the issue.[9] Little attention is paid to the particular social and religious context of Galatia in central Anatolia which Paul's recipients inhabited.

To be sure, classical rhetorical and epistolary criticism of Galatians, with their study of the structure, style, and argumentation of Paul's letter, have brought the historical context of the text and its audience into the picture.[10] And certain recent rhetorical studies, which suggested that the letter corresponds to deliberative rhetoric, argue that Paul is not so much defending himself against accusations directed against him by Judaising opponents as he is seeking to dissuade his audience from turning away from his gospel to another one.[11] Accordingly, Paul's primary aim is to persuade his

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[9] See the discussion in Longenecker, lxiii-lxxii; Burton, xxi-liii; Betz, 3-5; Oepke, 5-8; Mussner, 3-9; Dunn, 5-7; Witherington, 2-8; P.F. Esler, *Galatians* (London: Routledge, 1998), 32-36. The most recent commentary by J.L. Martyn (15-16) assumes the northern destination almost without discussion; on the other hand, S. Mitchell contends that 'there is virtually nothing to be said for the north Galatian theory' (*Anatolia*, II, 3).

[10] According to Mack, the search for more insightful ways to understand and to reconstruct the historical context of the NT texts has given great impetus to the rise of rhetorical criticism. See B.L. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, Guides to Biblical Scholarship (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 93-102.

[11] Betz's commentary on Galatians represents a thorough application of rhetorical criticism, arguing that it shows characteristics of judicial rhetoric. See also his 'The Literary Composition and Function of Paul's letter to the Galatians', *NTS* 21 (1975), 353-79. The debate over the rhetorical features of the letter, however, continues. Others, however, argue that the letter more adequately corresponds to deliberative or epideictic rhetoric. See B. Witherington's *Grace in Galatia* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998); J.D. Hester, 'The Rhetorical Structure of Galatians 1.11-14', *JBL* 103 (1984), 223-33; J. Smit, 'The Letter of Paul to the Galatians: A Deliberative Speech', *NTS* 35 (1989), 1-26; R.G. Hall, 'The Rhetorical Outline for Galatians: A Reconsideration', *JBL* 106 (1987), 277-87. More recently, see also T. Martin, 'Apostasy to Paganism: the Rhetorical Stasis of the Galatian Controversy', *JBL* 114/3 (1995), 437-61. G.A. Kennedy's work is also foundational. See his *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984). For a survey of rhetorical criticism in the study of Galatians, see P.H. Kern, *Rhetoric and Galatians,* SNTSMS 101 (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 43-56. For a concise survey of the history and development of rhetoric from the time of Aristotle to the second century C.E., see D. Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation. 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric*, SNTSMS 79 (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), 1-134. Graeco-Roman rhetorical theory has also been used to analyse other epistles of the New Testament seen as speeches in epistolary form. See, e.g., D.F. Watson, *Invention, Arrangement, and Style: Rhetorical Criticism of Jude and 2 Peter,* SBLDS 104 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).

audience that there is only one true gospel - the law-free gospel that he preached to them.

Nevertheless, recent rhetorical studies have been primarily interested in the study of communication oriented to the writers/speakers and their styles. The focus has also been preoccupied with the question or the extent to which Paul's writing conforms (or does not conform) to accepted Graeco-Roman rhetorical theory and genres or species usually referred to as judicial, deliberative or epideictic.[12] This approach does raises some problems. For instance, it begs the question as to whether ancient handbook rhetorical theory did influence the epistolary genre to the extent that these categories can be applied or used to analyse an epistle.[13] It is also necessary to ask whether Paul was influenced by traditional species of rhetoric and had in fact employed any one of them in his letter-writing.[14] Indeed, the sheer diversity of proposed solutions only confirms that the letter to the Galatians does not display obvious marks of any

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[12] The three categories are found in Aristotle's *Rhetorica* (1.3.3) and throughout the rhetorical tradition. See, e.g., Aristotle, *Rhet. Her.* 1.2.2; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Lys.* 16; Cicero, *Inv. Rhet.* 1.5.7; *Top.* 23.91; Quintilian, *Inst. Or.* 2.21.23; 3.3-4.

[13] See S.E. Porter, 'The Theoretical Justification for Application of Rhetorical Categories to Pauline Epistolary Literature' in S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht (eds.), *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*, JSNTSupp. 90 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 100-22. Porter points out many problems with the ways categories from oratorical rhetoric have been applied to epistles. See also C.J. Classen, 'St. Paul's Epistles and Ancient Greek and Roman Rhetoric', in Porter and Olbricht (eds.), *Rhetoric and the New Testament,* 265-91; J.T. Reed, 'Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories to Interpret Paul's Letters: A Question of Genre' in S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht (eds.), *Rhetoric and the New Testament,* 292-324. Reed makes careful distinctions between epistolary and rhetorical styles and categories, while not denying that there are functional similarities between them.

[14] Part of the problem, as Kern sees it, is the failure to recognise the fact that classical rhetoric functioned within its own specific social contexts which were quite different from that of Paul's letter. In his recent monograph, *Rhetoric and Galatians*, he has given detailed reasons why Galatians was not written in conformity with Graeco-Roman rhetorical convention. In his commentary on Galatians, J.L. Martyn contends (in only one paragraph on p. 21!) that Paul does not follow the standard teaching of rhetoric, i.e. the form is neither deliberative, epideictic nor forensic. One should also point out that rhetorical criticism of the NT can fall into the trap of applying too rigidly rhetorical categories to biblical texts. A more fruitful approach is to examine also rhetorical practice reflected in extant letters and speeches composed by orators in the Graeco-Roman world. This must be brought to bear in the analysis and comparison.

particular rhetorical genre.[15] Wuellner has also pointed out that the attempt to identify rhetorical patterns in the text and then to utilise those patterns to evaluate the author's style seems somewhat limited, even circular.[16]

More significantly for our purpose here, we need to consider the rhetorical situation and the audience's context with greater care. Particular attention must be paid not only to the speaker or his rhetorical style but also to the historical and social situation that gives rise to a speech and/or text and the effect of this on an audience or readers.[17] A rhetorical approach to interpretation demands that we ask the historical question of what a text like Galatians meant for its first audience. This gives rise to what L.F. Bitzer calls the 'rhetorical situation' of communication.[18] What causes and shapes communication may be attributed to the urgency of the matter (exigency), the audience which is capable of being influenced one way or the other, and particular constraints such as persons, events, values, beliefs and interests which may affect the decision(s) or action(s) needed to deal with the exigency.

Accordingly, Paul's letter to the Galatians, in the first place, may be seen as that which is prompted by a rhetorical exigency: (a) a significant number of the Galatians were contemplating law-observance and circumcision; (b) social and secular issues,

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[15] See R.D. Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1996), 124, 166-67.

[16] Cf. W. Wuellner, 'Where is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?', *CBQ* 49 (1987), 450-52.

[17] There has been a growing concern to apply modern rhetorical theory, in addition to Graeco-Roman rhetorical convention, to NT interpretation. Wuellner identifies four features of theory and practice of modern rhetoric as (1) 'the turn toward argumentation ... distinct from narrative and description'; (2) 'focus on the texts' rhetorical intentionality or exigency'; (3) 'the social, cultural, ideological values embedded in the argument's premises, *topoi*, and hierarchies'; (4) 'the rhetorical or stylistic techniques ... are seen as means to an end, and not as merely formal, decorative features'. It is worth pointing out that for Wuellner, the rhetorical situation stems from the premises of a text as appeal or argumentation. See his 'Rhetorical Criticism and Its Theory in Cultural-Critical Perspective: The Narrative Rhetoric of John 11', in P.J. Martin & J.H. Petzer (eds.), *Text and Interpretation: New Approaches in the Criticism of the NT,* NTTS 15, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), 171-85 (esp. 176-77); idem 'Where is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?', 456. However, the uncritical use of modern theory to interpret first century texts could be open to criticism, especially when it is used to identify ancient rhetorical genres or species. See further n.21.

[18] L.F. Bitzer, 'The Rhetorical Situation', *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968), 1-14.

including dissension, had affected relationships within the communities, both between Paul and his converts and among the Galatians themselves. Secondly, the audience to whom he writes were mainly Gentiles. And thirdly, the particular constraints are the presence of the Jewish agitators and the influence of their teachings. But a constraint that is often overlooked is the Galatians' own Graeco-Anatolian background, in the sense that the Galatians may have been influenced by their socio-cultural and religious background. Hence, their religious as well as secular outlook and perspectives may have influenced the rhetorical situation or exigency that Paul is seeking to deal with throughout the letter.

Rhetoric presupposes a world of real lived experience as well as the ability of the audience to understand the writer's persuasion or discourse. Indeed, effective rhetorical discourse assumes that the writer/speaker is aware of (and may in some measure even share with) the beliefs and value-system of his audience. Both also share a basic understanding of the facts at issue; they are engaged in a particular socio-historical situation, one in which they could understand and communicate with one another. This is not to dismiss the fact that a text is rhetorical in that it is the author's (ideological) presentation of a social construct of reality to the readers. Nevertheless, if we assume that Paul's discourse or challenge to the contemporary conventions is intelligible and potentially convincing to his audience, then any reconstruction of the rhetorical situation (or tension) in the text must bear in mind the question whether it coheres with or diverges from the reality perceived by its intended audience.[19] The context of the audience, critical for Paul's own understanding of the exigency, must be taken into account in our interpretation of the letter.

Also worth pointing out is the fact that there may exist a variety of ways in which the speaker seeks to persuade his listeners. Rhetoric, broadly speaking, is an act of persuasion and argumentation;[20] and this may involve rational and non-rational

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[19] This then places a limit on how far the author could 'reconstruct' the social reality in the text.

[20] Cf. J.T. Reed, 'Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories', 312-14.

appeals to the mind, to the will, and to the emotions for the generation of conviction.[21] Ancient rhetoric also recognises these persuasive forces; it posits the role of *ethos*,

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[21] Here, we should say something about the 'New Rhetoric' (as represented by the work of C. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca in their *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (trans. J. Wilkinson and P. Weaver, Notre Dame: University of Notre Press, 1969). 'New Rhetoric' has formulated an understanding of rhetoric as the way all discourse employs persuasive techniques. The approach, which paves the way for the use of other rhetorical-critical models (including modern ones), has been employed by a number of NT interpreters in their rhetorical analysis of Pauline letters (e.g. A.C. Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1990); R. Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence. Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986); E.S. Fiorenza, 'Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Cor.', *NTS* 33 (1987), 386-403). It should be pointed out that there are limitations in the use of 'New Rhetoric' to study classical rhetoric or to analyse the rhetorical tradition, genre and conventions of ancient texts. Indeed, 'New Rhetoric' is an essentially synchronic investigation of argumentation and communication; it does not claim to be a handbook of ancient rhetoric, but rather a revision of it to modern philosophical concerns, especially that of epistemology. Its aim is to expand the realm of argumentation and may include certain characteristics and functions not found in ancient rhetoric. As such, modern theory may tell us little of first century rhetorical convention and may not be helpful in classifying or identifying particular texts according to genre or arrangement. Indeed, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (*The New Rhetoric,* 21) reject much of the epideictic, deliberative and forensic classification. Thus, when attempting to study or classify the rhetorical genre of the NT, any application of modern categories or redefinition on historical texts could be misleading. In this regard, the use of ancient Graeco-Roman rhetorical handbooks and speeches/letters would be more appropriate. Here, it should be said that our aim in the present study on Galatians is not an attempt to classify its rhetorical genre or species; thus, we avoid here the potentially inappropriate use of the 'New Rhetoric' (i.e. for the purpose of genre classification or the study of classical rhetoric in antiquity). This is not to suggest, however, that the approach has no value at all in our understanding of the Pauline text (more generally, on the value of applying modern rhetorical theory in the interpretation of ancient texts, see Wuellner, 'Where is Rhetorical Criticism taking us?', 448-63; Classen, 'St. Paul's Epistles and Ancient Greek and Roman Rhetoric', 274-75, 290 n.76). Indeed, its focus on argumentation with persuasive intent and on the audience/readers could be utilised in a fruitful way in our interpretation of Galatians. In this regard, we may recall the general definition of argumentation adopted by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca: 'We will consider argumentation above all in its practical effects: oriented toward the future, it sets out to bring about some action or to prepare for it by acting, by discursive methods, on the minds of the hearers' (*The New Rhetoric,* 47). Furthermore, influenced by Cartesian dualisms, especially that between mind and will, as well as the dialectic between philosophy and rhetoric since Plato and Socrates, many interpreters, until quite recently, tend to dismiss rhetoric as a form of adornment to speech or a mere technique aimed to move listeners without regard to truth. However, since the emergence of the 'New Rhetoric', there has been a redefinition of rhetoric as an argumentation with a persuasive intent; it focuses on the audience/listeners in which the speaker seeks to appeal to a range of human faculties. It also tends to reintegrate fields of human activity set apart by Cartesian dualisms, appealing to a whole range of human faculties, including rationality, will and emotions, so as to induce particular reader-response and actions. We shall draw on these insights, although it entails an understanding of rhetoric that is broader than Graeco-Roman rhetorical theory. Indeed, such interpretative

logos, and *pathos* as aspects of persuasion or communication. *Ethos* refers to the speaker's appeal to his own moral character and other aspects of his life which enhance the speaker's credibility.[22] *Logos* refers to the modes of reasoning.[23] *Pathos* refers to the emotional reaction of the audience as a means of persuasion or proof.[24] These argumentative appeals or the three modes of persuasion, a common feature also in letters,[25] are the basic elements of effective communication and could help us describe and understand Paul's rhetoric and the potential rhetorical effect the text creates upon his audience.

Our focus in the present study, therefore, is to take serious consideration not only of Paul's rhetoric but also of the Galatian audience and their socio-historical setting. It will be argued that certain aspects of their Anatolian or Graeco-Roman values and beliefs have influenced to some extent the rhetorical situation and exigency. This represents a departure from previous scholarship, which concentrates mainly on (1) the issue of whether Paul's rhetorical pattern conforms to ancient handbook conventions; (2) the hypothetical reconstruction of the identity and arguments of Paul's opponents, as the primary key to understanding the rhetorical situation. As we shall see, this may provide only a limited picture of some of the issues Paul faces in the Galatian crisis.

2. The limitations of traditional interpretations

a. The agitators and the Galatians

Most interpretations of Galatians have focused on Paul's argument set against the agitators' 'other gospel' which requires circumcision and law-observance, one which

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perspective allows one to adapt to a variety of text-types and to a broad range of communicative situations or contexts.

[22] Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.2.1356A.3-4, 1.8.1366A.6; Cicero, *De Or.* 2.43.182-84; Quintilian, *Inst. Or.* 6.2.8-19.

[23] Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.2.1356B.8; Cicero, *De Inv.* 1.31-41.

[24] Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.2.1356A.3, 5; Cicero, *De. Part.* 5; *De Or.* 2.42.178, 2.44.185-87; Quintilian, *Inst. Or.* 6.2.20-24.

the Galatians have accepted as being the legitimate Christian gospel (1:6-9).[26] Consequently, they have tended to equate the context of Galatians primarily with the controversy between Paul and the agitators.[27] The arguments that arose out of this are often seen primarily against their Jewish background and contentions. And various attempts have been undertaken to reconstruct a possible origin and background of the agitators.[28]

However, seeking to understand the Galatian crisis solely from such a reconstruction is not without its limitations. There is little evidence, in the first place, to suggest an unambiguous identity and origin of the agitators. Although the arguments of the agitators are alluded to throughout Galatians, their identity is not spelled out clearly in the letter. Indeed, Paul's remarks in Gal. 3:1 and 5:7, 10 might indicate that he did not know precisely who was troubling the Galatians. This implication is that the agitators were probably outsiders rather than those within the communities.[29] The view that the agitators probably came from the Jerusalem church or had connections with it is plausible (cf. 2:12; 4:25-26) but unclear ultimately,[30] although it is unlikely that their activities were commissioned by its pillar apostles. Also unclear is whether the agitators were to be identified with those of the circumcision party at Antioch (2:12) or the 'false brothers' mentioned in 2:4; indeed, there is no good reason to

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[25] See, e.g., Cicero, *Epis. ad Fam.* 1.4.3; 1.5.4.

[26] Burton, 18; Bruce, 19-20; Betz, 46-47; Dunn, 29; Mussner, 53-54; Schlier, 36, 201-203.

[27] See the commentaries by Longenecker, lxxxviii-c; Mussner, 14-24; Betz, 5-9; Bruce, 19-32; Witherington, 21-25; J.M.G. Barclay, *Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians* (Edinburgh: T& T Clark, 1988), 52-56; 65-68.

[28] For a survey on the scholarly attempts to discern the identity and message of the agitators, see Longenecker, lxxxix-c; also R. Jewett, 'The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation', *NTS* 17 (1970-71), 198-212. The most recent commentary by Martyn represents one of the most extensive hypothetical reconstructions of the message and teaching of the opponents (whom he calls 'Teachers').

[29] One notes that Paul always refers to the agitators in the third person while addressing the Galatians in the second person. See 1:7; 3:1; 4:7; 5:7, 10, 12; 6:12-13. Cf. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993), 8.

[30] On the view that they were probably from the right-wing Jerusalem community, see Longenecker, xcv; Bruce, 25-27; cf. also Martyn, 119. It is also not necessary to see with Watson that the Galatian crisis was a continuation of the controversies in Jerusalem and Antioch. The identity of the opponents may have been different. See F. Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles,* SNTSMS 56 (Cambridge: CUP, 1986), 59-61.

doubt that there might have been more than one group of Judaising Jews involved in these incidents.[31]

The theological background of the agitators is also open to debate. Were the Jewish agitators guilty of a legalistic (mis)use of the law as a way of establishing one's own righteousness?[32] Even though doubts have been raised about whether they held to the notion of 'works righteousness',[33] not every interpreter is convinced that all strands within early Judaism were unambiguous on this point.[34] Yet it seems that the Galatians espoused the idea that one's righteousness (present and future) was determined by doing works of the law.

We are also unclear about the specific motives of the agitators, especially if we hope to assess this from Paul's accusations, which may be one-sided and partial.[35] Thus, for instance, one may reasonably question whether Paul's accusations that the agitators failed to obey the law and that they were motivated by a desire to avoid persecution do indeed reflect reality (6:12-3).[36] After all, Paul does not provide further evidence to back up his statements. But this is not to cast doubts on the validity of his assessment of the central message of the agitators or to suppose that he

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[31] J.L. Sumney, *'Servants of Satan', 'False Brothers' and Other Opponents of Paul,* JSNTSupp. 188 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1999), 149-50.

[32] See, for example, R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (trans. K. Grobel; London: SCM, 1952), I, 261-65.

[33] Against Bultmann, see the criticisms in Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism,* 481-82; cf. Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 169-76.

[34] Cf. G. Stanton, drawing on materials from Justin's *Dialogue*, believes that there were at least some strands in Judaism that held to the notion that one's standing before God was dependent on carrying out the whole law. See his 'The Law of Moses and the Law of Christ' in J.D.G. Dunn (ed.), *Paul and the Mosaic Law,* WUNT 89 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1996), 105-6. F. Avemarie also demonstrated that the rabbis could speak of salvation as being contingent upon obedience in the law. See, e.g., Midr. Deut. 33:2; Lev. Rab. 1:11. See F. Avemarie, *Tora und Leben,* TSAJ 55 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1996), 575-84; idem, 'Erwählung und Vergeltung: Zur optionalen Struktur rabbinischer Soteriologie', *NTS* 45 (1999), 108-126.

[35] Cf. Barclay, 'Mirror-reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case', *JSNT* 31 (1987), 86. From Paul's (partial) arguments, it is less clear whether the opposition was mutual or that it came only from Paul. For the view that the agitators saw themselves as Paul's ally, see Howard, *Paul: Crisis in Galatia,* SNTSMS 35 (Cambridge: CUP, 1979), 9.

[36] Cf. also Jewett, 'The Agitators', 204-206.

was completely misinformed.[37] His views are clear and sustained in opposing any notion that the Gentiles must be circumcised or take up the law.

Thus, while it is legitimate to assess the origin, theological background and the identity of the agitators, we observe that there are gaps in our knowledge due to the paucity of explicit or clear information on these matters in Paul's letter.[38] Indeed, Martyn's recent attempt to locate the Jewish agitators' theology in the diverse traditions of the Diaspora, Christian and Palestinian Judaism, including the later pseudo-Clementine literature, demonstrates the degree of difficulty in assessing their identity and the origins of their teaching.[39] Perhaps all we can really assume is that the agitators were Jews who probably came from outside the community.[40] They might have even taught that their teachings had some kind of connections with Jerusalem.

In the light of their message of circumcision and law-observance, we may safely assume that the agitators were people who perceived themselves to be Christian Jews and wanted the Galatians to be circumcised and to follow at least some of the religious practices prescribed in the law. Much more we cannot say. It may be wise

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[37] Indeed, to suggest otherwise would mean that all attempts to understand the situation would become impossible. See also Barclay, *Obeying,* 38; *pace* W. Schmithals, *Paul and Gnostics* (trans. J.E. Steely; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 18; W. Marxsen, *Introduction to the New Testament* (trans. G. Buswell, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968), 53.

[38] Indeed, the attempt to uncover the opponents' origin and motivation remains problematic, especially with regards to the problem of 'mirror-reading'. On this difficulty, see Barclay, 'Mirror-Reading', 73-93; G. Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography: Towards a New Understanding,* SBLDS 73 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 96-105. Indeed, there seems no real consensus among interpreters. See Mussner, 11-29.

[39] See Martyn, 'A Law-Observant Mission to Gentiles' in his *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), 11, 14-5. He also refers to *The Ascent of James* and *The Preachings of Peter*. Cf. also Betz, 9, 331-32.

[40] *Pace* J. Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (Richmond: J. Knox, 1959), 89. Munck argues that οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι in 6:13a is a permissive middle, referring to 'those who receive circumcision or let themselves be circumcised' not 'those who belong to the circumcision'. Although the term on its own could refer to Gentile Judaisers, it is difficult to imagine that the ones troubling the Galatians would have had no links at all to Jews, particularly in the light of Paul's reference to Sinai-Jerusalem and the Antioch incident. See also Howard, *Crisis,* 17. 5:3 also suggests that the participle does not mean 'those who receive circumcision'.

therefore to avoid interpreting Galatians *solely* as an extrapolation of a full portrait of the Jewish (Christian) opponents and their background, and Paul's subsequent engagement with this.

This then raises another issue. By focusing purely on Paul's opponents, it is normally assumed that Galatians is Paul's response to a conflict that existed between him and the agitators. It was the agitators that constituted his real dialogical partners;[41] his theological polemic was primarily aimed at their teachings.[42] However, it is not always clear in the letter that Paul is simply engaging with his opponents' arguments and their specific scriptural claims.[43] References to what his detractors have said or references to a report about it are not always evident.[44] Furthermore, the traditional reading of the letter in the light of a hypothetical reconstructed Jewish background for the agitators tends to overlook the possibility that the Galatians' own outlook and conduct might have been a contributing factor to the crisis Paul faces.[45]

To be sure, scholarship has given some consideration to the possibility that part of the problem may lie with the Galatians themselves or with influences other than the activity of the agitators. For instance, some have posited the presence of two different groups within the community, one being drawn to Judaism, the other

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[41] Note, for instance, the title of B.H. Brinsmead's study, *Galatians - A Dialogical Response to Opponents*, SBLDS 65 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982).

[42] Thus, the context of the crisis has been focused on the Jew-Gentile problem. Dunn, 'Echoes of Intra-Jewish Polemic in Paul's Letter to the Galatians', *JBL* 112/3 (1993), 459-77; Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 19; Mussner, 11-29; Martyn, 40-42; *Issues,* 47-75; 71-84; 191-208 emphasise that the conflict is intra-(Jewish)Christian. This view tends to focus mainly on the Jewish perspectives (of the agitators) concerning the extent and detail of law-observance or the relationship or boundary between Jews and Gentiles and ignores other possible contributing factors.

[43] For a discussion on this difficulty, see Sumney, *'Servants of Satan',* 134-59.

[44] See, for instance, 1 Cor. 1:11; 5:1; 6:12; 10:23 ; 15:35. Cf. also 1 Thess. 4:9; 5:1; 1 Cor. 7:1; 12:1.

[45] This is, of course, not to deny the influence of the agitators' activity in the churches. Indeed, as we shall see, the agitators might have exploited certain aspects of the Galatians' religious outlook and background in order to propagate their teaching concerning law-observance.

characterised by libertine enthusiasm.[46] Others have also attempted to identify a crisis apart from nomistic Judaism, seeing them as Judaising Gentiles[47] or gnosticising or syncretistic Christian Jews.[48]

These views, however, are not without difficulties. The so-called two-front theory has not won much of a following, since throughout his letter Paul does not indicate the presence of another group of intruders.[49] There is also a lack of evidence that Jewish communities in Asia Minor had succumbed to certain forms of syncretistic influences, or that circumcision was seen by Hellenistic Jews as a mystery rite and means for 'perfection'.[50] Nor were there syncretistic Gnostic groups present for whom circumcision was necessary for salvation.[51] Any attempt to posit the influence of an alleged aberrant Gnostic teaching appears to create more problems than it solves.

Furthermore, these views tend to attribute the issue (e.g. of circumcision or libertinism) to isolated theological factors or influences; that is, they are viewed rather narrowly in terms of Gnosticism, syncretism or mystery rites. This tends to overlook other more obvious factors that may account for the Galatians' own conduct and perspective. Our enquiry into the social and religious world of the Galatians will therefore require greater breadth than has been previously attempted.[52]

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[46] W. Lütgert, *Gesetz und Geist* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1919), 473-576; J.H. Ropes, *The Singular Problem of the Epistle to the Galatians* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1929).

[47] Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind.*

[48] Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*, 13-64. Cf. Brinsmead (*Dialogical,* 139-61) who argues that circumcision was presented to the Galatians as a mystery initiation.

[49] See Barclay, *Obeying,* 16 n.16.

[50] See P. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor,* SNTSMS 69 (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), ch. 6; L.H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 74. See Barclay's criticism (*Obeying,* 49-50) of the view of Jewett ('Agitators', 207-208) that the agitators assimilated the 'Hellenistic aspirations' of the Gentile Galatians and advocated circumcision as a means of 'perfection'.

[51] See Barclay, *Obeying,* 47-49.

[52] See below.

b. The issue of law-observance and circumcision

While we accept the view that the Galatians were unlikely to be syncretistic or Gnostic, the question remains: What other factors might have encouraged the Galatians to accede to the agitators' demands?[53] Indeed, we need to inquire not only about what happened, but *how* or *why* the Galatians were contemplating accepting circumcision and law-observance.

It has been suggested that the Galatians' attraction to the law may be attributed to the problem of the flesh and the inadequate moral framework provided by Paul.[54] In the first place, any show of concern about the problem of the flesh is from the apostle and not from the Galatians themselves. Secondly, the argument appears to be contradicted by 5:3 where, according to Paul, the Galatians seem to downplay the whole law (cf. 6:13). It is precisely the full implications of observing the whole law that he wants the Galatians to realise if they are to seek circumcision.[55] Thirdly, 5:21 indicates that Paul's present warning is not new. He had already warned and instructed them to avoid sin and to resist the lure to return again to the inappropriate practices they left behind when they were converted. Hence, there is no good reason to suggest that Paul (or his gospel) had failed to provide adequate moral guidance. It is true that 4:21 (οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι) suggests that the Galatians were serious about observing the law, submitting to the 'yoke of slavery' (5:1). But must one necessarily take this verse to mean that they had intended to deal with the problem of sinful flesh? Could there be other reason(s) why they were willing to do so?

Others have also argued that Paul's critique of the Galatians' works of the law stems from the fact that these practices betray an overly nationalistic and exclusive view of

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[53] Betz rightly raises the question as to 'how it was possible for the anti-Pauline forces to get a foothold among the Galatian Christians' (8).
[54] So Betz, 8-9, 273-74, 295-96; Barclay, *Obeying,* 70-71.
[55] Cf. Barclay's comment (*Obeying,* 64) that the Galatians were naive and ignorant about observing the whole law.

Jewish privilege and identity.[56] Yet in the eyes of Gentile Galatians, works of the law could be perceived to be *more* than merely distinctive Jewish identity markers or even entry requirements into the Jewish community.

As already pointed out earlier, one major area not often taken seriously by interpreters is the fact that a significant aspect of the crisis might have been caused by the Galatians' own outlook and conduct. Indeed, what is not usually recognised is that in his letter, Paul makes two specific accusations against the Galatians concerning their conduct. These are particularly explicit in 1:6-9 and in 4:8-11. While interpreters generally focus on the Galatians' turning toward the agitators' 'different gospel',[57] we should not ignore the significance of Paul's charge of apostasy. In 1:6-9, Paul describes their conduct as a 'turning away' (μετατίθεσθε) from the one who has called them (i.e. God).[58] This is no different from saying that the Galatians were in the process of committing apostasy; they were defecting from God.[59] Paul's major concern, it seems, is to deal with the apostatical behaviour of the Galatians; they were abandoning God's calling (cf. also 5:2, 4).[60]

The nature of the Galatians' apostasy is made even more explicit in 4:8-11, where Paul accuses them of returning to paganism. This accusation, at first sight, appears irreconcilable with the problem of law-observance. Thus, it has been argued that the apostle is making a comparison here, suggesting that the *effect* on the Galatians is similar to their former pagan worship and experience: The experience of being 'under

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[56] See Dunn, 'Works of the Law' in his *Jesus, Paul and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (London: SPCK, 1990), 227; Barclay, *Obeying,* 239-40. See further the discussion in Chapter 3.6.

[57] See, for instance, Betz, 46-47; Bruce, 19-20; Mussner, 53-54, 290; Dunn, *Theology,* 29.

[58] The verb frequently refers to 'conversion'. See Schlier, 36 n.1; Betz 47 n.41.

[59] According to Mussner (53), this is possibly an allusion to Israel's apostasies in LXX Exod. 32:8; Judg. 2:17.

[60] This is signalled by the way he begins his letter, not with the usual form of 'thanksgiving' formula or 'prayer' found elsewhere in his letters (cf. Rom. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:4-8; Phil. 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:2-10) but with a stern reprimand and warning concerning their behaviour. See also Bruce, 80; Fung, 43.

the law' is no different to being under the στοιχεῖα.[61] But we need to take sufficient account of Paul's plain accusation that the Galatians have in fact reverted to paganism. Indeed, interpreters have not taken adequate consideration of this and have remained satisfied simply to argue, for instance, that 4:10 shows Paul being 'highly sarcastic',[62] or that it is merely a rhetoric employed by him to 'maximise the similarities between the observances the Galatians have left behind and those they are, or are contemplating, taking up',[63] or that Paul is merely wishing to 'score a useful polemical point by describing their new Jewish practice as a regression to their former way of life'.[64] On the other hand, it is my suggestion here that Paul's two charges in 1:6-9 and 4:8-11 are explicable if the Galatians had indeed continued to retain their former religious outlook. This played a part in affecting their perspectives on the significance of law-observance.

Other linguistic clues could also support the view that the Galatians' religious (as well as socio-cultural) background might have been one factor contributing to the crisis facing Paul. In 6:14, he argues that the result of the cross of Christ is that for him, 'the world has been crucified to me and I to the world' (ἐμοὶ κόσμος ἐσταύρωται κἀγὼ κόσμῳ) (6:14). It is the κόσμος which Christians once belonged to and were separated from through Christ. It may be argued that Paul's application of κόσμος suggests that what he has in mind here would include the contemporary social and religious outlook and behaviour. The conventional meaning of κόσμος in Paul's day was 'universe/world' or the socio-cultural and religious worldview and values normally associated with the term.[65] Taking ὁ κόσμος at face value, it would seem that he is calling attention to something that is widespread; an outlook of the socio-

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[61] Cf. L. Belleville comments, 'Not that the Law and the 'rudimentary principles' are one and the same ... but being 'under the Law' and being 'under the rudimentary principles of the world' are similar experiences with similar result', '"Under Law": Structural Analysis and the Pauline Concept of Law in Galatians 3.21-4.11', *JSNT* 26 (1986), 69.
[62] Betz, 218.
[63] Witherington, 299.
[64] Barclay, *Obeying,* 64.
[65] On this as well as the socio-rhetorical significance it serves in Paul's letters, see E. Adams, *Constructing the World: A Study in Paul's Cosmological Language* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000).

religious life in the Galatians' society, or a sort of habit or fashion of thought and/or lifestyle to which a person might assimilate easily. Paul, it seems, is challenging a way of behaving and living which arises naturally within this αἰών; one which Paul calls the 'present evil age' in 1:4 (ὁ αἰὼν ὁ ἐνεστὼς πονηρός).

In 4:3, the term κόσμος, the only other occurrence of the word in the letter, appears in connection with στοιχεῖα, where the genitive τοῦ κόσμου indicates that στοιχεῖα are integrally linked to the present world. In this passage, Paul speaks of the Galatians as former pagan worshippers who had been previously enslaved to the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (4:3) but were released as a result of knowing God and to be known by him (4: 5, 7, 9). This stands in parallel to 6:14: Believers once belonged to the old κόσμος but were separated from it through Christ. This correlation and the link between τὰ στοιχεῖα, κόσμος and pagan worship in 4:3, 8-9 suggest that part of belonging to the old κόσμος is to return to paganism and to live under the enslavement of στοιχεῖα. It is to continue to retain the *world's* way of looking at the divine and cosmic realm as well as of relating to the gods.[66] Paul's accusation in 4:8-10 (with 6:14 also in mind) therefore at least opens up the possibility that the Galatians might have retained aspects of the religious outlook that reflected their κόσμος. This has influenced their perception of the importance of law and calendrical observances (4:10). The implication of Paul's antithesis of the 'new creation' (καινὴ κτίσις) and the κόσμος, then, is one that serves to differentiate the Galatian churches from the wider world whose beliefs, attitudes and conduct were different.

Paul's use of σάρξ could also suggest that the Galatians' outlook and conduct might have been influenced to some extent by their religious and socio-cultural background. The word σάρξ occurs eighteen times in the letter. In several places, the word is used with a fairly neutral sense with reference to, for instance, circumcision, human beings or the world in which one lives (1:16; 2:16, 20; 4:13-14; 6:13). Of particular interest, however, is its negative connotations implied in 3:3; 4:29; 5:13, 16-25; 6:8.

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[66] For a discussion of 4:8-10, see Chapter 4.

In 5:13-25 and 6:8, σάρξ is used to denote the sphere of paganism and of social/worldly conduct and lifestyle in opposition to God. It runs contrary to life in the Spirit. The phrase 'works of the flesh' characterises the socio-religious milieu in which the Galatians once belonged as unbelievers (cf. 5:21). The problem of the 'flesh' Paul encounters in 5:13-6:10 suggests that the Galatians were behaving like non-Christians.[67] As we shall see, the social problem Paul encounters might be attributed to the Galatians' socio-cultural or secular behaviour. The employment of σάρξ suggests that the Galatians' 'fleshly' behaviour was all-too-human and worldly, involving rivalry, strife and vain-glory. By living in the σάρξ, the Galatians have effectively reverted to their pagan past and to their pre-conversion life. Elsewhere in 1 Cor. 3:3-4, the term 'fleshly' (σαρκικός) is used to describe 'human' behaviour (κατὰ ἄνθρωπον) that characterises the wider world.[68] 'Flesh' in 2 Corinthians is associated with human standards (1:17; 10:2, 3) or behaviour such as boastful confidence (cf. ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ὑποστάσει τῆς καυχήσεως, 11:17-18). In short, the Galatians, like the Corinthians, could be acting in a human, 'fleshly' way that reflected the value-system and ideals of their Graeco-Roman society.

In the same way, the Galatians' 'completion in the flesh' (σαρκὶ ἐπιτελεῖσθε, 3:3) through works of the law could also reflect a 'worldly' pattern of religious behaviour and adherence.[69] Most interpreters take 3:3 to be a reflection of the agitators' claim, where σάρξ is usually seen as a reference to circumcised flesh and that circumcision was advocated as a means for 'completion' or 'perfection'.[70] The main difficulty with this view is that circumcision itself was not perceived as a hallmark of perfection but

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[67] See further Chapter 7.
[68] See Clarke, *Secular,* 113; Adams, *Constructing the World,* 93.
[69] In the same way, σάρξ is used in 4:23, 29 to designate a contrast between Ishmael's birth (κατὰ σάρκα) and could suggest that Ishmael's birth was the result of mere human perspectives and action, as is clear from the scriptural narrative concerning the involvement of Hagar. This stands in contrast to God's action (κατὰ πνεῦμα) displayed in the birth of Isaac (cf. δι' ἐπαγγελίας). See further Chapter 3.5.b.
[70] See Longenecker, 104, 106; Betz, 134; Martyn, 285; Jewett, 'Agitators', 206-207; P. Borgen, 'Paul Preaches Circumcision and Pleases Men' in M.D. Hooker and S.G. Wilson (eds.), *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in honour of C.K. Barrett* (London: SPCK, 1982), 39-40.

a sign of covenantal membership; that is, uncircumcision did not make one less perfect or incomplete but signified that one did not belong to the covenant or the people of God.[71]

On the other hand, σάρξ in 3:3 could point, not to circumcision *per se*, but to the nature of the Galatians' outlook.[72] Given the close association of σάρξ with contemporary religious and/or socio-cultural outlook and conduct in 5:13-25 and 6:8, we cannot rule out the possibility that the Galatians' religious observances might have been influenced by the perspectives of their contemporary κόσμος.[73] Indeed, this may have played a significant role in encouraging the Galatians to accede to the teachings of the agitators. Their socio-religious background provided a leverage for the agitators to commend law-observance. But according to Paul, the Galatians, despite having begun with the Spirit, were now ending in the σάρξ.[74] They were in danger of abandoning their Christian life in the Spirit.[75] In his letter, therefore, Paul unmasks

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[71] On circumcision as a *sine qua non* of Jewishness, see Josephus, *Ant.* 13.257-58, 318-19; especially the account of Izates' conversion in 20.17-96. See also P. Fredriksen, 'Judaism', 536, 546; Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE - 117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 438-39; cf. J.J. Collins, 'A Symbol of Otherness: Circumcision and Salvation in the First Century' in J. Neusner and E.S. Frerichs (eds.), *'To See Ourselves as Others See Us". Christians, Jews, 'Others' in Late Antiquity* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), 163-86.

[72] The significance of 3:3, I believe, probably lies more in the word σάρξ than in the term ἐπιτελεῖσθε ('completed/perfected') or ἐναρξάμενοι ('having begun'). Indeed, in placing emphasis on the latter, some interpreters saw (Hellenistic) cultic significance in the terms ἐπιτελεῖσθε and ἐναρξάμενοι which suggest some kind of initiation or entry into a new religion. See, e.g. Betz, 133; Schlier, 124; Brinsmead, *Dialogical* 79; D.J. Lull, *The Spirit in Galatia: Paul's Interpretation of Pneuma as Divine Power*, SBLDS 45 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1980), 51 n.87; 76 n.13, 135 n.7. But it is difficult to prove that they functioned in this technical sense in Galatians or that Paul uses the motifs in the same way as they were used in the mystery cults. More likely is the view that the Galatians saw law-observance, quite simply, as an advancement or completion.

[73] Of course, on the basis of 3:3 alone, we cannot speculate on the nature of their 'fleshly' outlook. What is suggested here is a hypothesis that must be teased out by what Paul reveals about the Galatians' perspectives and outlook concerning God and the law elsewhere in the letter. We shall examine this in greater detail in the following chapters. In other words, 3:3 may be seen as Paul's summary statement of the Galatians' outlook and conduct.

[74] In view of the datives, Martyn suggests that Paul thought of 'the Spirit and the flesh primarily as means that enable the human being to accomplish something' (285).

[75] Reading 3:3 with 6:8 in mind, it is possible to argue that according to Paul, the Galatians' present conduct in the σάρξ will have negative eschatological consequence. Cf. Witherington, 214.

the value-system of those who would observe the law and shows it to be in contrast to the work of God in Christ.

In this regard, it is worth pointing out here that it is not clear, as has been suggested by T. Martin, that the Galatians have rejected the agitators' gospel of circumcision.[76] It is true that there is some evidence that the Galatians did not submit themselves readily to circumcision. This seems clear from 5:2, where the conditional construction suggests that the circumcision is an event that has not (yet) taken place.[77] If they had already become circumcised, Paul's argument against this practice in 5:2-12 would be pointless since the process cannot be reversed (at least easily).[78] The Galatians' reticence, however, is quite explicable. This Jewish practice was not viewed favourably or accepted by Gentiles everywhere in the Graeco-Roman world.[79] Indeed, circumcision posed a significant barrier, even for potential proselytes, to complete conversion to Judaism.[80] The Galatian communities were probably no exception. They were naturally hesitant in submitting to this Jewish practice; nevertheless, this is not to deny that there existed a certain possibility that they were contemplating doing so, as Paul's warning against circumcision indicates.

In addition, the Galatians did seem to have shown a certain interest in some law-observances (cf. 4:10).[81] In 3:1-5, Paul's argument that the Galatians ought not to

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[76] More recently, T. Martin has rightly argued that we need to consider more seriously Paul's accusation of the Galatians' seeming return to pagan worship in 4:8-11. See his 'Apostasy to Paganism', 437-61. Nevertheless, as we shall see shortly, Martin probably overstates his case when he argues that the Galatians have no intention at all of taking up the law.

[77] Lyons gives several reasons why the Galatians have not yet submitted to circumcision. See his *Autobiography,* 126-27. According to Betz (136), Paul's argument in 3:5 also presupposes that the Galatians have not submitted to circumcision or the law. Cf. Martin, 'Apostasy and Paganism', 441. Nevertheless, the present subjunctive verb probably indicates that in Paul's mind it is not a mere hypothetical possibility.

[78] Oepke, 118.

[79] Feldman, *Jew and Gentile,* 155.

[80] It is often seen as a last major hurdle for sympathisers and 'God-fearers', see further P. Fredricksen, 'Judaism, the Circumcision of Gentiles, and Apocalyptic Hope: Another Look at Galatians 1 and 2', *JTS* 42 (1991), 532-58. See also J. Eckert, *Die urchristliche Verkündigung im Streit zwischen Paulus und seinen Gegnern nach dem Galaterbrief* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1971), 56-57; Barclay, *Obeying,* 46-47.

[81] *Pace* Martin, 'Apostasy', 455. See Mussner, 301-302; Betz, 217-18.

take up works of the law shows that they were seriously thinking about doing so. Further, in 4:21, Paul addresses the Galatians, λέγετέ μοι, οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι, τὸν νόμον οὐκ ἀκούετε.[82] Although they had not fully adopted the practices espoused by the agitators, for they were not (yet) ὑπὸ νόμον ('under the law'), they were nevertheless swayed by them. Thus, the Galatians did not reject out of hand the agitators' 'different gospel'; on the contrary, they were inclined to take up the law, at least some of its practices, and were even contemplating circumcision.

c. The appraisal of Paul's gospel and preaching ministry

Traditional interpretation, which focuses on the reconstructed arguments of the agitators or links the controversy primarily to them, provides a limited picture of the socio-historical situation. For instance, interpreters have argued that the agitators probably came from the Jerusalem church and that they began to question Paul's relationship to Jerusalem as well as his authority and legitimacy as an apostle.[83]

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[82] Burton, 252; Oepke, 110; Mussner, 317; Schlier, 216; Longenecker, 206. *Pace* Martin, 'Apostasy', 455, whose division here as Paul's address to the agitators seems artificial. There is no indication that Paul in 4:21-5:6 is now turning his attention on the agitators (whom he usually refers to in the third person). Although the phrase ὑπὸ νόμον relates to Jews and not to Gentiles (see Oepke, 101-103; Betz, 204), Paul's rhetoric here simply warns of its implication if the Galatians should take up the law (see also 2:4-5). Cf. also Betz, 204, Bruce, 181 who argue that in 4:1-5 and its *paidagogos* metaphor, Paul refers to the pre-Christian state of both Jews and Gentiles. Martin's distinction (454-55) between 'we' and 'you' as a reference to Jews and Gentiles seems strained. Although the term 'we' may distinguish Jews from Gentiles (cf. 1:23; 2:15, 16, 17), Paul in his letter also uses 'we' and 'you' without necessarily suggesting a contrast between the two groups. Indeed, 'we' is used in several instances to refer to both Jewish and Gentile believers, as the following examples might suggest. In 1:3, 4 (cf. 6:14, 18) the juxtaposition of ὑμῖν to ἡμῶν might point to an exclusive 'our', but it is more likely inclusive, since the Galatians are seen as sons of God (3:26; 4:6, 7). In 3:13, 14, ἡμᾶς clearly includes the Gentiles, because Christ's death 'for us' (cf. 1:4) extends the Abrahamic blessing 'to the nations' (v. 14). The λάβωμεν in the parallel ἵνα-clause confirms this observation. In 3:25 (cf. vv. 23, 24), the ἐσμέν includes the Galatians, because Paul's substantiation (γάρ) in v. 26 applies to 'you all'. In 4:6b, 7, Paul seems to switch the 'we' and 'you' quite arbitrarily. In 4:31, the ἐσμέν is clearly inclusive, because Paul addresses the Galatians as ἀδελφοί in the same breath. In 5:5, the 'we' is inclusive, since no contrast can be ascertained in the sudden shift from 'you' (vv. 1, 2, 4) to 'we'. In 5:25, 26, the 'we' includes the Galatians, since εἰ sums up the previous line of thought about how the Galatians are to walk by the Spirit (cf. vv. 16, 18).

[83] Thus Dunn in his commentary (26) argues that Paul asserts his apostolic authority because it was questioned. See also Bruce, 26; F. Watson, *Paul,* 59; J. Neyrey, 'Bewitched in

Against the backdrop of his uneasy relation with the Jerusalem church and its apostolate, Paul then seeks to defend and assert his apostleship and independence.[84]

Such a reading is not without its problems. In the first place, as Paul presents it in 2:2, the Jerusalem conference was not about his apostleship but about his gospel.[85] Furthermore, as pointed out earlier, it is not clear whether the agitators came from Jerusalem; nevertheless, even if they did, there is little evidence that the pillar apostles had commissioned their activities. Furthermore, in Gal. 1:18-20; 2:1-10, Paul expresses the good relations he enjoys with the Jerusalem 'pillars', including the remembrance of the poor in Jerusalem and their affirmation of his apostleship as well as his gospel and mission to the Gentiles.[86] Moreover, Paul seems to argue that he needed the Jerusalem church's recognition lest he be running in vain (Gal. 2:2). In 2:4, he also distinguishes the 'pillars' from the intruders who sought to 'enslave'

Galatia: Paul and Cultural Anthropology', *CBQ* 50 (1988), 98. There seems no consensus on whether Paul was charged for being dependent on or independent from the Jerusalem church for his gospel. On the various scholarly views, see the bibliography in Lyons, *Autobiography,* 81 nn.18-19.

[84] More controversial is the view that the uneasy relationship between Paul and the Jerusalem church occurred after the Antioch incident. After the rupture at Antioch, it is suggested, Paul claims his independent authority as an apostle with a unique commission from the Lord apart from human institutions. On this, see N. Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem. A Study in Relationships and Authority in Earliest Christianity,* JSNTSupp. 66 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992); cf. also Dunn, 'The Incident at Antioch' in his *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, ch. 6. Nevertheless, it is unclear whether one should place so much emphasis on the effect of the incident upon Paul's self-understanding of his gospel, his apostleship and his subsequent relationship with Jerusalem apostles. Indeed, Paul's missionary work in Arabia, Syria and Cilicia (cf. 2 Cor 11:32-33; Acts 9:28-30; Gal. 1:21) and his subsequent discussion and mutual agreement with the Jerusalem 'pillars', almost certainly about his gospel and mission, seem to indicate that he might have been sufficiently clear about the basic tenets of his gospel and apostleship. See further, M. Hengel and A.M. Schwemer, *Paul Between Damascus and Antioch* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM, 1997); 91-128, 144-50. Furthermore, as we shall see in Chapter 6, Paul is not so much interested in undoing the consequences of the incident (the outcome of which is not clear to us) as he is in demonstrating the truth of the gospel and in setting himself against those who please humans rather than God. Indeed, the issue here is not merely theological. We must not overlook the ideological as well as the rhetorical dimension of the concerns facing Paul.

[85] So B.R. Gaventa, 'Galatians 1 and 2: Autobiography as Paradigm", *NovT* 28 (1986), 316-17.

[86] See D.J. Verseput, 'Paul's Gentile Mission and the Jewish Christian Community: A Study of the Narrative in Galatians 1 and 2', *NTS* 39 (1993), 36-58; Bruce, 'Galatian Problems. 1. Autobiographical Data,' *BJRL* 51 (1969), 292-309.

others. These statements appear to be at odds with the view that the challenge against Paul's apostleship may be linked directly to the agitators' argument concerning his supposed uneasy relationship with the Jerusalem church.

These reconstructions, on the other hand, do not consider the possibility that one of Paul's major concerns with respect to the Galatian churches is the extent to which significant numbers of his converts have employed socio-cultural perspectives in their judgement against Paul. Indeed, the focus on the tension in the relationship between Paul and the Christian Jews (from Jerusalem) as a background of the Galatian crisis overlooks the possibility that the significant cause of conflict (or enmity) Paul faces could have come from his converts, in particular, their critical attitude towards his gospel and character. This seem clear from 4:16. The Galatians might be using typical socio-cultural prejudices, employing the Graeco-Roman conventions of rhetoric, comparison and enmity, to assess Paul's character and motives as well as his message and preaching ministry. In comparison to the agitators' persuasive words and rhetoric, Paul's message now appeared to lack weight and substance. Furthermore, the Galatians had judged his character and motives according to the accepted conventions of the day, accusing him of being inconsistent and a trimmer of his message in order to win his audience. These apparently 'secular' criticisms would have had important 'religious' implications. Their critical, socio-cultural appraisal created enmity and caused them to question Paul's message and ministry.

Thus, in the face of such hostility, Paul, as we shall see, draws attention to the legitimacy of his gospel message and preaching ministry, seeks to distance himself from the view that he is a people pleaser, and to set himself apart from those who please humans rather than God.

d. The social conduct of the Galatians

One further area of study that might suggest a likely influence from Graeco-Roman values and perspectives on the Galatians' conduct is 5:13-6:10. Interpreters have

understood this so-called hortatory section to be a continuation of Paul's polemic against the law or as part of his address concerning the effect of the agitators' message on the Galatian communities. Others have also seen Paul's argument here as evidence for the presence of aberrant theological groups or of (mis)understanding and concerns.

These views, as we shall see in Chapter 7, are not without difficulties, although it may be pointed out here that the one major weakness with current interpretations is the fact that such attempts to link these problems to external religious parties ignore the subtle force of the general social atmosphere which prevailed in this situation. In other words, the views are narrowly construed in terms of theological factors and ignore other possible social or secular influences, i.e. the possibility that the Galatians themselves could have reverted to the socio-cultural practices and perceptions of their contemporaries. We need to avoid the fallacy of too narrow a construct in our understanding of the situation; indeed, the multi-faceted nature of human conduct or outlook can seldom be attributed to one or two isolated factors or influences.

As we shall argue, the constellation of terms Paul lists in 5:19-21 and the social and semantic context in which they occur suggests that their behaviour has direct parallels with Graeco-Roman secular practices, especially socio-political competition and discord. In the light of this, Paul's concerns about their conduct and his injunctions to them against divisiveness and the demonstration of love and life in the Spirit (5:13-4, 16-8, 25-26; 6:1-5) could reflect the fact that some of them have returned to their former way of life. This explains why Paul warns them, once again, against reverting back to their pagan past (5:21b).

3. The object of the study

A major departure from the traditional reading in the present study, then, is to pay close attention to Paul's audience and their socio-religious setting. We argue that the religious as well as the socio-cultural frame of reference of a significantly Gentile

audience should be seen in its non-Christian milieu. It is also suggested that the social and religious context of the audience is at least as informative to us in our attempts to understand Paul's letter as the hypothetically reconstructed origin and arguments of the agitators.[87]

To be sure, the social and religious background of Paul's converts has not been ignored entirely in Galatian scholarship. W. Ramsay's commentary, for instance, provides a wealth of background material on the social and religious milieu of Asia Minor.[88] But later commentators, rather surprisingly, have made little use of this information in their works. Rhetorical and epistolary criticisms, as we have noted earlier, have also brought the neglected Graeco-Roman context of the letter into focus. But although they point to the importance of the readers or audience, the emphasis has usually fallen on a comparison between Paul's letter and the ancient handbook rhetorical genres or species.

More recently, an article by Susan Elliott represents an attempt to take serious consideration of the Anatolian background of the Galatians, in particular the worship of the various Mother Goddesses, and asks how it might have influenced Paul's argument in 4:21-5:1.[89] The present study, however, goes further and considers other parts of the letter as well as various aspects of Anatolian religious worship which might have influenced the situation and hence Paul's argument. In addition, we shall also examine other socio-cultural and secular influences which could also have

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[87] It is worth pointing out that the two-front hypothesis proposed by Lütgert (*Gesetz und Geist*) and Ropes (*The Singular Problem*) alerts us to another possible influence on the communities other than that caused by those who advocated law-observances. Nevertheless, as we have pointed out, their proposition about the presence of another party ('the spirituals' or 'Pneumatiker') remains unconvincing. On the other hand, it fails to consider the possibility that the Galatians themselves might have taken up their Graeco-Roman outlook and conduct. It also assumes that the problems highlighted in chs. 5-6 are essentially theological in nature. It will be argued that they are not necessarily religious in nature but are caused by the Galatians' secular outlook. One may still account for the issues within the communities without necessarily positing a hypothetical 'spiritualist' party.

[88] W. Ramsay, *A Historical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1899).

[89] S.M. Elliott 'Choose Your Mother, Choose Your Master: Galatians 4:21-5:1 in the Shadow of the Anatolian Mother of the Gods', *JBL* 118/4 (1999), 661-83.

affected the Galatians' outlook and conduct. Here, one should also mention S. Mitchell's impressive two volume work on Anatolia.[90] It offers extensive information on the social, religious and political history of Anatolia. The materials assembled in these two volumes will prove useful and invaluable for our present study.

Our study of the epigraphic and literary sources also seeks to be broader in scope, concentrating not only on Anatolia but also more generally on the Graeco-Roman world. This ensures a safer reconstruction concerning the general features of the Galatians' outlook and perspectives. The problem inherent in mirror-reading the Galatian situation can be lessened too by placing it within its socio-religious context.[91] Information gleaned from 'one end of a telephone conversation' can be carefully added to what is already known about the circumstances of the audience in order to reconstruct the other side of the conversation.

This thesis seeks to demonstrate that a significant number of Galatians within the churches had retained aspects of their Anatolian religious perspectives as well as certain practices influenced by their socio-cultural environment. This is not surprising if the Galatians had been recent converts from paganism (cf. 4:8); indeed, in 1:6, Paul expresses his dismay that they are 'so quickly' (ταχέως) deserting his gospel.[92] More specifically, it will be argued that (1) the Galatians have retained the outlook of their contemporary religiosity, which might have influenced their desire to

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[90] S. Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor,* 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

[91] Barclay ('Mirror-Reading') has described the difficulty of reconstructing 'the attitude and arguments of the other side' in New Testament exegesis as 'mirror-reading'. According to M. Hooker, it is 'an extremely difficult task, as prone to misinterpretation as incidental overhearing of one end of a telephone conversation'. See her 'Were there False Teachers in Colossae?' in M.D. Hooker, *From Adam to Christ* (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), 121.

[92] The issue of dating is discussed by most commentators (e.g. Martyn, 222-8; Witherington, 8-13; Longenecker, lxxii-lxxxviii), though not all interpreters agree on the dating of Paul's letter, especially its relation to the destination and the Acts chronology. Although dating is not significant for our reading of the letter, I tend to favour the view that it was addressed to the southern Galatians converted in Paul's first missionary journey (*c.* 48 C.E.) and written before the Corinthian correspondence (*c.* 53 C.E.). In other words, the crisis took place fairly shortly after they had first heard Paul's gospel, probably no more than one or two years later.

take up the law. In fact, their religious outlook and background provided a strategic advantage for the agitators to emphasise the significance of the law and its observance; (2) there were contentious issues concerning character and motives and that Paul's converts were evaluating him and his preaching ministry (as well as that of the agitators) on socio-cultural grounds; and (3) the ethical/moral problems as well as the divisive conduct within the Galatian communities could be attributable to their social or secular behaviour and outlook. It is also our argument that Paul *does* in fact appeal to certain aspects of the Galatians' Graeco-Anatolian outlook and values in order to demonstrate the legitimacy of his gospel and preaching, to spell out the consequences of their conduct and to deal with the problem of discord within the communities. His arguments are shaped, to some extent, within the framework of his audience's social and religious context.

The task before us, then, is clear. We need to establish how the Galatians would evaluate (1) religion and (2) each other, including Paul and the agitators, in terms of their socio-religious Graeco-Anatolian setting. That will mean conducting a fairly extensive enquiry into the secular and religious environment of the first century. Only in this way will we be able to gain insight into the nature of their outlook and behaviour and hopefully, in turn, into Paul's critical reply and arguments.[93]

4. Preliminary consideration: The question of identity and background

The issue of destination, whether the recipients were southern or northern Galatians, has long been argued among interpreters, but no clear consensus or definitive decision is in view.[94] That being the case, one might argue that the aim of the present study would be difficult to achieve, for the debate concerning a reconstruction of the identity and

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[93] Although our focus is primarily on the Galatian audience and their socio-religious context, it may be said that the distinction between Paul's implied audience and the actual audience need not be too sharply drawn. It is true, Paul's analysis of the problem may be different from the Galatians'. Nevertheless, if he is to be intelligible and convincing to his audience and to address what was important to them in their situation, we would have to assume that his evaluation or perception of the issues is not wholly unfair and inaccurate. See also above 1.1.

background of the Galatians (like the agitators) remains contentious.[95] However, this objection need not hinder our task, for Paul addressed his letter to the Galatians who were, quite simply, inhabitants of central Anatolia. And in the first century, the Anatolians consisted of a mix of several ethnic groups (e.g. Phrygians, Lydians, and the Galatians proper).[96] There was also a degree of consistency in the pagan worship and its beliefs in these regions.[97] Indeed, as we shall see, major centres for the worship of local gods, including the imperial cult, existed in many Galatian cities, both in the north and in the south. In this regard, whether Paul's recipients were from the north or the south need not affect our reading of the letter, especially when our focus is primarily on the distinctive features of the Graeco-Anatolian context of the Galatians.

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[94] See above n.9.

[95] Indeed, the letter itself says little, if anything at all, about whether the Galatians came from the north or the south. An enquiry on destination would no doubt have to take into consideration the Lukan chronology in Acts and his account of Paul's missionary journey. On this, see R. Riesner, *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994). Nevertheless, our present study is a socio-historical and exegetical enquiry, not a study on chronology. Our focus is on central Anatolia (including north and south Galatia) and its common social and religious characteristics. Whatever the outcome of the north-south debate, it need not affect our reading of Galatians.

[96] Since the fall of the Galatian ruler Amyntas in 25 BCE, his kingdom became the Roman province which included the original area of Galatian settlement around Ancyra; ancient Ancyra itself; the central Anatolian plateau of East Phrygia and Lycaonia, the mixed Pisido-Phrygian area around Pisidian Antioch and Apollonia, the mountainous tribal region of Isauria and Pisidia, and the Pamphylian plain. Between 6 BCE to 64 CE, this diverse area was further enlarged to include Paphlagonia to the north and the Pontic regions to the north-east. See Mitchell, 'Galatia', *ABD,* II, 871. According to Mitchell (*Anatolia,* II, 4), 'in the mid-first century it was normal to refer to the whole province, quite simply, as Galatia' (cf. Eutropius 7.10; *IGRR* iii.263). On the composition of the Roman province of Galatia from 25 BCE to 64 CE, see R.K. Sherk, 'Roman Galatia: The Governors from 25 BC to AD 114', *ANRW* II.7.2 (1980), 958-63. Strabo (12.5.1) also confirms that the province of Galatia included Pisidia, Lycaonia, parts of Pamphylia, and Cilicia Trachea. See also Ptolemy, *Geographica* 5.4. Cf. C.J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History,* WUNT 49 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1989), 290-305, although other inscriptions also show that 'Galatia' was a component territory within the Roman province. See further Hemer, *Acts,* 296-7; *CIL* 3.291; 3.312, 318. Since Γαλατία applies to the more extensive Roman province, it may be argued that it would not be unusual for Paul to address the various inhabitants such as Lycaonians, Phrygians or Pisidians as Galatians; so Bruce, 'Galatian Problems', 263. According to Hemer (*Acts,* 241-43), inscriptions and coins indicate that ethnic titles and territory or place names are often closely identified.

In assessing the background of Paul's audience, it has been suggested that the Galatians' outlook and behaviour were influenced by two factors: Graeco-Roman socio-cultural practices and an Anatolian religious background. It might be useful to clarify these two dimensions.

The ethnic Galatians were derived from the Celts who invaded and subsequently settled in Asia Minor from the third century BCE.[98] After a series of battles with their neighbours, they settled eventually around northern Ancyra, bordered by Bithynia and Paphlagonia to the north, by Cappadocia and Lycaonia to the south, by Phrygia to the west and by Pontus to the east.[99] Many inhabitants, especially the urban elites, later acquired the trappings of Hellenistic culture and language, although the indigenous population continued to retain some aspects of their native culture and languages.[100] The Romans, on the other hand, did not attempt to remove Greek manners, language or culture of the people.[101] Nevertheless, in time Roman administration and political-military institutions, as well as the imperial cult, were established and Latin was spoken in the Roman colonies, especially in the major cities of provincial Galatia.[102]

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[97] Cf. Mitchell's comments that 'the outlines of paganism were well defined and consistent from one city or region to another' (*Anatolia,* I, 30).

[98] On the history, ethnography and settlement of Anatolian Celts, see Mitchell, *Anatolia,* I, 11-58.

[99] According to Strabo (*Geog.* 12.5.1), 'this country was occupied by the Galatae after they had wandered about for a long time, and after they had overrun the country that was subject to the Attalic and the Bithynian kings, until by voluntary cession, they received the present Galatia, or Gallo-Graecia, as it was called'.

[100] On the Hellenisation of the Galatians, Strabo (*Georg.* 12.5.1) argues that they acquired Greek language and culture; indeed, he speaks of them as 'Gallo-Graecia'. Similarly, Livy (*Hist.* 38.17.3-9) also speaks of them as Gallogrecians. On the other hand, local languages such as Phrygian, Pisidian, and Lycaonian continued to be spoken, especially among native inhabitants, in the imperial period. According to Mitchell, 'a majority of the inhabitants of Asia Minor were in some measure bilingual in Greek and an indigenous language' (*Anatolia,* I, 175). See also Acts 14:11-12.

[101] Ramsay, 181-82. According to Levick, Romanisation was less successful in the eastern than in the western part of the province. See B.M. Levick, *Roman Colonies in Southern Asia Minor* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 185-88.

[102] On the development of thirteen Roman colonies, including those in Pisidian Antioch, Lystra and Iconium, see B. Levick, *Roman Colonies*; on the creation and establishment of the Galatian province as well as of the Roman roads and military garrisons, see also D.

Furthermore, later Hellenisation did not erode the persistence and adoption of the indigenous religious practices of central Anatolia. Indeed, the latter prevailed over a long period of time since the arrival of the ethnic Galatians; they remained unchanged over great parts of Asia Minor. The arrival of the Greeks or the Romans did little to alter its basic character or the preservation of local religious traditions. On the contrary, some of the native cults were adopted and partly Hellenised in the civic temples and cities.[103] The new Roman settlers also adopted some of these cults, though the citizens continued to participate in Roman religion, including the imperial cult.[104] In fact, there existed a large degree of tolerance and people were willing to accommodate other gods or religious beliefs and practices. Mitchell remarks, 'As Hellenized culture and literacy slowly embraced the native populations of Anatolia, it had no difficulty in acknowledging the religious beliefs and practices of Asia Minor's indigenous inhabitants as part of one and the same religious system.'[105] Thus, Paul's Galatian audience, we would expect, were former pagan worshippers who had known and shared many local cultural and religious elements.[106]

In our study we shall therefore use the term 'Anatolian' (or 'Graeco-Anatolian') to designate local religious beliefs and outlooks. As members of the Hellenised Graeco-

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Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor to the End of the Third Century,* vol. 1: Text (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), 453-66; 566-92. See also Mitchell, *Anatolia,* I, 29, 86-97.

[103] On the Hellenisation of the indigenous cult of Cybele as Artemis, see Mitchell, *Anatolia,* I, 49; II, 28-9; on the assimilation of the goddess Meter Zizimmene to Minerva or Athena, see S.R.F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Imperial Cult and Asia Minor* (Cambridge: CUP, 1984), 96-97.

[104] Some of the Roman cults imported were Dionysus (*IGR* 3.299), and Asclepius (*CIL* 3.6820). Imperial cult had also penetrated into the religious-cultural life of the Graeco-Roman cities, see Price, *Rituals and Power.*

[105] Mitchell, *Anatolia,* II, 30-31; see also idem, *Anatolia,* I, 47-9; Ramsay, 36-7.

[106] It is worth noting that in Acts 14:11-12, Paul and Barnabas were greeted in the Lycaonian language, despite the Greek divine names (Zeus and Hermes). This most probably suggests that the missionaries had came across a local Lycaonian cult. Cf. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (Suffolk: Viking, 1986), 38-39. Lane Fox (*Pagans,* 99-101) also rejects the view of those who dismiss the incident in Acts 14 as improbable. Elsewhere, pagans who heard or responded to Paul and his missionary activity were worshippers of local cults, such as the cult of the 'unknown god' in Athens (Acts 17) or the cult of Artemis in Ephesus (Acts 19:23). See D.W.J. Gill, 'Religion in a Local Setting' in D.W.J. Gill and C. Gempf (eds.), *The Book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman Setting* (Grand Rapids and Carlisle: Eerdmans and Paternoster, 1994), 80-92.

Roman society, the Galatians would also have been familiar with social and rhetorical conventions.[107] The term 'Graeco-Roman' is used here more generally to refer to these aspects. Nevertheless, the two terms need not be too sharply differentiated, given that there was a measure of continuity and assimilation in first century Asia Minor, not to mention interpenetration between what moderns distinguish as 'religious' and 'socio-cultural or secular'.[108]

5. The method of the study

In seeking to provide a social description of early Christianity, A. Malherbe has stressed the understanding of the unique social elements in the first-century cultural and social milieu. But he has also cautioned against moving too quickly towards theoretical descriptions and explanations of the Christian communities:

> Sociological description of early Christianity can concentrate either on social facts or on sociological theory as a means of describing the 'sacred cosmos' or 'symbolic universe' of early Christian communities. Even though new historical information may be assimilated within old paradigms, we should strive to know as much as possible about the actual social circumstances of those communities before venturing theoretical descriptions or explanations of them.[109]

Though faith and theology were decisive in shaping the early Christians' self-understanding, social structure, ethics and morality, interpretation of the biblical text needs to be coupled with the study of its socio-historical dimension. Both social history and theology need to be affirmed for their complementarity, and are necessary for grasping the full reality of the early church.[110] Indeed, B. Holmberg in his book,

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[107] See Chapters 5 and 7.
[108] Perhaps the term 'Graeco-Anatolian', to borrow from Ramsay (181), to designate the background of the Galatians, may not be inappropriate.
[109] Malherbe, *Social Aspects,* 20.
[110] T.F. Best, 'The Sociological Study of the New Testament: Promise and Peril of a New Discipline', *SJT* 36 (1983), 181-94.

Paul and Power, highlights a fundamental methodological flaw in New Testament interpretation, which he calls 'the fallacy of idealism'.[111] The fallacy basically ignores the historical and cultural phenomena; instead it defines the situation as it existed solely on the basis of theological structures as given in the Pauline texts.

Some scholars, on the other hand, have argued that a mere presentation of social facts cannot provide a true social description and explanation. Some interpretative framework is applied in the analysis of facts since historical facts alone do not constitute understanding. The explanation and comprehension of events require the arrangement of facts in a conceptual framework.[112] Accordingly, it is argued that sociological approaches can function as tools for interpreting historical evidence.[113] Sociological approach does not dismiss historical analysis, rather it 'complements and improves the prevailing method of biblical interpretation through more rigorous attention to the social dimension of the biblical text and to the sociological dimension of the exegetical task'.[114]

Though a sociological approach can yield valuable results, one should guard against any uncritical use of modern social theories or models to explain first-century social phenomena. In particular, one must be careful not to apply anachronistic and inappropriate categories.[115] One needs to examine critically the categorisations and

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[111] Holmberg, *Paul and Power. The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1978), 205.
[112] Holmberg, *Paul and Power,* 3.
[113] N. Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem,* 30. Theory and models of social sciences have been used in the analysis of biblical texts. See, e.g., the works of J.H. Elliott on 1 Peter in his *Home for the Homeless* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981); idem, 'Social Scientific Criticism of the New Testament and its Social World: More on Methods and Models', *Semeia* 35 (1986), 1-26; P. Esler on Luke-Acts, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts,* SNTSMS 57 (Cambridge: CUP, 1987); idem, *Galatians* (London: Routledge, 1988); F. Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*.
[114] J.H. Elliott, *Home for the Homeless,* 1. Watson comments that sociology is 'a natural and inevitable concomitant of the historical-critical method' (*Paul,* ix). On the legitimacy of social theory, see R. Scroggs, 'The Sociological Interpretation of the NT: The Present State of Research', *NTS* 26 (1980), 165f.
[115] E.A. Judge calls the uncritical use of modern social theories or models to interpret the NT world a 'sociological fallacy'. See Judge, 'The Social Identity of the First Christians: A Question of Method in Religious History', *JRH* 11 (1980), 210. Judge's warning against

models that one brings to bear upon the data. Also worth pointing out is the fact that since sociological analysis is primarily concerned with general patterns of human society and behaviour, the use of models based on other distant data is likely to yield pre-determined results and ignore that which is unique to the particular society under investigation.[116]

In the present thesis, we consider socio-historical study to be a more appropriate and safer method to reconstruct and understand the historical setting of Galatians.[117] We give priority to the gathering of social facts and to an exegetical process which allows these facts to speak within the context of their own time.

With this objective in mind, we shall attempt to identify some of the typical features of the Anatolian religious outlook as well as of the secular socio-cultural conduct most relevant for our present study.[118] That will mean conducting a survey of sources, literary and non-literary, drawn from Anatolia as well as from the larger Graeco-Roman world. Since Galatians was one of Paul's earliest letters written around the mid-first century, we shall focus on sources dated ca. 100 BCE to ca. 150 CE,[119] where a measure of continuity, as noted above, may be presupposed in many

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uncritical employment of social models to supply and interpret social facts of another milieu should be heeded, since no social laws have been found to apply across different cultures and historical periods. Indeed, scholars who have used social theory also realise the possibility of misapplication. Cf. Watson's warning that 'sociological analysis is not a satisfactory way of filling in the gaps in our historical knowledge. It is not a substitute for historical evidence, but a way of interpreting the evidence' (*Paul,* x).

[116] This raises implications regarding the use of social theory in P. Esler's recent work on Galatians. Applying insights from social anthropology or social identity theory in the interpretation of Galatians, Esler argues that Paul was concerned to establish or legitimate the Christian identity of his converts over against the competing Jewish claims. But one may question whether the issue of identity constituted the primary problem facing Paul. Indeed, the application of social theory not only fails to take sufficient cognisance of the socio-historical situation but is likely to produce predictable results. There is little doubt that Paul affirms the Christian identity and status of his converts. But we should not ignore other factors, drawn from a study of the broader Graeco-Anatolian context, that could affect the crisis, or the Galatians' (and indeed also , Paul's) thinking.

[117] For a representative studies employing socio-historical method, see above n.7.

[118] Our approach is close to MacMullen's study, which seeks to discover the 'feelings that governed the behaviour of broad social groups' (*Social Relations,* vii).

[119] References to sources made outside this period will be duly noted.

socio-cultural and religious matters. Indeed, our enquiry shall take on a deliberate breadth. This allows safer generalisations and avoids the tendency to regard (1) small segments of society as though they are representative of the whole or (2) of supposing that certain behaviour and outlooks are attributable to one or two isolated factors or influences. Against such a background we should be able to gain some insight into the Galatians' outlook and conduct, and we hope that this will also clarify further the discussion which Paul has with the Galatian churches in this letter.

6. The plan

The enquiry into the Galatians' Anatolian religious world will form the second chapter of the thesis. In Chapter 3 we shall attempt to discover from the Pauline text whether this historical analysis has served to illuminate our understanding of the nature of the Galatians' religious outlook and its impact on the crisis facing Paul. In addition, we also examine the extent to which Paul's arguments and criticisms have been prompted by the religious context of his Gentile audience. Chapter 4 examines the Galatians' perception of the divine and cosmic realm and asks how such an outlook might have also influenced their conduct and observances of the law. The following three chapters deal with socio-cultural issues. We hope to demonstrate in Chapters 5 and 6 that the questions of character, motives and rhetoric were one of the prominent features of the crisis facing Paul. This has shaped not only the apostle's argument concerning the legitimacy of his gospel and preaching ministry but also his polemical invective against his opponents. Chapter 7 examines the problem of discord within the churches. We shall ask whether the Galatians' social conduct and relationships had been influenced by the surrounding practices and outlook of their Graeco-Roman society. In the conclusion we shall summarise the result of our study and draw further implications from it.

Chapter 2

THE ANATOLIAN RELIGIOUS CONTEXT OF THE GALATIANS

1. Introduction

In an attempt to provide a background against which we can view the Galatians' religious outlook and behaviour, we shall map the general religious landscape of Anatolia (and the larger Graeco-Roman world), especially those aspects of popular Anatolian religiosity most relevant to our present study.[1] In the following chapter, we shall ask whether our insights into the religious world of the Galatians shed any light on their conduct as well as on Paul's criticism.

2. The religious world of the Galatians

It would be unwise, if not impossible, to classify with precision the many pagan cults in Asia Minor according to their distinct beliefs and patterns of worship. Indeed, many cults were notably tolerant of one another. In temples and shrines, dedications and worship were often made to a number of different gods at the same time. In addition to their own indigenous cults, many were also receptive to the worship of other gods, such as those of the Oriental and Roman cults. Nevertheless, we can attempt to discern some common patterns of Anatolian religiosity and mentality, especially those most relevant for our understanding of Galatians.

As Paul travelled through the provinces of the Roman Empire, he would have come into close contact with a widespread interest in pagan cults.[2] His missionary activity

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[1] The socio-cultural dimension of the Galatians' conduct will be examined in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

[2] Lucian wrote that 'the large majority of Greeks and all of the non-Greeks' practise religion (*Trag.* 53). See also R. MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 4-5; A.D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), 40-41; H. Koester, *History, Culture, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press;

took place in a world filled with the competing claims of a multitude of religious sects and popular philosophical traditions.[3] Many Gentiles who joined the early Christian community were likely to have been involved with a variety of cults. Numerous festivals and games point to the life and vitality of traditional civic cults in the Hellenistic period.[4] The proliferating mystery cults of the early Roman Empire offered a variety of religious choices and initiations, promising knowledge, protection and even union with the divine.[5] The cities, in particular, saw a great influx of Roman and Oriental religions. Inscriptions and coins indicate that many city sites of central Asia Minor were clustered with temples and shrines dedicated to the worship of a pantheon of Oriental and Greek gods including Isis, Sarapis, Demeter, Dionysus and Asclepius.[6] For example, the mystery cult of Demeter was well established in the Roman period.[7] And many notable Romans were initiated into the mysteries.[8] Nevertheless, while some of these cults became readily adapted and Hellenised in the civic temples and cities, many inhabitants of central Asia Minor, as we have noted in Chapter 1, continued to preserve their own local religious traditions.

Ancient Anatolia saw a lively religious interest as well as a diversity of pagan cults in cities and villages. Inscriptions and coins reveal that in the northern Galatian cities of Ancyra and Pessinus as well as the southern Pisidia and Iconium, the worship of the other Greek or Oriental deities such as Artemis, Apollo, Isis, Sarapis, Artemis,

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Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1982), I, 169-70. Cf. also Dio, *Or.* 37.11, 33. On evidence of active cultic life and paganism in Isthmia, see O. Broneer, 'Paul and the Pagan Cults in Isthmia', *HTR* 64 (1971), 169-87; in Corinth, see J.Z. Smith, 'The Egyptian Cults at Corinth', *HTR* 70 (1977), 201-31. The pervasiveness of cultic life in these areas could well reflect the pervasive religious interest of the larger Graeco-Roman world.

[3] On religious propaganda, see MacMullen, *Paganism,* 18-34, 94-112; on philosophical propaganda, see P. Wendland, *Die hellenistisch-römische Kultur in ihren Beziehungen zum Judentum und Christentum* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1912), 75-96.

[4] See H.H. Scullard, *Festivals and Ceremonies of the Roman Republic* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981).

[5] See Nock, *Conversion*, 99-137; cf. J. North, 'The Development of Religious Pluralism' in J. Lieu, J. North and T. Rajak (eds.), *Jews Among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 1992), 174-93.

[6] See Mitchell, *Anatolia,* II, 13-14.

[7] L.J. Alderlink, 'The Eleusinian Mysteries in Roman Imperial Times', *ANRW* II.18.2 (1990), 1457-98.

Hecate, Dionysus and Zeus, and indeed many others, were common.[9] However, the significant cults that best describe the religious atmosphere of ancient Anatolia were those for the various Mother Goddesses such as Agdistis or Cybele, for Men, for the gods of Justice and Holiness and for Zeus.[10] These cults, beliefs and traditions characterised the main religious culture of Anatolia since pre-Hellenic times. Indeed, before the Romans came to Anatolia, the Galatians in the north had rapidly taken over local religious beliefs, such as those of the Phrygians.[11] The Galatians consisted of the Trocmi who settled around Tavium; the Tectosages in Ancyra and the Tolistobogii around Pessinus, and these areas were well-known for worship of indigenous Anatolian cults.[12] In Pessinus, according to Strabo, the Galatians were attracted to and had participated in the well-known temple of the Phrygian Mother Goddess Cybele or Agdistis.[13] Similarly, we learn from Strabo that in Tavium, there stood a monumental bronze statue of Zeus and the most important Galatian shrine dedicated to the deity which rivalled even those of the neighbouring Pontic temple states.[14]

The southern part of the province of Galatia was no different. There is evidence in Phrygia and Lydia that these regions were dotted with sanctuaries of indigenous, local gods.[15] Indeed, Cybele, the mother goddess of the earth and regeneration, and her consort Attis were worshipped in many temples throughout Asia Minor.[16] An

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[8] K. Clinton, 'The Eleusinian Mysteries: Roman Initiates and Benefactors, Second century BC to AD 267', *ANRW* II.18.2 (1990), 1499-1539.
[9] Mitchell, *Anatolia,* II, 11, 14.
[10] See Mitchell, *Anatolia,* II, 11-30. The worship of Zeus, although a Greek god, was nevertheless ubiquitous in Anatolia.
[11] Mitchell, *Anatolia,* I, 49.
[12] Strabo, 12.5.1-4.
[13] Strabo, 12.5.3. Indeed, the goddess was worshipped before the Hellenistic era. See M.J. Rein, 'Phrygian Matar: Emergence of an Iconographic Type' in E.N. Lane (ed.), *Cybele, Attis, and Related Cults: Essays in Memory of M.J. Vermaseren* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 223-38.
[14] Strabo, 12.5.2.
[15] L. Robert, *OMS* i.421.
[16] For inscriptions in Asia Minor, see also *MAMA* vi.401 (Gordium, near Philadelphia); viii.297 (Konya, Ikonion); 396 (Viranköy, Pisido-Phrygian borderland). Vermaseren also notes that 'in the Roman epoch there was no citadel, village or hamlet in Phrygia that did not remain true to the worship of Cybele', *Cybele and Attis. The Myth and the Cult* (London:

Iconium inscription, for example, appeals to a multiplicity of saviour deities such as Agdistis and the Great Mother Boethene.[17] Elsewhere, the public religious life of Pisidian Antioch as well as of the Maeonian region of Lydia was dominated by Men Askaenos, the chief guardian deity of the colony, although he was also worshipped throughout the region of Phrygia into the highlands of Pisidia and across the Lycaonian plain.[18] The worship of Men was an integral part of the public life of the Roman colony of Pisidian Antioch, and games in honour of the deity were widely observed.[19] Rites and purity regulations were important features of the cult of Men, as was evident in their temple celebration near Pisidian Antioch.[20]

Mention should also be made of the gods of the Phrygians, the 'Holy and Just', Ὅσιος καὶ Δίκαιος (or the divine beings of Justice and Holiness Ὅσιον καὶ Δίκαιον), including a female counterpart Ὁσία, who were worshipped throughout Phrygia and the neighbouring parts of central Anatolia, including Lydia to the west and Galatia to the east, usually in rural contexts.[21] According to Robert, it was 'a powerful, original and complex religious movement in Phrygia and its neighbouring regions'.[22] A relief

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Thames and Hudson, 1977), 27, see also 13-31. According to Ramsay, the cult of the Mother Goddess characterises the indigenous Anatolian culture. See Ramsay, *Luke the Physician* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1908), 131. For archaeological evidence on the worship of Cybele in Phrygia, see L.E. Roller, *In Search of God the Mother. The Cult of Anatolian Cybele* (Berkeley: University of California, 1999), 63-115.

[17] *MAMA* viii.297.

[18] See Lane, 'Men: A Neglected Cult of Roman Asia Minor', *ANRW* II.18.3, 2161-74. See *CMRDM* i. nos.164-74, 270, 288, 290. On the worship of Men in north Galatia, in particular in Ankyra and Pessinus, see *CMRDM* ii.154f., *Galatia* 7-8. Cf. F. Cumont even says of Men that 'no god enjoyed greater popularity in the country districts (of Asia Minor)', *The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (New York: Dover, 1956), 61; Mitchell, *Anatolia,* II, 24-25; Levick, *Roman Colonies,*18, 189-90.

[19] See Levick, *Roman Colonies,* 190f. On the observance of the cult by members of the local aristocracy, see *CMRDM* i. no. 176.

[20] *CMRDM* i. no. 75.

[21] See *RECAM* ii.45; *MAMA* v.183; ix.63, 64; T. Drew-Bear, *Nouvelles Inscriptions de Phrygie* (Studia Amstelodamensia ad Epigraphicum, Ius Antiquum et Papyrologicam Pertinentia 16; Zutphen: Terra Publishing and Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1978), 38-41, nos. 3-8; Robert, *OMS* ii.1358-9.

[22] Robert, 'Reliefs votifs et cultes d'Anatolie', *Anatolia* 3 (1958), 118-19 (= *OMS* i.417-18). Robert demonstrates a tendency in some inscriptions from Lydia to use the more abstract θεῖον instead of θεός and to substitute θεὸς ὅσιος καὶ δίκαιος by Ὅσιον καὶ Δίκαιον. See

from Dorylaeum also reveals that these deities were found alongside other Hellenised or Greek divinities such as Apollo, Heracles and Hermes.[23] A common emphasis on justice and righteousness linked the pair to other deities such as Apollo, the Hellenic god of divine justice, or Dikaiosyne, the goddess of Prymnessus, near the borders of Pisidia.[24]

In addition to the indigenous deities (i.e. Mother Goddesses, Men and Ὅσιος καὶ Δίκαιος), one of the most widely worshipped gods in Anatolia was Zeus. Zeus's most important shrine was located in Tavium, although the deity was also widely worshipped in Ancyra, Lycaonia and Iconium.[25] Indeed, the cult was spread abroad by Galatian settlers. We note, for instance, that in north-west Galatia, dedications were found in several villages made to Zeus Narenos;[26] and the cult of Zeus Sarnendenos was also found in the same area of Galatia, as well as in the eastern part of Bithynian Nicea.[27] Zeus was often linked with other gods. A relief near Lystra depicts Hermes with the eagle of Zeus; in Lystra, a stone carving shows Hermes with two other gods, Earth (*Ge*) and Zeus.[28]

It should also be observed that since Augustus established the Roman colonies throughout the Galatian province, the imperial cult was a prominent feature of pagan religious life, especially in places such as Ancyra, Pessinus and Pisidian Antioch.[29] We know from inscriptional evidence that the god Augustus and the goddess *Roma* were worshipped in the Roman province of Galatia already during the reign of Tiberius.[30] The growth of the imperial cult was rapid and Galatia provides 'much the

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also Drew-Bear, 'Local Cults in Graeco-Roman Phrygia', *GRBS* 17 (1976), 249, 262-64 n.68.

[23] Robert, *OMS* ii.1355-60.

[24] *RECAM* ii.44, 45; Mitchell, *Anatolia,* I, 191; II, 18, 25.

[25] The worship of Zeus was prominent throughout Phrygia, see T. Drew-Bear and C. Naour, 'Divinités de Phrygie', *ANRW* II.18.3 (1990), 1907-2044.

[26] *RECAM* ii.11,12, 67, 86.

[27] *RECAM* ii.76.

[28] Mitchell, *Anatolia,* II, 24; see also Hemer, *Acts,* 111.

[29] See Mitchell, *Anatolia,* I, 100f.

[30] See R.K. Sherk, *The Roman Empire: Augustus to Hadrian* (Cambridge: CUP, 1988), 73-74.

most detailed evidence for the spread of emperor worship in the central Anatolian provinces'.[31] For instance, the list of priests, dating from Tiberius' reign, found in Ancyra also attests to the presence of the imperial cult there.[32] Major imperial temples have also been uncovered at Pisidian Antioch where a Christian community existed, as well as at Iconium, where there was a cult site in which its priest was serving Tiberius; indeed, the imperial temples occupied a central place in the new Augustan cities and were a focus of civic and public life.[33] And in these imperial temples and sanctuaries, of which there were more than eighty in over sixty cities in Asia Minor, imperial cult celebrations were held.[34] In Apollonia in the Galatian province, there also existed an imperial sanctuary, bearing a text of the *Res Gestae* and the statues of the divine Augustus, Julia Augusta, Tiberius, Germanicus and Drusus.[35] It is known that these were set up during the Principate of Tiberius between CE 14 and 19. Elsewhere in Pisidian Antioch, the imposing Temple of Augustus dominated the urban landscape, where an inscription of *Res Gestae* which adorned the area near the gateway recorded the achievements and benefactions of Augustus.[36]

Various special days and months were marked by imperial anniversaries. This reflected the imperial replacement of the local calendar, both sacred and secular.[37] And the observances of the calendar of the imperial cult became an important aspect of the public and civic life of the citizens.[38] Thus, for example, calendars had been regulated by the imperial cult since 9 BCE when the assembly of Greek cities decreed that the New Year would begin with 23rd September, which was Augustus'

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[31] Mitchell, *Anatolia* I.102.

[32] For the list, see Mitchell, *Anatolia* I.108. According to Mitchell (100), priests of Augustus are attested in thirty-four different cities.

[33] G.W. Hansen, 'Galatia' in D. Gill and C. Gempf (eds.), *The Book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman Setting,* 394; Mitchell, *Anatolia,* I, 104, 107.

[34] For a catalogue of imperial temples and shrines in Asia Minor, see Price, *Rituals and Power,* 249-74.

[35] Mitchell, *Anatolia,* I, 104.

[36] Mitchell provides a thorough description of the temple in *Anatolia,* I, 107. See also Price, *Rituals and Power,* ch. 6.

[37] Price, *Rituals and Power*, 106.

[38] Cassius Dio (*Hist. of Rome* 51.20.6-8) records the precedent set by Augustus in encouraging the veneration of Rome and its emperors as well as the dedications of sacred temples in many provinces.

birthday.[39] A first-century inscription from Greece (*c.* 15 CE) records the regulations for the observance of certain days to celebrate the various festivals of the imperial cult. The local magistrate (*agoranomos*) would set aside the first day for the god Caesar Augustus, the second day for the emperor Tiberius, the third day for Julia Augusta, and the fourth day for Germanicus Caesar, the fifth day for Drusus and the sixth day for Titus Quinctius Flamininus.[40]

Participation in the imperial cult activities involved worship and dedications to the traditional gods. Rituals and imperial temples symbolised the centrality and significance of the emperor in the civic and public life within the local framework or traditional structures of cult and society.[41] The imperial cults were modelled on the traditional forms of civic cults of the gods; they did not displace traditional cults but were integrated alongside them. Religious observance and participation in the imperial cult would often involve the whole community in worship as well as in honour of and in prayer for the emperor. Dedications and sacrifices were made on behalf of the emperor to the gods to ensure divine protection and favours.[42] Various associations and guilds adopted members of the imperial family as patron deities alongside other gods and engaged in celebrations, sacrifices and other rituals including mysteries in honour of the emperors or *Sebastoi* ('revered ones').[43]

There can be little doubt that the Galatians would have been familiar with the life of the cities that revolved around the celebrations connected with the imperial cult. So pervasive was the imperial cult that according to Mitchell,

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[39] See *OGIS* ii.458, *l.*30-52 = N. Lewis and M. Reinhold (eds.), *Roman Civilisation: Selected Readings,* I, 624-25.
[40] *SEG* xi.923.7-40 = M. Beard, J. North and S. Price, *Religions of Rome* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), II, 254. For further examples of the calendrical observances of imperial associations, see M. Beard, J. North and S. Price, *Religions of Rome,* II, 70 (3.4), 255 (10.5b).
[41] Cf. also Price, *Rituals and Power,* 101-31; M. Beard, J. North and S. Price, *Religions of Rome,* I, 360.
[42] M. Beard, J. North, S. Price, *Religions of Rome,* I, 350-52.
[43] See H.W. Pleket, 'An Aspect of the Emperor Cult: Imperial Mysteries', *HTR* 58 (1965), 331-47.

> One cannot avoid the impression that the obstacle which stood in the way of the progress of Christianity, and the force which would have drawn new adherents back to conformity with the prevailing paganism, was the public worship of the emperors. The packed calendar of the ruler cult dragooned the citizens ... into observing the days, months, seasons, and years which it laid down for special recognition and celebration ... where spectacular and enticing public festivals imposed conformity and a rhythm of observance on a compact population.[44]

3. The overseeing presence of the deities

One significant aspect of Anatolian popular religiosity is the overseeing presence of deities, which defines the religious character and outlook of the community. They were frequently identified by a mountain and/or a city/community. Indeed, mountains have been especially associated with divinity, where fear and awe were usually evoked in the presence of the mountains and gods alike. Thus, for instance, temples were maintained all over Mount Olgassys (ὁ Ὄλγασσυς ὄρος) by the people of Paphlagonia in northern central Anatolia.[45] The mountain and their city in Ilgaz were considered the hearth of the gods (*hestia theon*).[46]

Zeus, since Greek antiquity, was identified with mountains and geographical localities. The deity was considered one of the πατρίοι θεοί or θεοί τῆς πόλεως.[47] Every high mountain with its peak in the clouds was thought to be the dwelling place of Zeus.[48] For instance, Zeus Laphystios took his name from the mountain Laphystion in Boetia. In northern Galatia in Tavium we hear of the worship of Zeus

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[44] Mitchell, *Anatolia,* II, 10.
[45] Strabo, 12.3.40, 562.
[46] L. Robert, *A travers l'Asie Mineure* (Paris: École française d'athènes, 1980), 201-19.
[47] Other deities includes Hera. See *IGRR* iii.89, iv.1571, LeBas-Wadd. 400, 519-520.
[48] Elsewhere in ancient Greece, Zeus Lykaion also derived his name from the high mountain in south-western Arcadia, Lykaion, and his sanctuary was located at the summit. The sanctuaries of Zeus, it was known, were dotted on mount Olympus, and on the highest mountain of the island of Aegina, he was named Zeus Panhellenios. Cf. M.P. Nilsson, *Greek Popular Religion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), 6-7.

Tavianos.[49] Likewise in Pisidian Antioch, Men Askaenos was considered the chief god of the colony, *patrios theos*, and was regarded as a ruler of colonies or communities.[50] According to Strabo, the deity overlooked the public religious life of Antioch from two temples, one situated on the hill called Karakuyu, and the other in the north-west part of the territory.[51] Numerous dedications and inscriptions were found on the rocks as devotees climb up the hill above the city.[52]

Another prominent feature of Anatolian religiosity, we have observed, was the worship of the Mother of the Gods. Throughout central Anatolia, worshippers associated the Mother of the Gods with the name of the place or a mountain overlooking the city or villages they ruled or protected. Thus, for example, Meter Theon Zingotene was prominent at the village of Zingotos,[53] and on the north-eastern slope of Mount Sipylene in Lydia stood a thirty foot image of the Mother Goddess, Meter Sipylene.[54] In Iconium, the Mother of the Gods was worshipped as the Meter Zizimmene, for the cult was located at Zizima, a mountain north of the city.[55] At Pessinus in north Galatia, it is observed that Cybele was known as the Mother Goddess of Mount Dindymus (Meter Dindymene) which overlooked the city.[56] Also known as Agdistis (or Mount Agdistis), the deity is identified too with, or her name was derived from, other toponyms, such as Silandene, Plastene, Sipylene, or Tarsene in Lydia.[57]

Popular Anatolian religiosity must also be understood in the light of the overseeing presence and rule of the deities over the communities in the cities or the landscape surrounding the mountains. Since Greek classical times, the deities were seen as

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[49] See Strabo, 12.5.2; *RECAM* ii.418.
[50] See above n.18. In addition, see also *CMRDM* iv. nos. 83, 107, 127.
[51] Strabo, 12.8.14, 577; cf. 12.3.31, 556, 559. See also Levick, *Roman Colonies,* 44.
[52] For the inscriptions, see *CMRDM* i. nos. 160-294; iv. nos. 1-161.
[53] See *CCCA* i. no.121.
[54] *CCCA* i. nos.439-40; *TAM* v.ii.1357, 1375.
[55] See *CCCA* i. nos.773-802. Similarly, in Phrygia, names such as Meter Kiklea (*MAMA* x.226) and Meter Mezeane (*CCCA* i. no. 193) were often found.
[56] Mitchell, *Anatolia,* II, 20.

protectors of laws and customs as well as moral order, and the pagans saw themselves as their subordinates.[58] They were considered rulers of the communities and occupiers or possessors of certain places (κατέχων); they were thought to oversee the life of the community as well as to preserve their well-being and livestock. For instance, we learn that the Great Mother Anaeities holds Azitta and Meis Tiamou or that Men of Artemidorus holds Axiotta.[59] The deity Men was also considered 'king of the village';[60] he was also known by the epithet τύραννος or κύριος.[61] Elsewhere, Men Tiamou and Zeus Masphaltenos were known as 'lord tyrant' (τοῦ κυρίου τυράννου).[62] In the same way, a certain follower of Zeus in the first-century CE considered himself a servant/slave (ὑπηρέτης) of the gods of the heavens (θεῶν οὐρανίων).[63] Other deities such as Helios, Apollo and Nemesis were also thought to watch over the affairs of people.[64]

The dominant overseeing presence of the deities ensured that they would assert some special claim and authority over individuals.[65] Indeed, they were generally considered 'lords' and their worshippers 'slaves'. For instance, a number of communities ruled by the Anatolian deities were temple states, where many of the

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[57] See *MAMA* i.2c (Silandene); *TAM* v.i.202, 460 (Tarsene), v.ii.1353-4 (Plastene), 1357, 1375 (Sipylene).

[58] Nilsson, *Greek Popular Religion,* 77-78; H.W. Pleket, 'Religious History as the History of Mentality: The 'Believer' as Servant of the Deity in the Greek World' in H.S. Versnel (ed.), *Faith, Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981), 152-92. According to Pleket, terms such as ὑπουργός, ὑπηρέτης and δοῦλος τοῦ θεοῦ, including the divine epithet παντοκράτωρ or κύριος, found in Greek epigraphy suggest that worshippers saw themselves as subservient to their deities.

[59] *TAM* v.i.317, 526: Elsewhere, *TAM* v.i.499: the Great Men of Petra and the Great Mother of Taza.

[60] *SEG* iv.645.

[61] See *CMRDM* i. nos. 43, 53 (Maeonian region; second-century CE).

[62] In *TAM* v.i.537. Or cf. a Phoenician dedication in Cyprus 'to the Baal of Libanon, is lord', A.B. Cook, *Zeus,* I, 551. Cf. W. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos* (trans. J.E. Steely; Nashville: Abingdon, 1970), 93. Cf. Gal. 4:8-9.

[63] *IG* xii.165.

[64] Mitchell, *Anatolia,* I, 189-91.

[65] Thus, the alleged dialogue of Apollonius of Tyana with the Spartans: '"When he arrived they asked him "How are the gods to be worshipped?". "As masters"' (Philostratus, *VA* 4.31). Oriental-Hellenistic deities such as Sarapis, Isis and Osiris were also addressed as Kyrios/Kyria, as well as the Roman emperors. See O. Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1980), 195-98.

inhabitants were referred to as 'sacred slaves' (ἱεροί or ἱερόδουλοι).[66] One example of such a temple state was based on the cult of the Mother of the Gods.[67] A particular form of 'slave' (δοῦλος) of the goddess was the *gallus*. In their spring festival, priests or *galli* in the throngs of ecstatic worship would self-flagellate and castrate themselves in imitation of Attis's self-emasculation. In other Anatolian communities, the 'sacred slaves' were under the ruling temple priests; they were in service to the god, cultivating his lands and maintaining the temple properties.[68] According to Strabo, the priesthood of Men too had a number of temple-slaves, who also owned most of the land in the plain below the temple. From his references, we know that the temple of Men Pharnakou had πολλοὺς ἱεροδούλους and that at Pisidian Antioch, there were πλῆθος ἱεροδούλων prior to the time of Augustus.[69]

The presence and dominance of the deities as the protectors of the cult and laws ensured that the initiates who worshipped them would stay faithful to their commands and to observe the necessary ritual laws and/or ethical injunctions. Thus, for example, at the Hellenistic cult in Philadelphia in Lydia, a first-century BCE text attests the greatness and presence of the dominant 'saviour gods'; they 'watch over these things, and will not tolerate those who transgress the ordinances'.[70] Indeed, 'the ordinances were placed with Agdistis' who was known as the 'very holy guardian and mistress of this *oikos*' so that her worshippers 'may obey the things written here'.[71] The deities would reward those who adhered to and punished terribly all who disobeyed and transgressed the law and the limits the gods had set, for it is stated that 'to those who obey, the gods will be propitious, and will give them all the blessings gods give to men they love; if they transgress, they will hate them and inflict great punishments

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[66] For inscriptions in central Anatolia, see *TAM* v.i.459, 593; *MAMA* x.437, 492.
[67] See Strabo 11.8.4; 12.2.3, 535;12.5.3, 31, 32.
[68] Cf. a Lydian confession stele in *TAM* v.i.593 which talks about labour service to the deity.
[69] Strabo, 12.3.31; 12.8.14.
[70] *SIG* 985, *l*.34: καὶ ταῦτα ἐπισκοποῦσιν καὶ τοὺς παραβαίνοντας τὰ παραγ[γέλματα οὐκ ἀνέ]ξονται.
[71] *SIG* 985, *l*.50: τὰ παραγγέλματα ταῦτα ἐτέθησαν παρὰ Ἄγγδιστιν [τὴν ἁγιωτάτην] φύλακα καὶ οἰκοδέσποιναν τοῦδε τοῦ ο[ἴκου] ... ἵνα κατακολουθῶσιν τοῖς ὧδε γ[εγραμμένοις].

on them.'[72] Disobedience toward ordinances will bear 'evil curses from the gods'.[73] The elaborate rules of this religious association included a list of prohibitions worshippers must abstain, which included drink or sex and other temporary pollution; sometimes they must avoid certain types of person or food.[74] Likewise, an inscription from the temple of Cybele at Maeonia, Lydia (dated 147-146 BCE) also describes a series of ritual prohibitions and purifications.[75]

In addition to her role as a guardian deity of the sacral or cultic laws, the Mother of the Gods was also associated with other aspects of laws, such as the city's written records. Outside Anatolia, at Athens, stood the temple of the Mother of the Gods where there was housed the city's archives for decrees and records such as property deeds, wills, laws as well as prescriptions for religious observances.[76] The Mother of the Gods was evoked as a guardian deity to deal with wrongdoing or to ensure that certain aspects of the laws were enforced or carried out.

Related to the notion of the overseeing presence and rule of deities is the belief among Anatolian worshippers in divine justice, righteousness and strict morality. In Phrygian Prymnessus, we learn, for example, that their principal deity was the goddess Justice (Δικαιοσύνη).[77] The goddess Dikaiosyne, familiar throughout central Anatolia from Dorylaeum to Lydia and Pisidia, was depicted on coins with scales and holding two ears of corn, and the Prymnessians believed that the deity watched over

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[72] See *SIG* 985, *l.* 46-50. Elsewhere, a Cretan funerary epigram in the first-century CE records how when a follower of Hermes, Salvius Menas, overlooked an offering of annual sacrifice to the deity, this resulted in the death of his wife. This was perceived to be divine punishment; and he repented. On this inscription, see *IC,* II, para. 28, 2; cited in Pleket, 'Religious History', 172. See also M.P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion. Zweiter Band. Die hellenistische und römische Zeit.* Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft 5.2 (München: C.H. Beck, 1961), 290-92.

[73] *SIG* 985, *l.* 43-44: κακὰς ἀρὰς παρὰ τῶν θειῶν ἕξει [τὰ πα]ραγγέλματα ταῦτα παρορῶσα.

[74] On such prohibitions in the temple inscription, see *SIG* 982, 983. For a list of moral requirements binding on all who enter the temple of the goddess Agdistis at Philadelphia in Lydia, see *SIG* 985; also Nock, 'Early Gentile Christianity' in his *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, I (ed. Z. Stewart; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 65-66; S.C. Barton and G.H.R. Horsley, 'A Hellenistic Cult Group and the New Testament', *JAC* 24 (1981), 18-22.

[75] Vermaseren, *Cybele and Attis*, 30.

[76] *CCCA* ii. nos. 1-14.

the well-being of the people, ensuring justice, fair dealings and provisions. Anatolians would also invoke the power of the gods, Ὅσιος καὶ Δίκαιος (or Ὅσιον καὶ Δίκαιον) against wrongdoers.[78] The gods would intervene to bring about justice and fair dealings. In the same way, worshippers of Men also believed in divine justice. Indeed, the deity, also known as Men Dikaios, is identified in one Phrygian inscription as the 'Eye of Justice and Moderation' (Ὀφθαλμὸς Δικαιοσύνης καὶ Σωφροσύνης).[79] There is also epigraphic evidence of the concept of ἁμαρτία (or ἁμαρτάνω) as an offence committed against the deity.[80] In the Maeonian region, one local belief involved the fear of offending the god, whether knowingly or unknowingly (as is attested by the phrase ἐξ εἰδότων καὶ μὴ εἰδότων).[81] The power of the deity could be invoked to punish guilt, to ward off evil or to protect property and graves.[82] For example, Meter Sipylene functioned as a protector of graves and fines were imposed on those who violated the tombs.[83] An inscription in the early second-century CE records the invocation of the goddess Anaitis and the lord of Tiamou (Men) to punish the offenders for stealing.[84] The punishment was to have incurred the anger of Men.[85] Thus, we learn in an inscription that a pecuniary penalty was attached to the divine wrath, where the wrongdoer was to give 5 000 denarii to the temple.[86] Likewise, those who were in bondage to the god through misdeeds

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[77] Mitchell, *Anatolia,* II, 18.
[78] See *RECAM* ii.242. See also Drew-Bear, 'Local Cults', 262-65.
[79] Mitchell, *Anatolia,* I, 191; see Robert, 'Malédictions funéraires grecques', *CRAIBL* (1978), 268.
[80] *CMRDM* i. nos. 42, 70, 71, 77.
[81] *CMRDM* i. nos 61, 66.
[82] See *CMRDM* i. nos. 44, 70-71 (Lydian region); nos. 143-51, 154-56 (Lycaonian region). Cf. Cumont, *Oriental Religions,* 61. On the application of the epithet δύναμις to Men, see *CMDRM* i. no. 83; iii. no. 62. On the threat of divine punishment against tomb desecration, especially in Phrygia, see Mitchell, *Anatolia,* I, 188-89; Robert, 'Malédictions funéraires grecques', *CRAIBL* (1978), 241-89 (= *OMS* v.697-746); R. Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962), 106-25. The invocation of other deities was also not uncommon outside Anatolia. For example, a first-century CE Cretan epitaph records, 'You who pass by, do not injure my sacred grave, lest you incur the sharp anger of Agesilaos and Persephone, maiden daughter of Demeter' (Peek, *Griechische Versinschriften* I (Berlin, 1955), 1370).
[83] See *CCCA* i. nos. 544-45, 549-51, 575-76, 582-84.
[84] *TAM* v.i.317.
[85] *CMRDM* i. nos. 145-47, 149-151, 154.
[86] *CMRDM* i. no.144.

could purchase freedom with a price (λύτρον).[87] Belief in the rule of the gods and in divine justice was, however, not unique to the cult of Men. As Lane has pointed out, these features were also largely shared in the epigraphy of the area with other Greek gods such as Artemis, Zeus Sabazius, and the various forms of Apollo.[88]

To appease or avert divine justice, offenders were required to make confessions and erect steles to proclaim the power of the gods (μαρτυρεῖν) and, in some cases, to make offerings and eulogies (εὐλογία)[89] Various confessional inscriptions, particularly in Lydia and Phrygia, attest to the fact that the inhabitants supplicated for mercy (ἱλάσθαι) and sought to avert divine punishment (κόλασις) which might take the form of disease or death.[90] Hence offences against the gods and their sanctuaries were taken seriously; they needed to be confessed and atoned for.

Also worth noting is the fact that in the wider Graeco-Roman world, divine power(s) (δύναμις) was often associated with the gods.[91] People were not passive towards it; rather they sought and experienced divine power.[92] They responded readily to those who demonstrated power-miracles and were persuaded by the truth of their message

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[87] See *CMRDM* i. nos. 57, 61 and 90; cf. Nilsson, *The Greek Religion,* 108.

[88] Lane, 'Men', 2164.

[89] On the use of εὐλογία in Lydian inscriptions, see Robert, *Nouvelles inscriptions de Sardes,* I, 28-30. Note the confession inscriptions in which the dedicator confesses to deeds done against the deity, see Drew-Bear, 'Local Cults', 264-5; Mitchell, *Anatolia,* I, 192-94; Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 258. Mitchell (*Anatolia,* I, 194) thinks that although the confession texts were common in Lydia and Phrygia, these texts could also reflect similar religious ideas and practices in other parts of Asia Minor.

[90] See Mitchell, *Anatolia* I, 187-95.

[91] It seems that, under the Roman Empire, the generalised concept of 'divine power' had begun to take precedence over discrete divinities. See Nock, 'Graeco-Roman Beliefs' in his *Essays,* I, 33-48. Note Acts 8:10: οὗτός ἐστιν ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡ καλουμένη μεγάλη ('this one is the power of God that is called Great Power'). Cf. according to Cicero, 'reverence for the gods and respect for religion grow continually stronger ... the gods often manifest their power in bodily presence' (*Nat. D.* 2.6).

[92] MacMullen even remarks, '"What made converts?" -- converts of any sort, near or far. To that latter, the answer was seen to lie in the visible show of divinity at work' (*Paganism,* 126; see also 95-98); Tran Tam Tinh, 'Sarapis and Isis' in B.F. Meyer and E.P. Sanders (eds.), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* (London: SCM, 1982), III, 111-12; Nilsson, *Geschichte,* 41-43. People were not only awed by divine power but desired to receive it. Cf. the prayer to the Sun in P. Par 1665: δὸς ἰσχύν καὶ Θάρσος καὶ δύναμιν ('give strength and courage and power'); also P. Par 1616. See also Nock, 'Graeco-Roman Beliefs', 36 n.25.

and the power that stood behind them.[93] Divine power, as we have seen, was also evoked to punish wrongdoers[94] or to secure the good the gods could procure for them.[95]

We have seen that a common aspect of Anatolian religiosity was the notion of the overseeing presence of the gods and of divine justice and strict piety.[96] We have observed how dominant a role was given to the gods, who were also associated or identified with the local toponyms such as a city or a mountain. In their role as guardian or enforcer deities and protectors of laws and customs, they dominated the lives of their subjects as well as the landscape. The physical, religious and moral life of the Phrygians and the Lydians was ruled by the gods, especially the gods of Justice and Holiness, Men, the various Mother Goddesses and Zeus. Since the presence and the power of the gods could be seen or felt by anyone, Anatolian worshippers feared that guilt would incur the threat of divine justice. Hence the domination and power of the gods ensured that Anatolian pagans would submit to them and observe scrupulously their religious traditions and strict piety. This ensured that they would relate properly with the gods and receive divine favour and blessings. The confessional inscriptions and the erection of steles and eulogies, ritual

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[93] For example, accounts of miracles performed by Jesus and the apostles were intended to provoke awe and wonder as well as to elicit faith and belief in their gospel message (see Lk. 11:20; Jn. 20:30-1; Acts 2:22; 3:9-10). See also H.C. Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times,* SNTSMS 55 (Cambridge: CUP, 1986), 78-79, 90; S. Garrett, *The Demise of the Devil: Magic and the Demonic in Luke's Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 102.

[94] Mitchell, *Anatolia,* I, 192. In bibilical tradition, power-miracles also served as warnings of divine judgement (cf. Exod.7:3-4; Lk 11:14-20; Acts 5:38-9; 13:8-11).

[95] For example, outside Anatolia, the healing sanctuaries of Asclepius were found in many major cities including Epidaurus, Pergamum, Corinth, and were particularly attractive for many pagans. Accounts of healing and miracles are recorded in *IG* 4.951; F.C. Grant, *Hellenistic Religions: The Age of Syncretism* (New York: Liberal Arts, 1953), 57; Kee, *Medicine,* 67-70. The activities of demons and exorcisms in the larger Graeco-Roman world were not unknown. See further, G. Anderson, *Sage, Saint and Sophist: Holy Men and their Associates in the Early Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 1994), 92-98; MacMullen, *Paganism,* 79, 82. On the prevalence of magic, see MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order: Treason, Unrest, and Alienation in the Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), 125-26; Nock, 'Paul and the Magus' in his *Essays,* I, 316-17; Garrett, *Demise,* 11-19.

and in some cases moral observances evoked the image of subservience and the notion of divine justice. But divine power did not merely threaten and dominate: people also desired order, sustenance, and protection.

4. Jews and Gentiles

We are now aware of the prominence of Jewish settlements in central Anatolia, and many Jews participated actively in the civic and social life of Graeco-Roman society.[97] The friendly co-existence and social interactions between Jews and Gentiles might have proved a fertile ground for Jewish influence on Gentiles.[98] This naturally raises the question of whether Jews were actively seeking adherents in the first century. Some have argued that it is doubtful whether Jews were actively seeking Gentile converts,[99] while others affirm the existence of Jewish missionary activity.[100] No doubt part of the discussion depends on how one construes the meaning of 'mission' or 'propaganda' and how narrowly or broadly one defines them.[101] Although it is misleading, I think, to speak of Jewish 'mission' in the sense of active or aggressive proselytisation, I am inclined to think that the truth of the

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[96] Nilsson (*Geschichte*, 291) calls this the 'Lydian-Phrygian mentality', which involves remote deities and strict piety and ethics. See also Pleket, 'Religious History', 156, 178-81.

[97] See Mitchell, *Anatolia,* II, 32-33. Numerous Jewish epigraphic materials that have been uncovered also indicate the considerable size of Jewish population in Cilicia, see *CIJ* 782-94; E. Schürer, *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (rev. and ed. G. Vermes, F. Millar, M. Black and M. Goodman; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1973-87), III, 33-34. Trebilco argues that the settlement of Jewish Diaspora in Asia Minor, in particular, Phrygia and Lydia, goes back to the time of Antiochus III. See Trebilco, *Jewish Communities*, 5-7; Josephus, *Ant.* 12.148-53.

[98] On the social intercourse between Jews and Gentiles, see S.J.D. Cohen, 'Crossing the Boundary and Becoming a Jew', *HTR* 82 (1989), 13-33; Dunn, 119-21.

[99] See, in particular, S. McKnight, *A Light Among the Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1991). Cf. also M. Goodman, *Mission and Conversion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). Goodman argues that in the second and third centuries, some rabbis did approve of active mission to the Gentiles, cf. M. Goodman, 'Proselytising in Rabbinic Judaism,' *JJS* 40 (1989), 179-81. See also A.T. Kraabel, 'The Roman Diaspora: Six Questionable Assumptions' in J.A. Overman and R.S. MacLennan (eds.), *Diaspora Jews and Judaism: Essays in Honor of, and in Dialogue with, A Thomas Kraabel* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 7-9.

[100] See Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World.*

[101] See J. Carleton Paget, 'Jewish Proselytism at the Time of Christian Origins: Chimera or Reality?' *JSNT* 62 (1996), 65-103.

matter probably lies somewhere between the two extremes. Whatever the outcome of the debate, we cannot doubt that Jews had some interest in making Judaism attractive to Gentiles or in encouraging them to participate in synagogue life.[102] Indeed, Jews were willing to accommodate people in different ways.[103] This is shown by the evidence of many levels of adherents, including proselytes, Godfearers and sympathisers.[104] While partial adherents or sympathisers were quite clearly distinguished from full proselytes, they were nevertheless publicly associated with Judaism. They had adopted certain Jewish observances and/or participated in the life of the synagogue.[105] Gentiles might participate in Judaism as sympathisers, and were involved in various ways in the Jewish public and religious life, in benefaction and in various forms of worship and adherence.[106]

Given the prominence of the Jewish communities in Asia Minor, it is hardly surprising that they would have had some influence on the pagan environment,

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[102] According to Josephus (*Ap.* 2.282), albeit with some exaggeration, there was not a single city or nation in which Jewish practices cannot be found. See also Philo, *Vit. Mos*. 2.17. Cf. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor*; P. Borgen, 'Militant and Peaceful Proselytism and Christian Mission' in his *Early Christianity and Hellenistic Judaism* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), 45-70.

[103] T. Rajak, 'The Jewish Community and its Boundaries' in J. Lieu, J. North and T. Rajak (eds.), *The Jews Among Pagans and Christians,* 18. See also Cohen, 'Crossing the Boundary', 13-33. Cohen presents a broad range of degrees of attachment or the various levels of association Gentiles had with Jews.

[104] See, e.g., McKnight, *Light,* 90-101; Trebilco, *Jewish Communities,* 145-66; Feldman, *Jew and Gentile,* ch. 10; P.W. van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1991), 135-36; J. Reynolds and R. Tannebaum, *Jews and Godfearers at Aphrodisias: Greek Inscriptions with Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1987), 86-89. On the various reasons for the phenomenon of Gentile 'Judaising', including the fear of persecution, in the first and second-century CE, see S.G. Wilson, 'Gentile Judaizers', *NTS* 38 (1992), 605-16. For evidence of half-converts in Josephus, see *War* 2.463, 560; 7.45; *Ant.* 20.34, 41.

[105] The Aphrodisias inscription shows that Θεοσεβεῖς are those who are publicly associated with Jews and are listed as part of the Jewish community. See also H. Bellen, 'Συναγωγή τῶν 'Ιουδαίων καὶ Θεοσεβῶν', *JAC* 8/9 (1966), 171-72; more recently, Trebilco, *Jewish Communities,* ch. 7. Nevertheless, the inscription also makes a distinction between proselytes (and the Jews) and Θεοσεβεῖς. Not all Jews, however, would accord proselytes full status and privileges as born Jews. On the distinctions between proselytes and Jews in Qumran and the Mishnah, see Cohen, 'Crossing the Boundary', 27-29; see also Feldman, *Jews and Gentiles,* 338-41

[106] L.H. Kant, 'Jewish Inscriptions in Greek and Latin', *ANRW* II.20.2, 688. The Acmonian (*MAMA* vi. 262, 264) and Aphrodisian inscriptions both indicated Gentile benefaction.

especially when there were affinities in traditions, vocabulary and forms of religiosity and piety. The Anatolian pagan notion of the dominance and power of the gods were not foreign to Jewish religion. Both worshipped a god (or gods) that demanded obedience and piety. Both emphasised the observance of laws and rituals.

In addition, Jews and the people of Lydia and Phrygia both worshipped a wrathful god of justice. The pagan concepts of divine justice and retribution find close parallels with Jewish ideas of divine retribution and the Deuteronomic curse of the law. Jews also called on God to punish offenders or invoked the curses of the Jewish law, especially from Deuteronomy, against law-breakers (see Deut. 27:26 in Gal. 3:10; cf. also Gal. 1:8-9; 6:7-8). As in pagan inscriptions, the threat of divine punishment in the Jewish law found in Deut. 27-30 was invoked, for example, against tomb desecrators. A third-century CE Phrygian inscription in Acmonia records, for instance, the general phrase 'the curses that are written in Deuteronomy' (ἐπικατάρατος ὁ τοῦτος ... ὅσαι ἀραὶ ἐν τῷ Δευτερονομίῳ εἰσὶν γεγραμμέναι αὐτῷ).[107] Inscriptions also indicate the 'wrath of God' and that the desecrator 'will have to reckon with God'.[108] The Anatolian pagan notion of retribution against wrongdoers finds affinity with the Jewish ideas of divine justice and punishment.[109]

As we have already observed, many people in the ancient world associated divine power with their gods and were attracted to its manifestation. Similarly, they

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[107] *MAMA* vi.335. For other examples, see *CIJ* 760 (Blaundos): αἱ ἀραὶ ἡ γεγραμμέναι ἐν τῷ Δευτερονόμιῳ; *CIJ* 770 (Acmonia): κατάραι ὃς ἐὰν γεγραμμένα[ι εἰ]σὶν (second and third cent. CE). Outside Anatolia, a Jewish inscription in Argos (*CIJ* 719) attests that a certain individual (Aurelius Justus) had evoked the great powers of God and of the law to prevent the destruction of the grave monument. See also P.W. van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs,* 54-60.

[108] Note Robert, *Hellenica* xi-xii, 407 on the 'wrath of God' (τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ὀργῆς) in Jewish and pagan epitaphs. Cf. also *MAMA* vi.325. See also *MAMA* vi.234: ἔσται αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. The phrase also appears in *CIJ* 773 (Apamea, third-century CE).

[109] Note *SIG* 1240 (and *IG* xii.9.955), where an inscription in the second century CE refers to both the pagan goddess Hygeia and to Theos (the Jewish God), while invoking the Jewish Deuteronomic curse as a protection on behalf of the statue erected. That a Jew would evoke a pagan deity Hygeia seems clear from *CIJ* 711b (300-250 BCE), where an inscription from Oropus (Boeotia) mentions the manumission of a Jew who set up the monument beside an

acknowledged the divine power of the Jewish (-Christian) God and were attracted to Judaism and early Christianity, especially for protection against demonic afflictions.[110] The promise of protection against magic played an important role in the conversion of many to Judaism and Christianity.[111] Jewish and New Testament traditions attest the fact that Jews and Christians had a reputation for working miracles, exorcisms, healings and 'signs and wonders'.[112] And many pagans were attracted to the 'signs and wonders' performed by Jesus, the Jews and the early Christians. In addition, Jewish traditions such as those concerning Solomon's wisdom against demonic possession or Moses' reputation as a wonder-worker and a sage in divine mysteries would no doubt make Judaism attractive to pagans interested in divine power and miracles.[113] Furthermore, the invocation of the Jewish God, the God of heaven of the Persian period and Ὕψιστος or Παντοκράτωρ of the LXX, particularly with his Hebrew names such as Iao or Sabaoth, was thought to be effective.[114] Pagans who were naturally drawn to the reality of divine power became interested in the power of Jewish magic.

Pagans also shared certain aspects of Jewish theological vocabulary in their religious language and worship. For instance, confession inscriptions in Sardis and Lydia

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altar having been so commanded in a dream by the Greek gods Amphiaraus and Hygeia. See further Robert, 'Malédictions funéraires grecques', *CRAIBL* (1978), 244-52.

[110] A.F. Segal, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 109; D. Aune, 'Magic in Early Christianity', *ANRW* II.23.2 (1980), 1507-1557.

[111] Cf. *1 En.* 10:21; 48:4; Mk. 7:31-7; Acts 13:6f.; 14:8f.

[112] See, for example, Exod. 3:20; 4:30; Deut. 4:34; 7:19; 2 Kgs. 20; 1 Sam. 16; Isa. 8:18; Jer. 32:20-1; Dan. 4:2-3; 6:27; Neh. 9:10; Sir. 38:1-15; Lk. 10:17; 11:20; Matt. 11:4-5; Mk. 3:1-6; 16:17; Jn. 4:48, Acts 5:12; on the link between sickness and demons, see *1 En.* 6-11; Tob. 2-11; *Jub.* 10:16-14; Mk. 2:1-12. For δύναμις in the LXX, see *TDNT,* II, 290-9. Magic and exorcism were prevalent among Jews in the period before the Bar Kokhba, see P.S. Alexander, 'Incantations and Books of Magic' in E. Schürer, *History,* III, 342-79.

[113] According to Josephus, Solomon 'composed incantations by which illnesses are relieved, and left behind forms of exorcism with which those possessed by demons drive them out never to return' (*Ant.* 8.45-9); on Moses as a magician, see Feldman, *Jew and Gentile,* 285-87.

[114] See Diodorus Siculus i.94.2 (first-century BCE) = M. Stern (ed.), *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974-84), I, no. 58; Feldman, *Jews and Gentiles,* 380. Cf. P.S. Alexander, 'Incantations', 358.

show that they share the similar Jewish cultic idea of παντοκράτωρ or εὐλογία and the verb εὐλογεῖν.[115] While the Sardis inscription uses these Jewish terms, it may be observed, the deities commonly cited are Sabazios, Men, Isis, Zeus or Apollo. The language also affirms that both believed in the overseeing presence and rulership of their deities. In Cilicia, Lydia and their surrounding regions, there exist inscriptions which attest to the existence of a community of worshippers of an Anatolian deity called Σαββατιστής or Σαβαθικός from the time of Augustus.[116] And in Philadelphia, a dedication was made to a 'great, holy god Σαβαθικός'. It is quite likely that given the widespread interest in Sabbath,[117] these pagan inscriptions seem to come from Gentile groups who had been influenced to some extent by Jews and their ideas of the Sabbath.[118]

In accordance with the tradition of *interpretatio graeca*, some even identified one god with another. Gentile worshippers identified the Jewish God with the highest god of the pagan pantheon. For instance, Varro in the second-century BCE argues that Jews had in fact worshipped Jupiter.[119] Similarly, Plutarch, having compared Jewish and

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[115] On the possible Jewish influence in the use of the term εὐλογία in the Lydian confession inscriptions, see Robert, *Nouvelles inscriptions de Sardes,* I, 28-30. Cf. Pleket, 'Religious History', 171-74, 183-89. Pleket is more cautious of whether there was a Jewish influence. See also Kraabel, 'Paganism and Judaism' in Overman and MacLennan (ed.), *Diaspora Jews,* 248.

[116] Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées de l'Asie Mineure*, no. 80; *CPJ,* III, 41-87, esp. pp. 46-56 for a discussion of pertinent inscriptions.

[117] This seems clear from the mixed reactions of praises and criticisms concerning its scrupulous observance. Plutarch, for example, criticises the pagan religious veneration of Sabbath in *De Sup.* 165F-166C, 169C. See further Feldman, *Jew and Gentile,* 158-67.

[118] Jewish influence may be indicated in the term 'Sabbatheion' which in Thyatira is probably another name for a synagogue. See *CIJ* 752, cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 16.164. It is unlikely, however, that the deity was linked to the Phrygian-Thracian god Sabazios. See Johnson, 'The Present State of Sabazios Research', *ANRW* II.17.3 (1984), 1604. See Trebilco, *Jewish Communities,* 198 n.65; Kant, 'Jewish Inscriptions', 684 n.84.

[119] Cf. Augustinus, *Civ. Dei* iv.31; *De cons. evang.* i.22.30; 23.31 = Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors,* I, 209-10, no. 72A-C. Note Augustine's comments on Varro's assertion: 'Since the Romans habitually worship nothing superior to Jupiter, a fact attested well and openly by their Capitol, and they consider him the king of all the gods, and as he perceived that the Jews worship the highest God, he could not but identify him with Jupiter' (*De cons. evang.* i.22.30 = Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors,* I, 210).

Greek rituals, identified the Jewish God with Dionysus.[120] Conversely, Jews themselves identified Zeus with the God of Israel, arguing that when Greek philosophers and poets talked about Zeus they actually had in mind the true God.[121]

Common traditions also allowed the inclusion of Jewish tradition and (re)interpretation, as was the case in the inclusion of the Jewish tradition of Noah and the biblical account of the flood by the city of Apamea Kibotos as a part (or a re-interpretation) of their own native flood traditions,[122] or of the re-interpretation of shared traditions about world history from the classical Greek writers Hesiod and Homer by the Jewish Sibyl in the Sibylline Oracles I/II.[123]

It is possible to suggest then that the prominence of Jewish communities as well as the similarities between Jewish and pagan religious concepts and outlooks could open up the possibility that Gentiles might be attracted toward certain Jewish elements. If this is right, it is not difficult to understand how Paul's Anatolian audience could be influenced by the Jewish agitators. There were affinities between Jewish and pagan

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[120] Plutarch *Quae. Conviv.* 671C-672B = Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors,* I, 553-58, no. 258. Plutarch also associates the Jewish God/Sabbath with wine and hence with Dionysus, whose Bacchic worshippers were called Sabi. That such association could have been common may be discerned from Tacitus' refutation of this interpretation in *Hist.* 5.5.5.

[121] See Aristobulus (cited by Eusebius, *Pr.Ev.* 13.12.4-8) who quoted the verses of Aratus and replaces the name of Zeus by Theos, explaining that this was what the author had actually in mind. Cf. also Acts 17:28. Outside Asia Minor in upper Egypt, an example comes from the two Jewish votive inscriptions in the temple of Pan east of Apollinopolis Magna. The first expresses gratitude to God (θεοῦ εὐλογία) shown by Theodotos the son of Dorion, a Jew, for safety from a sea travel. Although one is not clear about the occasion for the second inscription, which begins with εὐλογεῖ τὸν θεόν, it is not unreasonable to suggest that it is probably connected with travelling, as the majority of inscriptions dedicated to Pan Euodes (Pan the Successful Journey) express similar concern. It is not usual for Jews to offer their prayers and thanks in a pagan temple, it may thus be argued that those responsible for the inscriptions had not in fact dedicated them to Pan Euodes but identified their God with 'Pan' as the universal deity. See W. Horbury and D. Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), no. 121, 122 (second or first-century BCE). See also M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM, 1974), 261-67.

[122] See Trebilco, *Jewish Communities*, 86-94. Although the coins which bear the image of Noah and the Ark were minted at the end of the second century CE, it was the earlier Jewish, and not Christian, influence that gave the coins and the flood traditions their biblical significance. See also J.M. Scott, *Paul and the Nations,* WUNT 84 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1995), 35-36.

[123] Trebilco, *Jewish Communities*, 95-99.

beliefs in the overseeing presence of the deity and divine power, in the importance of observing the law and its rituals, and in divine justice and punishment (against transgressors and lawlessness). This might pave the way for the agitators to propagate their Jewish teachings and portrayal of God and his demands to the Galatians. On the other hand, Paul could have equally appealed to the Galatians' religious context in order to dissuade them from adhering to the agitators' demands.

It is my argument that the Galatians, in the light of their own religious outlook and background, could have easily identified with, (re)interpreted and taken on certain aspects of Jewish elements. In a history-of-religions perspective, the concern for religious practices might have its background in their Anatolian pagan observances. Piety in ritual and calendrical observances could easily be baptised into a piety that takes on Jewish observances. The Galatians have attached significance to religious practices. Having compared both Jewish and pagan elements, they could have easily perceived the nature of God and the significance of his laws to correspond to aspects of their (former) Anatolian religiosity.[124] In other words, the Galatians could have *effectively* identified God with the Anatolian deity. But according to the apostle, this reveals their misconstrued views on the nature of God and of their relationship with him.

5. Antiquity and traditions

Many religious cults in the ancient world were firmly rooted in their local traditions and rituals. And most of these ritual precepts, derived from national or ancestral customs, were binding on worshippers.[125] The rites of the family and of the ancestors,

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[124] This is not to say, however, that the Galatians (or the agitators) had combined Jewish and pagan elements syncretistically, or that they had continued to believe in the gods of the pagan pantheon. There is no evidence in Paul's letter that this was the case.

[125] According to *SIG* 985, *l.* 14, the obligatory cultic ordinances concerning the performance of 'purification, the cleansings and the mysteries' given by Zeus were 'in accordance with ancestral custom and as has now been written' (κατά τε τὰ πάτρια καὶ ὡς νῦν [γέγραπται]). See also Nilsson, *A History of Greek Religion,* 192. On the contrary, those who turned away from ancestral rites and worship could face potential abuse. E.g., in the second-century, a

for instance, were considered sacred, since they were thought to be handed down by the gods themselves, for the ancient times were the closest to the gods. Indeed, in the worship of domestic gods in both Greek and Roman households, it was thought that the gods were handed down from the ancestors.[126] Cicero remarks, 'This no doubt meant that I ought to uphold the beliefs about the immortal gods which have come down to us from the ancestors, and the rites and ceremonies and duties of religion. For my part I shall always uphold them ..., and no eloquence ... shall dislodge me from the belief as to the worship of the immortal gods which I have inherited from our forefathers.'[127] The older things were, the more divine and credible they were. In fact, antiquity was often appealed to as a proof for the truth of traditions as well as a ground for their observance.[128]

Similarly, in the Greek magical papyri, spells and magical recipes were collected and passed down as ancient and valuable παράδοσις, whose origins could be traced back to the gods themselves.[129] The magician often operated on the assumption that his spells were an ancient and venerable tradition.[130] Their effectiveness was based on their alleged link to a revered tradition whose origin was in the gods themselves. Mystery rites were also part of the 'tradition', and transmission was fundamental to the practice of ritual initiation into the mysteries. The idea of 'traditions' would give the mystery rite a sense of venerability and a stamp of divine authoritativeness. For example, the initiatory rite in the mystery of Isis which Lucius went through was described as a παράδοσις by Apuleius.[131] An inscription from Attica attests that one

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baker's wife was regarded as an 'enemy of faith' because she is a 'despiser of all the gods whom others did honour' (Apuleius, *Meta.* 9.14).

[126] Cicero, *De Leg.* 2.27. See Nilsson, 'Roman and Greek Domestic Cults', *Opuscula Selecta*, III (Lund: Gleerup, 1960) 271-85.

[127] Cotta in Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 3.2.5. See also Cicero, *De Leg.* 2.10.27. He further defends the validity of the Roman religion on the grounds of its antiquity, see *De Nat. Deor.* 3.1.5-4.10. See also D. Georgi, *The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians* (Edinburgh: T &T Clark, 1987), 160; and literature cited on p. 223, notes 492-94.

[128] R.L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 122-23.

[129] H.D. Betz, 'The Formation of Authoritative Tradition in the Greek Magical Papyri' in Meyer and Sanders (eds.), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition,* III, 165.

[130] See Betz, 'The Formation of Authoritative Tradition', 161-70.

[131] Apuleius, *Met.* 11.21.

had 'entered into the tradition of the mysteries' (εἰσαγαγὼν τὴν τῶν μυστηρίων παράδοσιν).[132] The so-called 'Mithraic Liturgy' which promised divine protection and immortality to the initiates is likewise described as παραδοτὰ μυστηρία.[133] Similarly, mystery rites that were transmitted were considered sacred and divinely inspired; their origin was in the gods themselves.[134] Thus, one might seek to present his teaching to others as authoritative and divinely inspired by appealing to its character as an ancient and venerable παράδοσις. The ideology of παράδοσις would not only sustain the claim of an unimpaired transmission of divine revelation but also the authority of the teacher or a particular myth or rite. The traditions handed down were also significant for the social life of the community and their common cultic participation.[135]

In the same way, philosophical schools also placed a great premium on antiquity. Converts were required to learn the school's doctrines and traditions. While adherents remained committed to their teachers, loyalty to their founders and to their teachings or revered doctrines and traditions remained integral to the philosophical enterprise. The schools continued to sustain the veneration of the authority, stature and teachings of their founders. For example, the Epicureans were known for the firm conservatism with which they revered their founder and maintained his teachings. They regarded his teachings as canonical.[136] Members pledged to obey

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[132] *SIG* iii.704E 12, cited in C.E. Arnold, *The Colossian Syncretism*, WUNT II.77 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1995), 209. For other examples of the importance and role of traditions in mystery initiations, see Athenaeus, *Deipn.*2.40D.

[133] *PGM* IV.476. See also Arnold, *Colossians,* 139, 208.

[134] Plutarch: '... sacred writings, which the goddess collects and puts together and gives into the keeping of those that are initiated into the holy rites' (*Mor.* 351F-252).

[135] Cf. Isocrates (*Or.* 4.43): 'Now the founders of our great festivals are justly praised for handing down (παρέδοσαν) to us a custom by which, having proclaimed a truce and resolved our pending quarrels, we come together in one place where, as we make our prayers and sacrifices in common, we are reminded of the kinship which exists among us'.

[136] On the veneration of Epicurus, see A.J. Festugière, *Epicurus and His Gods* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), 40-42; N.W. DeWitt, *Epicurus and His Philosophy* (Minnesota: OUP, 1954), 100-101. Cf. A.A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics* (London: Duckworth, 1974), 19 who suggests that Zeno might have developed further than Epicurus in his work on logic.

Epicurus and to accept his teachings.[137] Commitment and allegiance to ancient traditions remained the indispensable cohesive force that united the members in a common identity. Veneration of a founding figure and of traditions, texts or doctrine sustained the legitimacy not only of the school's teachings but also the obedience and commitment of members.[138] But such ideology was not a unique feature of the Epicureans; it also features in other philosophical schools. As David Sedley points out, 'In the Greco-Roman world, especially during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, what gives philosophical movements their identity is less a disinterested quest for the truth than a virtually religious commitment to the authority of a founder figure'.[139] It is not surprising, then, that for many contemporary thinkers, the revered text of Plato was commonly regarded as divine; likewise, Epicurus and Socrates were held in great esteem by their followers.

In many respects Judaism both presented itself and appeared to outsiders as a philosophy.[140] For instance, Philo described the activity of Jewish synagogues as the study of philosophy.[141] His predecessor, Aristobulus of Alexandria argues that the Greek philosophers learned from Moses, a point that would be made by later Jewish and Christian apologists.[142] For Josephus, the various Jewish sects were regarded as philosophical schools.[143] And the presentation of Judaism in certain literary genres

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[137] Philodemus, *Peri parresias* 45.8-11; N.W. DeWitt, 'Organisation and Procedure in Epicurean Groups', *CPhil.* 31 (1936), 205-11; Malherbe, 'Self-Definition among Epicureans and Cynics' in B.F. Meyer and E. P. Sanders (eds.), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, III, 48.

[138] The philosophical schools maintained allegiance of their adherents through oral propaganda and the use of epistolary literature as well as the insistence on daily conversation with a philosopher and the observation and imitation of his lifestyle. See Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians,* ch. 3; Nock, *Conversion,* ch. 11; Seneca, *Ep.* 6.5-6.

[139] D. Sedley, 'Philosophical Allegiance in the Greco-Roman World' in M. Griffen and J. Barnes (ed.), *Philosophia Togata* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 97-119 (97). On the loyalty and veneration of the founder by Epicureans, see Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.* 1.43; Plutarch, *Mor.* 1117B.

[140] Cf. M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism,* I, 255-61; J.J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 175-94; Nock, *Conversion,* 78.

[141] Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 2.215-16.

[142] P. Borgen, 'Philo of Alexandria' in M.E. Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, II, 233-82 (274-79).

[143] Josephus, *War* 2.119; *Ant.* 18.11.

and in the categories of Hellenistic philosophy could function as a propagandistic and apologetic means to attract Greeks who were already interested in, or alternatively hostile towards, Judaism.[144] On the other hand, early Christianity, although in a sense a religion that appealed to many with its system of esoteric doctrines and exclusive salvific claims,[145] resembled contemporaneous Graeco-Roman philosophies, even borrowing from them their conventions and patterns of language.[146] Later Christian apologists also understood Christianity as a philosophy, which they sought to communicate with Jews and Greeks.[147]

As a philosophical school, Judaism stood in the same tradition with its contemporaries. The link to antiquity, revered historical figures, and traditions or doctrines was sufficient ground for expecting them to be true. If one could show one's own tradition to be older than its rival, one could lend it additional authority. Thus, by appealing to antiquity and the revered Jewish παράδοσις, now faithfully transmitted to the present, Jewish ancestral law, customs and an inherited way of life could be attractive to, or at least be tolerated by, those on the outside.[148] As Tacitus

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[144] Cf. According to Collins, 'it is almost inevitable that the "apologetic" would be directed simultaneously to those within and to those outside' (*Between Athens and Jerusalem,* 9). Dalbert argues that one aspect of Jewish propaganda literature was the manifestation of spiritual revelation in rational ethics, see P. Dalbert, *Die Theologie der hellenistisch-jüdischen Missionsliteratur unter Ausschluss von Philo u.Josephus* (Hamburg: Reich, 1954), 137-43.

[145] E.A. Judge, 'The Early Christians as a Scholastic Community: Part II', *JRH* 1 (1960-61), 125-37; W. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians. The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 81-84. On the other hand, Christianity was perceived as a foreign cult, so Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96.10; as a θίασος or συναγωγή, cf. Lucian, *Pereg.* 11.

[146] For a discussion and bibliography, see Meeks, *Urban Christians,* 81-4; Malherbe, 'Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament', *ANRW* II.26.1, 267-70.

[147] For example, Miltiades in his apology or Melito of Sardis in his letter to Marcus Aurelius referred to Christianity as a philosophy (Eusebius, *His. Eccl.* 5.17.5; 4.26.7).

[148] Thus, Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities* and *Against Apion* defend the antiquity of the Jewish people. Cf. Josephus, *Ap.* 1.176-83; Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.2. See Feldman, *Jews and Gentiles,* 177-200.

remarks, 'These rites, whatever their origins, are sanctioned by their antiquity'.[149] They had an air of authority about them.[150]

Since in matters religious, older was often thought to be superior and more reliable, antiquity and the long and honoured reputation for wisdom and piety could serve as hall-marks of credibility and truth. Indeed, a link to Jewish antiquity might bring prestige and honour.[151] Thus, like Plato, Moses was highly honoured by both pagans and Jews.[152] His towering stature, virtues and eminence as a law-giver could serve as a means of sustaining the legitimacy and the authority of the Jewish law and traditions. Even a pagan magical text speaks of Moses as the messenger and a prophet who transmitted the divine mysteries (παρέδωκας τὰ μυστήρια) to Israel.[153] Similarly, traditions concerning Abraham could be effectively employed to legitimate circumcision and law-observance.[154] Abraham's exemplary behaviour and righteousness, and his obedience to circumcision, all serve to instruct those who claimed to be his children. People also placed a premium on ancestry; it was an object of pride and boasting. For example, Josephus refers to 'the Carthaginians ... for all their pride in the great Hannibal and in the nobility of their Phoenician

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[149] Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.5.

[150] On the comprehensiveness and reliability of the Jewish law to govern lives, Millar remarks that 'no religion entirely lacks this; but in Judaism it is much more definite and more comprehensive than in the ancient religions' (Schürer, *History,* III, 155).

[151] For instance, according to Trebilco (*Jewish Communities,* 93), the link to the revered Jewish antiquity, including the figure Noah, in the re-interpretation by Jews of the local native traditions enhanced the prestige and significance of the city.

[152] Cf. Josephus (*Ap.* 2.161): 'Such was our legislator (Moses); no charlatan or impostor, as slanderers unjustly call him, but one such as the Greeks boast of having had in Minos and in later legislators'. Moses was known as the greatest law-giver, whose virtue, piety, courage and wisdom were highly esteemed. For example, Jewish apologists thought that Moses was superior to the Greek philosophers; cf. Aristobulus (second-century BCE, in Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* 13.12.1, 13-16), Artapanus (*c.* 100 BCE, *Praep. Evang.* 9.27). Elsewhere, see praises of Hecateus in Diodorus 1.94.1-5; 40.3.3; Strabo, 16.2.38-39.762; and Manetho in Josephus, *Ap.* 1.235, 250; see *Ant.* 1.6 (as a lawgiver); 2.270-71 (piety); 3.98 (leadership); 4.328 (wisdom); similarly, Philo also mentions the fame of his law (*Vit. Mos.* 1.1.1-2) and his divinity (*Quaest. in Exod.* 2.54; *Sacr.* 9; *Poster. C.* 28; cf. *Ass. Mos.* 11.6). See also Feldman, *Jew and Gentile,* ch. 8.

[153] *PGM* V.108-17; see also Betz, 'Formation of Authoritative Tradition', 166.

[154] On the faithfulness and righteousness of Abraham, see *Jub.* 23:10; 1 Macc 2:52; on the separation of Gentiles, see *Jub.* 22:16-19. His virtues and character were highly esteemed by Jewish writers, see Josephus, *Ant.* 1.161, 165, 256; Philo, *Abr.* 107-108; *Migr. Abr.* 13.

descent ...'.[155] Ancestry was also the boast of the patriarch Joseph, who 'boasted at being a member of the Hebrew race'.[156]

The premium placed on antiquity, ancestry and traditions in the Graeco-Roman world could provide another reason why the Galatians were attracted to the teachings of the agitators, who might have been seen as legitimate interpreters or transmitters of religious traditions. Like most contemporary religions and philosophical schools, Jews (or Christian Jews) could offer history and revelation, traditions and texts, to attract outsiders and to sustain their allegiance. The appeal to revered scriptural tradition or the law and its link to Abraham could be used to command authority and to legitimate commitment. Hence it is not inconceivable that the Galatians saw the link that Jewish practices had with antiquity, ancestry and tradition as conforming to certain ideals of the Hellenistic and Roman era; standards esteemed even among the philosophers. In the light of this, Paul's so-called law-free gospel could have appeared to them as one without links to Jewish antiquity, especially when it overlooked significant aspects of past Jewish practice. On the contrary, Paul, as we shall see, *does* appeal to antiquity and (scriptural) tradition in his demonstration of the truth of the gospel. Thus, the values or ideals held by the Galatians and their contemporary society could inform our understanding of what Paul seeks to do in his letter.

6. Conclusion

The prevailing Anatolian religiosity and mentality in the cities and villages of Asia Minor involved a strict ritual and moral piety, the fear of divine justice, and subservience to the overseeing rule of the gods. Worship often centred on or around mountains and/or cities associated with the deities. Communities submitted to deities who were believed to govern their lives, ethics and behaviour. Some communities were temple states and their residents were known as sacral slaves. The belief in the

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[155] *War* 2.380.

deities as guardians and protectors of the laws ensured that the latter were observed scrupulously. Indeed, curses were often invoked against transgressors or wrongdoers. Confessional inscriptions and the erection of steles point to the threat of divine justice and punishment perceived by many worshippers. They sought favour, hoping that divine justice might be averted or appeased by adhering to divine laws. The performance of rituals or cultic ordinances was also considered religiously significant and appropriate, not only in the civic participation of the imperial cult but also in their religious associations, seeking to secure divine power, protection, and benefits, material or otherwise.

Gentiles also could not have ignored the influx of ideas brought by Jews and Christians. The friendly co-existence and the social interaction between Jews and Gentiles provided many opportunities for the pagans to come into contact with Jewish religious concepts. Some were quite content to remain loosely attached or to sit somewhere on the border between the two. Common traditions, vocabulary and forms of piety shared by both pagans and Jews, could further encourage receptivity toward Jewish elements. Both Jews and pagans emphasised the overseeing presence and rule of god and acknowledged and witnessed to the presence of divine power. Both placed great premium on antiquity and traditions. Both also worshipped a god of justice and also attached significance to the laws as well as the observance of religious practices and rituals. This opens up the possibility that the Galatians' receptivity toward the Jewish teaching espoused by the agitators might have been influenced to some extent by their own Anatolian religious outlook and mentality. Doubtless their previous religious ideas and attitudes would have been affected by what they had learned and experienced, but it is inconceivable that their own brand of paganism would not have affected or modified their understanding and reception of Jewish (and Pauline) elements, especially when there were affinities between them. We cannot dismiss possible subliminal and vestigial influences of their pagan past on their present conduct.

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[156] Philo, *Migr. Abr.* 20. On the boasting in one's ancestry, see the section περὶ εὐγενείας in Philo, *Virt.*, esp. 187, 197.

It is my suggestion in the following chapter that the Galatians' acceptance of the agitators' gospel was attributable in part to their perception concerning the nature of the divine and the significance of the law. They perceived the law to be the manifestation of God and his divine will and attached religious significance to its scrupulous observance. Influenced by the agitators' teaching, the Galatians' outlook and estimation of the law were also attributed to the fact that they have attached toponymic significance to Mount Sinai and the city of Jerusalem. In addition, the Graeco-Anatolian context of the Galatians have also shaped, to some extent, Paul's argument as he seeks to demonstrate the truth of his gospel and to spell out the consequences of their conduct.

Chapter 3

PAUL'S CRITIQUE OF THE GALATIANS' RELIGIOSITY

1. Introduction

In the light of the information collected in the previous chapter, we must now ask whether our insights into the religious life of Anatolia shed any light on the Galatians' conduct as well as on Paul's criticisms. To do so, we need to examine what the apostle himself reveals about them in the relevant texts. I suggest in what follows that the Galatians' outlook reflects aspects of their contemporary Graeco-Anatolian religious perspectives. This has influenced to some extent their acceptance of the agitators' teaching. On the other hand, Paul also appeals to the Anatolian context or values and beliefs of his audience and hopes thereby to correct at least in part their perception of the law and of God. At the same time, he is especially concerned to highlight for his audience the proper ways, according to the gospel, to relate and live before God. The Galatians are not to conform any longer to the world's outlook.

2. The significance of the law in the Galatians' religiosity

Paul asserts in Gal 2:16, 21, 3:2-5 and 5:2-4, that righteousness and divine gifts do not come from the observance of the law.[1] He draws a sharp antithesis between ἐξ ἔργων

[1] The verb δικαιόω occurs some eight times in Galatians (2:16 (3 times), 2:17; 3:8, 11, 24; 5:4) and the noun δικαιοσύνη in 2:21. The verb is used in the LXX in a judicial sense of acquitting someone (e.g. Exod. 23:7; Deut. 25:1, 2; 2 Sam. 15:4; Mic. 6:11). Paul's usage here could suggest that the verb δικαιόω is used forensically and relationally to indicate one's standing before God. To be justified is to be declared righteous before God. See Schrenk, 'δικαιόω', *TDNT,* II, 215; J.A. Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul* (Cambridge: CUP, 1972), 212; Dunn, 134; Longenecker, 85; Witherington, 174; cf. Räisänen's remark: 'the gaining of a *new* relationship with God'. See H. Räisänen, 'Galatians 2:16 and Paul's Break with Judaism', *NTS* 31 (1985), 545. More recently, Eckstein argues that the terms δικαιοῦν and δικαιοσύνη refer to the juridical-forensic (or soteriological-eschatological) expressions of God's salvific acquittal of the guilty sinner. See H-J Eckstein, *Verheissung und Gesetz,* WUNT 86 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1996), 16-

νόμου and ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως or πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as the ground of the Galatians' experience of divine work and gifts. According to him, no one is justified by works of the law but through (ἐὰν μή) faith in Jesus Christ (διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) (2:16).[2] Indeed, he argues that even Christian Jews know that righteousness is obtained through faith in Christ (εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν).[3] Paul's argument would seem to suggest that in the Galatians' mind, one's relationship with

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20. Ziesler also sees the verb (δικαιόω) as essentially forensic and the noun δικαιοσύνη or adjective δίκαιος as ethical, describing behaviour within the relationship. On this, see Ziesler, *Righteousness,* 147, 212. On this point, it may be observed that in his letter to the Galatians, Paul, it seems, uses the noun and the verb without necessarily suggesting that there exists a sharp distinction between them (see 2:16-21; 3:19-24; 5:4-5). See also Dunn, 'The New Perspective on Paul' in his *Jesus, Paul and the Law,* 207; Esler, *Galatians* 141-42. Esler (*Galatians,* 159-69) is probably too quick to dismiss the significance of the forensic or relational dimension of δικαιόω when he argues that righteousness refers primarily to the privileged aspect of Jewish identity; i.e. the prize of belonging to the Jewish people. As many Jewish texts demonstrate, righteousness has a judicial as well as a future dimension, i.e. it promises one's justification and ultimate standing before God and one's participation in the world-to-come. The righteous one is portrayed as one assured of a desirable destiny, hope of salvation, justification and ultimate standing before God. See also Ps. 51:4 (LXX 50:6); 98:9 (LXX 97:9); Wis. 12:12-22; *1 En.* 38; *Jub.* 21:4; cf. also Gal. 5:5: 'we ... await the righteousness (δικαιοσύνης) for which we hope'). See also D.A. Campbell, *The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3.21-26,* JSNTSupp. 65 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 152-3, 176. Martyn (263-75), on the other hand, looks at the justification language (or 'rectification' as he calls it) from Paul's apocalyptic point of view. He argues that the Jewish opponents in Galatia adhered to a juridical-forensic reading of δικαιοῦν/δικαιοσύνη, whereas Paul talks about God's cosmological apocalyptic act in Christ to make right the whole of the cosmos and to bring about liberation. With the differing views on Paul's justification language (whether it is 'forensic/ethical' or 'apocalyptic' or 'social'), the debate concerning the concept of δικαιοσύνη/δικαιοῦν will probably continue for some time yet. See the bibliography in Campbell, *Rhetoric,* 138-56. However, what is more significant for our purpose here is the Galatians' perception of the importance of the law and its relation to God for the purpose of achieving righteousness.

[2] The ἐὰν μή in 2:16 has an adversative rather than an exceptive force. See Räisänen, 'Galatians 2.16', 543-53, esp. 547. Cf. BDF no. 376. Even Dunn who sees ἐὰν μή as 'exceptive' (partly from the fact that he sees 2:15f. as Paul's response to Peter's action) admits that Paul has driven the distinction between faith in Christ and works of the law into an outright antithesis in the latter half of the verse (2:16bc; 3:2, 5, 10-12). See Dunn, 'The New Perspective on Paul' in his *Jesus, Paul and the Law*; 196; idem, 'The Theology of Galatians' in his *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, 245. Moreover, while it is not entirely clear whether 2:15-21 continues to be Paul's response to Peter, this section is nevertheless to be seen as an address to the Galatians, who were left with little doubt about Paul's formulation of the sharp antithesis between faith in Christ and works of the law. Secondly, I take the expression πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as an objective genitive (see further below).

[3] The aorist ἐπιστεύσαμεν refers to the once-for-all step of becoming believers through faith in Christ. See Betz, 117-8. This could refer to their initial step of baptism. Cf. Schlier, 94.

and eschatological standing before God depend on doing works of the law. That the Galatians were seeking to secure righteousness and a favourable standing before God (present and eschatological) through works of the law may be gathered from the future passive tense of δικαιωθήσεται in 2:16d.[4] This is further reinforced in 5:5, where the Galatians are reminded that one waits for the 'hope of righteousness' through faith (ἐκ πίστεως).[5] It seems that they had believed that doing works of the law, including circumcision, could secure righteousness (present and future). They appeared to have seen religious practices in the law as a means to establish their standing before God.

It is quite natural to enquire as to how the Galatians have come to perceive the significance of law-observance as a means to establish one's righteousness and standing before God. Interpreters of Galatians have generally focused on the Jewish agitators as the main influence on the Galatians' action. Attention has been drawn to the possible Jewish origin and background of the agitators and their teaching. However, as we have pointed out in Chapter 1, the paucity of information about them in Paul's letter often makes our attempt to identify the agitators difficult. We may need to be cautious about seeking to understand the Galatian crisis solely on the basis of such a reconstruction.

On the other hand, as we have noted, Paul's negative description of the Galatians' conduct in 3:3 opens up the possibility of the presence of σάρξ, or the outlook and behaviour that arises out of their κόσμος, which had influenced to some extent their religious conduct.[6] His converts began as pagan worshippers and entered a new community with very different values. But the attitudes that the converts brought into the Christian faith were greatly affected by their previous religious worldview and

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[4] Note also the present tense '*seeking* to be justified' (ζητοῦντες δικαιωθῆναι) in 2:17a; cf. 5:4: ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε.

[5] The use of ἀπεκδεχόμεθα is commonly used to refer to eschatological anticipation. See Rom. 8:19, 23, 25; 1 Cor. 1:7; Phil. 3:20. See also Schlier, 234; Mussner, 350.

[6] See Chapter 1.2.b. Thus, I agree with Barclay (*Obeying,* 209) that σάρξ is not to be taken in a purely individualistic or Lutheran sense, denoting self-centredness or self-dependence. The issue facing Paul is not to be construed in such reductionistic terms. See also below 3.6.

way of life. Indeed, such vestigial religious influences might have even provided points of leverage for the agitators.

What was the nature of the Galatians' outlook that could have influenced them to take up the law? 3:1-5 seems to suggest that their conduct was linked to their particular outlook about God or the nature of the divine as well as their perception of the significance of religious observances. According to Paul, the Galatians have placed religious significance in works of the law as a means to secure righteousness rather than in Christ crucified (3:1). That such belief was linked to their perception of God and the law may be gleaned from Paul's rhetorical remarks in 3:2-5. Paul argues that the blessing of divine gifts, including the Spirit and righteousness, comes from faith, or the hearing of faith (ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως, 3:2, 5).[7] By faith the Galatians have already entered into the experience of the Spirit (cf. 3:2, 14; 4:6) and witness the presence of divine power-miracles.[8] In 3:5, he asks, 'Does God give the Spirit and work power-miracles among you through works of the law or by the hearing of faith?' The rhetorical question seems to suggest that the Galatian converts have somehow perceived the link between the law and the divine and its activity. This explains why they have attached significance to law-observance.

How could the Galatians have arrived at such an outlook or perspective about God and the law? Seen against the backdrop of their Anatolian perspectives, their

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[7] Since the phrase ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως is set against 'doing works of the law' (3:2, 5), it is probably better to take ἀκοή to mean 'hearing' (as an antithesis to 'doing'), rather than to see it with Hays as referring to the 'message' of the gospel. See R.B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Narrative Structure of Galatians 3.1-4.11,* SBLDS 56 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1983), 139-49; Burton, 147; G.W. Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians. Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts,* JSNTSupp. 29 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 111.

[8] Cf. 1 Thess. 1:5; Rom. 1:16. It is worth noting that in 3:2-5 Paul is not refuting the agitators' teaching concerning the Spirit. Without clear evidence elsewhere in the letter, we cannot draw firm conclusions from Paul's argument here that the agitators had in fact questioned the Galatians' possession or experience of the Spirit. Thus, Cosgrove's argument that the Spirit was the agitators' main contention is a case of 'mirror-reading'. See C.H. Cosgrove, *The Cross and the Spirit: A Study in the Argument and Theology of Galatians* (Macon: Mercer, 1988), 39-42, 45. This is not to deny, however, that 3:2-5 could well reflect Paul's own polemical evaluation of the Galatians' perception of God and their conduct in the law.

'fleshly' conduct in the law was hardly surprising (3:3). It would have been natural for them to perceive God to be the divine enforcer of the law. Our historical study reveals that for many Anatolian worshippers, the overseeing presence and rulership of the deities ensured that their laws and traditions or customs were observed scrupulously. Indeed, the scrupulous observance of the cultic law was perceived to be religiously significant, for it secured divine favour, power, miracles, protection and benefits.[9] The social and religious life of communities was based on the notions of justice and proper behaviour. Seen in the context of their religious background, the Galatians could have perceived that the experience of divine power, favour and blessing lies in one's fastidious observance of the law.[10] The Galatians have invested religious significance in works of the law, seeing them as a means of relating to God and establishing their righteousness and ultimate standing before him (cf. also 2:15-16).

To be sure, we cannot delineate from 3:1-5 alone the specific contours of the Galatians' Anatolian outlook. Nevertheless, our argument will be supported by additional insights gleaned from what Paul reveals later in his letter about the Galatians' religious perspectives. It is suggested that their own perception of ritual practices as well as their outlook on the physical and divine world have influenced their desire to take up the law. As we shall see, the Galatians' religious conduct could be attributed, more specifically, to their perception of the law as an expression of God and his will. This is already hinted in 3:5. Influenced by the Anatolian view that geographical toponyms (i.e. the mountain and the city) were religiously significant, the Galatians have also attached toponymic significance to Mount Sinai and the city Jerusalem and *hence*, works of the law.

The focus on the Anatolian context of the audience as an issue facing Paul then raises the question, What was the role of the agitators in the Galatian crisis? It is reasonably clear that they came from outside the Galatian communities and that their teachings

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[9] See Chapter 2.3.

have affected the Galatians' outlook and conduct (e.g. 1:6-7; 4:17-20; 5:7-10).[11] Indeed, the agitators might have exploited, in some respects, the outlook of the contemporary κόσμος in order to legitimate the observance of the law.[12] They were successful because they were able to take advantage of the outlook of Paul's converts.[13] In fact, some of their Jewish teachings probably catered to the values and perspectives of the Galatians' religious background, especially when there were similarities in forms of piety and religiosity.

There is little doubt that Paul is concerned about the deleterious effect of his opponents; but, at the same time, he is also aware of the culpability of his converts. He is concerned about their apostatical behaviour.[14] By retaining their former outlook, the Galatians have played a part in causing the situation to deteriorate sharply.[15] Indeed, despite what the agitators might have said, the Galatians, who had been taught by Paul previously and had been doing well (5:7), should have known better than to be influenced by them or to allow their pagan past to colour their religious perspectives and conduct.

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[10] This reminds one of *SIG* 985 *l.*46-48 where it is stated explicitly that those who observe the cultic ordinances will receive divine favour and blessings.

[11] For a discussion on the agitators' activity, see Chapter 6.

[12] In this sense, then, it is not hard to see how Paul could, in effect, class the Jewish teachings and practices advocated by the agitators as part of 'human' religion characteristic of the present κόσμος.

[13] This insight might complement what we may already know (or not know) about the agitators and their teachings.

[14] Indeed, as we have noted in Chapter 1.2.b, Paul's primary focus is on the behaviour of his converts rather than the agitators.

[15] This raises the question as to whether the agitators' role was superfluous and the Galatians themselves, by reverting back to their pagan outlook, have been the principal cause of the crisis (cf. Munck's thesis, based on 6:13, on the primary role of the Galatians in causing the crisis). In my opinion, it is unnecessary to differentiate too sharply the role of the agitators and the contributing factor of the Galatians' religious background. The agitators could have taken advantage of certain theological similarities between Judaism and Anatolian religiosity in order to commend law-observance. Moreover, since the Galatians were most probably recent converts (cf. their rapid turning away from the gospel, 1:6), it is not surprising that their previous religious background could have made them particularly susceptible to the agitators' teaching.

Before turning our attention to the various aspects of the Galatians' Anatolian perspectives of God, the law, the mountain and the city, we look at what Paul says about his gospel and law-observance.[16] Paul criticises the Galatians for attaching significance to law-observances. To achieve his aim, he seeks, first of all, to establish the legitimacy of his gospel and to spell out the consequences of one's desire to take up the law. As we shall see, Paul's strategy lies in his appeal to certain contemporary beliefs and values the Galatians were familiar with. The context of the audience could illuminate aspects of his arguments.

3. The gospel, antiquity and tradition

It is argued that the Galatians' outlook has given rise to their spiritual ignorance and lack of understanding of what Paul perceives to be the proper understanding of the divine and the relationship between worshippers and God. In response, Paul states the fact that the Galatians have received the Spirit through faith as a sign of God's promise and work among them should lead to the conclusion that they should not start observing the law (see also 3:14; 3:26-28; 4:6). Since the Spirit and the accompanying manifestation of power-miracles were not bestowed by God as a result of the observance of the law, the Galatians are not to associate the law with God as an expression of the divine will nor to see its observance as religiously significant in the pursuit of righteousness. They are not to perceive God as one who demands religious observance of his law as a means to secure divine favour and blessing. In fact, this anticipates Paul's subsequent argument in 3:19-20. There, as we shall see, he will distance God from the giving of the law, suggesting that the law does not speak for God's redemptive activity.[17] The law cannot offer direct access to God; indeed, by turning to the law, they have turned away from God (1:6).

To challenge the Galatians' perception of the law and of God, Paul, first of all, appeals to antiquity and tradition to demonstrate the truth of his gospel. We have

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[16] The reason for structuring our arguments in the chapter in this manner is so that we may try to follow the order of Paul's argument in his letter.

seen how people in the ancient world placed a great premium on antiquity and tradition.[18] The link to antiquity was also seen as the ground for establishing authority and legitimacy. Thus, by linking the gospel to scriptural promise and tradition, we see that Paul does in fact also draw on the particular perception of the significance of antiquity and religious traditions commonplace in the Galatians' contemporary society in order to command authority and to legitimate commitment from his converts.[19]

At the beginning of his letter, Paul argues that his law-critical gospel is not without the sanction of established religious authorities; it is not a human invention, shaped to conform to human expectations or to win human approval.[20] His message and mission are derived from divine appointment and scriptural authority (1:15-16). Furthermore, Paul appeals to and (re)interprets the Jewish tradition and demonstrates, at the same time, that his gospel is linked to antiquity and to scriptural authority and traditions.[21] By (re)interpreting the religious tradition and by placing the Christ event in the context of past history as a fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham, Paul also counters any possible charge that he is either introducing a new foreign religion or corrupting (Jewish) tradition. It silences any criticism of Paul's gospel as one having no ancestral legitimacy at all, i.e. it had abandoned all Jewish traditions, and in so doing had abandoned all claims to be a true religion with the authority derived from such traditions.[22] On the contrary, according to Paul's judgement, it was the agitators

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[17] See below 3.5.a.

[18] See Chapter 2.5.

[19] It is worth noting that Paul seems to assume that the Galatians would accept the normative value and authority of scripture. Cf. Mussner (212) argues, 'Paulus ist φύσει Ἰουδαῖος und rabbinisch geschult. Und so kennt er die göttliche Autorität der Schrift und ihre umfassende und normative Geltung.' On the other hand, Paul's confidence, and indeed strategy, may be attributed in part also to the general outlook concerning the significance of antiquity and traditions.

[20] See also Chapter 6.2.

[21] Cf. Hays comments, 'The Abraham story is for Paul taken up into the Christ story' (*Faith,* 226).

[22] Although Munck's thesis (*Paul,* 87-134) concerning Gentile Christian heresy has not received wide acceptance, his argument that the basic problem facing Paul concerns OT interpretation does merit some consideration. Indeed, part of the problem facing Paul involves a (mis)appropriation of scriptural tradition and a failure to apply a christological

(and the Galatians who followed their teachings and practices) who have failed to heed appropriate scriptural tradition. As he puts it, the agitators were the ones 'perverting the gospel of Christ' (μεταστρέψαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 1:7).

Paul and his critics could have been giving priority to different aspects of their religious tradition. But over against their emphasis on circumcision and the law, Paul appeals to and interprets scriptural traditions concerning Abraham and the ancient promise to support his gospel (3:6-14).[23] He chooses aspects of the tradition that emphasise the significance of Abraham's faith over against his circumcision or works. This is clear from the key word ἐπίστευσεν which Paul picks up in the scriptural citation (3:6). The righteousness credited to Abraham in Gen. 15:6 is associated solely with God's promise and the patriarch's faith (cf. Gen. 3:6). Faith, not law, is the basis of one's true relationship with God. Similarly, those who believe are justified with Abraham and receive the blessing of inheritance (3:9, 18, 29).[24] Indeed, those who are of faith (οἱ ἐκ πίστεως) are the children of Abraham, who functions in turn as their forefather.[25]

However, it is not simply the fact that believing Gentiles are blessed and justified through faith just as Abraham was (3:5-6). They are the objects of divine blessing

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hermeneutic. If our emphasis is on traditions, we may then see the situation as that which arises out of the Galatians' uncritical application of these scriptural texts to their Christian communities. They were influenced by those who, perhaps with a Jewish background, emphasised the link between their practices and antiquity embedded in scriptures.

[23] Is Paul also refuting the agitators' understanding of Abraham traditions? This is not unlikely (so Hansen, *Abraham,* 98; Stanton, 'The Law of Moses', 106), although one should bear in mind the problem of 'mirror-reading' (see Sumney, *'Servants of Satan',* 154-55).

[24] According to Mussner (242), the inheritance includes the Spirit and adoption (cf. 3:14). For Betz (159), it 'includes all the benefits of God's work of salvation'. Nevertheless, we should not overlook the fact that Paul may have in mind here the inheritance of the land, as is usually attested in Jewish tradition. See Exod. 3:7-8; Ezek. 36:8-12; Sir. 36:10; *Jub.* 22.14-15; 32.19. See also Rom. 4:13. A redefinition of the inheritance in terms of the eschatological blessings parallels many intertestamental Jewish texts which see the promise of the land in an eschatological sense as God's blessing to his people in the eschaton. See Foerster, 'κληρονόμος', *TDNT,* III, 779-81.

[25] There is probably a hint of distinction between 'those of faith' and those who observe the law, i.e. 'those of faith' or believers in Christ are the children of Abraham. So Eckstein, *Verheissung,* 105.

referred to in the original promise to Abraham (3:8-9).[26] Paul says that it was always in the mind of God to justify Gentiles 'out of faith' (οἰ ἐκ πίστεως), that is, by means of faith.[27] He tells the Galatians that their justification and the blessings they receive as the result of their obedience to his gospel are indeed the fulfilment of God's ancient promise and intention in scripture. Scripture is said to foresee this outcome and to proclaim to Abraham in advance that 'all the nations will be blessed in you' (3:8).[28] Paul presses home the point that the Gentiles are part of God's original plan revealed to Abraham.[29] Scripture witnesses to the inclusion of the Gentiles in the blessing promised to Abraham, which is confirmed by their experience of the Spirit (3:14). Indeed, by drawing a comparison to a human διαθήκη or legal will, he further emphasises the irrevocability of God's promise/covenant with Abraham in antiquity (3:15, 17).[30] The law, given 430 years later, did not annul it so as to nullify the promise (3:15-18).[31] According to 3:18, the priority or precedence of God's promise then sets the basis for dissociating the blessing of inheritance from the law. On the other hand, the law is set in contrast to promise (3:21a);[32] it has no power 'to give life' (ζῳοποιῆσαι; 3:21) or to produce righteousness.[33] Thus, Paul's strategy here

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[26] Mussner, 221; Hays, *Faith,* 203-206. Although Abraham's justifying faith serves as Paul's starting point, he is more interested here in the promise of God to Abraham than in the character of Abraham's faith which is more prominent in Rom. 4.

[27] Bruce (156): 'God's abiding policy'. Note the present tense δικαιοῖ τὰ ἔθνη (3:8). The promise given to Abraham was inclusive, that is, it includes the Gentiles simply on the basis of faith. So Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 106.

[28] Note Paul's use of Gen. 12:3 and Gen. 22:18 here. See Hays, *Echoes,* 108.

[29] Witherington, 228; Bruce, 156; Sanders, *Law,* 21; Hansen, *Abraham,* 115.

[30] On a survey of views sought to identify the sort of legal arrangement for inheritance, see Longenecker, 127-30. Lim has recently suggested that the legal document Paul has in mind parallels a second century CE Palestinian document (PYadin 19) which concerns a testator's will to his daughter about the distribution of property. This will seems to be irrevocable. See T. Lim, *Holy Scripture in the Qumran Commentaries and Pauline Letters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 58-65.

[31] Indeed, later in his allegorical argument concerning Abraham's two sons Isaac and Ishmael, Paul by-passes Mount Sinai and the law. For further discussion on 4:21-5:1, see 3.5.b below.

[32] The contrast highlights the impotence of the law, not its inconsistency with promise. So Martyn, 358-59; *pace* Dunn, 192.

[33] Given the connection between righteousness and ζῳοποιῆσαι, ζῳοποιῆσαι probably has a soteriological sense with reference to the eschatological ζωή. See also Bultmann, 'ζωοποιέω', *TDNT,* II, 874; Dunn, *Theology,* 90.

depends in part on the claim that he is reasserting the efficacy of a divine promise even older than the law.

Furthermore, Paul argues that it was through Christ, Abraham's seed, that God's promises have been fulfilled and through whom they are distributed (3:16). The Gentiles are linked to Abraham through faith in Christ, the 'seed' of Abraham.[34] By interpreting the σπέρμα (singular) Paul probably alludes to the Abrahamic and the Davidic promise (cf. also 4:1-7).[35] In other words, the promise is now interpreted as having a christological and eschatological significance. Christ is the fulfiller of the promise to Abraham, which brings about the gifts of the Spirit and of adoption as sons of God (3:14; 4:7). Believers of the gospel are now recipients of the Spirit and of the promise by virtue of being in Christ (3:14a) through faith (3:14b).[36] By faith (διὰ τῆς πίστεως), believers belong to Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ), and by belonging to Christ who is the only legitimate Seed, they too become Abraham's seed (τοῦ Ἀβραάμ σπέρμα) and indeed children of God (3:26).[37] The family of Abraham has been identified with the family of Christ.[38] Since God's promise was addressed only to

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[34] Interpreters have argued that the central concern in Gal. 3 seems to be the question of who may legitimately be called the sons of Abraham. See Hansen, *Abraham,* 99; Barclay, *Obeying,* 86-92; Martyn, 125; N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 144.

[35] Paul may well have in mind the Abrahamic and the Davidic covenant alluded to in Gen. 22:17 and 2 Sam. 7:12-14. Cf. Betz, 157. Scott has recently argued that in 4:1-7, God's sending of his Son 'in the fullness of time' was to fulfil the Jewish expectation of divine adoptive sonship in the messianic time based on the Davidic promise spelled out in 2 Sam 7:12-14. Subsequent Jewish tradition applies 2 Sam. 7:14 not only to the coming Messiah but also to the people of God as a whole. See J.M. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God,* WUNT II.48 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1992), 117, 178-80.

[36] The content of the promise in 3:14 is the Spirit. So Betz, 152-53.

[37] Martyn suggests that Paul picks up the theme of descent from Abraham in order to make contact with the teachers, but that descent from Abraham is secondary to that of descent from God. See Martyn, 306. It is true that Paul (re)defines the significance of descent from Abraham; nevertheless, Martyn seems to have overlooked the particular importance of Abraham for Paul's argument concerning promise and inheritance. Abraham was the one who received God's promise that the inheritance was to be his. Paul is still concerned to emphasise the continuity of those who are in Christ with Abraham and who receive the inheritance.

[38] Cf. Hays who discusses the participation of the faithful in the identity of the Messiah. See Hays, *Faith,* 213; idem, 'Crucified with Christ: A Synthesis of the Theology of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, Philippians and Galatians' in J.M. Bassler (ed.) *Pauline Theology.*

Abraham and his Seed (3:16), it follows that the Gentile believers in Christ too have now become heirs, sons, and the recipients of the same promise of inheritance (3:29).[39] In this way, Paul is clearly linking the Christ event, and therefore his gospel, to the ancient promise and to scriptural traditions. Implicitly, therefore, those who 'pervert the gospel of Christ' and preach a 'different gospel' would not be able to derive any authority or legitimacy on the basis of biblical antiquity or scriptural tradition.

In making the link between Christ and Abraham, Paul bypasses the law, with the result that Christ alone is the channel of the promised blessings. As Paul puts it in 2:20, the ζωή θεῷ is empowered by Christ; it is lived by faith in Christ. Only by participation in the death (Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι) and resurrection (ζῇ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός) of Christ can one achieve the purpose of living for God. This thereby excludes the possibility of righteousness διὰ νόμου (2:21).[40]

Thus, in making the link between the gospel (the primacy of faith and the Christ-event) and antiquity (or more specifically, God's promise to Abraham), Paul establishes the truth, the validity and the authority of his message. As he points out, the presence of the Spirit among the Galatians is a sign that confirms the validity of God's promise and hence his preaching of the gospel of Christ crucified (3:1-2, 5-14).[41] When the experience of the presence and the power of the Spirit is the proof, it is also clear that it is by this mark or seal that the Galatians receive the blessing of justification and are able to relate to God as his children, and indeed as children of Abraham, children of freedom, children in Christ. By demonstrating the fact that scriptural traditions support his message, Paul hopes that the Galatians would not turn to law-observance or the agitators' gospel of circumcision.

I. *Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 239-40.

[39] Note 3:18, where Paul defines the inheritance as ἐξ ἐπαγγελίας and dissociates ἐκ νόμου ἡ κληρονομία from the promise.

[40] Note the occurrence of διὰ νόμου in v. 19 and v. 21 which brings life (ἵνα θεῷ ζήσω) and righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) into close association. The same association is found in 3:21.

[41] Cf. Lull, *Spirit,* 54-57.

The issue facing the Galatians now is whether they are to continue in their seeming ignorance and to persist in their 'fleshly' conduct. They are to understand and accept the significance of God's activity in Christ apart from the law. They are to act in consistency with what they know of the gospel. Since σάρξ, in apocalyptic language, stands in contrast to the events of the gospel and the coming of the Spirit, it signifies the sphere of opposition to God and his new activity in Christ.[42] The Galatians' 'fleshly' conduct stands in opposition to a new pattern of existence created by the Christ-event and marked by the Spirit. On the other hand, they are to re-evaluate whether to continue to assign religious significance to certain aspects of life and practices. In the light of the gospel, the appropriate response for the Galatians, in establishing their relationship with and standing before God, is therefore not to add circumcision and works of the law, or anything else, to faith. The Galatians are urged to remain steadfast and faithful and to continue their life in the Spirit, without attaching inappropriate significance to the law (2:20).[43]

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[42] The word σάρξ could carry apocalyptic connotations, and as such it aligns with κόσμος. See Barclay, *Obeying,* 205-15. See also Martyn, 'Events in Galatia: Modified Covenantal Nomism versus God's Invasion of the Cosmos in the Singular Gospel: A Response to J.D.G. Dunn and B.R. Gaventa' in J. Bassler (ed.), *Pauline Theology,* 160-79; idem, 'Apocalyptic Antinomies in Paul's Letter to the Galatians', *NTS* 31 (1985), 410-24. According to Martyn ('Apocalyptic Antinomies', 417), the Spirit and the flesh are 'two opposed orbs of power, actively at war with one another since the apocalyptic advent of Christ and of his Spirit'. On the general theme of apocalyptic in Paul, see J.C. Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 135-81.

[43] It would seem here that the πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 2:16 (twice) probably has an objective nuance to mean faith in Christ (see also 3:6-9, 22), although it is observed that faith is presented as possible with the coming of Christ (3:22-23, 25). One notes that the phrase πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 2:16 stands in parallel to the phrase ἐν πίστει τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ in 2:20. Now the meaning of πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ seems to remain unresolved. On those who argue for the case of objective genitive, see Burton, 121; Betz, 118; A.J. Hultgren, 'The *Pistis Christou* Formulation in Paul', *NovT* 22 (1980), 28-63; Dunn, 138-9. R. Harrisville recently argues that the early Fathers do not use it as subjective genitive. See his '"PISTIS CHRISTOU": Witness of the Fathers', *NovT* 36 (1994), 233-41. Those who see it to be subjective genitive include Longenecker, 87; K. Kertelge, *'Rechtfertigung' bei Paulus: Studien zur Struktur und zum Bedeutungsgehalt des paulinischen Rechfertigungsbegriffs* (NTAbh, 3; Münster: Aschendorff, 1967), 162-66; Howard, *Crisis,* 57-59; Hooker, 'ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ', *NTS* 35 (1989), 321-42; Martyn, 270-71; Witherington, 182; Hays, *Faith,* ch. 4; B. Longenecker, 'Defining the Faithful Character of the Covenant Community. Galatians 2.15-21 and Beyond' in J.D.G. Dunn (ed.), *Paul and the Mosaic Law,* 79-81. Obviously, a critical and an in-depth study of the phrase, whether it

4. The curse of the law

Following the argument that it has always been God's plan to justify Gentiles ἐκ πίστεως (3:8) and that οἱ ἐκ πίστεως are blessed with Abraham who believed (3:6-9), Paul states that those who rely on carrying out the law are under the curse of the law. It has been suggested that Paul here cites one of the agitators' claims and then corrects their interpretation to show that the scriptural texts support him rather than them.[44] It is not clear, however, that he is simply refuting their claims; in fact, there is no indication that 3:10 is a mere reference to what his detractors have said or a report about it.[45] Indeed, far from disclaiming his opponents' argument, it may well be that Paul himself is citing a specific scriptural text in 3:10 to serve his own particular rhetorical purpose.[46] He is asking his audience to hear its significance or implications that may not have come to their full attention previously but which will clinch the decision for them.

Paul's citation of the Deuteronomic text, at first glance, appears to be problematic. The reasoning of 3:10 does not seem to serve his purpose. It is hard to see how he would appeal to a scriptural text from Deut. 27:26 that clearly affirms the opposite:

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is objective or subjective in meaning, will require some consideration of other Pauline and NT passages. We also need to question how 'faith(fulness) of Jesus Christ' (or for that matter, 'faith in Jesus Christ') is to be interpreted within the larger theological context of Paul's understanding of covenant, the salvific significance of the cross and resurrection as well as of God's role in justification. Does the faith(fulness) of Jesus in his obedience in death adequately explain the apostle's soteriological perspectives? Such study deserves lengthier discussion than we can give it here. Nevertheless, it is not unreasonable to suggest here that we should also enquire what Paul intends the Galatians to understand and *do*. He wants the Galatians to take a particular course of action. It seems sensible, in my opinion, to take πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as a genitive of quality to mean 'Christic faith', or, according to Hultgren ('*Pistis Christou*', 248-63), faith which is specifically Christ-centred. Whether the genitive has a subjective or an objective nuance is to be discerned in the context of Paul's argument and concern.

[44] Longenecker, 116; Martyn, 309; cf. also C.K. Barrett, 'The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians', in his *Essays on Paul* (London: SPCK, 1982), 159.

[45] Cf., for instance, 1 Cor. 1:11; 5:1; 6:12; 10:23 ; 15:35.

[46] According to Burton (163), 3:10-14 is Paul's counter-argument from Scripture. So also E. Baasland, 'Persecution: A Neglected Feature in the Letter to the Galatians', *ST* 38 (1984), 144.

The curse falls not on those who *do* the law, but on those who *fail* to do it.[47] What is not clear is the rationale behind the chosen text to support his arguments. Most interpreters resolve the difficulty by assuming that Paul has left his minor premise unstated, i.e. the premise that no one has in fact fulfilled all the law.[48] In his mind, it is impossible to carry out the whole requirements of the law and the curse therefore applies to those who fail to do the law.[49] Accordingly, he is here issuing the warning of a potential curse to the Galatians who are considering the prospect of doing the law. However, a rigorous and perfectionistic attitude towards law-observance would seem to be at odds not only with the idea that the law is in fact performable but also of the forgiveness that Jewish religion so often speaks about.[50] The view that it is impossible to carry out the law also plainly contradicts Deut. 30:11-14. Disobedience came about through the actions of humans, not because obedience was not possible. Paul himself may even have thought that it was possible to keep the law, since he later claimed that he had been blameless with regard to righteousness under the law.[51] One questions therefore whether the point of Paul's argument here is about an ability or inability to perform the law, or about whether the law is performable in its entirety or not.[52] On the other hand, the argument of Bultmann and Schlier that the curse applies because of sin that arises out of man's self-sufficiency and human effort to keep to law is not satisfactory.[53] It ignores the plain meaning of the text which states that the curse applies to those who fail to do the law, not to those who do it.

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[47] C.D. Stanley, '"Under a Curse": A Fresh Reading of Galatians 3.10-14', *NTS* 36 (1990), 481.
[48] E.g. Burton, 164; Mussner, 224; Eckert, *Verkündigung,* 77.
[49] See, for instance, Räisänen, *Paul and the Law,* 94-95.
[50] Cf. Martyn, 310; Dunn, 171; Howard, *Crisis,* 51-54.
[51] Phil. 3:6.
[52] Sanders rejects the notion that human inability to keep the law is a basic assumption in Paul's argument (*Law,* 22-5, 27). Nevertheless, 3:10, at the very least, assumes that no one, including the Galatians, *does* observe all the law even though it does not say whether or not one *could* observe all the law. Cf. according to Stanley, Paul's 'real concern is to show that keeping the commandments could not produce 'justification' and 'life' even if the law *could* be fulfilled in its entirety' ('"Under a Curse"', 482).
[53] Schlier, 134-35; Bultmann, *Theology,* I, 264.

Others have also sought to see the 'curse of the law' in the larger Deuteronomic context of Israel's disobedience and covenantal disloyalty.[54] Accordingly, the unfaithful people of Israel incurred the curse of the law; indeed, in view of the divine judgement on the nation, the law could not provide a way to life.[55] God, however, removed the curse and brought about the fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham that the nations would be blessed in him. The main difficulty with this view is that Paul's citation of the curse of the law applies to individuals, not to the whole nation of Israel. It is also unlikely that the Galatians would have in mind here the historical context of Israel's disobedience.

Part of the difficulty in interpreting 3:10 is to see how it coheres with Jewish (or the Deuteronomic) understanding of the curse and the law(-observance). This tends to overlook, however, that Paul is dealing with a particular outlook of his Gentile audience. Indeed, the Anatolian religious context of the Galatians could clarify Paul's argumentative purpose in 3:10-14.

We have argued in the previous chapter that one prominent distinguishing feature of Anatolian religiosity was the overseeing presence and rulership of the gods, especially the gods of Justice and Holiness, Apollo and Hecate.[56] When the gods' will was disobeyed people suffered divine punishment in the form of disease, destitution, or death. Indeed, Anatolians and Jews both shared similar ideas of divine justice and of the necessity to obey the will of the deities. Both worshipped the wrathful God of Justice, where divine vengeance and punishment might be averted through proper adherence to the necessary laws and rituals. Such a notion was also evident in non-Jewish epitaphs, where Deuteronomic curses were cited as a warning against tomb desecrators.[57]

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[54] See J.M. Scott, 'For as Many as are of Works of the Law are under a Curse' in C.A. Evans and J.A. Sanders (eds.), *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*, JSNTSupp. 83 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 197-221; Wright, *Climax,* 137-56; T.L. Donaldson, 'The "Curse of the Law" and the Inclusion of the Gentiles: Galatians 3:13-14', *NTS* 32 (1986), 94-112.
[55] Wright, *Climax,* 150.
[56] See Chapter 2.3.
[57] See Chapter 2.4.

Now in 3:10, Paul portrays the law as a manifestation of the God of Justice, who would mete out retribution and curse against those who defy the law. He argues that those who do the law and orientate their lives around it (see 3:12b) come under the rule of the God of Justice, for 'as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse' (v. 10a). And their works of the law would be judged accordingly; they would be under the constant threat of divine discipline, for the curse falls on those who fail to remain (ἐμμένω) in the law to do it.[58] That Paul would evoke such a curse would be self-evident to his listeners. For the Anatolian audience, the image of God as the one who pronounces a curse and punishes law-breakers would have evoked the familiar image of the Anatolian god(s) of Justice. It is not hard therefore to see why Paul would appeal to the curse-formula, for as he sees it, the issue confronting the Galatians is not merely about law-observance but also about the implication of coming under the wrathful God of Justice. By evoking this divine image, he is issuing a threat intended to dissuade them from adhering to the agitators' 'other gospel' and to see the negative consequences of their contemplated course of action (see also 1:8-9; 6:7-8a).[59] Indeed, as he will make clear in vv. 13-14, God's justice could not be appeased through the observance of religious practices or works of the law; only Christ's death could redeem one from the curse. By becoming a curse through death on our behalf (ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν), Christ allows us access to life and blessing promised earlier to Abraham.[60] The blessings which flow to Gentiles have nothing to do with the law; on the contrary, those who rely on it are cursed.

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[58] The idea of ἐμμένω means perseverance or continuance in God's ways. See Sir. 2:10; 6:20; 11:21; 1 Macc. 10:26, 27. Cf. also Deut. 11:22; 13:4; 30:20.

[59] Elsewhere, Paul, to counter 'the other gospel' and to win his converts back to him, also evokes the image of the God of justice. Thus, in 1:8-9, Paul emphasises (twice!) that those who preached a different gospel will be accursed. Similarly, in 6:7-8a, he warns of divine justice against those who persist in sin and works of the flesh.

[60] Cf. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Trinity, 1991), 123.

The basis for Paul's argument in 3:10 probably lies in the fact that according to God's judgement, no one is justified before him by the law, but only by faith (v. 11).[61] At the same time, the following verses also serve to question any perception that sees the law as religiously significant. Over against the Anatolian view that one relates to the gods through the scrupulous observance of rituals and laws, Paul argues that faith is the basis by which one relates to and establishes one's righteousness before God. The Galatians are urged not to orientate their lives and outlook around religious observances.

Thus, in citing Hab. 2:4, Paul emphasises the significance of faith(fulness).[62] It is not entirely clear whether 'faith', in the phrase ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται, qualifies the verb 'to live' or the noun 'the one who is righteoused'. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that he is setting up a sharp antithesis to v. 10: Righteousness is associated with faith alone; curse applies to those who seek to do the law. The Galatians are urged to remain in their faith(fulness) in Christ,[63] or more specifically in the promises of God to Abraham fulfilled in Christ (3:8, 14, 16).[64] Righteousness that depends *solely* upon the scrupulous observance of religious practices or works of the law is rejected. Faith as an appropriate way to live before God rules out the possibility of living solely by the law.

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[61] It is also possible that Paul has in mind here individual transgressions (or more specifically, the Galatians' works of the flesh referred to in 5:13-6:10) that break the law and thus incur divine judgement. Cf. Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, 94-96; H. Hübner, *Law in Paul's Thought* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1984), 18-19.

[62] It is plausible that Paul may have an eye on the context of Habakkuk which speaks of the faithfulness of the righteous. The latter, in the face of crisis, will live if they continue to be faithful to God and to his commandments; their reliance on God would see them through. This set in contrast to those who had became faithless and ungodly (Hab. 2:5-17, 18-19). In citing Hab 2:4, Paul may have intended to underscore the (historical) significance of perseverance of faith.

[63] In contrast to the LXX rendition that emphasises the faithfulness of Yahweh, Paul's omission of μου might suggest that he has (re)interpreted the Habbakuk text christologically, emphasising life and faith in Jesus. See Mussner, 227. On Paul's eschatological use of Hab. 2:4, see Kertelge, *'Rechtfertigung'*, 89-95.

[64] It is worth noting that the Habbakuk text which Paul cites speaks of one who lives by the 'faithfulness' of the vision of the coming salvation, that is, by the promise of God over against those who relied on wealth and earthly goods (Hab. 2:1-4, 5-20). Similarly, Paul's citation may be a call to faith, in which the vision of righteousness and salvation has come to fulfilment in Christ.

The contrast is further explicated in 3:12a: The law is not of faith (ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως), which could imply that ὁ νόμος does not have its origin in faith.[65] More problematic is 3:12b. It states that the one who does the laws shall live by them (ὁ ποιήσας ἀυτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς). Once again, the plain contextual meaning of Lev. 18:5 seems to contradict Paul's argument, for it affirms that the Torah's own standard of fidelity to God and its accompanying promise of life to those who do the law stands. Nevertheless, it is doubtful if he affirms the promise of Lev. 18:5, especially when he has just argued in v. 11 that righteousness by faith is the only way to life. Since the law does not have its origin in faith, Paul is here distinguishing the true promise of Hab. 2:4 from the false one spoken of in Lev. 18:5.[66] It is also noted that the ἐν in 3:12b is not instrumental; rather, it expresses the primary orientation of life, the sphere of existence. In other words, 3:12 may be seen simply as a description of one whose religious outlook and life orientates around works of the law (see also 3:1-5). The one who does works of law would align himself to the latter (ἐν αὐτοῖς) rather than to faith. Such a person is set in contrast to the one described in v. 11b, 'the righteous one who shall live by faith'.[67] But this will have significant implications. Since 'the law is not of faith' (v. 12a), the dire consequence of v. 10 applies to such a person; he belongs, in effect, in the category of curse. Paul is saying that there are two ways of living. One has its basic *modus operandi* living by doing the law; the other by faith (in Christ, see vv. 13-4). As he already pointed out, the former would come under the wrathful God of Justice and will be accursed if found guilty of breaking the law.

Thus, the Anatolian context of the Galatians could illuminate Paul's argument. He appeals to the contemporary religious outlook as a strategy to dissuade the Galatians

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[65] So Martyn, 315.
[66] Martyn, 333.
[67] Stanley argues that Paul omits ἄνθρωπον from Lev. 18:5 (LXX) in order to bring the two quotations (Hab. 2:4 & Lev. 18:5) into near-perfect parallelism, 'throwing into sharp relief the inherent contradiction (in Paul's way of thinking) between their respective content'. See C.D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture,* SNTSMS 74 (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), 245.

from taking up the law. He warns that by coming under the law, the Galatians are in danger of coming under the God of Justice. Indeed, if the Galatians had taken up the law out of fear of offending God, 3:10 may well be the apostle's paradoxical response. Paul argues that it is precisely by coming under the law that one would face the retributive justice of God. His selection of the Deuteronomic text implies that he is asking them to consider the implication of taking up the law.[68] He points out the foolishness of belonging to ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. As Paul perceives it, the Galatians' works of law, accompanied by the lack of perseverance in their faith(fulness) to Christ, would effectively bring them under the God of Justice. In a way, one could say that in the face of divine judgement, the law, and the attempt to keep it, cannot provide the way to life. By defining Christ's crucifixion as that which brought freedom and redemption from the curse of the law (3:13),[69] Paul's point is clear: It is only 'in Christ' and 'by faith' that one is able to relate to God. Identification with Christ crucified (3:14a) frees one from the curse of the law and opens the door to the blessing of Abraham, including justification, and the reception of the Spirit (3:14b).[70]

5. God, the law, the mountain and the city

a. God and the law

In our historical survey in Chapter 2, we saw that Anatolian deities were perceived as guardians and enforcers of the laws.[71] The laws were integrally linked to the deities and their cults and were seen as an expression of the divine will. Worshippers observed them scrupulously to gain divine favour; they also feared what the gods might do if the laws were transgressed or their observances neglected. From our analysis of 3:1-5, we have pointed out that the Galatians' observance of the law was

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[68] As 5:3 indicates, their decision to take up circumcision is also bound up with the implication of taking up the whole law.
[69] See Eckstein, *Verheissung,* 153-54.
[70] On the relationship between Christ, Abraham and God's promises, see the above discussion.

closely associated to their perception of God. Indeed, in linking the law with God, the Galatians' outlook and perception of the law might not have been very different from that of their contemporaries. To see how this is so, we examine what Paul says about the law in 3:19-25.

Paul's use of the verb προσετέθη in 3:19a seems to suggest, in the first place, the supplementary nature of the law and its subordination to the covenant. The role of the law may be gathered from the use of the term χάριν which could mean either a cause ('because of transgressions') or a goal ('in order to produce or provoke transgressions'). The latter might cohere better with the negative views expressed about the law thus far (see also Rom. 5:20),[72] although it is hard to see why transgressions had to increase before the coming of Christ. The former is not unlikely given the explanatory note on the role of the law as a παιδαγωγός to discipline and train those under its charge (3:24-25).[73] It may be that absolute certainty cannot be achieved here.

Paul then maintains that the law was 'ordained through angels by a mediator. Now a mediator involves more than one party; but God is one' (vv. 19c-20a). There is nothing in the text to suggest that he is portraying the role of angels in a negative light, or that they were even seen as demonic beings with evil intentions, ultimately responsible for the giving of the law and for causing transgressions.[74] More likely is the view that angels were seen here, quite simply, as an intermediate agency, as the

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[71] See Chapter 2.3.

[72] See Eckert, *Verkündigung,* 82; Schlier, 152; Hübner, *Law,* 26.

[73] On 3:23-26 as a portrayal of constraint, see Betz, 176; Howard, *Crisis,* 61; N.H. Young, 'Paidagogos: The Social Setting of a Pauline Metaphor', *NovT* 29 (1987), 171-73; F. Thielmann, *From Plight to Solution: A Jewish Framework to Understanding Paul's View of the Law in Galatians and Romans* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989), 74.

[74] Esler, *Galatians,* 198-99; *pace* Hübner, *Law,* 24-36. If Paul had wished to speak of evil supernatural beings, he would have called them demons rather than angels (cf. 1 Cor. 10:20-21). There is also little evidence elsewhere in the letter to suggest Paul's negative evaluation of Moses as the mediator of the law; *pace* Betz. 170.

use of διά might suggest.[75] Nevertheless, at first glance, the question as to why Paul felt it necessary to mention the role of an intermediary in the giving of the law seems puzzling.[76]

It is possible to take διαταγείς as a 'divine passive', i.e. that God is ultimately the source of the law and the angels were his agents in the role of mediating it.[77] However, the context of what was said earlier in v. 19a and what follows in vv.19b-20 makes this less likely. Paul has just stated emphatically that it was God who gave the inheritance to Abraham through promise in 3:18 (note the position of ὁ θεός at the end of the verse); one that is not to be set aside, supplemented, or reinterpreted by the law given 430 years later. This contrasts noticeably with his failure to mention God in 3:19, which is also confirmed by the reference to the human mediator in 3:19b-20. Thus, what is significant in his statement about the intermediary is the fact that there is, as G. Stanton observes, 'the absence of explicit reference to the involvement of God in the giving of the law'.[78]

One might question, however, whether Paul's statement about the role of angels would necessarily mean that he is distancing God from the law. It is possible to argue, for instance, that the Galatians and Paul had in mind the Jewish traditions that link both God and the angels to the law, i.e. they saw angels as God's agents responsible for the transmission of the law.[79] But it is difficult to know how far the Galatians (or even Paul) were familiar with these traditions, especially when the belief in God and angels as givers of the law was not widespread or universal even in first century Judaism.[80] 4 Ezra 3.18-19, for instance, does not mention angels in its description of the giving of the law at Sinai. It is perhaps also worth noting that it is unlikely that the Galatians, in their Anatolian worldview, would have naturally linked

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[75] This also coheres with Jewish traditions that associate angels and Moses with the giving of the law. Cf. Deut. 33:2 LXX; Ps. 67:18 LXX; *Jub.* 1:27-29; Acts 7:38; Heb. 2:2. On Moses as the mediator in early Judaism, see e.g. Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 2.166; *Ass. Mos.* 1.14; Heb. 8:5-6.
[76] According to Witherington, 'the final two clauses of vs. 19 are the most puzzling' (256).
[77] Cf. Witherington, 255.
[78] Stanton, 'The Law of Moses', 113. Cf. also Räisänen, *Law,* 130-31; Martyn, 366.
[79] See above n.75.

both angels and God in the genesis of the law. In the Anatolian religious world, angels, unlike Zeus or Cybele, were not seen as givers or guardians and protectors of the law.[81] On the other hand, they were more commonly perceived as (inferior) divine messengers or intermediaries. Their role was to carry out and transmit the commands of a higher/supreme deity or to mediate between the gods and worshippers. For instance, a Lydian inscription (165 CE) set up to the Anatolian deity Men Axiottenos speaks of how divine justice was carried out against theft and the transmission of his command through an angel.[82] Here, the deity gave orders to the thief through an angel that the cost of the stolen cloak is to be paid and a stele set up to proclaim his powers. In other inscriptions in Caria near Stratonicea, the reference to θεῖος ἄγγελος/ἀγγελικός probably refer to a subordinate being (or 'angel') fulfilling a mediatorial function as a divine messenger or to an intermediate divinity (θεῖον, 'Theion' or 'Divine') who is also a divine messenger but inferior to the highest or supreme god (such as Zeus Hypsistos/Theos Hypsistos).[83] It is not unreasonable therefore to suggest that Paul's reference to angels (and the human mediator) would impress in the minds of the Galatians, quite simply, that God was not involved in the genesis of the law.

If, as we have argued, Paul wishes to distance God from the giving of the law, then, the thrust of v. 19 would have made a particular impact on those who had retained their Anatolian worldview. In the Galatians' mind, the identification of the deity with the law would evoke the image of God as the enforcer and guardian deity of the law; the law expressed divine ordinance and will and is to be observed scrupulously. Indeed, such an outlook might prove to be a strategic advantage for the agitators to

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[80] Esler, *Galatians*, 199.

[81] Cf. our historical study in Chapter 2.

[82] *CMRDM* i no. 69; *TAM* v.i.159.

[83] See Robert, 'Reliefs Votifs', 118-122 (= *OMS* I.417-421). But cf. a dedication from Temrek in ancient Saittae (close to Lydia) where the god Holy and Just was identified as an angel (Ἀνγέλῳ Ὁσίῳ Δικαίῳ). See *TAM* v.i.185. Since Holy and Just was a god directly involved in human affairs (i.e. being concerned with justice and fair dealings between human beings), and angels, on the other hand, were believed to be mediators between god and worshippers, it is not difficult to understand why the deity would be seen here as an angel.

argue for the link between God and the law as well as the significance of law-observance. Paul, however, challenges their perspectives. In distancing God from the giving of the law, the Galatians are left in little doubt that there is no religious significance in law-observance. The divine blessing of righteousness does not come from one's conduct in the law (3:2-5).

The Anatolian context of Paul's discussion may also help clarify v. 20, where according to the apostle, 'a mediator, however, is not of one (v. 20a), but God is one (v. 20b)'. It has been suggested that in view of Rom. 3:29-31, God is one in the sense that he is the one God over Jews and Gentiles and that it is his desire to create one family of all believers; as such, the introduction of the law (through a mediator) to the Galatians would undermine the oneness of the Christian family.[84] It is doubtful, however, that the Galatians would have readily understood 'of one' to refer to 'of one family'.[85] They would have had to assume more than what Paul is saying here.

In reading v. 20, other interpreters tend to draw a contrast between the mediator and the affirmation 'God is one' (as well as its implication for the law) from the significance of the implied plurality (ἑνὸς οὐκ). It is argued that since plurality is implied in the concept of a mediator, it is inferior when contrasted to the (numerical) oneness of God.[86] Accordingly, the mediator does not speak for God but for the parties, for God, unlike the many in the parties, is one.[87] This view seems to employ a somewhat odd and trivial use of the *Shema* that resonated with so much significance for both Jews and Gentiles.[88] However one construes the meaning of 'not one' (i.e.

Also worth pointing out that the name of a deity associated with the angel missing from the text could probably be Ζεὺς Ὕψιστος.

[84] Wright, *Climax,* 163-70.

[85] Cf. Dunn, 191 n.1.

[86] Betz, 171-73.

[87] Martyn, 366.

[88] For the significance of the worship of one God in early Christianity, see R.M. Grant, *Gods and the One God: Christian Theology in the Graeco-Roman World* (London: SPCK, 1986), 46-49; E. Peterson, *ΕΙΣ ΘΕΟΣ: Epigraphische, Formgeschichtliche und Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1926). Peterson has demonstrated the frequent use of the εἷς θεός formula in Hellenistic religious propagandistic purpose to emphasise the uniqueness of the god acclaimed. As Guerra also

whether angels or Israelites), it is also not clear how the idea of implied plurality and the parties involved would in itself explain the antithesis between v. 20a and the *Shema* in v. 20b.

It is clear enough that an intermediary mediates between two or more parties and, as some have pointed out, Paul may consequently be saying that the mediated law as such is inferior 'because of its indirect introduction into the people's experience', in comparison to the Abrahamic covenant and the promise given by God himself (3:17-18).[89] While the mediated law might contrast God's direct and unilateral redemptive action, the affirmation that 'God is one' would seem an unusual way of drawing attention to this comparative sense of 'superiority' (i.e. direct divine activity) and 'inferiority' (i.e. indirect mediation). An alternative and perhaps more straightforward reading, on the other hand, would suggest that Paul's focus here is on the *status* of the mediator and its implicit inferiority when compared to the *Shema*.[90]

Indeed, Paul's contrast between the oneness of God and the mediator becomes explicable in the light of the Galatians' Anatolian outlook. In contrast to the contemporary view that the law(s) was integrally associated with the deity who was seen as its guardian-enforcer (cf. 3:5), Paul argues that the law was not to be identified with the divine, for God was not directly involved in the giving of the law but a mediator (vv. 19c-20a). Appealing to the oneness of God, a basic axiom of Jewish-Christian monotheism,[91] Paul affirms in v. 20b that there is only one God and no other. The *Shema* challenges any notion that the one who mediates the law is to be associated with the divine, for the mediator, unlike God, is 'not of one' (ἑνὸς οὐκ). Here, instead of taking ἑνός as a subjective genitive, it is possible to construe it as a

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demonstrates, the formula is prominent in Hellenistic Jewish apologetic literature. See A.J. Guerra, *Romans and the Apologetic Tradition,* SNTSMS 81 (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), 74-101.

[89] Longenecker, 142; Witherington, 258; cf. Betz, 171-72.

[90] Nevertheless, as we have pointed out, it is observed that Paul's aim is not to direct his polemic specifically at the plurality of angelic mediation or Moses as the mediator of the law.

[91] Deut. 6:4-5; Rom. 3:29-30; 1 Cor. 8:6. See also Betz, 172 n.87.

qualitative genitive indicating the sort of mediator he was not.[92] It is an emphatic denial that the mediator (and the law) is one in the sense of being seen as a metonymy for the divine being himself.[93] If this is right, it is not necessary then to see the relation between v. 20a and v. 20b in terms of plurality-oneness antithesis. Paul's focus is not on the implied plurality or even the parties involved whom he does not in fact explicate in detail.[94]

Hence Paul merely draws a contrast between the law given through a mediator and the covenant-promise instituted by God himself (3:17-18). Since God had no direct role in the mediation of the law, it may be argued that the law therefore did not speak for God. Contrary to the Galatians' perspectives, God is not to be perceived as one who gives and enforces the law as a means for gaining righteousness (or any other divine benefits). It does not speak for God's redemptive plan;[95] in fact, according to 3:21, the law cannot impart life or righteousness to those who have been imprisoned or confined in sin (v.22). That was not the purpose of the law (see v. 19a); on the contrary, it brings about a curse and enslaves those under it (3:10-14; 4:21-5:1).[96] And its role was primarily to function as a supervisory custodian; and even then it had a limited and restrictive duration, for its role terminated with the coming of Christ (3:23).[97]

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[92] Cf. BDF 91-92, no. 165.

[93] It is therefore not necessary to see with Esler (*Galatians,* 199) that Paul is here concerned to establish that the status and identity of the Galatians (as members of an in-group) is superior to that of the out-group (the Jews). Is Paul adopting an anti-Judaic stance against the law deemed to be permanent and divinely-ordained (cf. e.g. *2 Bar.* 4:1; *1 En.* 99:2; Wis. 18:4)? This charge may seem inappropriate. In the first place, he is addressing the Gentile Galatians, not Jews. Furthermore, Paul does affirm the law in 5:14, although it is now redefined through Christ. On the other hand, Paul's criticism of the law must be seen in the light of their Anatolian outlook, i.e. they have perceived the law as the manifestation of God, expressing his will that its observance would bring about divine benefits.

[94] Paul is also silent about the identity of the mediator. For a discussion and criticism of its possible identity, see Bruce, 179.

[95] Paul, however, is quick to argue that this does not mean that the law would stand in opposition to God's promise (v. 21a). That is, the law cannot (and does not) oppose or alter God's promise of life and righteousness (as v. 21b. suggests).

[96] See above 3.4.

On the other hand, Paul has made clear the permanent validity and primacy of God's covenant-promise he made to Abraham; and as the implication of v. 20b seems to suggest, divine redemption and justification is to be found only in conformity to the oneness of God, not to the law.[98] The law, which was given 430 years later through an intermediary and was temporary in validity for only between Moses and Christ, cannot supplement, change or modify in any way God's promissory covenant made with Abraham based on faith (3:17, 19). Being 'under the law' (3:19-25) has now been replaced in the divine economy by being 'in Christ' (3:26-29). Accordingly, the Galatians are not to perceive the law as a metonymy for God himself or an expression of his (redemptive) will. They are not to invest religious significance in works of the law or to perceive such observance as a means to secure righteousness.

b. The mountain and the city

i. The significance of toponyms in the Galatians' outlook

It is also suggested that the Galatians' outlook and attraction to the law might be attributed to their perception of the significance of geographical toponyms. This may be gleaned from Paul's arguments in 4:21-5:1.

Interpreters often argue that the Galatians' conduct (and therefore Paul's refutation) was influenced by the agitators' reading of the Jewish tradition concerning Abraham's two sons.[99] In particular, the agitators were claiming to be sons of Isaac, the legitimate children of Abraham,[100] even claiming that their views were supported by the church in Jerusalem.[101] The Galatians, on the other hand, were led to believe

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[97] For a discussion on παιδαγωγός and its role as a custodian and disciplinarian, see Longenecker, 146-48; Witherington, 262-67. See also Young, 'Paidagogos', 150-76.
[98] Betz, 172-73. See also Rom. 3:30.
[99] See Barrett, 'The Allegory', 154-70.
[100] The agitators could have appealed to scriptural texts such as Gen. 16-21; so Martyn, 434; cf. Longenecker, 218.
[101] Martyn, 459-66.

that they belonged to the line of Ishmael, children of Hagar. This might explain why they were willing to take up the law, even circumcision. Their conduct was motivated by the desire to become part of the people of God, the children of Abraham along the line of Isaac.[102]

Nevertheless, such a view does not adequately explain the Galatians' outlook. This becomes clearer when we examine carefully Paul's argument. In 4:25-26, Paul talks about Mount Sinai and the city of Jerusalem, where he links the mountain-city and enslavement (= Hagar) and draws a contrast between the present Jerusalem and the 'Jerusalem above'. Part of the difficulty, of course, is to understand why Paul makes such a topographical connection or contrast.[103] It is not simply the case that Mount Sinai is a metonym for the law. Furthermore, the argument that he is merely refuting the agitators' reading of the Hagar-Sarah tradition by arguing that those under the law actually belong to the line of the slave woman Hagar and her son Ishmael is not without its difficulty. It is hard to see how his argument would gain any ground over against theirs. His identification of Jews as children of Hagar clearly contradicts the sense of the Genesis text concerning the history of Israel and the destiny of her people.

Some interpreters have also focused mainly on a possible theological background for Paul's argument. Thus, it is argued that in the contrast between the present and the heavenly Jerusalems, Paul is drawing on the idea of Jewish apocalypticism to suggest

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[102] Hays, *Echoes,* 111-21.

[103] On the textual problem and the argument for the inclusion of Hagar in 4:25, see Martyn, 438; Longenecker, 211. There are also textual variations whether to include or omit Ἀγάρ in v. 25a, although most commentators (Dunn, Betz, Longenecker, Oepke, Schlier) support the reading τὸ δὲ Ἀγὰρ Σινᾶ ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ. See further Betz, 244-45; Burton, 259-61. Paul also makes the link between Hagar and Mount Sinai, as the use of the neuter article τό (attached to ὄρος) seem to suggest; thus, one could translate v. 25a as 'the Hagar-Sinai mountain is in Arabia' or 'this Hagar-Sinai is a mountain in Arabia'. See also Dunn, 251. Further, the question as to why Paul finds it necessary to mention 'Arabia' at all has vexed most interpreters. Solutions based on geographical and etymological arguments have been proposed, although not entirely satisfying. See the discussion in Elliott, 'Choose Your Mother', 668-69; Dunn, 251-52; Mussner, 323. Nevertheless, the concentration on geographical detail should not, as Elliott rightly points out, obscure the significance of the question 'Why the mountain?'.

that the earthly Jerusalem will be replaced by the new, eschatological heavenly city.[104] It is not clear, however, if he intends to argue for the notion of eschatological transformation or fulfilment. The fact that Paul speaks negatively of the present Jerusalem (as one being in slavery) without any hint of God's future action in establishing it is quite different from saying something, as with certain Jewish and early Christian texts, about the provisional or inadequate nature of the present awaiting for the transformation or fulfilment in the future.[105] There is also no hint of the chronology one might expect to find here. One may safely argue therefore that the contrast Paul makes between the present Jerusalem and the Jerusalem above is probably one of spatiality rather than of chronology or of the motif of (future) fulfilment.[106] The question, however, remains: Why the geographical contrast?

In the light of our analysis, it seems that although Paul may have been aware of particular Jewish texts and their contemporary interpretation, especially references concerning Hagar-Sarah and their sons,[107] a recourse to the Jewish background may be insufficient in itself to illuminate the Galatians' outlook or Paul's toponymic argument. On the other hand, Paul's toponymic reference, I would argue, makes sense if he is in fact responding to the Galatians' Anatolian beliefs that attached significance to local toponyms. The Galatians' Anatolian background could have influenced their perception of the divine realm as well as of the significance of religious practices (in particular, works of the law). This probably then explains why they were receptive to the agitators who might have introduced the toponymic significance of Mount Sinai and Jerusalem to support their arguments. 4:25-26 may

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[104] See, for instance, *Pss. Sol.* 17:33; *4 Ezra* 7:26; 10:40ff; *1 En.* 90:28-9; *2 En.* 55:2; cf. Heb. 8:5; 11:10, 14-6; 12:22; 13:14; Rev. 3:12; 21:2. See Betz, 246-47; Dunn, 253-54; idem, *Theology,* 51; Longenecker, 214-15.

[105] Also worth noting is the fact that while the earthly Jerusalem (or Zion) is called mother in certain Jewish texts (e.g. *4 Ezra* 10:7, 17; Isa. 50:1; Jer. 50:12; Hos. 4:5), it is not clear if the 'Jerusalem above' is also seen in similar imagery as Paul does in 4:26.

[106] This is further supported by the fact that the present tense in v. 26 suggests that, for Paul, the 'Jerusalem above' is a present reality.

[107] See, for example, a survey of Philonic and the contemporary Jewish interpretations of Hagar, Sarah, and their sons in Longenecker, 200-206. Longenecker (205) observes that the similarities in interpretation between Paul and Philo demonstrate that 'they both have read Scripture'.

provide further insight into 4:21 and explain why the Galatians would be willing to be enslaved to the law.

It is my suggestion that to understand the significance of Mount Sinai and Jerusalem in the letter, we must set it against the religious background not only of the Jewish traditions but also of those of the Galatians. For many Anatolian worshippers, as we have seen, local toponyms were significant; this identifies the deities as well as their cults.[108] Numerous dedications and inscriptions attest to the fear, awe and piety that were the natural human emotions before the mountains and the gods. Similarly, a number of cities ruled by the Anatolian deities were considered as temple states, where many their inhabitants or 'sacral slaves' were in service to the deities. Such views on the religious significance of toponyms might have influenced the Anatolian Galatians' perception of Mount Sinai and the Jerusalem city, and hence law-observance.

Under the influence of the agitators' Jewish teaching, the Galatians have attached religious significance to Mount Sinai, for it was the site of divine theophany, the genesis of the law, the origin of the covenant and of divine election.[109] Indeed, mountains in the OT and in Second Temple Judaism were also a symbol or site of religious and theological significance.[110] Mount Sinai, according to Josephus, was the dwelling place of God.[111] It was a mountain on which revelations of divine will or of future events were given.[112] It also functioned as a sacred and cultic site; the location

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[108] See Chapter 2.3.

[109] See e.g. Exod. 19:10-18; Deut. 33:2; *4 Ezra* 3:17ff. speaks of God bowing down the heavens to touch Sinai. On the giving of the law at Sinai in Rabbinic tradition, see Num. R. 13.3; Midr. Ps. 68.9.

[110] According to Donaldson, the mountain (in particular, Sinai and Zion) speaks of salvation history, eschatological blessings, divine revelation and election, and cosmic significance. See further T.L. Donaldson, *Jesus on the Mountain: A Study in Matthean Theology*, JSNTSupp. 8, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 30-86.

[111] *Ant.* 2.264; 3.76, 82.

[112] See, e.g., *Jub.* 1.1-5, 26; 6.19; 48.2.

where God binds his people in a covenantal relationship.[113] Both God and Israel met at the mountain to ratify the covenant. Given the close association between the deity, the mountain and the law, it is not surprising that the observances of the (Mosaic) law were considered religiously significant in establishing one's relationship with God. Indeed, the God of Mount Sinai was perceived to be the giver and enforcer of his law.

Similarly, the city of Jerusalem, commonly found in Jewish and Christian traditions, often carries religious or sacred significance; it was a place God had made his dwelling place.[114] The Galatians probably perceived Jerusalem not only as the source and support of the agitators' gospel of law-observance but also as a legitimate and prominent temple or cultic state of God.[115] They might have even perceived the observants of the law in the present Jerusalem as sacral slaves of the prominent Jewish temple-state of God. This may be gathered from Paul's language of slavery in 4:25 and the links made between it and Jerusalem (see also 5:1; cf. 4:26). It reminds one of a class of cultic or temple functionaries, the sacral slaves, within the temple-states in Anatolia.[116] Consequently, law-observance could be seen by the Galatians as an action which would create a relationship with the divine who towers over their world analogous to the relationship in which sacral slaves/inhabitants were in service to the (mountain) deity who enforced the law and ruled the temple-state. Seen in the Anatolian context of their perspective on the significance of toponyms and the law as well as the association of God with the mountain-city, it is not difficult to understand why the Galatians were swayed by the agitators and were attracted to the law (see

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[113] Deut. 31:10-13. Similarly, Mt. Zion was also considered sacred, it was the place where God dwells and was closely associated with the law and divine eschatological blessings. See Ps. 43:3; 68:16; 74:2; Isa. 2:2f; Jer. 31:12; Tob. 4.5-7.

[114] See, e.g., Ps. 102:21-23; Tob. 14.5-7; *Jub.* 1.15-17; *2 Bar.* 4.2-4; 1QDibHam 4.1-3: 'Thy dwelling place ... a resting place in Jeru[salem the city which] thou hast [chosen] from all the earth that thy [name] might remain there for ever'. Cf. also above n.104. However, it should be noted that the idea here, as pointed out earlier, is spatial rather than chronological.

[115] Dio in his *Or.* 33 talks about certain cities, such as Tarsus and Nicomedia, referred to as having the status of the 'mother-city' (μητρόπολις), which enjoyed primacy and prestige over against other lesser cities. It is not unlikely that the Galatians have perceived Jerusalem as a μητρόπολις, a city of pre-eminence and prestige (cf. Paul's reference to Jerusalem above as 'our mother' in 4:26). On the link between Jerusalem and μητρόπολις, see Philo, *Leg. Gai.* 281; cf. Isa. 1:26.

[116] See Chapter 2.3.

4:21a). In the light of their outlook, Paul's geographical contrast, as we shall see in the following section, then becomes explicable.

ii. Paul's allegorical argument

Contrary to the Galatians' estimation of the significance of the law and its association with God, Paul argues in 3:19-21 that the law, as we have already pointed out, does not have its genesis in God. In 3:2-5, he also questioned the view that God worked among those who observed the law. Paul goes on to argue here that those who take up the law and circumcision become children of the slave woman (cf. 4:31).[117] S. Elliott has recently argued that Paul, with reference to the Anatolian religious background of his audience, identifies Hagar as the Mother of the Gods in association with Mount Sinai, which also corresponds to the Jewish temple state of Jerusalem.[118] Accordingly, those who submit themselves to circumcision and the law would become enslaved, just as the worshippers of Pessinus (sacral slaves or castrated *galli*) were enslaved to the temple state of Meter Dindymene.[119]

While Elliott is right to explore the Anatolian background of the Galatians and its potential illumination of Paul's allegorical argument, she may have over-stretched the relevant imagery. To be sure, Paul does evoke the imagery of the 'mother' in the verb γεννάω ('begetting') and in 4:26b-27a; however, this is quite different from saying that Hagar is portrayed as a divine figure, i.e. the Mother of the Gods, to whom worshippers are enslaved. It is also doubtful whether the Galatians themselves would have perceived her as such.[120] Not only does v. 25c (δουλεύει γὰρ μετὰ τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς) indicate that Hagar herself is enslaved *with* her children, but Paul's allegory of Hagar is drawn from the Genesis narrative concerning Abraham, Sarah,

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[117] Cf. Räisänen: 'It is the law itself that enslaves those under it' (*Paul and the Law,* 44); see also Hansen, *Abraham,* 152.
[118] Elliott, 'Choose Your Mother', 661-83.
[119] Elliott, 'Choose Your Mother', 676.
[120] Indeed, it is most probable that their understanding of Hagar has been influenced by the teaching of the agitators who first introduced the allegory. Cf. Barrett, 'The Allegory', 163.

the slave woman Hagar and their offspring, Ishmael and Isaac (4:22-23).[121] Indeed, Paul begins his argument in 4:21-22a with a plea to them to hear a passage from the law that they may not have properly understood, 'Tell me, you who want to be under the law, will you not listen to the law?' Paul is reminding them of something critical in scripture that may not have been clear to them. Without necessarily attributing any (Anatolian) religious or divine configuration to her, he simply highlights the servile status of the παιδίσκη Hagar (and her offspring) and the implication of those who would belong to her.

The enigmatic association of Hagar with Mount Sinai in 4:25 becomes clear in the light of the Galatians' Anatolian perception that the mountains and places were often identified with the divinity. Paul exposes the falseness of any notion of religious significance or sacredness attributed to Mount Sinai; on the contrary, the mountain, and the corresponding Jewish temple state of Jerusalem, is identified not with a divine figure but a *human* figure, a slave woman Hagar.[122] And if the Galatians take up the law, they, together with the law-observants of Jerusalem, would become enslaved. By means of the theme of 'slavery', Paul connects Hagar, Mount Sinai and the city Jerusalem.[123] 4:25 is therefore Paul's polemical reversal of their perception and outlook.

Further insight into the link between the Galatians' outlook, enslavement, and Hagar (and her children) may be gleaned from Paul's emphasis at the beginning in v. 23 that Hagar's child was born 'according to the flesh' (κατὰ σάρκα). It is quite natural to

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[121] Paul, it seems, is drawing from scriptural traditions when he writes: γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι (v.22) and τί λέγει ἡ γραφή (4:30).

[122] Indeed, Hagar's child, according to v. 23a, was born 'according to the flesh' (κατὰ σάρκα), and not as a result of divine work; this status will also be shared by those who aligned themselves with the mountain (v. 25).

[123] Scholars often see the link between law and slavery against the background of 4:1-11, where the law is seen as a pedagogue which enslaves those under it and as the enslaving στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου. See Dunn, 252, Mussner, 320, Betz, 242, Stanton, 'The Law of Moses', 109. However, as suggested above, we should not ignore that Paul's language of slavery could also reflect the Galatians' Anatolian outlook and enslavement to the God of the mountain-city and his law. This makes Paul's connection between slavery (= Hagar) and Sinai-Jerusalem explicable.

read this to mean that Ishmael's birth was effected through the natural human means of procreation.[124] This then contrasts with the visitation of the Lord that resulted in the pregnancy of Sarah and the birth of Isaac (Gen. 18:10; 21:1-2), a child of promise (4:28) and 'born according to the Spirit' (4:29). On the other hand, Paul might have intended to suggest more than a mere comparison between two forms of conceptions and births (i.e. ordinary vis-à-vis supernatural).

According to Paul, the covenant from Mount Sinai associated with Hagar begets (γεννῶσα) children through the flesh 'unto slavery' (4:23-25, 29). The use of the verb γεννάω could refer to the two different kinds of birthing process in which churches are 'begotten' among the Gentiles, i.e. one by Paul and the other by the agitators' law-observant mission.[125] Drawing this insight together with the reading of 'flesh' in 3:3 as referring to the 'circumcision of the flesh', Martyn argues that the issue centres on the consequence of the agitators' mission which would result in the Gentiles being begotten by circumcision. While it is possible to read 'flesh' here with an eye on 3:3, it seems odd to understand the phrase 'according to the flesh' as a metonym for circumcision, since this does not feature in the scriptural narrative concerning Ishmael's conception and birth.

On the other hand, we may argue that in Paul's mind, the Galatians were in danger of being 'begotten' as a result of an outlook not unlike that involved in Ishmael's birth.[126] Paul's (re)interpretation of the allegory and his link between Hagar and Sinai-Jersualem seems to suggest that in his mind, the Galatians' religious status no more involves the divine promise and power than did the human perspective and

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[124] Longenecker, 208. The preposition κατά means 'means' or 'cause'; see also BAGD κατά, II.5.

[125] Martyn's reading of 4:19 relies upon B.R. Gaventa, 'The Maternity of Paul: Exegetical Reflections on Galatians 4:19', in R.T. Fortna and B.R. Gaventa (eds.), *The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul and John in Honor of J. Louis Martyn,* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), 189-201. See also Martyn, 451-53; Witherington, 331.

[126] It is not necessary thus to argue with Martyn (452) that Paul's expression of 'flesh' (which he interprets as circumcision) reflects his contemporary situation and not the ancient narrative.

means by which Abraham and Sarah (through Hagar) got Ishmael.[127] Indeed, the term σάρξ with the preposition κατά in combination with a verb is used elsewhere to characterise human behaviour and standards from a worldly perspective.[128] The Galatians' 'birth', like the birth of Ishmael (κατὰ σάρκα, 4:23), had not depended on divine promise and work, but on human perspective and design.

In the same way, by allowing their Anatolian outlook to influence their perspective on the law, the Galatians have overlooked the basis of God's promise and grace in Christ by which they would receive divine blessing and inheritance. They have not continued in their faith(fulness) in Christ nor in the Spirit and have failed to grasp the radical implications of Christ's death and resurrection. Little wonder, then, that in 5:1 at the end of this section, the Galatians are urged not to submit to slavery but are to stand firm (presumably in their faithfulness in Christ), for it is Christ who has brought freedom to believers.

Paul assumes that the Galatians would become children of the slavewoman (4:31) if they subjected themselves to the law (4:21), even though they are not direct descendants of Abraham and Hagar. The literal or natural sense of 'according to the flesh' has now been conflated with a negative figurative meaning.[129] He is concerned about the negative consequence of a 'birthing process' brought about not only by the mission/teachings of the agitators but in particular an Anatolian outlook involving scrupulous behaviour that is κατὰ σάρκα (cf. 3:3). In allegorising and contemporising the story, he argues that if the Galatians adopt such an outlook, they would become children of Hagar. In other words, their servile being and status, like Ishmael, would be begotten according to the flesh and not as a result of divine promise and power through the Spirit (δι' ἐπαγγελίας; cf. κατὰ πνεῦμα, 4:29).

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[127] Dunn, 246.
[128] See, e.g., 2 Cor. 1:17; 10:2, 3; 11:18.
[129] On the Jewish allegorical interpretation of the Hagar-Sarah story, especially in Philo and the rabbinic literature, see Longenecker, 200-206.

Now Paul's Anatolian audience may not necessarily see enslavement to be an unattractive thing. After all, for many pagan worshippers, subservience to deities as sacral slaves and participation in their cults would have had a positive appeal, for it could promise spiritual elevation and honour, or divine benefits and power.[130] Indeed, Paul prides himself on being a 'slave of Christ' (Χριστοῦ δοῦλος; 1:10). Thus, if he is to succeed in dissuading the Galatians from taking up the law, he must not simply appeal to them to avoid becoming enslaved; rather he must demonstrate the negative and even dire consequences of becoming one.[131]

Thus, according to Paul in 4:30, the consequence of this outlook and lifestyle is that such a person, like the slavewoman and her children, would have no part in receiving the promise of inheritance (4:30; 5:1; Gen. 21:10). Here, inheritance probably includes all the spiritual benefits, including sonship, the Spirit, life, righteousness and redemption, that Christ has brought through his salvific work (cf. also 3:18, 29).[132] Paul's allegory excludes those who desire to be under the law from the promise.[133] A similar warning is also probably suggested, though not explicitly, in 4:25 where he links Hagar (and her children) with Mt. Sinai in Arabia which lies outside the promised land and the stage of redemptive history.[134] The implication is that those who are associated with the covenant from the Hagar-Sinai mountain, as well as those

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[130] Indeed, 'slave' could be something of an honorific title at least if one was slave of an important and powerful individual, and this could be said of a devotee of a cult who saw himself as a slave of the god, not least in Jewish thought (Deut. 32:36; Josh. 24:29; Pss. 89:3; 105:26, 42; Mal. 4:4). See also D.B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation. The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 56. Cf. R.L. Gordon, 'Mithraism and Roman Society: Social Factors in the Explanation of Religious Change in the Roman Empire', *Religion* 2 (1972), 109; Barton and Horsley, 'Hellenistic Cult Group', 13, 39.

[131] It is not necessary to argue with Elliott that Paul has brought Hagar, 'the Mother of the Gods, in all her manifestations, down to the level of the slave concubine ... from positions of power into pathetic dishonor' in order to dissuade the Galatians from becoming enslaved to her ('Choose Your Mother', 681). As we have pointed out, it is unlikely that Hagar is herself portrayed as a divine figure. On the contrary, Paul's rhetorical strategy of dissuasion lies in the promise of inheritance, which will be given only to the children of the free woman.

[132] See above n.24.

[133] Dunn, *Theology*, 91.

[134] Cf. Schlier, 218-19.

who make much of the present city of Jerusalem, will have no part in the promise of inheritance.

On the other hand, Paul impresses the Galatians that they have come to receive the promise and inheritance in the same manner as Isaac (κατὰ Ἰσαακ), that is, by divine work (4:28). They have not received it through works of the law but through the divine work in Christ. Those who through faith in Christ are like Isaac, are children of the promise and born according to the Spirit. They are the children of the free woman (Sarah) associated with the heavenly Jerusalem; they are the 'contemporary Isaacs', brought forth by the power of the promise/Spirit through God's promise made to Abraham (4:27-31).

Thus, we should at least consider the probability that it was the Galatians' Anatolian outlook that has prompted Paul's critical (re)interpretation of the Hagar-Sarah allegory. Indeed, Paul is not so much critical of Judaism as he is of their Anatolian outlook and perspective of the mountain Sinai and the city Jerusalem. They have allowed their (former) religious views to influence their judgement as well as reception of the agitators' teaching. They associated the local toponyms with God (and his law) and the temple/cultic state, investing religious significance in the law as well as circumcision. In response, Paul associates Hagar with Mount Sinai-Jerusalem (v. 25). He argues that (1) those who aligned themselves with the toponyms and invested sacred significance in the law, covenant and circumcision, would become enslaved and belong , not to God, but to the line of the slave woman Hagar and her son Ishmael; (2) consequently, according to Gen. 21:10 (cited in v. 30), they, like Hagar and her offspring, would have no share in the promise of inheritance. On the other hand, the 'free woman', ἐλευθέρα (Sarah) is associated with the 'Jerusalem above', who is the mother of the children of the promise, those who are freed by Christ (4:27-5:1).[135] Her children are the legitimate inhabitants of the 'Jerusalem above'.

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[135] The religious significance of the city 'Jerusalem above' would have also appealed to the Anatolian perspective of the Galatians, though Paul may have also conflated two Jewish

6. Works of the law

In the light of our argument so far, it is natural to raise the question as to how we should understand the phrase 'works of the law', especially from the perspective of the Galatians' outlook. It is observed, first of all, that our perception of the Galatians' 'works' differs from the so-called Lutheran understanding. It is not that the Galatians were agonising over the problem of sin and the inability to satisfy the righteous demands of God and that they needed to see the futility of self-sufficiency and of human effort and works. Neither were they led to believe that good works could earn salvation. That this had prompted Paul's criticism does not cohere with the fact that he does talk about good works.[136] In fact, he instructs the Galatians to 'test one's own work (ἔργον), and then the reason for boasting (καύχημα) will be in oneself and not in one's neighbour' (6:4). He also issues a warning of judgement on the basis of works (see 5:21; 6:7-9). It may thus be said that the Galatians' outlook in relation to the law was unlike Luther's. It was not the issue concerning the problem of human sin and inability, which one realised through self-introspection, that would hinder the Galatians from doing works of the law and thereby result in their failure to achieve justification and righteousness.[137] Consequently, Paul's purpose in his letter is not to persuade the Galatians that they could not justify themselves in their legalistic works and therefore needed God's grace. The issue before him is not about the universal problem of human sin and of how one may be saved; his discussion about 'faith' over against 'works/doing' is not a solution to this sort of problem.

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traditions, that of Sarah, the mother of nations (Gal. 4:22-23), and the holy city of Jerusalem (Zion), who symbolically is the mother of God's own people (Ps. 87; Isa. 66:7-11). See Longenecker, 214-15.

[136] This is also true in situations where the issue of Gentile Judaising is not in view. See 1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor 9:3, 8; 10:15-7; 11:16-12:10; Rom. 5:3; 15:17; 1 Thess. 1:3.

[137] Against Bultmann, *Theology,* I, 261-65, see Sanders, *Paul,* 481-82. Hübner, against Dunn, continues to defend the Lutheran tradition, see 'Was heisst bei Paulus "Werke des Gesetzes"?' in E. Grässer and O. Merk (eds.), *Glaube und Eschatologie* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1985), 123-33. On a critique of interpretation based on individualistic Lutheran legalism, see Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles.*

On the contrary, we seek to understand the Galatians' outlook and behaviour in the context of their first century socio-religious setting, not from the perspective of sixteenth century Luther. Paul's primary concern was not about their 'works' but about their Anatolian religious outlook concerning the nature of God and his law. The Galatians' conduct was influenced by their Anatolian perception that the law and the toponymns were integrally linked to the divine. Consequently, they have attached significance to religious and ritual practices and perceived the scrupulous observance of the law as a means of relating to God. The idea that the Galatians' behaviour was influenced by the notion that good works could earn divine gifts (or that Paul is dealing with the problem of self-sufficiency) seems to me to simplify a much more complicated reality. We cannot ignore the (vestigial) influences of their pagan past on their present outlook and conduct.

Our investigation into the religious context of Paul's audience also leads us to assess the recent discussion of the phrase 'works of the law' which draws insights from studies in social anthropology. From the perspective that a social group's distinctive identity found its expression in its ritual behaviour, practices and beliefs, it has been argued that 'works of the law' are those observable social practices that distinguish Jews as a people of God from the Gentiles.[138] These ritual practices would include circumcision, Sabbath observance and food laws.[139] It is further maintained that Paul's critique of the works of the law stems from the fact that the observance of these ritual practices betrays an overly nationalistic and exclusive view of the law and

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[138] See Dunn, 'Works of the Law' in his *Jesus, Paul and the Law,* ch. 8. The meaning of the phrase 'works of the law' has received much scholarly attention, see also J.B. Tyson, '"Works of the Law" in Galatians', *JBL* 92 (1973), 423-31; T. Schreiner, '"Works of the Law" in Paul', *NovT* 33 (1991), 217-44; C.E.B. Cranfield, '"The Works of the Law" in the Epistle to the Romans', *JSNT* 43 (1991), 89-101. Dunn, in response to Cranfield and Schreiner, defines the phrase as 'what is required of the members of the covenant people, those to whom the law has been given to show them how to live as God's people'; it is those works that maintain Israel's distinctive identity against Gentile encroachment. See Dunn, 'Yet Once More - "The Works of the Law": A Response', *JSNT* 46 (1992), 99-117 (102). He also clarifies that works of the law are those required by those who *maintained* their covenantal status and righteousness.

[139] Dunn, 'Works of the Law' in his *Jesus, Paul and the Law,* 217.

Jewish privilege.[140] It accentuates a Jew-Gentile distinction and excludes Gentile believers from the community of God's people. It promotes the idea that God's saving activity is to be envisaged in Jewish national and cultural terms.

There is little doubt that social and ritual practices do serve to foster a particular group's distinctive identity over against 'outsiders'. This could lead one to place too much weight on the physical and national factors, resulting in pride and boasting. On the other hand, ritual and religious practices could be perceived to be more than mere identity markers, at least in the eyes of many Gentiles. Indeed, the Galatians might have regarded 'works of the law', in a broader sense, as religious observances in general. The Anatolians saw the laws and their observances as a means of relating to the 'guardian' deities who dominated the religious and physical life of the communities. The Galatians could have approached works of the law with the Anatolian concept of the function and significance of religious laws and toponyms in mind. As 3:1-5 makes clear, it was their outlook concerning the nature of the divine and their high evaluation of religious practices that have influenced them to take up works of the law. The reading that takes consideration of the Galatians' religious background also coheres with 4:8-10 (a subject we shall examine in the following chapter), where their calendrical or law observances were influenced by their pre-Christian perception of the divine and cosmic world. Their actions do not necessarily betray an overly nationalistic and exclusive view of the law and of Jewish privilege.

Thus, I would argue, in the eyes of Gentile Galatians, circumcision and works of the law could be perceived to be *more* than mere Jewish distinctive boundary markers or even entry requirements into the Jewish community. That they sought circumcision was not motivated by a desire to become part of the larger Jewish community; neither were they doing works of the law simply because they were convinced of their covenantal obligation and that maintenance within God's covenant requires doing what the law requires. Paul is not criticising national pride engendered by the Jewish

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[140] Thus, for instance, according to Barclay, Paul in Galatians is opposing Jewish 'cultural imperialism - regarding Jewish identity and Jewish customs as the essential tokens of

special covenantal status; neither is he concerned about the extent to which Gentiles should or should not observe Jewish practices and calendrical events.[141] Rather, his focus is on their observance which stems from their (misconstrued) idea of God and of the significance of religious practices. The Galatians have allowed their pagan past to influence their outlook and conduct in the law. According to the apostle, this, in effect, constituted apostasy and deviation from his gospel.[142]

Moreover, the Galatians' adherence to the Jewish law and its rites might actually reinforce their religious worldview. From the perspective of the sociology of religion, we learn that rituals embody religious worldviews and symbolic order. As C. Geertz puts it, 'For it is in ritual ... that this conviction that religious conceptions are veridical and that religious directives are sound is somehow generated. It is in some sort of ceremonial form ... that the moods and motivations which sacred symbols induce in men and the general conceptions of the order of existence which they formulate for men meet and reinforce one another.'[143] It is well recognised that ritual and symbolism function to affirm and strengthen the identity and status of groups.[144] Nevertheless, focusing purely on the functional approach tends to overlook the perceptions and symbolism that ritual evokes. Religious observances and ritual are ways in which groups articulate the nature of the relationship between the human and the divine. A sense of dependency upon the deities whose power and lordship was increasingly acknowledged was evoked in part by the experience or the performance of religious ritual. But they also become the means by which worshippers secure divine favour.

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membership in the people of God' (*Obeying,* 239-40).

[141] Cf. some interpreters who have argued that Paul in Galatians is not correcting a narrow view or misunderstanding of the law (or its function) that keeps the Gentiles out. Rather, he is setting up a fundamental antithesis between Christ crucified and works of the law. See Martyn, 'Events in Galatia', 165-66; Gaventa, 'The Singularity of the Gospel: A Reading of Galatians' in Bassler (ed.), *Pauline Theology,* 150-53.

[142] In this regard, it may be said that Paul is far more concerned about apostasy than simply about the issue of 'staying in/going on' as some interpreters have argued (e.g. Dunn, 155-56; Longenecker, 103-104; Witherington, 214).

[143] C. Geertz, 'Religion as a Cultural System' in M. Banton (ed.), *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion* (London: Tavistock, 1966), 28.

In the Galatian situation, circumcision and the observance of the law, including the calendrical events and festivals, would no doubt serve their social function in exemplifying and strengthening the identity of the community. Yet by observing these 'works of the law', it would evoke a certain image about the human relationship with God and one's disposition towards him. Doing works of the law reflects a conviction of its symbolic importance in establishing and maintaining one's relationship with God. Ritual and religious works, in a sense, signified for the Galatians a symbolic and dramatic entry and maintenance of a proper relationship with God and a possession of divine gift and favour.

7. Conclusion

It is argued in the present chapter that the Anatolian context of the Galatians could illuminate both their outlook and conduct as well as Paul's arguments. We have seen that the Galatians have allowed contemporary religious assumptions to govern their thinking, life and practices. Their Anatolian and superstitious outlook and practices have betrayed their seeming lack of discernment of the significance of Christ crucified. Paul is therefore concerned to highlight for his audience the proper ways, according to the gospel, of living before God. He demonstrates that his gospel has links with antiquity and appeals and (re)interprets scriptural traditions concerning Abraham and God's promises. He further argues that faith rules out the law as the basis by which one receives the gift of righteousness. Since it is God's action in Christ that creates the relationship of faith, the appropriate response for the Galatians is therefore not to attach religious significance to aspects of religious practices where it is inappropriate. In addition, the Anatolian background of the Galatian audience also illuminates aspects of Paul's argumentative strategy and purpose. By coming under the law, Paul warns that they are in danger of coming under the curse of the God of Justice.

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[144] See P.L. Berger and T. Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Penguin: London, 1967), 174-76; H. Mol, *Identity and the Sacred* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1976), 233-45.

The Galatians have also associated the mountain and the city with God and the temple/cultic state, investing religious significance in the law and the covenant, as well as the agitators' gospel of circumcision. Contrary to their outlook, Paul clarifies the (non)significance of the law, the mountain and the city. He not only distances God from the giving of the law but also (re)interprets the Hagar-Sarah allegory and warns the Galatians that they will become enslaved and have no part in the promise of inheritance.

Chapter 4

THE *STOICHEIA* AND THE GALATIANS' RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, we have argued that the Galatians had reverted to an Anatolian perception of the divine realm, which could have influenced them to attach inappropriate value to religious observances of the law. In this chapter, it will be argued that they might have also carried over into their new religion the contemporary view of the στοιχεῖα as well as their perception of the significance of calendrical observances.

2. The context and reference of στοιχεῖα in 4:8-11

Paul in 4:3 tells us something, albeit only briefly, about the Galatians' pagan past. Prior to the coming of Christ, the Galatians[1] were enslaved under τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου. Contextually, the στοιχεῖα seems to be identified with the law, since τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου in v. 3 is set in parallel with ὑπὸ νόμον in v. 5.[2] The term τὰ στοιχεῖα appears again in v. 9, this time with reference to the Galatians' pagan worship in the past (4:8). Paul seems to assert that by observing the law (or more specifically, calendrical observances), the Galatians are in effect putting themselves, once again, in bondage to the στοιχεῖα. This then raises the question as to why Paul makes a connection between the observance of the law and servitude under the στοιχεῖα. As noted by some interpreters, he has in effect classed Judaism and paganism as comparable, both being enslaved under στοιχεῖα.[3]

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[1] For the view that the first person plural 'we' in 4:3 includes both Jews and Gentile Christians, see Oepke, 128-29; Schlier, 193; Betz, 204; Mussner, 268, 271.
[2] Cf. Räisänen, *Paul and the Law,* 131; Sanders, *Law,* 69.
[3] Bruce, 202, 301; Schlier, 193.

Related to this is, of course, the function of στοιχεῖα in Paul's polemic in 4:8-11. Setting aside for the moment the question of its meaning, we ask whether it reflects the agitators' vocabulary or Paul's own polemical statement and his (Jewish) theological perspective and vocabulary.

It has been argued by some interpreters that the language of στοιχεῖα forms part of the agitators' teaching.[4] Drawing on Jewish parallels from Wisdom, Philo, Josephus and Jubilees, Martyn has recently argued that the Galatians might have been told, from the example of Abraham, that they 'are to ascend from the foolish and idolatrous worship of the elements themselves to the knowledge of the true God who created them, celebrating the holy times ordained by him in his law, and doing so at the junctures fixed by the activity of his servants, the astral elements'.[5] This hypothesis appears attractive and could plausibly explain the connection between law-observance and the 'elements'. Nevertheless, an explicit reference to the agitators' teaching or, more specifically, a discussion on the influence of Jewish ladder theology (or of Abraham's example) on the Galatians' conduct is notably lacking.[6] If Martyn's reconstruction is right, we would also have expected Paul to give his own line of interpretation over against the agitators. It is doubtful that the Jewish ladder theology played a significant part in the agitators' teaching or that the Galatians' conduct was influenced by it. On the other hand, since the only other mention of the στοιχεῖα in the letter is a reference to the Galatians' pre-Christian existence (4:3), we should not ignore the possibility that the Galatians' own pre-Christian outlook and conduct concerning the στοιχεῖα could have influenced significantly their desire to take up the law.

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[4] E.g. Jewett, 'The Agitators', 208; E. Schweizer, 'Slaves of the Elements and Worshippers of Angels: Gal 4:3,9 and Col. 2:8, 18, 20', *JBL* 107 (1988), 455-68 (466); Mussner, 302

[5] Martyn, 393-400; 414-15.

[6] The difficulty with Martyn's view shows up in his hypothetical reconstruction (415), without warrant in the text, of Paul's response to the agitators' ladder theology. Furthermore, with so much discussion on Abraham in the letter, one wonders why there is no mention elsewhere of the patriarch's example of his ladder-like journey to the perception of the true God.

On the other hand, it has been suggested by some interpreters that 4:9 is simply Paul's polemical evaluation of the observance of days.[7] The apostle, in making the connection between paganism and life under the law, argues that life under the law and under the στοιχεῖα are similar experiences and have similar results.[8] However, it is not always clear why Paul would make a link between law-observance (or Judaism in essence) and paganism. How are these two forms of enslavement in some way(s) comparable? Various attempts to interpret the comparison along the line that both are legalistic (Burton), ritualistic (Lightfoot), idolatrous (Caird, Reicke) or nationalistic (Howard) are not without their difficulties or inadequacies.[9] On the other hand, few consider the significance or the seriousness of Paul's charge that the Galatians are returning back to paganism (4:9).

Others, however, remain content to argue that 4:10 is a mere rhetoric employed by Paul 'to maximise the similarities between the observances the Galatians have left behind and those they are, or are contemplating, taking up'.[10] C. Arnold goes further and argues that Paul's language of στοιχεῖα must be seen against the apostle's concern to dissuade the Galatians from acceding to the demands of the agitators. Accordingly, those who take up the law would come under the power and enslavement of the old aeon. From Paul's two-age apocalyptic perspective, Arnold

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[7] Cf. Betz, 216-17.

[8] Cf. L. Belleville, '"Under Law"', 53-78 (69). Similarly, according to Ziesler, 'if they accept the Law they will enter into a slavery which is parallel to but not identical with their former bondage' (59).

[9] For the survey of these views, see Howard, *Crisis,* 66-82. Howard points out the weaknesses of these comparisons in the light of Jewish traditions and from Paul's theological perception of pagan worship and of the law elsewhere in Romans and 1 Corinthians. However, his criticism is somewhat limited. Although Howard (76) is right to suggest that we need to consider first the pagan background of the Galatians, he fails to consider more specifically the significance of στοιχεῖα or ask how the Galatians' own Graeco-Roman perspective of the latter could have influenced Paul to write 4:8-10. Indeed, over against Howard's proposed solution, the Galatians' actions do not necessarily betray an overly nationalistic and exclusive view of the law and of Jewish privilege. See further below.

[10] Witherington, 299.

argues, the law was seen as that which was somehow exploited by the στοιχεῖα or demonic beings who enslave those 'under the law' or the law-observant.[11]

There is little doubt that the reference to στοιχεῖα is the apostle's polemical statement about the observance of the law. While there is merit in assessing Paul's use of the term στοιχεῖα against his theological or apocalyptic perspective on life in the present evil age, we should not overlook the fact that his response could be prompted in part by the Galatians' own outlook and conduct. Paul's use of the term στοιχεῖα could reflect the Galatians' (previous) religious background and vocabulary, as is suggested by his reference to their pre-Christian past in 4:3, 8-9. More significant is the fact that Paul seems to be accusing the Galatians of returning (ἐπιστρέφω) to paganism.[12] The verb ἐπιστρέφω is a technical term which suggests either religious conversion or religious apostasy.[13] Its use here in the present tense indicates that the Galatians are in the process of apostatising (cf. also 1:6; 5:4). Interpreters tend to dismiss the significance of this accusation in favour of the view that the apostle is simply making a polemical or a rhetorical statement that keeping of the Jewish law, including its calendrical events, is equivalent to keeping pagan observances. On the contrary, is it not possible to argue that the Galatians' reversion to their pre-Christian past is somehow linked to the nature of their outlook and belief of the divine/physical world?

It is perhaps worth noting here that the observance of 'days, months, seasons and years' in 4:10 could refer to certain Jewish observances such as the Sabbath or the new-moon,[14] although Paul does not elaborate or specify them. It may be argued that Paul's lack of specificity probably indicates that he is not so much concerned about specific Jewish observances as he is about the Galatians' attitude with which they

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[11] Arnold, 'Returning to the Domain of the Powers: *Stoicheia* as Evil Spirits in Galatians 4:3, 9', *NovT* 38 (1996), 69.

[12] T. Martin in his article 'Apostasy to Paganism' (440) recognises this point in 4:8-11 but does not consider, however, the significance of στοιχεῖα in the Galatians' conduct.

[13] Cf. 1 Thess. 1:9; also Lk. 1:16; Acts 3:19; 9:35; 11:21; 14:15; 15:19; 26:18; 2 Pet. 2:21-22.

[14] The reference to the observance of 'days, months, seasons, and years' (παρατηρεῖσθε καὶ μῆνας καὶ καιροὺς καὶ ἐνιαυτούς; 4:10) probably refers to the festivals and observances

observed these religious practices. That is, the apostle in 4:9 is describing 'the *typical* behaviour of religiously scrupulous people'.[15] Betz suggests that the Galatians were conforming to the superstitious character (δεισιδαίμων) of typical pagan worshippers.[16] But he does not elaborate on this or demonstrate how the Galatians' behaviour typified the scrupulous attitude of the superstitious. He remains content that Paul's description is 'highly sarcastic'.[17] However, taking the cue from Betz, it will be suggested that 4:8-10 is not merely about Paul's polemic or rhetoric against keeping the law or its calendar but also about the Galatians' seeming ignorance of God and their 'superstitious' outlook and conduct.

3. The significance of στοιχεῖα in the Galatians' worldview and conduct

The Galatians' religious conduct, gleaned from 4:10, may be understood against the background that calendrical observance in the ancient world was viewed as something religiously significant. In fact, the observance of days and months and the system of registering a religious value to it was something the Galatians would have been familiar with not only from Judaism[18] but also through imperial cult participation[19] and Hellenistic and Mystery religions.[20] The concern the Galatians showed and the value invested in observing the 'days, months, seasons and years' as a necessary

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prescribed in the Torah. See Longenecker, 182; Dunn, 227-29; Bruce, 205-7; Sanders, *Law,* 20, 69, 101.

[15] Betz, 217.

[16] Betz, 217-18.

[17] Betz (218) cites Bultmann in agreement here.

[18] For instance, on the diaspora observance of new moons, see J.C.G. Thornton, 'Jewish New Moon Festivals, Galatians 4:3-11 and Colossians 2:16', *JTS* 40 (1989), 97-100. Cf. G. Delling, 'μήν', *TDNT,* IV, 639-41. On the significance of Sabbath observances, see Schürer, *The History,* II, 467-75.

[19] See Chapter 2.2.

[20] Plutarch (*Demetrius* 26.1), for instance, recounts how a certain Demetrius who wished to be initiated into the mysteries had to go through three different rites performed at different, specific times and seasons. Lucian too in his *Menippus,* 4.72-109 describes the importance of the observance of 'days' and 'months' and the 'moon' in initiation rites. Indeed, from Hesiod's *Works and Days*, we learned that the observances of days remained a definite part of Hellenistic religion, an indication of an increased concern among worshippers that humans lived justly in relation to the gods. See Nilsson, *A History of Greek Religion*, 107, 186-90; Plutarch, *De Sup.*169D-E.

aspect of religious piety and conduct would have been part of their socio-religious background. Piety that included calendrical observance could easily be baptised into a piety that observed distinctly Jewish calendrical practices. On the other hand, it may be argued that the Galatians' attitude towards religious observances could also be discerned from what we may know about the contemporary belief in the divine/cosmic world and, in particular, the στοιχεῖα.

The meaning of στοιχεῖα has received much scholarly attention and a consensus on the matter seems as yet a long way off. Some have taken it to mean the basis of stars (i.e. fire) or the elemental substances of which the cosmos was composed: fire, air, water, and earth.[21] Others have linked it to the fundamental principles of all religions,[22] or more specifically to the principles of the Torah.[23] But Paul's claim that the Galatians are mistaking the στοιχεῖα for gods is doubtful if the στοιχεῖα are only religious principles or observances and regulations. For some interpreters, however, the στοιχεῖα were thought to be personalised heavenly or elemental spirits with cosmic and astral powers that enslaved humans.[24]

To be sure, the conventional Greek usage of στοιχεῖα in Paul's day would have been the stars and the physical elements of the universe. Nevertheless, there is some evidence that the στοιχεῖα, even if they were understood as physical elements, were associated with spirits or supernatural entities. For instance, Isis was believed to have powers over the elements; she was acknowledged as the mistress of all the elements

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[21] See Wis. 7:17; 19:18; *4 Macc.* 12:13; 2 Pet. 3:10, 12. See also Schweizer, 'Slaves of the Elements', 455-68; D. Rusam, 'Neue Belege zu den στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (Gal 4,3.9; Kol 2,8.20)', *ZNW* 83 (1992), 119-25; Martyn, 395-97. See also Delling, 'στοιχεῖον', *TDNT,* VII, 670-83.

[22] See, for instance, C.F.D. Moule, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Cambridge: CUP, 1957), 91-92; Delling, 'στοιχεῖον', *TDNT,* VII, 685; W. Carr, *Angels and Principalities,* SNTSMS 42 (Cambridge: CUP, 1981), 75-76.

[23] Cf. Longenecker (165-66) who takes it to mean the 'basic principles' of the Mosaic law and of religion. See also Witherington, 301.

[24] See, for example, Betz, 204; Bruce, 204; Schlier, 190-91; I-G Hong, *The Law in Galatians,* JSNTSupp. 81 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 165; Arnold, 'Returning to the Domain', 55-76.

(*elementorum omnium domina*).[25] In some Jewish traditions, angels were thought to govern, or were even identified with, the stars.[26] The divinization of στοιχεῖα as elements was, however, present in Greek thought. According to Philo, the traditions in Homer and Empedocles speak of pagans who called 'fire Hephaestus ... air Hera ... water Poseidon ... and earth Demeter'.[27] Indeed, the reverence of elemental substances as gods was not unknown in the Graeco-Roman world.[28] Elsewhere in Wisdom 13:2, 'they (the Gentiles) supposed that either fire or wind or swift air, or the circle of the stars, or turbulent water, or the luminaries of heaven were the gods that rule the world'. 1 Enoch 80:7 charges the Gentiles for mistakenly taking the stars themselves to be gods. Furthermore, in the ancient religious world of magic and astrology, the term στοιχεῖα is used in the Greek magical texts in connection with the stars and/or spirit entities (or gods) they represent (e.g. *PGM* IV.1301-307); it also refers to the thirty-six astral decans (or astral gods) that rule over every ten degrees of the heavens (*PGM* IV.440-41).[29] Similarly, in the third century CE Jewish text, the Testament of Solomon (18:1-5), στοιχεῖα is applied to decans (δεκανός) which are also called 'demons' (δαίμονας). The text preserved much earlier traditions and the application of στοιχεῖα to supernatural beings might be traced back to the first century and before.[30] People in the ancient world dealt with the fear of decans or supernatural beings thought to influence astrological fate (εἱμαρμένη). They sought to avert the harmful influence of these powers through the use of magical recipes or the

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[25] Apuleius, *Meta.* 11.5.

[26] It is a common Hellenistic and Jewish view that angels governed the cosmic order, the stars and the four elements; the stars composed of fire were thought to be living things (see Judg. 5:20; Job 38:7; Dan. 8:10; *Jub.* 2:2, 8; *1 En.* 60:11-25; 75:1-3; *2 En.* 4:1; *T. Abr.* 13:11). Drawing on texts such as *1 En.* 18:13-6; *Jub.* 8:3; *Ezel. Trag.* 79-80; *Ps.-Phoc.* 71-75, 101-104; *T. Sol.* 18, Mach argues that the Jewish idea that angels were identified with stars was not uncommon. See M. Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien des jüdischen Engelglaubens in vorrabbinischer Zeit,* TSAJ 34 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1992), 173-84.

[27] Philo, *Vit. Cont.* 3; *Dec.* 53.

[28] W. Wink, *Unmasking the Powers* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 128; T. Barton, *Ancient Astrology* (London: Routledge, 1994), 111-13.

[29] See the texts in H.D. Betz (ed.), *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation,* vol. 1: Text (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1986). The concept of 'decans' in ancient astrological handbooks was used to refer to supernatural beings such as astral gods, demons or angels. See Arnold, *The Colossian Syncretism,* 167-68 and literature cited there.

[30] Barton, *Ancient Astrology*, 69; Arnold, 'Returning to the Domain', 57-59.

invocation of powerful deities for protection.[31] The concern for days and months, especially in accordance to the phases of the moon, was also particularly crucial for the performance of certain magical rites.[32]

The reading of στοιχεῖα to mean more than mere physical elements of the universe (or religious principles or observances) also coheres well with Paul's reference in 4:8-10. In 4:9, for instance, the στοιχεῖα seem to suggest a transcendental connection or the notion of personal beings, at least in Paul's perception of how the readers viewed them. Indeed, the term is used here to refer to the divine beings to which the Galatians as Gentile non-believers once worshipped and which they were subjugated (v. 8).[33] That the στοιχεῖα were personal beings or entities is also gleaned from the fact that they were seen as something capable of asserting control and enslaving people. The adjectives 'weak and beggarly' (ἀσθενῆ καὶ πτωχά) also suggest that the στοιχεῖα used here most likely refer to personal beings rather than simply the physical elements or abstract religious principles. Moreover, in 4:3, Paul has described the plight of Gentiles (and Jews) who were enslaved under the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου prior to the coming of Christ. It is possible that the στοιχεῖα here, seen by Paul as (personal) 'guardians and trustees' (ἐπίτροποι and οἰκονόμοι, v. 2), may be interpreted as supernatural beings who were in control over the κόσμος.[34] Hence I

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[31] See G. Luck, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1985), 317; Nilsson, *Geschichte,* II, 507. On the invocation of powerful deities for protection against daimons and the undesirable astrological fate in the magical texts, see *PGM* I.195-222; XIII.618-40. See also Barton, *Ancient Astrology,* 191-97. Others also sought the powers of a greater god. For example, the goddess Artemis in Ephesus was acclaimed as 'Lord' (Κυρία) and 'Saviour' (Σώτειρα) and was venerated because of her lordship over fate and supernatural forces. See R. Oster, 'Ephesus as Religious Center under the Principate', *ANRW* II.18.3, 1661-728 (1723-24).

[32] See, e.g., *PGM* IV.787, 2389; XIII.30, 387.

[33] What Paul denies is their divinity (τοῖς φύσει μὴ οὖσιν θεοῖς), not their existence. So Mussner, 291. The construction τοῖς φύσει μὴ οὖσιν θεοῖς also reminds one of the phrase λεγόμενοι θεοί in 1 Cor. 8:5, where Paul affirms that the gods of the Graeco-Roman religion could not be rightly called θεοί, for they were in fact demonic spiritual powers (10:19-20).

[34] It is plausible that Paul may have in mind the Jewish idea of 'guardian angels of the nations' attested in Deut. 32:8-9; Dan. 10:13-4, 20-21; Sir. 17:17; *1 En.* 20:5; *Jub.* 15:21. See Dunn, 'Echoes of Intra-Jewish Polemic', 473. Nevertheless, it is difficult to know whether the Galatians would have been familiar with this Jewish tradition.

would argue that more is at stake, since it appears to me that Paul is concerned that στοιχεῖα in some manner are related to suprahuman beings that enslave those under their powers.

Indeed, widespread in the Graeco-Roman culture of Paul's day was the belief that the world was teeming with unseen, malevolent forces or supernatural powers in constant conflict with each other. Gods, demonic spirits, and spiritual forces were thought to be capable of influencing the physical world, including its basic elements. In fact, the elements were perceived by some to be instruments of divine punishment or means of divine communication.[35] The supernatural powers could control human destiny and were believed to have impacted upon human affairs; they were also thought to be capable of being appeased or manipulated.[36] Worshippers have sought to overcome the hostility of powers or to influence the elements through participation in an initiation rite.[37]

Thus, given the fact that the world was thought to be populated by spirits or gods and the predilection of many people for astral religious beliefs and practices, it is not unlikely that the Galatians would have been familiar with taking στοιχεῖα to mean more than mere physical elements. They might have perceived the presence of supernatural entities or powers in reality that rule or control the divine and physical realm, including the basic elements. The στοιχεῖα were perceived to be signs of supernatural import or involvement.

It is suggested that the Galatians' desire to observe the law becomes explicable if they have brought into their new faith such perspectives or outlooks from their pre-Christian pagan past. The Galatians' religious conduct may be attributed in part to

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[35] See Plutarch, *De Sup.* 165D-E. See also below.

[36] Cf. M. Smith, 'De Superstitione', 9-14; Philo, *Aet. Mund.* 107-9; Hermas, *Vis.* 3.13.3.

[37] Engaging in cultic rites were believed to be capable of dealing with any effect caused by changes in the elements, including the movement of the stars. Such changes, for instance, might cause the turning of seasons, and so affect the growing of food necessary for the sustenance of life. Thus, for instance, adherents of the cult of the Great Mother would

their perception of the divine/cosmic world. They might have seen the observance of holy times or days as a way of living free from fear and from the possible malevolent influence of the στοιχεῖα.[38] This is made a little more plausible by the evidence from the teaching of Elchasai who, according to Hippolytus, at the end of the first-century CE, combined aspects of Jewish practices, in particular circumcision and law observance with astrological beliefs and practices.[39] His teaching emphasises the hostility of 'the wicked stars of impiety' (viewed as supernatural beings) and the need to pay attention to the courses of the moon and to regulate one's life according to the calendar, especially the Sabbath. According to Hippolytus, the teaching of Elchasai warns of the adverse 'powers of the days of the sovereignty of these stars', and that one should abstain from the commencement of any undertaking (including baptism) during these phases of the moon.[40] On the other hand, Elchasai argues that one ought to 'honour the day of the Sabbath, since that day is one of those during which prevails (the power) of these stars'.

This is not to suggest that the Galatians were influenced by particular strands of Elchasaite teaching. But it does provide a parallel and points to how aspects of Jewish practices, especially the observance of days and the phases of the moon, could be observed to influence the στοιχεῖα or supernatural powers and to overcome the adverse effects caused by their presence.

4. Superstition and the Galatians' religiosity

In the previous chapter, we have seen how Paul was concerned that the Galatians have attached religious significance to the law and its observances. 4:8-10 may give further insights into his critique of the nature of the Galatians' outlook and conduct. Indeed, Paul's criticism of the Galatians' behaviour and outlook lead to the

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engage in their orgiastic rites and ecstatic worship to ensure the fertility of the earth. For the description of the rites, see M.J. Vermaseren, *Cybele and Attis*, 24-32, 113-24.

[38] Cf. Thornton, 'Jewish New Moon Festivals', 100.

[39] See Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* 9.9, text translated in J.H. MacMahon in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers,* Vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990).

conclusion that they are regarded as superstitious, at least that is how he seems to perceive them.[41] To see why this is so, we begin by asking what it meant to be criticised for being superstitious in the first century ancient world.

a. Criticism of superstition in the ancient world

When the Roman critics in Paul's time distinguished between *religio* and *superstitio*, they often discussed the different (acceptable and unacceptable) forms of human relations with the gods, not truth and falsehood (i.e. that *religio* refers to the worship of the true god and *superstitio* a false one).[42] The two categories were employed as labels of approval or disapproval, although they do not always denote clear, simple or easily definable opposites; the boundaries between the two could be re-negotiated.[43] *Religio* was a term used to describe how one worships and relates to the gods.[44] It

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[40] See Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* 9.11.

[41] To be sure, Paul does not use the term δεισιδαιμονία ('superstition') to characterise the Galatians' behaviour. Nevertheless, as we shall argue, his criticism seems to suggest that the Galatians' outlook and attitude fit some of its characteristics. It is also observed that the NT often passes negative judgement against δεισιδαιμονία (Acts 17:22; 25:19) and 'magic' (Acts 8:9, 11; 13:6, 8; Gal. 5:20; Rev. 9:21, 18:23, 21:8). See D. Lührmann, 'Superstitio -- die Beurteilung des frühen Christentums durch die Römer,' *TZ* 42 (1986), 193-213. In addition, it should be pointed out that the Galatians may not have shared Paul's judgement here. On the contrary, they may have perceived that without the law, they would be 'participating in a novel unsanctioned *superstitio* like "Gentile Pauline Christianity"' (Witherington, 44).

[42] Thus, according to Seneca (*On Mercy* II.5.1.), '*religio* honours the gods, *superstitio* wrongs them'. See also M. Beard, J. North and S. Price, *Religions of Rome,* I, 214-27.

[43] According to Nilsson, 'the difference between religion and superstition was a difference of degree rather than of kind' (*Greek Popular Religion,* 111). See also M. Beard, J. North and S. Price, *Religions of Rome,* I, 225. In this sense, then, Paul's criticism of the Galatians' outlook and conduct as being superstitious is his own perception and judgement, one which may not be shared by his critics or even by his addressees.

[44] On the Roman use of *religio*, see Cicero, *De nat. de.* 1.14: *pietas, sanctitas, caeremonia, fides, templa,* etc., cf. 2.9 where religion is referred to as *cultus deorum*. Cf. Martyn (37 n.67.), who follows Käsemann, defines 'religion' as 'the human being's superstitious effort to come to know and to influence God'. This involves the distinction between the sacred and the profane. According to him, Paul is attacking such human religion, for God's apocalyptic act in Christ ended the religious distinction between sacred and profane. However, one needs to look at the issue of 'religion/superstition' in the context of first-century Graeco-Roman setting by asking: (1) how *religio-superstitio* distinction might have been perceived in the first century Graeco-Roman world; (2) how religious practices are perceived by their critics, especially by the philosophers.

usually referred to those traditional honours and religious practices paid to the gods by the state.[45] *Superstitio*, on the other hand, was distinguished from what was considered proper *religio*; as such, it could be seen pejoratively as foreign and strange habits of worship that threatened the stability of *religio* and the state.[46]

The Greek counterpart, δεισιδαιμονία, was also used in Hellenistic thought to debate the nature of correct religious behaviour.[47] Its negative connotation often denotes a product of fear, popular excesses of divine worship and religious behaviour. Philosophical critique often aimed at what they saw as the misapprehension and ignorance of the nature of the gods as well as the fear of the divine and physical realm, which led to excesses and to an improper evaluation as to the effects of ritual practices.[48] The critics perceived the fear of the gods (or δαιμόνια, 'demons') as one of the main features of superstitious belief and practice.[49] Indeed, Plutarch remarks that those who lived in fear and ignorance of the gods and demons are enslaved.[50] Fear manifests itself in ignorance and in an unwarranted distrust of the supernatural beings as guilt about offences against them, fear about fate and misfortune, even

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[45] So Pliny, praising Trajan in 100 C.E., describes the Roman state as 'devoted to *religiones* and always earning by piety the favour of the gods' (*Panegyric* 74.5). On religious piety as a function of family and civic responsibility, cf. Koester, *History, Culture and Religion of the Hellenistic Age,* 363; Nock, 'Early Gentile Christianity', 64-66.

[46] L.F. Janssen, '"Superstitio" and the Persecution of the Christians', *VC* 33 (1979), 152. See Cicero, *De Div.* 2.148-150; Livy, 39.16.5-11; Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44; Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96.

[47] The Greek counterpart (δεισιδαιμονία), in contrast to the Latin *superstitio*, could denote a positive meaning, suggesting religious behaviour and practices that are socially acceptable. See, e.g., Polybius, *Hist.* 6.56.7; Acts 17:22. Nevertheless, it is also used pejoratively by Greek writers and critics.

[48] See, e.g., Theophrastus' portrait of the δεισιδαίμων in his *Char.* 16, where δεισιδαιμονία increasingly connoted the negative idea of excessive fear of the gods and the strange behaviour that accompanied it. See also Plutarch, *De Sup.* 165D-E, 166A-B, 167D-E, 168D-E, 169D-E, 171A-B; cf. Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 2.106-8; *Det. Pot. Ins.* 20-21; P.J. Koets, *Δεισιδαιμονία: A Contribution to the Knowledge of the Religious Terminology in Greek* (Purmerend: J. Muusses, 1929), 35-40, 45, 49-50.

[49] Cf. Theophrastus: 'A fearful cowardice with regard to the divine (δειλία πρὸς τὸ δαιμόνιον)' (*Char.* 16.1); Plutarch, *De Sup.* 165B-D; cf. M. Smith, 'De Superstitione (Moralia 164E-171F)' in H.D. Betz (ed.) *Plutarch's Theological Writings and Early Christian Literature* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975), 2-3; Nilsson, *The Greek Religion,* 110. The distinction between fear of deities and demons is not often made. See also Plutarch, *De Sup.* 168A-D, 171C.

[50] So Plutarch, *De Sup.* 166D-F; 167B.

anxiety regarding death and the hereafter.[51] The superstitious ones (δεισιδαίμων) also mistake the mundane matters and causes of events in life and in the world for signs of supernatural involvement.[52] Indeed, the superstitious feared the elements (earth, sea, air, etc.), which are incorrectly taken as instruments of divine punishment or means of divine communication.[53] They approached the world as though it were teeming with dangerous, unseen forces that must be appeased or overcome in specific ways.[54] Consequently, such people invested ritual practices with religious significance, believing that they could influence the cosmos or the realm of the divine.[55]

Also criticised is the observance of holy days. Although such observance, as we have noted, remained a definite part of Hellenistic and Mystery religions, those who followed these regulations excessively or in a fearful way were, however, considered superstitious. According to the critics, the observance of days, including the Sabbath, was one of the characteristics of the superstitious.[56] Theophrastus, for instance, describes how the superstitious person (δεισιδαίμων) would observe the fourth and seventh days of each month as religiously significant and offer sacrifices on those days.[57] Plutarch in his *De Superstitione* also talks about Nicias' fearful inactivity during the lunar eclipse.[58]

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[51] See, for instance, Plutarch, *De Sup.* 167B-D; 166F-167A, 167D-168E, 170D-F; Theophrastus, *Char.* 16.1; 16.8, 11; Philo, *Sacr.* 15. Contrary to such perceptions, Plutarch argues that the gods do not possess human flaws such as anger but are the source of goodness. See Plutarch, *De Sup.* 165C, 167D-E, 169F-170F; M. Smith, 'De Superstitione', 31.

[52] See Theophrastus, *Char.* 16.2-8; Plutarch, *De Sup.* 168C-D.

[53] Plutarch, *De Sup.* 165D-E.

[54] See M. Smith, 'De Superstitione', 9-14; Koets, *Δεισιδαιμονία*, 35-40, 45-6, 50.

[55] Censure, for example, was aimed at such trappings of popular religion as cultic images, ritual sacrifice, purity rules, oracles, magic, astrology and so forth. See H.W. Attridge, 'The Philosophical Critique of Religion under the Early Empire', *ANRW* II.16.1 (1978), 45-78. See also Plutarch, *De Sup.* 165F-166C, 168D-E, 169D-E; Theophrastus, *Char.* 16.2, 7, 9, 10, 13; Koets, *Δεισιδαιμονία,* 63-64.

[56] Theophrastus, *Char.* 16.10; Horace, *Sat.* 1.9.67-72; Plutarch, *De Sup.* 169C-E; Seneca, *Sat.* 5.179-184.

[57] Theophrastus, *Char.* 16.10. On the significance of the observances of days and months, see Hesiod, *Works and Days,* 770, 772, 780.

[58] Plutarch, *De Sup.* 169A.

It should be said that it is not so much the mere observance of ritual and cultic practices that is the central focus of the critics; rather, their focus is on what they tend to see as the ignorance of the divine nature, the interior, psychological effects of improper religious beliefs as well as the fastidiousness or the manner of observances that followed from such beliefs.

It is also worth noting that the superstitious were criticised for their failure to conform to accepted traditions and standards of propriety. The excessiveness of such people would lead them to observe unofficial customs that differed from those sanctioned by tradition. The corruption or the misuse of hallowed religious traditions by superstitious individuals has been the subject of various criticism. For instance, Philo complains about superstitious individuals who misconstrue the biblical mysteries; Strabo, on the other hand, contends that the original traditions of Moses were degraded by 'superstitious men' who added dietary laws and circumcision.[59] And in Plutarch's mind, the superstitious 'transgress the god-given ancestral dignity of our religion'.[60] The superstitious were vilified for their corrupting influence and violation of sacred texts, traditions, and rituals.[61]

On the other hand, the philosophical criticism of religious conduct was constructed with an eye to formulating a rational or enlightened or 'natural' type of piety, informed by suitable philosophical principles. Indeed, the pejorative labelling of superstitious as a criticism of pagan worshippers is in a sense ideologically motivated. This critique stems from a perspective formed by particular theological and/or philosophical judgements. As such, superstitious people seem to be estranged from what the philosophers perceive to be true reality. They are concerned that misapprehension about the deity and about what truly matters could lead to a failure to live up to one's responsibilities in life, in matters spiritual, rational and ethical. Thus, the basic thrust of their efforts was the attempt to encourage more critically-

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[59] See Philo, *De Cherubim* 42; Strabo, *Geog.* 16.2.36-37.
[60] Plutarch, *De Sup.* 166B. He also criticises the rites and myths or tales of their so-called religious traditions. See, for example, *De Sup.* 165F, 167A, 170B-D, 171B-E.
[61] Cf. R. Hodgkin, 'Superstition', *ABD,* VI, 240.

held habits of religious belief and practice and to free religious life from superstition, and to focus the expression of piety in a proper conception of deity, philosophically conceived. This involved the task of dispelling ignorance and instilling what they consider a right understanding about the gods, leading to a proper conduct.[62]

b. Paul's concern about the Galatians' superstitious outlook

Paul's reference to the Galatians' seeming ignorance of God and his language of servility and of religious scrupulosity in 4:8-10 (cf. also 3:1-5), I would suggest, seems to point to the fact that in his mind the Gentile audience appeared to be superstitious.[63] Indeed, the critique of the Galatians' behaviour and the task of explicating his gospel that Paul undertakes in his letter allows him at certain points to come very close to the philosophical polemic of superstition. His concern, it seems, centres on the acceptable and unacceptable forms of human relations with God. In his judgement, the Galatians' observance of the law betrays their 'superstitious' behaviour, fastidiousness or excesses and improper evaluation as to the effects of ritual practices.

Paul, not unlike the philosophic critics, saw the link between the Galatians' behaviour and their seeming ignorance of the nature of the divine. He points to their lack of discernment or seeming ignorance of God/Christ crucified.[64] He calls them ἀνόητοι

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[62] For instance, Seneca, no less influenced by his Stoic perspective, argues that rituals, including Sabbath observance, arose from ignorance and a deficient knowledge of god's character and desires. See his *Ep. Mor.* 95.47-9. On the contrary, he focuses on rational piety and personal morality, informed by philosophical doctrines. See further Seneca, *Ep. Mor.* 95.34-9, 43-46. See also Plutarch, *De Sup.* 166C, 167E. Cf. S. Calderone, 'Superstitio', *ANRW* I.2 (1972), 380-81.

[63] This is not to say, however, that Paul shares the view that certain Jewish practices, such as the observance of Sabbath and the rite of circumcision, were superstitious. On the views of those who consider the observance of Sabbath or circumcision superstitious, see Plutarch, *De Sup.* 169C; Horace, *Sat.* 1.9.67-71; Juvenal, *Sat.* 14.96-106; cf. Philo, *Spec.* 2.60-61. Other Roman writers have also called Judaism a superstition. See Cicero, *Flac.* 67; Valerius Maximus 1.3.3; Horace, *Sat.* 2.3.281. On the similar labelling of Christianity, see Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96.7, 12; Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44; Suetonius, *Nero* 16.2.

[64] This might be attributed to the fact that the Galatians have now viewed Christ's crucifixion or the cross as an ignominy. In the Roman times, crucifixion was the ultimate penalty for

Γαλάται (3:1).[65] His reminder in 4:8 of what they already know about the nature of God and the use of the verb φρονέω ('think') in 5:10 both suggest that the challenge the Galatians presents for Paul is that they do not (continue to) think in what he perceives to be a proper way.[66] The Galatians (wrongly) believed that through religious observances they could influence the divine and physical realm, in dealing with the στοιχεῖα as well as in gaining righteousness before God (see 3:1-5).[67] Their religious scrupulosity betrays their 'superstitious' outlook.

Furthermore, as we have pointed out in the previous chapter, the one issue Paul is concerned about is the debate over who is right in the theological interpretation of sacred traditions and rituals. Over against the Galatians' works of the law, Paul highlights the fact that his gospel is in fact linked to antiquity and to scriptural authority and traditions. The apostle's concern could indeed reflect the philosophical criticism often directed at the superstitious excesses of those who observed customs

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criminals and the like. Cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44. That this is plausible may be gathered from Paul's rhetorical statement in 2:17 which seems to counter an objection that Christ was a 'promoter of sin' (ἁμαρτίας διάκονος). Indeed, the crucifixion was seen as the judgement of God against sinners and law-breakers (cf. Gal. 3:13 referring to Deut. 21:23). See J.A. Fitzmyer, 'Crucifixion in Ancient Palestine, Qumran Literature, and the New Testament', *CBQ* 40 (1978), 498-507; M. Wilcox, '"Upon the Tree" - Deut 21:22-23 in the New Testament', *JBL* 96 (1977), 88. Cf. Dunn (178) who thinks it is plausible that Deut. 21:23 was used in Jewish polemic against the early Christian claim that the crucified Jesus was the messiah. Cf. the LXX reading of Deut. 21:23: κεκατηραμένος ὑπὸ θεοῦ πᾶς κρεμάμενος ἐπὶ ζύλου. It is perhaps worth observing that, in addition to the substitution of the verbal adjective ἐπικατάρατος for the participle κεκατηραμένος (cf. 3:10; LXX Deut. 27:16; see Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture,* 246), Paul has also omitted ὑπὸ θεοῦ, possibly to avoid the idea that Christ was accursed by God as a criminal. Cf. Burton, 172; Bruce, 'The Curse of the Law' in Hooker and Wilson (eds.), *Paul and Paulinism,* 31.

[65] The vocative ἀνόητοι is used in Lk. 24:25, coupled with βραδεῖς τῇ καρδίᾳ (slow of heart), to refer to the lack of the understanding of the disciples. Cf. also Rom. 1:14 where ἀνόητος is the antithesis of σοφός.

[66] On the contrary, according to 4:8-9, regaining the knowledge of God is a benefit of Paul's gospel.

[67] In this regard, it may be suggested that the link between the Galatians' conduct in 3:1-5 and 4:10 lies in their 'superstitious' outlook concerning religious scrupulosity. Cf. also the finding of both rhetorical and epistolary analyses that there is a parallel between 3:1-5 and 4:8-11, with 3:1-5 serving as the introduction and 4:8-11 as the conclusion of an *inclusio*. See Longenecker, 178; Hansen, *Abraham,* 78; J. Smit, 'The Letter of Paul to the Galatians: A Deliberative Speech', *NTS* 35 (1989), 13-14.

that differed from those sanctioned by religious tradition.[68] Such criticism typically characterises the superstitious as those who have corrupted or misused the hallowed sacred traditions and texts. Paul's (re)interpretation of the Abrahamic tradition and his criticism of works of the law could therefore inform our understanding of the Galatians as those who were perceived to be 'superstitious' in their excesses of religious observances. According to the apostle, their outlook and conduct are in opposition to the true *religio* exemplified by the gospel.

We know that fear was a common characteristic of superstitious people. Though fear (φόβος) is not explicitly mentioned in the letter, Paul's language of slavery in 4:9 allows one to consider a fear that would appear superstitious as another workable explanation of the Galatians' behaviour.[69] As we have argued, the Galatians saw the στοιχεῖα to mean more than mere basic elements; they are also related to the supernatural powers that could influence the κόσμος (including the basic elements) in which humans lived in. In this state of affairs, the fundamental relationship that is operative between worshippers and the forces of the supernatural realm is one of servility and fear. Influenced by their own religious background, we have argued that the Gentile Galatians might have held to a similar perception of the divine/physical realm. This problem manifests itself in their seeming misapprehension of God/Christ (4:8) and in the scrupulous attitude with which they observed the calendar (4:10).

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[68] Indeed, critics were often concerned that superstitious practices which failed to heed accepted norms could pose certain threats, such as the undermining of society's moral stability. See Hodgson, 'Superstition', 240. See also Plutarch, *De Sup.* 166B; Cicero, *De Div.* 2.148-150; Livy, 39.16.5-11; Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44; Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96.

[69] Perhaps worth noting is the fact that Paul's assurance of the hope of righteousness (5:5) and the promise of Spirit, justification, sonship and inheritance they have in Christ (3:14, 22, 26-29; 4:5, 7) could fit with the possibility that the Galatians held some sort of anxiety or fear about the judgement of the law and their status before God (note, especially, 2:15, where the (Christian) Gentiles, in the eyes of some Jews, were still considered 'sinners' who had breached the law, ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἁμαρτωλοί). Consequently, the Galatians no longer need to live in fear under the enslavement of the law. Neither do they need to fear any (Jew-Gentile) barrier which might prevent them from participating in the covenant people of God. See also N. Bonneau, 'The Logic of Paul's Argument on the Curse of the Law in Galatians 3:10-14', *NovT* (1997), 73, 77. On the term ἁμαρτωλοί as a reference to Gentile sinners and lawlessness, see Dunn, 132-33; idem. 'Echoes of Intra-Jewish Polemic', 462-63.

In addition, Paul's reference to the observance of days in 4:10 also fits with the image of superstitious behaviour in antiquity. In their presentations of the superstitious person, critics such as Theophrastus, Horace, and Plutarch mention the designation of certain days as religiously significant. The Galatians had attached religious significance to calendrical observances that Paul thought were religiously insignificant.

What difference then does the label or perception of 'superstition' make in our understanding of Galatians? It could provide one explanation why Paul objected to the Galatians' religious behaviour. The presence of perceived superstition within the communities allows us to see how the Galatians related to the divine and physical world and perceived the importance of religious scrupulousness. Contemporary religious assumptions have governed their thinking, life and practices. It also demonstrates that for Paul, there are distinctions between proper and improper religious activity. Contrary to the Galatians' conduct, Paul argues that correct or appropriate religious behaviour and outlook is one that is characterised by faith and freedom in Christ, not servility to or fear of the στοιχεῖα.[70]

5. Paul's warning: Servility or freedom

What Paul is contending against in the text here is more than mere life under the law. He is concerned about the Galatians' process into apostasy. Their outlook and conduct have influenced them in ways contrary to those of God. They have begun to align themselves and pattern their lives according to the cosmos in which those powers operate. This, however, has effectively led them back to their (previous) religious enslavement.[71] They are in danger of (re)turning to a condition no different to their former pagan way of life.

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[70] This is further explicated in the following section.

[71] According to Scott (*Adoption,* 181-86), the slavery terminology is part of a 'second exodus' motif central to the passage in 4:1-7. This thesis is further developed by S.C. Keesmaat in her *Paul and his Story. (Re)interpreting the Exodus Tradition,* JSNTSupp. 181 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1999), chs. 5-6. Accordingly, it is argued that Paul sees Christ as one

As Paul sees it, the continued servility under the influence of the unseen forces and powers is a matter only of one's faithlessness in Christ and ignorance about the new reality and freedom that the cross has accomplished. Thus, Paul reminds them of what they know about God and his action in Christ (4:8). In the light of the new realities rendered by God in Christ, Paul denies that the στοιχεῖα, whom he describes as 'weak and poor' (τὰ ἀσθενῆ καὶ πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα), can wield any power or play any significant part in an authentic Christian worldview and life. To be sure, he takes the potential influence of στοιχεῖα on the Galatians' outlook and conduct seriously. But he grants them little significance. On the other hand, Paul assures them that in the light of Christ's work, the believer is no longer a slave (δοῦλος) to τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου but a son (υἱός). And the Spirit of Christ lives in the hearts of Christians (4:6-7; also 3:26-29). As he has already pointed out in 1:4 and 3:2-5, Christ has delivered them from the present evil age. Their (previous) Christian experience was one marked out by the Spirit, whom they had received, whom their Christian life had begun with, and who had been given to them, as was evidenced by the presence of power-miracles among them. As Paul argues in 4:6, the Spirit's Abba-cry is the evidence of their sonship and of the relationship they have with God.[72]

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who enacted the 'new exodus' and brings freedom to those who participate in him. Keesmaat argues that Paul reinterprets the exodus motifs and themes, suggesting that the Galatians' failure to participate in the crucified Messiah and their observance of the law led in effect to a return to slavery not unlike Israel's desire to return to Egypt. It is not implausible to see with Scott and Keesmaat that Paul may be comparing the post-Sinai period of slavery with Egyptian slavery. If so, this would make Paul's polemic against law-observance and his warning against slavery even more acute. Nevertheless, I do not think that all of the terminology of the passage could be (or needs to be) explained solely on the basis of the second exodus typology. For instance, it is not clear if Paul presents Christ as one who enacted the second exodus (as a new Moses?). In addition, the Galatians' enslavement as a return to paganism needs to be explained adequately (4:8-10). It is not immediately clear that the Galatians would see the enslavement as a return to Egyptian slavery. Indeed, the one weakness of Scott and Keesmaat's argument is that they have not considered the significance or the meaning of στοιχεῖα for Paul's contemporaries or the Galatians. They have also failed to ask how that might have influenced the Galatians' conduct and hence Paul's argument.

[72] See Burton, 223; Betz, 211; Longenecker, 174; Lull, *Spirit,* 68-69.

On the contrary, without the knowledge of Christ proclaimed in the gospel or the obedience of faith and life in the Spirit, the superstitious would become instruments of supernatural influences other than the Spirit of God. The powers, being an integral part of the present evil age, hold people in bondage. They would continue to live in fear of these powers, engaging in various means of ritualism or unenlightened religious practices. Indeed, in the light of the use of κόσμος in 4:3 and 6:14, the implication is that the Galatians, by returning to the στοιχεῖα and to calendrical observance, would be returning to the old aeon they once belonged to as pagan worshippers, the κόσμος from which they had been redeemed through Christ (see 4:3; 6:14).[73] They would be subjected, once again, to the enslaving power of the στοιχεῖα.

What this also means is that the decision the Galatians are to make is not simply one between 'slavery' and 'freedom' or that between 'coming under the law' and 'freedom from the law' (4:9b, 21; 5:1). The structure of the decision presents the deeper implications of that decision as a choice to align with Christ/Spirit of Christ or with the spirits or powers of the κόσμος. The Galatians are presented with the dilemma of two opposing 'worlds' or spiritual realms. The end result, as Paul envisages, is one that involves grave concrete realities;[74] the Galatians, through ignorance and the malevolent influence of their outlook and conduct, are open to spiritual powers and realities other than the Spirit of God. One is either a son of God by means of the Spirit (4:6), or a slave to beings that by nature are not gods (4:9). Implicitly, therefore, having demonstrated that the presence of the Spirit is a sign that confirms the truth of his teaching (3:1-5, 14; 3:26-28; 4:6),[75] those who remain in whole-hearted commitment to his gospel will continue to be enlivened by the Spirit (4:6, 29). This reading makes explicable Paul's warning that the Galatians are in the

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[73] E. Adams, *Constructing the World,* 229-30. Cf. also Arnold, 'Returning to the Domain', 75-76.

[74] In this sense, therefore, Paul is not simply making a mere rhetorical remark or comparison between paganism and law-observance. What he envisages in enslavement also appears to be more than a return to the old cosmos of the elemental pairs of opposites or religious polarity (the Law/Not-Law or Jew/Gentile as Martyn (403-406) argues). There are real spiritual realities or consequences involved here.

[75] Smit, 'The Letter of Paul to the Galatians', 15.

danger of returning to paganism. It also coheres with his perception elsewhere that paganism is usually associated with the suppression of the truth about God and the influence of other supernatural entities.[76]

What Paul desires his converts to do is clear. The Galatians are not to return to enslavement or to come under the spiritual powers who lead their subjects away from the true knowledge of God. On the contrary, as the following verse 4:12a makes clear, the Galatians are to become like him, that is, to align themselves to God/Christ and to continue to be whole-heartedly committed to the gospel.[77] This is further explicated in 4:19, where Paul expresses the desire that Christ will become formed in the lives of the Galatians. Like Paul, they too are to live by faith in the Son of God. Having been released from the controlling grip of the στοιχεῖα on human life when Christ became crucified, they must not submit to the enslaving forces again; rather, they are to live in the light of the new eschatological realities (6:14). Their attitudes and behaviour must be wholly at odds with the patterns of life that characterise the present age.

In the light of the above analysis, one therefore questions whether the Galatians' observance of the law, especially the observance of the calendar, was motivated by covenantal obligation. It has been rightly pointed out that Jewish writings often attest to the fact that the observance of the law, including circumcision, Jewish festivals and calendrical events, served not only as distinctive markers of the identity of the people of God over against the Gentiles but also as a test of covenantal faithfulness.[78] But this does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that the issue in the Galatians' observance of the law is to be seen as part of this larger concern about covenantal

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[76] Cf. Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 10:20-21.

[77] B. Longenecker, '"Until Christ is Formed in You": Suprahuman Forces and Moral Character in Galatians', *CBQ* 61 (1999), 100-101. Longenecker has recently demonstrated the malevolent influence caused by the agitators' activity and Paul's concern over what this would have on the Galatians' Christian character and life. However, he does not consider the significance of στοιχεῖα in the Galatians' outlook nor its impact on their spiritual life.

[78] For the various references, see Dunn, 227-28.

obligation and the identity of the people of God as Abraham's children.[79] Indeed, in the light of the above analysis of the religious background of the Galatians, one hesitates to label their observance of law (in particular, the calendrical events) as exclusively motivated by (Jewish) covenantal concerns. The Galatians might have observed 'days, months, seasons and years' for different reasons. There existed a variety of reasons for observing calendrical events, which stemmed from a 'superstitious' concern of how to deal with the malevolent powers of the στοιχεῖα.

It is crucial therefore to ask, in my opinion, how the Galatians' own background and perception of the divine/physical world (and the στοιχεῖα) might have influenced their observance of Jewish practices, as well as how they as former pagans might have perceived religious practices in general. Paul's use of the term τὰ στοιχεῖα and his polemic against the Galatians in 4:8-10 must be understood against their religious outlook, vocabulary and background as influenced by their past involvement in pagan worship and practices. It is not merely a polemical (or rhetorical) term coined by Paul from his own Jewish theological or apocalyptic perspective.

6. Conclusion

We have argued that 4:8-10, though brief in length, is significant in identifying the contours of the Galatians' superstitious conduct in their law-observance. It is suggested that their outlook and behaviour stemmed in part from their perception concerning the στοιχεῖα and the divine/cosmic realm. They had attached religious significance to calendrical observance. Indeed, any calendrical observance, whatever its origin, would have its own system of attaching religious value to it. However, it is not necessary, given Paul's rather general and brief description, to seek a precise definition of the actual practice or background of the Galatians' observance of 'days,

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[79] There is little dispute among scholars that when Paul speaks about the law, he means the Mosaic Law. The contention is about what sort of 'works' he has in mind. According to Dunn, it refers not just to those markers of Jewish distinctiveness over against Gentiles but also 'works' required by those who maintained their status within God's covenant. See Dunn, 136, 229; idem, 'Works of the Law' in his *Jesus, Paul and the Law,* 219-25.

months, seasons and years'.[80] It would obscure the point of his argument. Rather, Paul's polemical evaluation concerns the Galatians' scrupulous religious observance and the 'superstitious' attitude with which they sought to relate to the divine/physical realm and to deal with fear and the hostility of the supernatural entities in the world. Paul, however, warns that the failure to appropriate the freedom and the blessing of redemption and adoption through Christ's work of the cross would mean a return to pagan worship and to servility to the στοιχεῖα.

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[80] For instance, there is little evidence to suggest that the Galatians were involved in some form of 'Kalendarfrömmigkeit' or had worshipped the calendrical-regulating stars or astral spirits as gods. *Pace* Mussner, 299-302.

Chapter 5

RHETORIC, ENMITY AND COMPARISON IN GALATIANS

1. Introduction

It has been argued in the preceding chapters that one of Paul's major concerns is the extent to which the Galatians have reverted to contemporary Anatolian outlooks and perceptions of the nature of the divine and physical realm. It will be argued in the present chapter that the Galatians have also employed categories drawn from the socio-cultural conventions of the day. Indeed, an important aspect of the crisis Paul faces consists of the Galatians' favourable reception of the agitators and their judgement and prejudice against him. But their judgement was a social one according to conventional Graeco-Roman values. They were judging Paul's message, character and motives according to accepted standards of rhetoric and comparison. On the one hand, they were enamoured of the persuasive rhetoric of the agitators; on the other, they began to question the character and integrity of Paul and his preaching. Paul was also seen as a flatterer, one who has contravened accepted social norms and, as such, he is not to be trusted. In the minds of the Galatians these socio-cultural criticisms would also have had important 'religious' implications. This might have led them to question his position as a bearer of the gospel. They were using their social prejudices to assess the legitimacy of his ministry as well as his gospel. I hope that this will illuminate new aspects to the conflict and offer fresh perspectives or viewpoints on the Galatian crisis and the nature of the enmity which characterised the Galatians' relationship with Paul (4:16).

2. The Galatians' attitude towards Paul: Past and present

The nature of the relationship between Paul and the Galatians is described in Gal. 4:16 as one of 'enmity' (ἐχθρός). Paul asks, 'So, have I now become your enemy by speaking the truth to you?' (ὥστε ἐχθρός ὑμῶν γέγονα ἀληθεύων ὑμῖν). This seems

to point to a serious breakdown in Paul's relations with the Galatians, in contrast to their favourable reception of him when he first preached the gospel to them (4:13-15). On this previous occasion, despite his 'weakness of the flesh' (ἀσθένεια), the Galatians did not reject him. The phrase ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκός has been interpreted to mean some sort of physical weakness or ailment which Paul suffers.[1] The phrase, however, does not need to take this as its only reference;[2] it could also allude to Paul's (lack of) social as well as physical status.[3] In a society that placed great premium on outward or physical appearance, where such was also expected of rhetors and declaimers,[4] the Galatians were tempted (cf. πειρασμός, 4:14)[5] to judge or despise him (ἐξουθενεῖν; ἐκπτύειν) according to his 'flesh' (σάρξ), his physical features and visage.[6] On this previous occasion, however, they set aside their social prejudices; on the contrary, they received him as 'an angel of God, as Christ Jesus' (v. 14). They would have plucked out their eyes and given them to him and considered it a joy and

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[1] See, e.g., Longenecker, 190; Betz, 220, 225.

[2] Recently, T. Martin argues that the phrase does not refer to sickness. See Martin, 'Whose Flesh? Whose Temptation? Galatians 4.13-14', *JSNT* 74 (1999), 65-78.

[3] The term ἀσθένεια, as opposed to 'strong', could refer to the lack of social status and worth or to one's position within a social hierarchy. See M. Reasoner, *The Strong and the Weak*, 45-55. *Pace* Oepke, 105-106.

[4] On the esteem of physical attributes, see Epictetus, *Dis.* 3.22.88; cf. 3.1.1-9. Audiences were drawn to the physical attributes of those who declaimed, as Philostratus observes, 'when Alexander of Seleucia came to Athens his "perfect elegance" sent a "low buzz of approval" through the audience and he was described as "godlike" in appearance' (*Lives,* 572, 570). On the other hand, Lucian's *Toxaris* talks about how illness (18-19, 60-61) and ugliness (24, 30f.) could affect relationships. Baldness and eyebrows, even the way one walks, have been the subject of ridicule. See Marshall, *Enmity,* 65. See also D.A. Russell, *Greek Declamation* (Cambridge: CUP, 1983), 85.

[5] There is some textual uncertainty here. The reading of the Galatians' trial over Paul's flesh is the more difficult one and is supported by both good Alexandrian and Western texts, though P46 has μου.

[6] We learn, for instance, from the *Acts of Paul and Thekla* that Paul was viewed as a 'man little in stature, bald-headed, with crooked legs, well-born, with eye-brows meeting and a long nose'. See Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha* I, ch. 3, 237. Ramsay dates this description of Paul to the first-century CE, see his *The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1903), 381; Betz, though cautious of its historical authenticity, comments that it probably comes from Paul's opponents, *Der Apostel Paulus und die sokratische Tradition. Eine exegetische Untersuchung zu seiner 'Apologie' 2 Korinther 10-13* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1972), 55.

blessing (μακαρισμός) to have associated with him (v. 15).[7] This reveals the kind of strong relationship the Galatians had with Paul originally.

In marked contrast, the present relationship is one of enmity. It is not implausible that it had been affected by the Galatians' social prejudices against Paul's (uninspiring) physical visage.[8] But Paul's remark in 4:16 hints at a more likely reason for their attitude: 'So, have I now become your enemy by *speaking the truth* to you (ὥστε ἐχθρὸς ὑμῶν γέγονα ἀληθεύων ὑμῖν)?' The enmity, it seems, was somehow caused by the Galatians' critical judgement or perception of Paul's rhetoric and the truth(fulness) of his message.

It is my argument that Paul was judged according to Graeco-Roman conventions. The Galatians compared him unfavourably with the agitators and viewed Paul's gospel and his character as seriously flawed. The nature of their criticism may be gleaned from Paul's remarks in 1:10 and 5:11.

To be sure, 1:10 alone does not necessarily mean that Paul was accused of being a crowd-pleaser.[9] He may well be formulating these rhetorical questions to distinguish himself against those who accommodate their messages. Moreover, unlike the situation in Corinth, there is no explicit naming of his detractors or the specific charges made against him.[10] Nevertheless, taking 1:10, 4:16 and 5:11 together allows

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[7] The expression ὁ μακαρισμὸς ὑμῶν may be taken to be an objective genitive, expressing the joy and enthusiasm the Galatians had for Paul and his gospel (v. 15b.).

[8] See above n.6. *Pace* T. Martin who recently argues that the Galatians could have disdained and rejected him over his physical circumcision. See Martin, 'Whose Flesh?', 86-90. There is little evidence elsewhere in the letter that this attitude toward Paul's circumcision was a significant contributing factor in the enmity. More problematically, Martin's view does not cohere with the fact that the Galatians were actually contemplating circumcision (5:2)!

[9] So B.R. Gaventa, 'Galatians 1 and 2', 312; B. Dodd, 'Christ's Slave, People Pleasers and Galatians 1.10', *NTS* 42 (1996), 91-92; Betz, 56; Borgen, 'Paul Preaches Circumcision and Pleases Men', 40.

[10] See 2 Cor. 10:10-11; cf. 11:5-6, 12-13.

the possibility that Paul's character and motives in his preaching are at least in question, though the dangers of 'mirror-reading' must be kept in mind.[11]

Turning our attention to 5:11, it is probable that the agitators (and the Galatians) could have pointed out his seeming inconsistency in the preaching and practice of circumcision;[12] that he approved its practice on certain occasions to certain people while objecting to it when it concerns the Galatians (5:2).[13] Perhaps they saw that Paul did approve of Christian Jews expressing their faith within the bounds of law-observance and the practice of circumcision. Or perhaps they argued that Paul himself continued to live a Jewish lifestyle and that he did approve circumcision being done on another occasion.[14] As ἔτι ('yet', 'still') with κηρύσσω might suggest a temporal sense in 5:11, Paul might have been accused of preaching circumcision whenever he finds it expedient.[15] Yet, they would argue, he does not demand that Gentile Galatians observe these practices. Perhaps by waiving the uncomfortable rite of circumcision, Paul may have been accused of being a crowd pleaser and a trimmer of the gospel message, seeking to accommodate his Gentile converts and so making it

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[11] It should be said that unlike theological disputes in the modern academia, criticism and/or hostility toward the message and the messenger (or his character) in the ancient world were often linked. The Galatians' critical attitude towards Paul's gospel would have influenced their view of his character and motives (and vice-versa).

[12] Given the somewhat abrupt insertion of the denial of preaching circumcision in 5:11, there is no reason to doubt that such accusation was made against Paul. See further Mussner, 12-13; Jewett, 'The Agitators', 208; Watson, *Paul,* 55; Fung, 48. Bruce (236) supports this view by noting that circumcision is not mentioned in the immediate context.

[13] Also worth noting is the fact that the conditional clause of 1:10b has the form of a real case, probably suggesting that his opponents were saying that Paul was *still* preaching circumcision. See also Burton, 31; Schlier, 42; Bruce, 85; Longenecker, 18; Esler, *Galatians,* 67-68.

[14] Cf. 1 Cor. 9:19-23; Acts 16:3. In addition, the basis of the agitators' claim may be attributed to Paul's neutral attitude towards circumcision expressed in 5:6.

[15] According to Barclay, the opponents 'may even have argued that Paul, himself a circumcised Jew, normally circumcised his converts but had left them in Galatia with an inadequate initiation' (*Obeying,* 59). See also Howard, *Crisis,* 44-45. According to P. Borgen, 5:11 suggests that Paul may have been portrayed as one who pleases fellow Jews by promoting circumcision. See P. Borgen, 'Paul Preaches Circumcision and Pleases Men', 37-46. One agrees, however, with Barclay (*Obeying,* 50) against Borgen that it is not sufficiently clear in the letter to press the distinction concerning the issue of circumcision in Galatia as that which stems from the distinction between its spiritual/ethical sense (understood by Paul) and its physical sense (advocated by the agitators).

easier for them to accept his gospel.[16] Whatever the basis of their accusations, Paul nevertheless feels he must respond to a (mis)representation of his views and character. Thus, 1:10 and 5:11 may well point to one of the significant socio-cultural issues of the day. The Galatians' view of Paul and his gospel could have been influenced by their criticism of his rhetoric and seeming inconsistency of character. This might have given rise to enmity and caused them to turn toward the agitators.

5:8, on the other hand, suggests that the Galatians were attracted to the agitators' persuasive rhetorical speeches. The Galatians' socio-cultural evaluation of both Paul and the agitators plays a part in their decision to adhere to the gospel of circumcision. This view is further supported by Paul's subsequent development of the rhetorical issue in the letter. As Paul describes his relationship to the gospel throughout the letter, he consistently demonstrates that there is only one gospel and that it requires the pleasing of God rather than of one's fellow human beings. He does this too in his polemic against the agitators' own character and rhetorical motives (1:6-2:14; 4:17; 5:7-11; 6:12-3). At the same time, the polemical invective could also serve to stifle criticisms and establish the legitimacy of his gospel and preaching ministry.

Hence the cumulative evidence in the letter, I would suggest, seems to point to the question of character as well as rhetorical stratagem and motives as one of the prominent features of the Galatian crisis. Before returning to these issues in the text, we seek, first of all, to understand the Graeco-Roman background against which we may understand the Galatians' socio-cultural attitudes and prejudices.

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[16] See Longenecker, 18-19; Martyn, 142. That Paul would act in this way would not be surprising, especially when circumcision was viewed as an object of ridicule by Gentiles in the ancient world. See Dunn, 49-50.

3. Enmity, comparison and rhetoric in the ancient world

a. The rhetorical convention

The rhetorical questions in 1:10 seem to indicate that Paul was being perceived as one no different to a mere orator or a declaimer. This seems clear from the use of πείθω here (cf. also 5:8), a term which appears in definitions of 'rhetoric', for rhetoric is the art of persuasion.[17] In Graeco-Roman oratory, the aim was persuasion.[18] All aspects of public speech - content, style, delivery - must be adapted to the subject and to win the assent and approval of hearers. Thus, according to Cicero, the aim of the speaker is to convince the audience, that is, to 'win the assent of the throng'.[19] It means that one has 'to instruct (*docere*), delight (*delectare*), and to move the minds of the audience (*movere*)'.[20] Elsewhere, he argues that 'eloquence has the power to sway men's minds and move them in every possible way ... it implants new ideas and uproots the old'.[21]

To win the assent of the audience would also require eloquence in one's delivery. Form and content, or eloquence and wisdom, are not necessarily perceived to be

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[17] For a discussion of the etymology of the word, see R.G.A. Buxton, *Persuasion in Greek Tragedy: A Study of Peitho* (Cambridge: CUP, 1982), 10-20, 48-53. Although rhetoricians such as Quintilian and Cicero were concerned with rhetorical theory and the art of speaking in the courts and the forums, we may nevertheless seek to draw some insights from their writings in order to gain a clearer picture about how speakers viewed and accomplished their task, the social role of oratory in their world, and the attitude of the masses toward oratory.

[18] According to Tacitus' Messalla, no one can be called an orator who cannot speak 'in a manner fitted to win conviction (*ad persuadendum*)' (*Dial.* 30). Similarly, Cicero says, 'the function of eloquence seems to be to speak in a manner suited to persuade an audience, the end is to persuade by speech' (*De Inven.* 1.6); indeed, the aim of oratory is πείθειν (*Brutus* 59). See also Cicero, *De Part.* 5. Cf. also Quintilian's observation that a standard of rhetoric in his day was 'the power of persuasion' (*vim persuadendi, Inst. Or.*2.15.2-4). This continues into the mid-second century, as may be gleaned from the writings for Aristides, where persuasion, for him as for Plato, is the aim and purpose of oratory; *To Plato,* 302, 392; see also 138-40. See also Plato, *Gorg.* 458E, 462C, *Prot.* 352E (πείθειν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους). Cf. also Pliny, *Letters* 1.20.16-18; 2.3.9-11. See also D. Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation. 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric,* SNTSMS 79 (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), 110-15.

[19] Cicero, *Brutus* 191.

[20] Cicero, *De Op.* 4.

distinguishable by many people. Those who possess wisdom are deemed capable of producing eloquence; and those who are eloquent exhibit wisdom.[22] Form and content are characterised by σοφία, and people would gather to hear them.[23] Thus, an appreciation of eloquent oratory is also a sign of an appreciation of the content of thought, which could be termed wisdom or philosophy. As D. Litfin argues, 'The people of antiquity could scarcely by faulted for conflating wisdom and eloquence in the assumption that powerful ideas should be adorned with powerful words, or conversely, that eloquence could be an index to wisdom.'[24]

The task of persuasion involves rhetorical adaptation. Orators would shape content and style according to circumstances in order to achieve the best results.[25] However, through the means of rhetorical power, training and experience, as well as the careful study of audience and occasion, they could even manipulate and create a message to gain the desired result.[26] As Dio observes, armed with the power of persuasion, the δύναμις of πείθω, the orator could even twist and warp the law to his own use.[27] Persuasion might even entail deception, falsehood or the distortion of truth.[28] On the other hand, flattery and display were not untypical features in Graeco-Roman oratory. There were orators who sought to flatter, entertain or impress their audience. Indeed, the term κόλαξ ('flattery'), together with words such as ἀπάτη ('deception') or γόης

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[21] Cicero, *Or.* 97.

[22] Cf. Cicero says, 'Eloquence is nothing else but wisdom delivering copious utterance' (*De Part.* 79). Similarly, Hippias of Elis, according to Dio in *Or.* 71.2, 'claimed to be the wisest of the Greeks' for 'at the Olympic Games and at the other national gatherings he produced poems of every style and speeches which he had composed of diverse kinds'.

[23] Dio, *Or.* 42.5; 77/8.2.

[24] Litfin, *Paul's Theology,* 124.

[25] Adaptability was often advocated and defended. See, for instance, Cicero, *Or.* 122-125; Quintilian, *Inst. Or.* 2.13.2; 12.10.56, 69. Cf. also Aristides, *To Plato,* 138-40; 185.

[26] Cf. Aristides, *To Plato,* 138.

[27] *Or.* 76.4; cf. 18.5.

[28] A. Gellius says, 'It is the orator's privilege to make statements that are untrue, daring, crafty, deceptive and sophistical, provided they have some semblance of truth and can by any artifice be made to insinuate themselves into the minds of the persons who are to be influenced' (*Attic Nights* 1.6.4). Cf. according to Plutarch, 'Pherecydes and Heracleitus ... courted applause with a bold display of hollow words' (*Mor.* 1090A). See also Dio, *Or.* 4.33-35. Quintilian even advocated some form of deception and falsehood as a means for gaining the desired result, although he justifies the means on the ground that the goal must be a worthy one. See *Inst. Or.* 12.1.36, 38, 41; cf. 2.17.19, 20, 27.

('cheat'), is also used to describe certain orators, at least since Plato and Demosthenes, to reflect the bewitching effect they had on audiences.[29] In the ancient world, magic and deception were in fact often used to characterise rhetoric and sophistry.[30] As de Romilly comments, rhetors were engaged in 'delivering speeches and pouring out words, which have a magical and seductive influence on the audience; here is magic'.[31]

To be sure, the oratorical form of persuasion does not necessarily eschew a style designed to please or even flatter listeners.[32] It is, after all, not inconsistent with the aim of rhetoric, which is to make the listeners receptive to the message. Nevertheless, flatterers who accommodated themselves to their audience were open to criticism. Dio comments, 'The sophists ... can't help adopting the thought of their listeners, saying and thinking such things as fit the nature of those listeners, whatever it happens to be.'[33] He was critical of this sort of pandering because it was basically motivated by self-interest.[34] Indeed, for Dio, such a person, 'ever turning and revolving, a flatterer of peoples and crowds, whether in public assemblies or lecture halls, or in his so-called friendship with tyrants or kings and his courting of them - who would not feel pity for his character and manner of living?'[35] The term κόλαξ was used pejoratively of sophists, whom Dio identified as a group of public orators.[36]

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[29] Plato, *Symp.* 203D; Demosthenes, *De Corona,* 276. According to Plato, magic, illusion and sophistry were treated almost synonymously. See further J. de Romilly, *Magic and Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1975), 32. Similarly, for Philo, ἀπάτη and σόφισμα work 'deception and illusion through the eyes of souls that are ready to be seduced' (*Gig.* 59). Cf. also Philo, *Praem. Poen.* 25.

[30] See J. de. Romilly, *Magic and Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Mass., 1975).

[31] J. de Romilly, *Magic and Rhetoric*, 29.

[32] Tacitus, *Dial.* 19.1-2; 22.4; cf. Pliny, *Letters* 3.18.10.

[33] *Or.* 35.8. By the first-century CE., the term σοφιστής was commonly used to designate rhetoricians whose ability in eloquence would attract public hearing and students to their schools. See B.W. Winter, *Philo and Paul among the Sophists,* SNTSMS 96 (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), 3-4.

[34] See further *Or.* 4.131-132; 12.5, 13; 35.8; 38.2; 22.1; 32.10; 33.23.

[35] *Or.* 4.124.

[36] The 'flatterers, imposters and sophists' are the opposite of the 'noble, independent souls', see *Or.* 32.11. Cf. *Or.* 32.39, where Dio instructs the crowd against comparing him with those who 'habitually sing such strains, whether orators or poets'. In his mind, the latter are

Indeed, in many circles sophistic rhetoric was deplored as a form of manipulation without substance.[37]

Other forms of criticisms too were levelled against orators. With the increasing emphasis in public oratory on declamation and display,[38] the criticism was made that the focus on declamation merely to impress made little, if any, difference in the lives or actual affairs of people.[39] Furthermore, Philo points out that there were virtuoso rhetoricians who enjoyed a large public following but lacked moral judgement. They instructed others but failed to produce personal virtue.[40] They could engage in lengthy discourses but their actions betrayed how erroneous and inconsistent their lives were.[41] Philosophical critics, on the other hand, would warn their pupils against being misled by appearances, for it is not the garb or manner that makes a true philosopher, but his life.[42]

What, then, were some of the qualities an orator should possess in order to persuade his audiences? Teachers of rhetoric such as Quintilian contended that 'the entire hope of victory and the entire method of persuasion rest on proof and refutation, for when we have submitted our arguments and destroyed those of the opposition, we have, of course, completely fulfilled the speaker's function'.[43] Cicero argues that effective

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'clever persons, mighty sophists, wonder-workers' (δεινοὶ ἐκείνοι καὶ μεγάλοι σοφισταὶ καὶ γόητες), while in comparison he is 'quite ordinary and prosaic'.

[37] Philo calls this shadowboxing (*Det. Pot. Ins.* 4).

[38] Cf., for instance, Dio's description of orators in his *Or.* 32.19 as 'those who declaim speeches for display (οἱ ἐπιδεικτικοὺς λόγους κτλ.)'. Cf. also Seneca, *Ep. Mor.* 40.5; Epictetus, *Dis.* 3.23. As G.A. Kennedy comments, the practice of declamation was 'the major rhetorical phenomenon of the Roman Empire'. See Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 103. See also Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 312-22; Litfin, *Paul's Theology*, 112-15.

[39] Cf. Tacitus, *Dial.* 31.1-36.1. See also Quintilian's opposition to declamation as an end in itself, *Inst. Or.* 10.1.125-31.

[40] See, e.g., Philo, *Migr. Abr.* 72.

[41] Philo, *Poster.* 86.

[42] E.g. Epictetus, *Dis.* 2.19.28, 4.8.4-14; Dio, *Or.* 49.11-12.

[43] *Rh. ad Here.* 1.9.19. Thus, it is observed that rhetoric is not merely about a speaker's form or style; it includes content and subject matter.

rhetoric encompasses the ability to think well, to discover and to grapple with ideas; for him, the 'discovery of valid or seemingly valid arguments to render one's cause plausible', is 'the first and most important part of rhetoric'.[44] Elsewhere, for Dio, rhetoric is the power of persuasion, that is, the power 'in word and thought alike'.[45] Plutarch writes, 'The mental habit of public men - deliberation, wisdom, and justice, and, besides these, experience, which hits upon the proper moments and words and is the power that creates persuasion - is maintained by constantly speaking, acting, reasoning, and judging'.[46] The appeal to substantive content was a significant strategy in rhetorical persuasion.[47] This was often necessary, for in first-century rhetorical convention, substantive content was evaluated, even appreciated, by ordinary audiences. In fact, many listeners, although not powerful rhetors or professional literary critics themselves, were experienced and discerning judges of oratory. There were astute and perceptive listeners.[48] Cicero comments, 'judgement is passing upon us as often as we speak.'[49] Indeed, Messalla warns that 'any stupid or ill-advised statement brings prompt retribution in the shape of the judge's disapproval, taunting criticism from your opponent - yes, and from your own supporters expressions of dissatisfaction'.[50] He also speaks of audiences who were 'always numerous and always different, composed of friendly and unfriendly critics, who would not let any points escape them, whether good or bad'.[51] Audiences appreciated knowledge, discernment, and understanding; they could discern good, solid material when they heard it.[52]

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[44] See Cicero, *De Inv.* 1.9, 2.178.

[45] *Or.* 33.1. For him, eloquence without wisdom was not a thing to be proud of. Cf. *Or.* 1.8: 'It is only the spoken word of the wise and the prudent, such as were most men of earlier times, that can prove a competent and perfect guide and helper of a man endowed with a tractable and virtuous nature, and can lead it toward all excellence by fitting encouragement and direction'.

[46] *Mor.* 792D.

[47] Cf. Epictetus, *Dis.* 2.23; A. Gellius (*Attic Nights* 17.20.6): 'for one must penetrate to the inmost depths of Plato's mind and feel the weight and dignity of his subject matter.'

[48] On the praise of one such audience, see Pliny, *Letters* 3.18.8.

[49] *De. Or.* 1.125.

[50] Tacitus, *Dial.* 34.3.

[51] Tacitus, *Dial.* 34.5.

[52] Tacitus, *Dial.* 32.3; cf. Pliny, *Letters* 1.10.5: 'He reasons with much force, penetration, and elegance, and frequently embodies all the sublime and luxuriant eloquence of Plato. His style

This raises the question on the importance of the role of audience. Ordinary audiences, and not just the initiated or the learned, would evaluate the speakers' style and eloquence as well as their ideas or subject matters.[53] Indeed, it is 'the multitude and the forum', not literary critics, for whom the orators must satisfy.[54] Orators were deeply concerned about how they were being judged by their hearers. Thus, a potential declaimer, when first entering a city, would usually observe certain conventions and seek to establish his reputation as a speaker among its citizens.[55] Audiences would either judge the speaker favourably or otherwise. Sometimes evaluation also involved comparing and contrasting one orator with another, which could lead to jealousies and rivalry among orators for the esteem and favour of the people.[56] Needless to say, the desire to win the approval and favoured judgement of the audience was a major consideration for many.[57] Speakers could win approval and praise,[58] especially, reputation, honour and power.[59] Some were even 'looked upon as

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is rich and various, and at the same time so wonderfully sweet, that it seduces the attention of the most unwilling hearer.'

[53] Tacitus, *Dial.* 32; cf. Pliny, *Letters* 1.16.2.

[54] Cicero, *Brutus* 283.

[55] For instance, they would arrange a public lecture and invite guests, and speeches often included an introduction, an encomium to the city, followed by a declamation. This main aim is to impress their listeners. See the example of Aristides' visit to Smyrna in 176 CE and his subsequent success in the city (*Or.* 51.29-34) in Russell, *Greek Declamation,* 76-77. Indeed, one of the purpose of the orator's entry into a city was to make disciples and to establish a school that would attract followers. See B.W. Winter, 'The Entries and Ethics of Orators and Paul (1 Thessalonians 2:1-2)', *TynBul* 44 (1993), 55-74.

[56] See, for instance, Philostratus' description of the competition between Polemo and Favorinus in *Lives* 490. Cf. also Dio's comparison with other orators. See, e.g., *Or.* 32.10-11, 39, 68. Dio's use of παραβολή is synonymous to σύγκρισις, on this, see C. Forbes, 'Comparison, Self-Praise and Irony: Paul's Boasting and the Conventions of Hellenistic Rhetoric', *NTS* 32 (1986), 4-5.

[57] According to Epictetus, speeches were geared to win applause, to gain a hearty 'Bravo!' or 'Marvellous' (3.23.24); 3.23.19: 'you gaped for men to praise you, and counted the number in your audience'; Dio, *Or.* 32.10: speak for '(your) own glory' (δόξης τῆς ἑαυτῶν); Plutarch, *Mor.* 45F; See also S. Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius* (London: MacMillan, 1904), 344.

[58] Dio, *Or.* 40.6; 33.5.

[59] Aristides, *To Plato,* 179; Dio, *Or.* 12.11; 18.2; 54.1, 4; Tacitus, *Dial.* 6.; Juvenal, *Sat.* 10.114-132; Epictetus, *Dis.* 3.9.8-9.

gods' (ὡς θεούς).[60] Dio also lists some of the common motivations in one's pursuit of skill in public speaking,

> Take oratory, for instance. There are many well-born men and, in public estimation, ambitious, who are whole-heartedly interested in it, some that they may plead in courts of law or address the people in the assembly in order to have greater influence than their rivals and have things their own way in politics, while the aim of others is the glory to be won thereby, that they may enjoy the reputation of eloquence.[61]

On the other hand, audiences could become sceptical or suspicious of the orators and their rhetoric. They doubted the worthiness of the orators' position and were unpersuaded by their declamations. Consequently, these orators could even face hostility, wrath and ridicule.[62] Little wonder then that we hear Crassus's remark: 'The eloquence of orators has always been controlled by the good sense of the audience, since all who desire to win approval have regard to the goodwill of their auditors, and shape and adapt themselves completely according to this and to their opinion and approval'.[63]

Thus, it is observed that ordinary audiences in the Graeco-Roman society interacted not only with the speakers' style and form but also their speeches or subject matters. To be sure, orators could be evaluated quite apart from their content. But there were always discerning and perceptive audiences who might cast a critical judgement and disapproval upon those speakers whose the subject matter was unconvincing or

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[60] Dio, *Or.* 18.3. Elsewhere, Dio argues that his speeches reflect the gods' παιδεία καὶ λόγος as the solutions to the city's problems. He says that 'if one hears words of wisdom, we must believe that they too were sent by god'. Indeed, he establishes his credibility before the people by claiming that he is appointed by a god at whose bidding he speaks. See *Or.* 32.12-16. On the function of rhetoric in society and in character-building, see *Or.* 1.8; cf. also 22.5; 32.18; 44.6.

[61] *Or.* 24.3.

[62] According to Cicero, praise and ridicule from the audience often accompanied oratory, see *De. Or.* 3.52-53. Forms of hostility shown include rage (Dio, *Or.* 7.24-26; 34.6), jeers and laughter (43.3) and uproar (7.25; 38.6-7).

unworthy of their assent. Orators who, while not rejecting the external forms of declamations, also sought to appeal to knowledge, discernment and understanding in order to persuade their audiences. Form and content, nevertheless, were linked. The eloquence of delivery and the persuasiveness of the subject matter were not often distinguishable. On the other hand, flattery and accommodation could be open to critical judgements and scepticism. Even though some listeners might find it attractive, flattery, as we shall see in the following section, was often a major cause of enmity that affected social relationships.

b. The convention of enmity and comparison

In a society that valued constancy and trust, any charges levelled against Paul on the basis of inconsistency would have seriously damaged social relationships. Such a person is not to be trusted.

Plutarch describes the flatterer (κόλαξ) who associates with influential men in this way:[64]

> ... it is necessary to observe the uniformity and permanence of his tastes, whether he always takes delight in the same things and commends the same things, and whether he directs and ordains his own life according to one pattern .... but a flatterer, since he has no abiding place of character to dwell in, and since he leads a life not of his own choosing but another's, moulding and adapting himself to suit another, is not simple, not one, but variable and many in one, and, like water that is poured into one receptacle after another, he ... changes his shape to fit his receiver ... So by making himself like to all these people and conforming his way to theirs he tried to conciliate them and win their favour ... The changes of the flatterer ... may be most easily detected if a man pretends that he is very changeable himself and disapproves the mode

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[63] Cicero, *Or.* 24.
[64] Plutarch, *Mor.* 52B-53D.

> of life which he previously approved, and suddenly shows a liking for actions, conduct or language which used to offend him. For he will see that the flatterer is nowhere constant, has no character of his own ... the flatterer's case is exactly the same as that of the chameleon.

Such a person is usually motivated by a desire to seek some personal gain or advantage.[65] He cannot be trusted, due to his inconsistency and self-seeking. A flatterer is also regarded as one who subjects himself to servility and self-debasement, for he is willing to submit himself to anything that would please another.[66] Shame and dishonour are often present.[67] He is one who is untruthful, assimilating and accommodating to his circumstances.[68] Consequently, flattery could affect relationships and destroy friendship.[69] Indeed, friendship in ancient society, as P. Marshall has demonstrated, was based on sincerity, constancy and steadfastness.[70] Not surprisingly, the claim to speak the truth in all circumstances, and its accompanying 'boldness/frankness of speech' (παρρησία), distinguish a friend from a flatterer.[71]

The convention of comparison (σύγκρισις) between persons was also commonly practised in the ancient world.[72] It is standard rhetorical practice in an encomium or

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[65] See Marshall, *Enmity*, 27-30.
[66] Cf. Plutarch, *Mor.* 13B-C; Dio, *Or.* 50.8. See Marshall, *Enmity,* 74-78.
[67] According to Hesiod, 'he is a worthless man who makes one and now another his friend. But as for you, do not let your face put your heart to shame' (*Works,* 713-14).
[68] For instance, according to Theophrastus, 'he assumes every kind of shape and of speech as well, so varied are his tones' (*Deipn.* 6.258A). See also Plutarch, *Mor.* 53D.
[69] Plutarch argues, 'You cannot use me both as a friend and a flatterer' (*Mor.* 142C). Cf. Cicero says, 'We ought, therefore, to choose men who are firm, steadfast and constant, a class of which there is a great dearth' (*de Amic.* 62); see also 25.92.
[70] See Marshall, *Enmity,* 21-24. For an overview of Graeco-Roman convention of friendship and enmity, see esp. chs. 1-2.
[71] See Schlier, 'παρρησία', *TDNT,* V, 871-75, 882-84. For instance, the Cynics claimed that they sought to teach and educate in truthfulness, in contrast to those who resorted to flattery. See Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 6.4.
[72] Comparison was taught widely in Greek education. See S.F. Bonner, *Education in the Ancient Rome: From the Elder Cato to the Younger Pliny* (London: Methuen, 1977), 250-76.

vituperation to compare the person under discussion with illustrious examples.[73] Individuals were compared and evaluated according to attributes such as rhetorical skills, status, character and personal worth.[74] For instance, according to Plutarch,

> It is not possible to learn better the similarity and the difference between the virtues of men and women from any other source than by putting lives beside lives and actions beside actions, like great works of art, and considering whether the magnificence of Semiramis has the same character as that of Sesostris, or the intelligence of Tanaquil the same as that of Servius the King ...[75]

Similarly, Aelius Theon writes:

> Comparison is a form of speech which contrasts the better and the worse. Comparisons are drawn between people, and between things: between people, for example that of Ajax and Odysseus; between things, for example that of wisdom and courage ... in the comparison of people, one firstly juxtaposes their status, education, offspring, positions held, prestige and physique; if there is any other physical matter, or external merit, it should be stated beforehand in the material for the encomia. Next one compares actions, preferring the finer ones and those responsible for more numerous and greater benefits; those which are more stable and durable; those which were especially opportune; those for which the failure to perform them would have resulted in greater injury ... One should refer to those things done with effort rather than ease ...[76]

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[73] According to Cicero, 'a splendid line to take in a panegyric is to compare the subject with all other men of high distinction' (*De Or.* 2.85.348). See also Quintilian, *Inst.* 2.4.21.
[74] See Forbes, 'Comparison', 1-8.
[75] Plutarch, *Mor.* 243.
[76] Spengel, *Rhetores Graeci,* II, 112-15, cited in Forbes, 'Comparison', 6.

Here it may be observed that such comparison could determine the relative merits and standing of individuals vis-à-vis one another, favouring one over against the other.[77] It should also be pointed out that the convention of comparison did not necessarily take the form of comparing one individual with another. Self-comparison was not uncommon. Indeed, the practice was often seen by philosophers as a means to self-understanding or knowledge.[78] As an ethical means, it helped one to improve oneself or to work towards personal goodness. On the one hand, comparing oneself with someone superior, especially those with greater wealth, higher status or better education, could lead to envy, malice and jealousy;[79] yet, on the other, by comparing with another, especially those who are not one's equal, one could feel a sense of superiority.[80]

Comparison also allows one to exemplify one's attributes or character. It promotes self-advertisement and serves to accentuate one's (superior) achievement and status.[81] Dio Chrysostom, against the charge that he is a flatterer, argues that 'my purpose in mentioning such matters was neither to elate you, nor to range myself beside those who habitually sing such strains, whether orators or poets. For they are clever persons, mighty sophists, wonder-workers; but I am quite ordinary and prosaic in my utterance, though not ordinary in my theme.'[82]

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[77] Aristotle advises rhetoricians: 'And you must compare him with illustrious personages, for it affords ground for amplification ... and amplification is most suitable for epideictic speakers' (*Rh.* 1.9.39-40).

[78] See Plutarch, *Mor.* 463E; H.D. Betz (ed.), *Plutarch's Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), 119-21, 218-19, 383.

[79] See Plutarch, *Mor* 471A. Cf. Plutarch comments, 'Yet there are others, Chians, Galatians (Γαλάτης), or Bithynians, who are not content with whatever portion of either repute or power among their own fellow-countrymen has fallen to their lot, but weep because they do not wear the patrician shoe ...' (*Mor.* 470C).

[80] See, e.g., Plutarch, *Mor.* 485C-E.

[81] Cf. Lucian: 'Do not expect to see something that you can compare with so-and-so, or so-and-so; no, you will consider the achievement far too prodigious and amazing even for Tityus or Otus or Ephialtes. Indeed , as far as the others are concerned, you will find that I drown them out as effectively as trumpets drown flutes, or cicadas bees, or choirs their leaders' ('A Professor of Public Speaking', 13.21). Cf. also Epictetus, *Dis.* 3.22.60; Aristotle, *Rh.* 1.9.39-40.

[82] Dio, *Or.* 32.39.

4. Rhetoric, enmity and comparison in the Galatian churches

a. The Galatians' familiarity with Graeco-Roman rhetorical convention

It can be observed that public declamations by rhetors or orators were popular and almost every speech made in public or private was redolent with rhetorical figures and stylistic embellishments.[83] Rhetoric was ubiquitous in the Graeco-Roman city, especially in the law-courts, the forums and the assemblies.[84] Speeches, and even professional rhetorical displays, were regular events in temples, theatres, council chambers, lecture halls, and at public festivals, ceremonies and games.[85] Many people, even if they were not skilled in rhetoric, were exposed at some time or other to a variety of rhetorical performances. Moreover, anyone who received any Greek education whatsoever would thereby receive at least a modicum of rhetorical education.[86] Oratory was appreciated by the average listener, and in the first-century CE, it was by no means an exclusive domain of the educated.[87] But for those who aspired to enter civic or political office, the importance of rhetoric should not be underestimated. C.P. Jones remarks, 'The spoken word was paramount: without oratory a Greek could not enter civic life, where he had to persuade his colleagues in

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[83] In the first-century CE, rhetoric was a firmly established social practice and many were highly responsive to public orators. See Cicero, *Orator,* 168. Elsewhere, Cicero says, 'In every nation, and most of all in communities which have attained the enjoyment of peace and tranquillity, this one art has always flourished above the rest and ever reigned supreme' (*De Or.* 1.30-31). See also Dio, *Or.* 4.14, 35; 12.5; Tacitus, *Dial.* 28.

[84] According to Mack, 'the forum for the practice of rhetoric was the assembly (*ekklesia*) or the council (*boule*) gathered for deliberation and litigation, or the public gathering for celebration of civic-religious occasions'. See B.L. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament,* 28.

[85] Russell, *Greek Declamations,* 76; see also D.E. Aune, *The New Testament in its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 12-13.

[86] According to Bonner (*Education in Ancient Rome,* 79), it was 'the most important subject in Roman education' and that 'effective speaking was the prime objective of the standard school curriculum' (331; cf. also 65-75). According to H. Marrou in his *A History of Education in Antiquity* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1956), 147, 238-42, great attention was paid to preparatory rhetorical study at pre-gymnasium or secondary-school level, which children undertook for a year or two once they had finished the primary level at age 14. Cf. also Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric,* 3.

[87] Winter in his *Philo and Paul* (241) refers to Favorinus' comment on women and children appreciating oratory. See Dio, *Or.* 37.33.

the council or his inferiors in the assembly, to plead in courts of law, and to represent his city before governors and emperors'.[88]

Hence, given the pervasiveness, importance and popularity of rhetoric and oratory in Graeco-Roman educational and public life, we may assume that the Anatolians, including the Galatian Christians, would have been familiar with popular rhetorical phenomena and the fundamental features and aims of the art. Like their neighbours, the Galatians probably participated enthusiastically in their role as audiences. Indeed, they were most probably discerning and perceptive listeners and were critical about what they heard. For example, to an audience in Phrygia, Dio remarks, 'You are devoted to oratory to a degree that is remarkable, I may even say excessive, and you tolerate as speakers only those who are very clever.'[89]

It may be said, at this point, that there is little evidence in Paul's letter to suggest that many of the Galatians were trained themselves in the fine art of rhetoric or were professional orators. Some might be capable and even eloquent speakers, especially if they were involved in the civic or political life of their cities. But more likely the majority were merely admirers of impressive rhetoric. It is also unlikely that many of them were professional judges or literary critics of speeches and oratory. Nevertheless, they were probably discerning and perceptive listeners and judges of oratory (or saw themselves as such). Indeed, it seems unimportant whether their judgements were 'right' or 'wrong'. They passed their verdicts anyway and that was what really mattered. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that the situation reflects more the outlook and values they hold rather than the level of sophistication or competence they possess in oratorical skills or critique.

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[88] C.P. Jones, *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 9.
[89] *Or.* 35.1.

We may therefore assume that the inhabitants of Galatia reflected the broad ethos, culture and values of the Graeco-Roman culture of which they were a part.[90] Further, it may also be said that by the first century, Jews were already familiar with much of the Greek culture and rhetoric.[91] They lived and moved widely in the Hellenistic world of the first century, a world in which rhetoric and oratory were common features of daily life. We may safely say that the orators who addressed them were little different from other speakers from Rome to Asia.

It is suggested that the Galatian Christians might have perceived the agitators (and Paul) as one of those constant stream of sophists and speakers they were accustomed to hearing.[92] As such, one need not be too surprised to see that, like many ordinary audiences who typically loved to judge speakers and speeches, they would be inclined to subject the agitators' rhetoric to similar critical evaluation. They would render their verdicts on the persuasiveness of their speeches.

The Galatians' perception of Paul was probably no exception. Like any orator who first entered a city, Paul was expected to establish his effectiveness as a speaker. His preaching was subjected to scrutiny which would determine, as least in part, his

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[90] According to Ramsay (181-82), the cities in southern Galatia, despite Roman influence, continued to maintain many aspects of Greek culture, language and manners. On the interpenetration of things Greek and Roman during the first and second centuries CE, which lead to a certain homogeneity of outlook without sacrificing diversity, see G.W. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 15-16, 21; C.P. Jones, *The Roman World*, 124-25.

[91] See M. Hengel, *The 'Hellenization' of Judaea in the First Century after Christ* (London: SCM, 1990), ch. 3. See also D. Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: Athlone Press, 1956), 155-57; Judge, 'St. Paul and Classical Society', 28-29. More generally on the interpenetration of Jewish and Greek culture, see Hengel, *Jews, Greeks, and Barbarians: Aspects of the Hellenization of Judaism in the Pre-Christian Period* (London: SCM, 1988), 110-26; W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (London: SPCK, 1955), 5-16; Schürer, *History,* II, 52-80. On the spread and influence of Greek culture, see A.H.M. Jones, *The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), 281-83.

[92] Judge has argued that Paul and his preaching ministry share certain characteristics with the sophistic profession, and that the early churches were parallel in some respects to the philosophical movement or 'scholastic community' of the day. See Judge, 'The Early Christians as a Scholastic Community', 125-37. Forbes has also demonstrated from Paul's

success or failure. And his first visit to the Galatians, we have noted, was well received. Paul's message won approval, for the Galatians had received him as 'an angel of God, as Christ Jesus'.[93] They regarded him as one who spoke the message and will of God and so responded favourably to his preaching (4:13-14).

However, it seems that the Galatians have now taken up a more critical judgement and even prejudice. According to 5:8, it appears that this may be attributed in part to the fact that they were now swayed by the agitator's persuasive rhetoric and eloquent delivery of their message. To gain a more precise understanding of the nature of the Galatians' criticism, we must examine what Paul himself reveals about them in the text.

b. The Galatians' perception of Paul

At the very beginning of the letter (1:1), Paul argues that he is an apostle commissioned by God to proclaim with authority the message of the gospel. He is sent 'not from men nor through any man' (οὐκ ἀπ' ἀνθρπώπων οὐδὲ δι' ἀνθρώπου). This negative assertion is unique. Paul's salutations in his other letters do not include both negative and positive statements about how he became an apostle.[94] He also goes on at some length to give autobiographical details about his divine calling and ministry among the Gentiles (1:13-2:9), arguing that his apostolic call comes from God (1:13-6) and that his gospel message has its basis not in human traditions but in God's revelation of Jesus Christ which he has received (1:12). Although not unaware of the danger of 'mirror reading', we can say with some confidence here that the Galatians, for some reasons, had come to doubt the legitimacy of Paul's apostleship as well as his message. In fact, I would suggest, any doubt cast on Paul's apostleship

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skilful use of rhetorical conventions in 1 Cor. 1-4 and 2 Cor. 10-13 that it is likely that he acquired some form of rhetorical training and education. See Forbes, 'Comparison', 24.

[93] Cf. Dio's remarks in n.60 above. Elsewhere in Acts 10:25-26, we learn that Peter was greeted, even worshipped, as a visiting angel by Cornelius who responded to a divine vision. See also Acts 14:11-13, where Paul and Barnabas were hailed as gods. Indeed, the idea that the gods could visit man, revealed in messengers, in revelations or in divine power, was widespread since Homer. See Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians,* ch. 4.

could be linked to the Galatians' judgement of his rhetoric, character and motives. That his calling is indeed thought to be other than a divine commission may be attributed to the fact that the Galatians had reasons to reject Paul as one of many orators they were accustomed to evaluate.

The Galatians, it seems, were enamoured of the agitators' persuasiveness and discourse of the 'other gospel' as being the truth (1:6, 5:8). This seems clear from 5:8, where, according to Paul, ἡ πεισμονή lies at the heart of the agitators' rhetoric. Betz argues that the word ἡ πεισμονή is rare and its meaning may be difficult to ascertain.[95] Nevertheless, we may reasonably assume that the word suggests the idea of the rhetorical techniques of persuasion. Swayed by the agitators' beguiling and persuasive rhetoric (cf. 3:1), the Galatians became doubtful of Paul's own law-free message. Since form and content were related in the minds of most audiences, it is likely that the Galatians were won not only by the agitators' rival subject matter but also by their eloquence in preaching and delivery. They were perceived as convincing and powerful in words and in rhetoric. Convinced by the arguments of the agitators (cf. 1:7-9; 4:16-7; 5:8-12; 6:12-3), the Galatians may have maintained that the true gospel requires circumcision and the observance of the law, the two requirements Paul had failed to mention to them. Set against the claim that the agitators' message was the true gospel (cf. 1:6-7), Paul's gospel could be seen as somehow defective or inadequate. The Galatians now evaluated Paul's law-free message as one which lacked substance, weight and validity, and therefore not worthy of acceptance. Whether sound or not, their verdict was rendered anyway. Paul and his message were critically and unfavourably appraised by those who probably considered themselves as discerning judges of oratory.[96] In short, Paul was essentially perceived and judged as an unworthy or ineffective orator. His preaching has failed to measure up. This could provide one explanation as to why they were attracted to the agitators and were contemplating to take up the law.

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[94] See Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; cf. Phil. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1.
[95] Betz, 265.
[96] If the Galatians had seen themselves to be discerning and critical judges of oratory, then Paul's charge to them as ἀνόητοι Γαλάται in 3:1 appears all the more ironical.

But Paul was not only judged (and rejected) as a mere orator. His character and motives also came under close scrutiny. 1:10 may provide further insights into the Galatians' socio-cultural criticism. It seems that Paul was criticised as one who seeks merely to win others to his message (i.e. human approval) through the means of flattery and accommodation. It is interesting that the two terms which picture the notion of servility commonly found in charges against flattery - ἀρέσκειν and δοῦλος - are found in 1:10. Paul is probably accused for trimming his message in order 'to persuade' or 'to accommodate and please' his Gentile audience (ἀνθρώποις ἀρέσκειν). Here, it is to be observed that the meaning of ἀρεσκεία would not be perceived, at least by some, to be different from κολακεία ('flattery').[97] The verb πείθω ('to persuade') also carries a negative connotation when it refers to travelling preachers who merely flattered and entertained crowds in order to win popularity and material gains.[98] Accommodation or flattery that is basically self-serving, as we have seen, was one of the criticisms levelled against some orators. Paul might have been perceived as one who accommodates his gospel to please others, even twisting and distorting the truth. Indeed, the Galatians might have associated the lack of substance and weight (or truthfulness) of his message to his disconcerting adaptability and inconsistency. Consequently, such perception of the apostle and his message might have created enmity (see 4:16). If this is true, then 1:10 may well be Paul's refutation against any accusation of flattery, accommodation and inconsistency.

As 5:11 indicates, the accusation probably finds its basis in Paul's message concerning the requirement of circumcision. The basis for the charge of his inconsistency or the question of whether he did or did not preach circumcision has often been noted by interpreters.[99] However, what has less often been noticed is the rhetorical dimension of the accusation in 1:10 and 5:11. Ancient polemic often took

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[97] See Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 6.255A-B. Cf. 1 Thess. 2:4-6 where flattery and people-pleaser are linked. Cf. also 1 Cor. 1:17; 2:1-2; 2 Cor 4:2.

[98] It is not necessary to argue that the force of 'to persuade' is different from 'to please' (or 'to flatter'), as the speeches of orators attest that they would seek to persuade others by pleasing them. See Betz, 54 n.103; 55 n.111.

the form of exaggeration, misrepresentation, fabrication or defamatory argument in order to sharpen the point of the invective as well as to persuade and to arouse the emotions of hearers.[100] It could well be that the charge against Paul's preaching of circumcision, for instance, may have had such an ideological motivation. Whatever the basis of the accusation, real or fabricated, it is not difficult to imagine its broader implications (and herein is our emphasis) on the perception of Paul's character and consistency (or the lack of it) in his preaching. This would have created enmity and thus strained the relationship between Paul and the Galatians.

Any doubt or suspicion cast on Paul's character, rhetoric, integrity, or adequacy of his subject matter could have important theological implications. Thus, the Galatians could begin to question Paul as a divine messenger and a legitimate gospel-bearer. This may be gleaned from 4:14. In contrast to the present situation, Paul was previously received as an 'angel of God' (ὡς ἄγγελον Θεοῦ), even 'as Christ Jesus' (ὡς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν). However, his failure to measure up to the expectation of his converts' negative view of him as a mere orator peddling his own message could have given the Galatians good reasons to question the legitimacy of his role as a divine harbinger. Consequently, they could also have doubted the adequacy of Paul's gospel and their (Pauline Christian) status. This could have affected their relationship with the apostle and his (future) ministry among them (4:19). As P. Marshall has shown, enmity and the refusal of friendship, which is also a refusal of the giver's affection, could suggest the denial of the gift received or an unwillingness to receive new benefits.[101]

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[99] See above 5.1.

[100] See, e.g., Aristotle, *Rh.* 3.19.1. See also Sumney, *Identifying Paul's Opponents: The Question of Method in 2 Corinthians,* JSNTSupp. 40 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 97, 212-13; R.G. Hall, 'Ancient Historical Method and the Training of an Orator' in S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht (eds.), *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture: Essays from the 1995 London Conference,* JSNTSupp. 146 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1997), 106.

[101] Marshall, *Enmity,* 13-18.

5. Conclusion

In the light of our discussion we may now explicate, in a summary fashion, the nature of enmity in the relationship between Paul and the Galatians. 4:16 is not a mere rhetorical question; on the contrary, it points to a serious breakdown in the relationship between the apostle and his converts. It is also not necessary to draw on later second-century Jewish Christian sources to shed light on the verse, namely that Paul was called the 'enemy' by the agitators as one who has deviated from their form of Christianity.[102] It is not clear whether the agitators did in fact label Paul their 'enemy'. On the contrary, we should not ignore the fact that Paul was viewed negatively by the Galatians themselves (ἐχθρὸς ὑμῶν γέγονα). They have passed their own social judgement against him and his rhetoric. Thus, we argue that the Galatian crisis may be attributed in part also to the influence of Graeco-Roman conventions of rhetorical evaluation, comparison as well as social prejudice, especially the withdrawal of friendship from those who were seen to be flatterers and inconsistent.

The Galatians, who were accustomed to being critical judges of orators and their display of rhetoric, now rendered a critical appraisal against Paul. They saw him as a mere orator who sought to persuade others to his gospel message. In comparison to the agitators' persuasive and eloquent rhetoric, they considered his subject matter or preaching content to be deficient and insubstantial. Swayed by the agitators' rhetorical discourse that the true gospel required circumcision and works of the law, they began to question the adequacy of Paul's gospel and hence, the legitimacy of his apostleship. Moreover, if Paul was seen as one who was inconsistent in his preaching and motives, seeking to accommodate others, then one is not surprised that the relationship between the apostle and the Galatians was also affected. They were beginning to reject Paul and his gospel and to treat him as an enemy. Clearly, this is

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[102] *Pace* Martyn, 422. Later Ebionites, from the perspectives of their form of Jewish Christianity, called Paul the 'enemy'. Cf. Ps. Clem. *Hom. Ep. Pet.* 2.3; Ps. Clem. *Recog.* 1.70.

contrary to their past affection and previous joyous acceptance of the gift of the gospel which Paul had offered when he was present with them (4:13-15).

Chapter 6

PAUL'S ARGUMENTS AND COUNTER-ARGUMENTS

1. Introduction

In the preceding chapter, we argued that the Galatians were judging Paul and his preaching ministry according to the Graeco-Roman conventions of enmity, comparison and rhetoric. Paul was critically and unfavourably judged by his converts both in terms of content (and eloquence) as well as character and motives. He was seen as a mere orator seeking to persuade others to his own brand of the gospel message. In the light of the agitators' persuasive rhetoric, Paul's message appears insubstantial and unworthy of acceptance. In addition, his character and motives also contravened accepted social expectations. Charges of duplicity against Paul's behaviour and actions would most certainly have elicited strong disapproval. According to Graeco-Roman conventions of friendship and enmity, such a person cannot be trusted. And these socio-cultural criticisms would have had significant 'religious' implications. Paul's failure to measure up to the social expectations of his converts could have given reason for the Galatians to question not only his position as an apostle of Christ but also the adequacy of his gospel message. Their social prejudices would have influenced their assessment of the legitimacy of his ministry and of his gospel. Hence, in this chapter, we shall examine how Paul seeks to justify his preaching and rejects any notion that he was a typical orator who uses persuasive techniques which invigorate Greek rhetoric.

2. Paul's defence of his gospel, character and preaching ministry

It has been suggested that the rhetorical question in 1:10 (ἄρτι γὰρ ἀνθρώπους πείθω ἢ τὸν θεόν, 'am I now persuading men, or God?') is to be treated simply as a passing

remark[1] or an emotional outburst linked to the anathema of vv. 8-9.[2] In effect, such a view concedes that it has no perceptibly significant function. However, it will be argued that the entire verse, albeit brief and terse, and its immediate context are highly significant. It is more than Paul's rebuttal against the Galatians' socio-cultural criticism of his own preaching. It also foreshadows or anticipates other parts of the letter where Paul polemicises his detractors and, at the same time, establishes himself as one who pleases God rather than humans.

1:10, it should be noted, is linked to the preceding verses (vv. 6-9) by γάρ, i.e. 1:10 explains why the Galatians are to reject those who mislead them or preach a different gospel from Paul's. This emphasis is further reinforced in the following verses. The particles γάρ in vv. 11-12 and in v. 13 provide an explanatory ground. 1:13ff. supports vv. 11-12 which in turn builds on 1:10 and vv. 6-9.[3] Paul's explication of the nature of his gospel and his relationship with it as well as of his autobiographical account serve to refute the claims and motives of the agitators on the one hand, and to validate the legitimacy of his gospel and preaching ministry on the other.[4] The two motives are linked. He is challenging the Galatians' negative perception of him as well as their attraction towards the agitators' gospel. Indeed, he demonstrates that his gospel is worthy of their belief and acceptance.

To achieve his aim, Paul, in the first place, argues that he does not persuade his listeners of his cause, seeking to win them for his own self-centred interest through some form of humanly-inspired message. He does not persuade or accommodate

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[1] For Betz, vv. 10-11 form a *transitus,* i.e. to make 'a transition to the next section desirable', which is another way of suggesting that the verses have little or no significant function here.

[2] For instance, commentators see 1:10a as Paul's persuasion of God to act so that the anathema would be effective. See Bruce, 85; Burton, 31; Witherington, 84; Longenecker, 18.

[3] Gaventa, 'Galatians 1 and 2', 314; B. Dodd, 'Christ's Slave', 93.

[4] It is usually argued that Paul sets out his autobiography in 1:13-2:14 in order to establish his independence from Jerusalem. This view fails to take adequate consideration of the significance of the rhetorical questions Paul poses in 1:10. 2:2 also points to the fact that Paul's autobiographical remarks demonstrate his attempt to persuade other church leaders of the validity of his gospel, not his independence from them. See Lührmann, 12; Howard, *Crisis,* 21-45.

human beings, as flatterers would do, but rather God (1:10a).[5] The ἤ in 1:10a may be taken as disjunctive rather than copulative, in which case he is contrasting his behaviour towards God and towards human beings. Against any possible charge of accommodation or flattery, he argues that he does not seek to please human beings but God. Paul distances himself from any perception that he is a mere rhetor.[6] The antithesis suggests a fundamental opposition to the idea that he conforms to the purpose and practice of a Graeco-Roman orator who shapes his content and style in order to win the approval of his audiences.[7]

On the contrary, Paul asserts his character and promotes himself as an accredited bearer and proclaimer of the divine revelation, arguing that he is a slave of Christ, proclaiming the gospel to the Gentiles (1:10b).[8] Through this character assertion, Paul, on the one hand, may well be commending himself as an example to others, a common feature in ancient autobiographical writing;[9] on the other hand, this could be a polemical point, i.e. he is setting his character against others, suggesting that a slave of Christ preaches the gospel that is true while the gospel preached by those who accommodate another is false.[10] Paul's self-characterisation as a slave of Christ stands in contrast to those who sought to enslave others through the law (2:4).[11] Unlike some, it is as the slave of Christ that Paul does not seek to preach a message

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[5] Cf. 1 Thess. 2:4-6. Here, as noted previously, the verb 'to persuade' includes the idea 'to please' or 'to win the approval of'. See also Martyn, 136; Longenecker, 18.

[6] Our interest here is not to argue whether Paul employs (or indeed is capable of employing) Graeco-Roman rhetorical forms in his writings (for this discussion, see the references cited in Chapter 1 n.11); rather, our focus is on his preaching and purpose and asks whether in the perception of the Galatians he conforms to the typical *modus operandi* of a Graeco-Roman orator.

[7] To be sure, Paul cares about how the Galatians would react to him and he does appeal to their understanding and assent (cf. 5:7-8). Indeed, in such instances, the verb πείθω does not always carry a technical meaning within the rhetorical context. It may simply denote the result of the speaker's influence on the hearers (see e.g. Acts 14:19; 2 Cor. 5:11). However, in the particular context of 1:10 (and 5:11; cf. 5:8), the fact that Paul eschews the idea that he is persuading his audiences rather than God suggests that the verb carries strong rhetorical overtones here.

[8] On the designation Χριστοῦ δοῦλος used elsewhere, see 2 Cor. 4:5; cf. 2 Cor. 2:14; 3:6; 1 Cor. 3:5; 7:22.

[9] See Lyons, *Autobiography,* 17-53; Gaventa, 'Galatians 1 and 2', 324-25.

[10] See further below.

[11] So Dodd, 'Christ's Slave', 100.

pleasing or accommodating to the crowd, for slavery to Christ involves freedom from any form of servility to another.

Implicitly, Paul, as slave of Christ and a bearer of the divine revelation, is arguing that he needed no subject to be suggested by a critical audience on which to declaim in order to gain the Galatians' approval. All grounds for wishing to establish his own eloquence and reputation as a orator were removed by the predetermined *logos*. He makes clear that his aim is not to move his listeners or to engender conviction through the effectiveness of his own words or rhetoric.[12] Indeed, he has come simply to declare Christ crucified (1:16). The verbs he chooses to describe his activity, εὐαγγελίζομαι (1:8, 9, 11, 16) and προγράφω (3:1), do not suggest the typical rhetorical *modus operandi*.[13] He does not seek to discover the persuasive or attractive elements in his subject, or to dress it with rhetorical finery, much less tailor or distort the message to achieve maximum effect on his audience. What this means, then, is that Paul is asking the Galatians not to perceive or appraise him as a typical orator.

One further reason why Paul says he is not a typical orator who resorts to secular rhetorical strategies lies in the fact that the power to elicit faith and response resides solely with God's revelation in the gospel, and indeed in the divine power that is at work in his evangelistic Gentile mission (2:8). As 1:6 makes clear, it was the grace of Christ (ἐν χάριτι Χριστοῦ) by means of which the Galatians have been called.[14] When the gospel is preached, it is not Paul, but God who brings about a new creation and calls the churches into existence (cf. 3:2; 6:15). In fact, the Galatians had witnessed incontrovertible evidence of the Spirit's work and power (3:2-5). The

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[12] Dio, on the other hand, believes in the benefit of eloquence, and has great esteem for the man who 'endeavours by the persuasion of speech (πειθοῖ καὶ λόγῳ) combined with goodwill and a sense of justice to train and direct a great multitude of men and to lead them to better things' (*Or.* 4.124). Cf. also *Or.* 4.127.

[13] Cf. Litfin, *Paul's Theology,* 196. According to Kern, Paul in his letter-writing does not employ the language of rhetoric or oratory. See Kern, *Rhetoric,* 203, 254-55. On 'προγράφω', see Schrenk, *TDNT,* I, 770-72; for the use of visual objects, such as painted pictures, to achieve the desired effect on audiences, see Quintilian, *Inst. Or.* 6.1.29-36.

[14] Cf. 5:8. See also 1 Thess. 1:4-5; 2:13; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:19.

wavering Christians are doubtless also to recognise the power of God in his gospel over against the other.

It is also worth observing that Paul's reference to his own ministry and his personal circumstances in the letter also serves to refute any perception that he comes as an aspiring orator. For instance, in 4:13, Paul talks about his illness of the flesh during his initial entry into Galatia. This was a potential hindrance to effective oratory. He also made several references to his persecution and suffering as a messenger of the gospel (1:13-14; 3:4; 4:29; 5:11);[15] indeed, he asserts in 6:17: 'I bear in my body the marks (στίγματα) of Jesus'. Such self-description does not fit the image of an orator. It is at odds not only with an orator's triumphant entry into the city or of his popularity but also with the necessary physical attributes any aspiring orator would possess.[16] Once again, implicit in Paul's self-description is the suggestion that the Galatians should not so regard (or judge) him as a typical orator; rather, they are to accept him as they did previously (cf. 4:14-15).

Paul not only distances himself from any perception that he is a mere orator but also argues why the Galatians should accept him and his gospel. The γάρ of 1:11-13 further grounds the legitimacy of his gospel. It is supported by the claim that his message is not of his own devising or of another's: τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ... οὐκ ἔστιν κατὰ ἄνθρωπον (1:11). The phrase κατὰ ἄνθρωπον usually refers to the measure by which one's conduct or perspective is to be assessed.[17] Here, Paul states that his message is not derived from any human source nor does it have its origin in human thinking; rather, it comes from a revelation of Jesus Christ (1:11-12, 15-16). Similarly, his apostolic status and his commission to preach among the Gentiles are divinely-ordained (vv. 15-16). This affirms 1:1 where it is stated that Paul's apostleship is not

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[15] See E. Baasland, 'Persecution', 135-50.

[16] See Chapter 5.3.a.

[17] Elsewhere, Paul uses the phrase κατὰ ἄνθρωπον to refer to (1) an established rule in society (1 Cor. 9:8), to indicate a human way of speaking (Rom. 3:5); (2) a rhetorical convention (3:15, see C.H. Cosgrove, 'Arguing like a Mere Human Being: Galatians 3.15-18 in Rhetorical Perspective', *NTS* 34 (1988), 536-49); (3) or one's behaviour that is thoroughly secular (1 Cor. 3:3-4). On the preposition κατὰ, see BAGD, no. 5.

ἀπό or διά humans but διά God and Christ. The apostolic designation is unique to Paul and implies a special relationship to God and to the Galatians. As apostle to the Galatians, he wields authority. Being divinely called endows this apostolic status with divine significance and enhances the authority or credibility of the speaker/writer because of its transcendent source. The appeal to *ethos* and Paul's (selective) presentation of himself as an apostle sent by God emits authority.[18] The Galatian readers must now respond to what is written or presented in the letter.

The argument spelled out in vv. 11-12 (and indeed, v. 10) is further elaborated and supported by 1:13-2:10.[19] Here, Paul narrates his early interactions with other Christian Jews to demonstrate the validity of his gospel (1:18-2:10).[20] The favourable encounter with Peter and James and other important figures in Jerusalem implies that Paul's gospel is recognised as valid among the churches of Judaea (1:23-34). Even though he faces opposition from others (2:4-5), his gospel nevertheless gained the approval of the pillars of the Jewish community (2:9).

Paul draws further support for the validity of his gospel in his report of the Antioch incident and his confrontation with Peter, Barnabas and other Jews. To Peter (and those with him) who bowed to fear and hypocrisy, Paul confronts him for not 'walking in line with the truth of the gospel' (οὐκ ὀρθοποδοῦσιν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, 2:14; also 1:7; 2:5). Later in 5:7, he accuses the agitators of hindering the Galatians from 'obeying the truth'. Such confrontation, of course, is to imply that Paul, unlike Peter and the agitators, is acting and speaking in the truth of the gospel. This, in fact, is made clear in 2:5 and 4:16b. This is certainly ideological; it implies some sort of power play that seeks to influence the relational triangle that exists between the Galatians, Paul and the agitators. As we have seen, the claim to speak the truth and its accompanying 'boldness/frankness of speech' (παρρησία) serve

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[18] On *ethos* as a rhetorical mode of persuasion, see Chapter 1.1.

[19] Longenecker, 22; Dunn, 51-52.

[20] Cf. according to Verseput, 'Paul employs the story of his own independent calling and career ... to support the validity of his converts' salvation without incorporation into the ranks of Jewish Christendom'. See Verseput, 'Paul's Gentile Mission', 38.

to distinguish a friend from one who flatters and accommodates. In claiming to have spoken the truth to them, Paul not only distances himself from any charge of accommodation or inconsistency but also distinguishes his character and motives from those of his opponents.

Furthermore, Paul also denies any allegation that he is still preaching circumcision (5:11a). In fact, if he had been inconsistent in his preaching of circumcision, he would have had to explain specific charges at greater length than he is doing at 5:11. The fact that he passes this off with a mere rhetorical question (which argues the condition to be contrary to fact) probably shows that he is confident that not only is such an accusation untrue but that the Galatians would not really believe in it.[21] The evidence that the allegation has little basis, he argues, also lies in the fact that he is still being persecuted.[22] Unlike the agitators (6:12), Paul does not accommodate or change his message in order to avoid hostility. Indeed, this sets him apart from a typical orator or sophist who desires to win the audience and so is willing to shape, even distort, his message according to circumstances and audience.[23] That he does not preach circumcision to the Galatians as a necessary requirement for salvation also stems from the conviction that such a preaching is antithetical to and entirely nullifies the preaching of Christ crucified (5:11b; see 5:2).[24] Having demonstrated the essence

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[21] It may well be that 5:11a simply suggests a rumour circulating among Galatian churches that Paul still preaches circumcision. One parallel to this is Acts 21:21, 24, where it was rumoured that Paul forbade the Diaspora Jews to circumcise their children or to practise Jewish customs, but James and the other believers did not believe in the rumour. Thus, it may not be inappropriate to insert, as Martyn (467) does in his translation of 5:11, the phrase 'as some wrongly report to you' here.

[22] The persecutors may have been Jews who, not unlike the pre-Christian Paul of Gal. 1:13-14, were zealous in advancing Judaism as well as in the upholding of the law and the preaching of circumcision. Cf. also 6:12. On the threat of persecution from pressure of zealot circles in Judaea, see Jewett, 'The Agitators', 198-212.

[23] Cf. Kern, *Rhetoric,* 254. See also below 6.3.

[24] This further confirms that the conditional statement of 5:11b is contrary to fact. So Mussner, 358 n.106.

of his gospel and the sufficiency of faith in Christ thus far,[25] he expects the Galatians to agree with him (cf. 5:10).

Paul not only defends the validity of his gospel but also his motive and intentions. In 4:19, he presents a parental image of himself as a pregnant mother giving birth, and that of the Galatians themselves bearing Christ but needing a further gestation period for Christ to be fully formed in their spiritual wombs.[26] This may suggest the view of Paul 'giving birth' to the Galatian church(es) (the ἐν ὑμῖν idea).[27] The metaphor of Christ forming in them could suggest the idea of the eschatological Christ-event that has resulted in a new community in the Galatians; indeed, the cross of Christ has brought forth a 'new creation' (6:14-15).[28] These views, however, do not necessarily exclude the idea of 'Christ in us' not unlike the ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ motif (2:20)[29]; in which case, Paul envisions the spiritual and christological formation of the Galatians, that they enter and remain in their faith in and relationship with Christ. The seeming

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[25] The inferential particle ἄρα ('so', 'therefore') in 5:11b may indicate a conclusion to 5:1-11 (Betz, 269 or 5:11a, so Mussner, 360), although it could well also conclude Paul's whole argument in 1:6-5:11 against the agitators' gospel.

[26] Elsewhere, the imagery Paul uses is that of a father begetting children (cf. 1 Cor. 4:15; Philem. 10).

[27] See Schlier, 214; Martyn, 425. The metaphor of a woman in labour pain akin to the birthing of a new community is attested in 1QH 3:7-10.

[28] On the link between apocalyptic expectation and the metaphor of childbirth, see Martyn, 429-30. See also 1 Thess. 5:3; Rom. 8:18-22. Mell has demonstrated that the expression 'new creation' (καινὴ κτίσις; 6:15) was a technical term in Jewish apocalypticism which refers to the new or transformed creation (or cosmic order) that follows the destruction or renewal of the world. See *Jub.* 4:26; *1 En.* 72:1. It also denotes 'new heavens and new earth' (Isa. 65:17; 66:2; *1 En.* 91:15; Rev. 21:1), 'renewal' (1QS 4:25) or 'renewed creation' (*4 Ez.* 7:75; *2 Apoc. Bar.* 32:6; 57:2). See U. Mell, *Neue Schöpfung: Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Studie zu einem soteriologischen Grundsatz paulinischer Theologie,* BZNW 56 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1989), 47-257. It is possible that in Paul's mind, the transforming work of Christ on the cross has already inaugurated the new age and the destruction of the old cosmos. The process of re-creation and liberation of the present evil age has already begun at the cross (cf. 1:4). See 1 Cor. 7:3; 15:27-28; Rom. 8:19-22; Phil. 3:20-21.

[29] For the 'in Christ Jesus' (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) idea, see Gal. 1:16; 2:4, 20; 3:5, 14, 26-29; 4:6; 5:6. See also Burton, 249.

success of the agitators' activity among them, on the other hand, poses a particular threat that undermines Paul's apostolic work to 'beget' believers in Christ.[30]

Paul's positive characterisation of his own work, on the other hand, stands in contrast to his negative evaluation of the agitators' wooing activity. He is making a personal appeal and seeks to arouse the emotions or *pathos* (πάθος) of the Galatians and to draw them to himself.[31] He wants to dissuade the Galatians regarding future actions by demonstrating that the actions of the agitators are 'without a good purpose'. He reminds them of their warm initial response to him and his proclamation, even when they might have had reason to be critical of him. Above all, he demonstrated his love to his converts as a pregnant mother, undergoing arduous (labour) pain and difficulty to bring about their spiritual formation and maturity in Christ. As a dutiful parent should, he has loved them and nurtured them. He makes plain his motives and intention as one who is responsible for their spiritual well-being.

Paul's maternal metaphor may well serve to underscore the Galatians' debt to him and to elicit an appropriate response from them. Indeed, in first century Jewish and Graeco-Roman convention, parents were considered the greatest of all benefactors to their children.[32] They gave life to their children and all that was needed from infancy to adulthood. As such, children owe the greatest debt of gratitude to their parents. The appropriate social reciprocity for the children then is to show love and honour to their parents in return.[33] Since Paul was their spiritual, parental benefactor, the reasonable response the Galatians should make is to love him, as they did when they first received the gospel from him (4:15). But the rhetorical questions in verses 15 and 17 of ch. 4 suggest otherwise. What has become of their joy and affection? Have

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[30] The word πάλιν ('again') in 4:19 might suggest, as Paul sees it, the danger of the agitators' teaching bringing about a reversal of the birth process.
[31] See Hansen, *Abraham,* 53; Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation,* 150. On the appeal to *pathos* as a means of rhetorical persuasion, see Chapter 1.1.
[32] See, for instance, Seneca, *De Benef.* 2.11.5; 3.1.5 5.5.2; 6.24.2; Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 2.229, 234; *Dec.* 112, 165; *Vit. Mos.* 2.207. On this, and more generally on the giving and receiving of benefaction as the basis for creating and maintaining interpersonal relationship in the ancient world, see G.W. Peterman, *Paul's Gift from Philippi.*
[33] Seneca, *De Benef.* 3.1.5.

they misjudged Paul and regarded him, the one who has spoken the truth and has loved and nurtured them, as their enemy?

In the light of the above study, we may now question the common view among interpreters that the section of 4:12-20 is a somewhat erratic and irrational emotional outburst that has either been tacked to the preceding argument in chapters 3-4 or served as something of a lighter interlude between chapters 3-4 and chapters 5-6.[34] Others have also argued that there is a major division between 4:11 and 4:12[35] or that there was simply 'a change between heavy and light sections which require an emotional and personal approach to offset the impression of mere abstractions'.[36] On the contrary, our study interprets 4:12-20 within the broader context of the Galatians' acceptance of the agitators' teaching and their social judgement against Paul's character, behaviour and motives. This emotionally charged section is to be understood as part of his response to the Galatians to set aside their social prejudices and critical appraisal of his character. The section 4:12-20 is Paul's emotional and passionate appeal to the Galatians to come back to him and his gospel.[37] He wants to restore their relationship: 'Become like me, because I have become like you' (4:12).[38]

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[34] Thus, Schlier calls the section 'an argument of the heart' reflecting an 'erratic train of thought' (208). Similarly, Mussner (304-305) and Oepke (140) argue that Paul, overcome with emotions, loses control of the argument here, so that one would have to resort to intuitive grasping to understand what is being said.

[35] Longenecker, 183-87.

[36] Betz, 221.

[37] 4:12 may also be seen as a link to the preceding 4:8-11. I have argued that the Galatians have retained the contemporary outlook on the nature of the physical and divine worlds and have invested significance *in* religious practices. They have failed to continue to remain in their faith in Christ alone. For the Galatians then to become like Paul would involve their once again being parted from conformity to their old way of life and religious outlook. Christ has to be reformed in them (4:19). And what this means is that the Galatians are to continue to live a life of faith in Christ, just as is evident in Paul's testimony of Christ in him and his life of faith(fulness) (2:20). It is thus not necessary to see with Longenecker (183-87) that there is a major division between 4:11 and 4:12.

[38] Betz (220-37) has argued that the *topoi* of friendship, i.e. of 'true' and 'false' friendship, functions in 4:12-20. He is right to emphasise Paul's language of intimate relationship and his desire to restore 'friendship', although one need not always read the passage solely with friendship conventions in mind. Indeed, we observe that Paul chooses to describe such a relationship not as 'friends' but in an imagery of a mother begetting her children. Furthermore, Betz does not take sufficient account of the Galatians' social judgement and

In his bid to persuade the Galatians to follow his example, Paul appeals to them, demonstrating, in contrast to the agitators' motive, his love for them like a mother and focusing on their previous conversion experience. 4:12-20 then becomes explicable when we set it within the social context of the Galatians' perceptions of Paul and his gospel. It is not necessary to resort to some sort of psychological interpretation or to see this section as a mere erratic or an emotional aside.

3. Paul's polemical invective against his opponents

As we have already noted, Paul not only seeks to defend himself against any charges of inconsistency or expediency but also to berate the behaviour of the agitators and the character of their spiritual activity. The invective and polemical nature of his criticism may be seen as one of the means by which he hopes the Galatians will turn toward him away from the agitators and their gospel.[39] He seeks to discredit them before his converts. There is little doubt that his negative characterisation of their character and conduct is, too, ideologically motivated.[40] He wants the Galatians to return to their commitment to him and his gospel.

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their charge of inconsistency and flattery against Paul that have affected such a relationship (see 4:16).

[39] Recent articles by B. Dodd ('Christ's Slave') and Gaventa ('Galatians 1 and 2') demonstrate that 1:6-2:21 (in particular, 1:10 and its immediate context) is to be understood as Paul's polemic against his opponents. I would argue, however, that the thematic connection is evident not only here but also in other parts of the letter.

[40] Paul's negative caricature of the agitators is probably also consistent with the exaggerated nature of ancient polemic. As such one may question whether all he says may reflect the reality, especially when he does not provide further details or support for his accusations. Nevertheless, it is clear what he intends to achieve. See further the discussion in D.L. Stamps, 'Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation: The Entextualization of the Situation in New Testament Epistles' in Porter and Olbricht (eds.), *Rhetoric and the New Testament,* 193-210. Stamps notes that authors embed within a letter a particular perspective on a historical situation in order to make their argument effective. That is, the persuasiveness of the argument of the letter is linked to this literary presentation of the situation. Thus, in order to elicit a favourable response from his readers, Paul's perspective and presentation of the opponents is not surprising in such polemical context.

Paul, one might argue, engages in a form of σύγκρισις.[41] In the first place, he accuses the agitators of perverting the gospel of Christ (θέλοντες μεταστρέψαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοὺ Χριστοῦ, 1:7) and calls those who insist on law-observance and circumcision pseudo-believers (2:4). So strong is his stance that Paul asserts that anyone who preaches a gospel that is different from the one the Galatians received shall bear a curse (1:8). Indeed, the antithesis in 1:10 between the one who pleases God and another who pleases humans serves not only to support Paul's gospel and his preaching but also to distinguish him from other crowd-pleasers. 1:10 could well be a veiled polemical evaluation of his opponents. But who are these flatterers or crowd-pleasers that Paul has in mind?

It is possible that Paul may well be distinguishing himself from some of his contemporaries who pleased others (fellow Jews, peers) through the observance of the law (cf. 1:14; 2:4f.). This is hinted in 1:10b., where the adverb ἔτι ('still') suggests that there was a time prior to his call when he was a crowd-pleaser (like them) but is no longer one now.

In comparison to those who seemed important, οἱ δοκοῦντες (2:2b, 6 [twice], 9; note also its connection with πρόσωπον in v. 6 and στύλοι in v. 9), Paul argues that they did not matter;[42] God does not accept one according to outward appearance (lit. does not accept the face of human beings) (ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν δοκούντων εἶναί τι, - ὁποῖοί ποτε ἦσαν οὐδέν μοι διαφέρει· πρόσωπον ὁ θεὸς ἀνθρώπου οὐ λαμβάνει - ἐμοὶ γὰρ οἱ δοκοῦντες οὐδὲν προσανέθεντο). The word πρόσωπον could carry the idea of 'the respect or esteem of a person', referring to attributes such as status, power, credentials and honour in human society.[43] It could also suggest the idea of 'mask', where in a

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[41] See Chapter 5.3.b.

[42] The present tense οἱ δοκοῦντες would suggest that Paul is presently concerned with how certain individuals are being esteemed by others, perhaps by the agitators, including even the Galatians. Who these people were is not clear, although it has been suggested that Paul is alluding to the Jerusalem 'pillars' or apostles (cf. 2:9). See also Longenecker, 53; Betz, 92; Dunn, 102. Cf. Lightfoot, 108.

[43] Lohse, 'πρόσωπον', *TDNT,* VIII, 770. Cf. LXX πρόσωπον passages in Lev. 19:15; Deut. 1:17; 16:19; 2 Chron. 19:7; Job 13:10; Ps. 81:2; Prov. 18:5; Mal. 2:9.

polemical rhetorical context, it refers to one's presentation of view in contrast to the opponent's.[44]

In our study of the rhetorical conventions, we observed that orators and sophists would shape their message, at times, even distorting the truth, in order to persuade others.[45] At times, this may require one to assume a particular rhetorical style, mannerism, even physical appearance. Like actors who put on different masks and assumed diverse characters in different plays, such orators, in a way, don masks to suit particular rhetorical situations so as to achieve the desired rhetorical effect.[46] Their hallmark is adaptability and accommodation. It seems then that Paul here may be accusing certain seemingly important (Christian) Jews for placing a great premium on 'outward appearance'. They wore 'masks' and accommodated their message in order to influence and convince their hearers to accept their gospel of circumcision and law-observance (2:4).

It is also worth observing that a desire to win the approval of people is sometimes accompanied by a fear of hostility and anger from those who became suspicious of them.[47] Under such pressure, this often encourages deliberate accommodation, which might lead one to overstep the boundaries of integrity. No wonder Dio in his characterisation of the ideal leader and speaker in *Or.* 32.11, affirms that such a person 'without guile speaks his mind with frankness, and neither for the sake of reputation nor for gain makes false pretensions, but out of good will and concern for his fellow-men stands ready, if need be, to submit to ridicule, and the disorder and uproar of the mob - to find such a person is not easy ... so great is the dearth of noble, independent souls'. The antithesis of fear and inconsistency, as Dio points out, is the resistance to the temptation to pander to the audience, even at the cost of receiving hostility, and to remain truthful for the good of others.

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[44] See Lohse, 'πρόσωπον', *TDNT,* VIII, 770.
[45] See Chapter 5.3.a.
[46] Cf. *prosopopoeia*, a rhetorical exercise in which the student assumes the persona of a stock character and gives a speech in his or her assumed style. See Quintilian, *Inst. Or.* 2.1.2.
[47] See above Chapter 5.3.a.

This insight could shed some light on Peter's behaviour in the Antioch incident.[48] As Paul sees it, the issue at stake is that Peter, by his withdrawal at table-fellowship, was compelling the Gentile Christians to judaise (2:14), that is, to adopt the Jewish way of life.[49] This has often been noted by interpreters, but what has less often been noticed is its thematic link to Paul's polemic against the rhetorical stratagem of his detractors. The clue lies in 2:11, where it is stated that Paul opposes Peter κατὰ πρόσωπον.[50] The phrase probably suggests more than mere 'face to face' confrontation; rather, Peter was accused for his changeability, literally, for putting on a mask. His actions showed that he changed his position with regard to the observance of the law for Gentile Christians. In fear and under pressure, perceived or real, he accommodated and 'played' to the 'circumcision party'. His lack of commitment or constancy to 'the truth of the gospel' resembles a sophist or an orator who accommodates his action and speech according to particular circumstances and audiences. As the metaphor of straightness suggested by the verb ὀρθοποδέω in 2:14, Peter is not acting in an unbending, unwavering and sincere manner.

This reading is further supported by the verb συνυπεκρίθησαν in v. 13, where the verb ὑποκρίνομαι ('to interpret', 'answer' in classical Greek) could be applied to acting in theatre, that is, a piece of play-acting, the concealment of one's character, thoughts, or feelings under the pretext of suggesting something quite different.[51] The noun ὑποκριτής in antiquity could mean 'actor'. Peter's ὑπόκρισις (including that of the other Christian Jews who joined him) was not the display of virtue as a disguise for wrongdoing, as is usually understood by commentators. He stood condemned because he was putting on a rhetorical mask, play-acting and changing for reason of expediency. Peter (including Barnabas and the other Jews who were with him) was

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[48] For the history of interpretation of the Antioch incident, see A. Wechsler, *Geschichtsbild und exegetische Studie über den antiochenischen Zwischenfall (Gal 2, 11-14)*, BZNW 62 (Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991), 1-295.
[49] Dunn, 'The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2.11-18)' in his *Jesus, Paul and the Law,* 149-50; Esler, *Galatians,* 93-116, 126-40.
[50] I owe this insight to D.A. Campbell's unpublished paper, 'The Rhetorical Partitio' (1996).
[51] See U. Wilckens, 'ὑποκρίνομαι', *TDNT*, VIII, 559-71.

acting a part which was merely a pretence, at odds with his earlier actions and intentions as exemplified in his adoption of Gentile ways and his previous table-fellowship with the Gentiles. Indeed, his action stands in stark contrast to v. 9, where he and the other apostles were seen as pillars and foundations (στῦλοι) of the church. But in Antioch, he deviated from his original affirmation of Paul's gospel and partnership in his ministry among the Gentiles (2:7-9) and has not remained steadfast in pillar-like position and conduct.

Similar charges are also laid against the agitators in 6:12-13. Paul accuses the agitators' behaviour of being influenced by particular circumstance, i.e. to avoid persecution.[52] According to Paul in 6:12a, one motivation of the agitators for compelling the Galatians to be circumcised (ἀναγκάζουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμνεσθαι) lies in the desire 'to make a good show in the flesh' (θέλουσιν εὐπροσωπῆσαι ἐν σαρκί).[53] Paul here uses the unusual verb εὐπροσωπέω whose cognates, as we have seen, carry the idea of 'to have a good, outward appearance'. According to him, their rhetoric on circumcision was motivated by the fear of persecution and the desire to please and to appear good before others (fellow Jews?). Indeed, they too, according to Paul, were

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[52] Given its polemical context, Paul's charge may not necessarily reflect actual reality. His purpose may well be to arouse hostility toward his opponents and to win the Galatians over. See Betz, 313; W. Schmithals, 'Judaisten in Galatien?', *ZNW* 74 (1983), 55.

[53] In his recent book *Seek the Welfare. Christians as Benefactors and Citizens* (Grand Rapids & Carlisle: Eerdmans & Paternoster, 1994), 124-43), Winter has recently argued that the Galatians sought circumcision to gain legal status as a *religio licita* and avoid social pressure from the surrounding society and the civic obligation to participate in imperial cult worship. Winter's view, however, is not without its difficulties. In the first place, it is doubtful whether the legal use of πρόσωπον is commonly attested in the first or second century (so Lohse, 'πρόσωπον', *TDNT,* VIII, 770). More significantly, Winter does not provide external evidence to demonstrate that Gentiles sought to become proselytes through circumcision in order to avoid such participation. Further, there is little evidence elsewhere in the letter to suggest this; indeed, he does not refer to the social pressure/persecution of the Galatians but of the agitators (6:12b) or say about how to deal with imperial cult worship, which we would expect him to do so if the issue had been what Winter envisages. This is not to deny, however, the pervasive influence of imperial worship and the pressure to conform. It is more likely that such issue has not confronted (or not yet at least) the Galatians who were most probably new converts. That they were new converts may be inferred from Paul's remark in 1:6 of how quickly they have turned away from his gospel as well as his lack of reference to any leadership or authority structure within the churches. Thus, 6:12 may well simply indicate the agitators' rhetoric on circumcision and says nothing about its implication for imperial cult participation.

guilty of inconsistency in their conduct and preaching. The charge of inconsistency and the lack of integrity is levelled in 6:13a. The verse is introduced by οὐδὲ γάρ; the term περιτεμνόμενοι then occurs, and this is taken by most interpreters to refer to the agitators, 'the circumcised ones'.[54] In v. 13b., introduced by ἀλλά, we find περιτέμνεσθαι, where the subject of the infinitive is the Galatians. The two parts of the verse may be seen as an antithetical parallelism. That is, Paul's criticism of the agitators for their failure to keep the law suggests that they do not really have a legitimate motive for wanting the Galatians to be circumcised. He is insinuating that there was a seeming contradiction between their speaking and doing; they were not sincere in their law-keeping.[55]

Reading with an eye on 1:10 and its immediate context, Paul's polemical invective and criticism of the agitators (including, more generally, those who insist that Gentiles observe the law) concerning rhetorical integrity and consistency builds up to a deliberate comparison right up to the close of the letter.[56] The latter were those concerned primarily with 'outward appearance', who resorted to play-acting and accommodation to please people and to avoid hostility; even Peter and others in Antioch succumb to such pressure. On the other hand, along with God who is impartial and does not λαμβάνειν πρόσωπον (2:6),[57] Paul portrays himself as one who

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[54] On the meaning of term περιτεμνόμενοι and the discussion of the variant reading, see Schlier, 281; Mussner, 412-13; Bruce, 269-70.

[55] Paul does not provide any details here, again this may indicate the common feature of ancient polemic engaging in exaggeration or defamatory accusation to win audience. Cf. also Barclay, *Obeying,* 64-65; Watson, *Paul,* 62. In this regard, Jewett ('The Agitators', 201-202) probably reads too much into 6:12-13 when he argues that the basis for Paul's accusation lies in the fact that the agitators had 'annulled grace and rest on their boasting', and thereby 'denied and perverted the truth of the gospel which the law itself affirmed'.

[56] It is interesting to compare this with the aim of the orator's epilogue in Aristotle's *Rh.* 3.19.1: 'To dispose the hearer favourably towards oneself and unfavourably towards the adversary; to amplify and depreciate; to excite the emotions of the hearer; to recapitulate. For after you have proved that you are truthful and the adversary is false the natural order of things is to praise ourselves, blame him, and to put the finishing touches. One of two things should be aimed at, to show that you are either relatively or absolutely good and the adversary either relatively or absolutely bad'. Cf. Cicero, *de Or.* 2.43.182.

[57] On the phrase λαμβάνειν πρόσωπον used to refer to God's impartial judgement where there is no respect of persons, see also Lk. 20:21; cf. Mk. 12:14; Deut. 10:17; Sir. 35:13. See also J.M. Bassler, *Divine Impartiality,* SBLDS 59 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1982), 171-74.

is unmovable and unconcerned for rhetorical technique or πρόσωπον, even in the face of hostility and persecution (1:10; 2:6, 11-14; 5:11; 6:12-13). It was they, not he, who were accommodating and inconsistent in their speech and conduct.

Implicitly, the Galatians were thus encouraged to follow Paul's example not to deviate from the truth of the gospel in any circumstances (Gal. 1-2) and to resist the agitators and reject their message (cf. 2:5), even if that meant suffering (3:4; cf. 5:11b).

Furthermore, Paul also criticises the agitators for seeking to win the Galatians by means of rhetorical trickery. This is hinted in 3:1, where he speaks of the agitators' activity, albeit indirectly, as that which had 'bewitched' the Galatians. The term βασκαίνειν ('to bewitch'), used figuratively here, is commonly associated with the idea of demonic influence and magic, especially the casting of the evil eye.[58] Thus, Schlier and Neyrey think that the Galatians may have been influenced by witchcraft or the demonic spells of certain magicians.[59] There is little evidence in the letter that the opponents were sorcerers or magicians/witchcrafters or that the Galatians were involved in an occult movement. More likely the meaning is to be discerned in a rhetorical context, i.e. Paul could have in mind here the 'bewitching' effect sophists, orators or rhetors had on their audiences. As we have already noted, critics often linked certain rhetoric with magic and deception (with such terms as γόης and ἀπάτης).[60] Similarly, Paul's usage here probably reflects a pejorative description and criticism of the rhetoric of the agitators as a form of deception and falsehood. B. Longenecker has even argued that Paul uses the verb βασκαίνειν in a technical sense (i.e. the evil eye), which suggests that malevolent suprahuman forces and influence are associated with the agitators' activity.[61] The implication is that those who adhere to the agitators' malicious teaching will align themselves to spiritual realities that run

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[58] See, for instance, Plutarch, *Mor.* 680C-683B. See also Delling, 'βασκαίνω', *TDNT,* I, 594-95.

[59] Schlier, 119; J. Neyrey, 'Bewitched in Galatia: Paul and Cultural Anthropology', *CBQ* 50 (1988), 72-100. But cf. also B. Longenecker, '"Until Christ is Formed in You"', 97-99.

[60] See above Chapter 5.3.a. See further Betz, 131 nn.33-34.

contrary to the ways of God. They are open to malevolent spiritual forces other than the Spirit of God. If this is true, then Paul's insinuation that the agitators wield the evil eye offers a further devastating critique of their spiritual activity.

The Galatians have been 'bewitched' and were ignorant or foolish enough to have turned towards the agitators (3:1). The Galatians were beguiled by the seeming impressiveness of the agitators' rhetoric, which has unfortunately clouded their vision of Paul's portrayal of Christ crucified before them. In fact, his next statement sits in contrast to the agitators' rhetoric. Paul is not deceptive nor manipulative; rather he simply portrays publicly (προγράφω) Christ crucified.

That Paul decries the agitators' rhetorical stratagem and argumentation is also suggested in 5:7-10. Despite of what the Galatians might think of their persuasive oratory, Paul's polemical purpose is to convince his converts to reject them.[62] In 5:7, having noted that the Galatians had gotten off to a good start, he asks 'Who got in your way (ἐγκόπτειν) so you were not persuaded (μὴ πείθεσθαι) with regard to the truth?' As Pfitzner notes, the verb ἐγκόπτειν suggests 'a breaking into or obstruction of the Galatian Christians in their course of following the "truth"'.[63] According to Paul, the persuasion, which lies at the heart of the agitators' rhetoric, was distracting the Galatians from the truth. In the next verse, he denies that such persuasion (ἡ πεισμονή) is from God, 'the one who calls you'. And in v. 9, it is clear that Paul criticises the agitators' rhetoric employed against his version of the gospel, arguing that a little yeast leavens the whole; a metaphor with a negative connotation, because fermentation was seen as corruption.[64] There can be little doubt that the Galatians, at this point in 5:7, will recall 1:10 to mind: There is a contrast between Paul and the agitators. Both stand as a model and antitype for the Galatians in terms of rhetoric and persuasion. In contrast to the agitators, Paul is a slave of Christ who does not

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[61] See B. Longenecker, '"Until Christ is Formed in You"', 92-108.
[62] Hansen (*Abraham,* 59) sees the section as accusatory. Cf. Smit, 'The Letter of Paul to the Galatians', 19.
[63] V.C. Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agon Motif: Traditional Athletic Imagery in the Pauline Literature* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967), 136; Betz, 264; Longenecker, 230; Dunn, 274.

seek to accommodate or please (πείθω) his audience. They are to see the pervasive corrupting effect of the agitators' activity among them and so turn away from them. Implicit in the imagery of the race is the argument that if the Galatians follow the agitators, they will never reach the finishing line and so attain the goal or its prize, i.e. the hope of righteousness (5:5).

In 4:17, Paul is explicit about what he thinks of the agitators' character and motives, accusing them of courting the Galatians with 'no good purpose'.[65] Indeed, the agitators' rhetoric and envy were not uncommon characteristics of the agonistic culture of the first century.[66] This is later confirmed in 5:7, where the agonistic language of 'cutting in' on someone in a race also suggests that those who resorted to rhetorical means of persuasion or of pleasing people were in fact engaged in competition (against Paul) for the Galatians' allegiance (5:7b-8). Their activity was motivated by a desire to seek 'to exclude' (ἐκκλείω) the Gentile Christians from fellowship with Paul, so that they might become their followers, being zealous for them (ἵνα αὐτοὺς ζηλοῦτε, 4:18a).[67] For Paul their zeal or envy is 'not good' (οὐ καλῶς, v.17); it is contrary to v. 18 ('but the good is to be zealous in a good manner'). As he sees it, the agitators' zeal was also morally questionable; it was hardly 'in a good manner'. The agitators merely wish to bolster their own influence and standing by enlisting the Galatians in a relationship of dependent allegiance. Taken together

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[64] Betz, 266, Dunn, 276.

[65] Cf. Hansen, *Abraham,* 59, 87; Watson, *Paul,* 62; Longenecker, 194; Betz, 21.

[66] According to Aristotle (*Rh.* 1.11.8-15; 2.9.5-2.10.4), competition and envy (φθόνος) among equals, for instance, in sports and in love, were commonplace. Esler (*Galatians,* 47-48; 218-19), who follows Malina, argues that in the Mediterranean agonistic culture, striving for honour (as opposed to shame) governed social interactions, including competitions.

[67] It is possible to argue that the force of ἐκκλείω would suggest an exclusion from the community of salvation, i.e. circumcision and law-observance were seen as entrance requirement. See Schlier, 212; Martyn, 423; Dunn, 238. For a list of other interpretations, see Mussner, 310-12. Others (Bruce, Mussner, Longenecker) have argued that the force of ἐκκλείω could suggest the agitators' desire to exclude the Galatians from fellowship with Paul. Nevertheless, even if one places greater emphasis on their soteriological teaching, it would have had such a social consequence. On the dynamics of the relationship between Paul, the Galatians and the agitators, see C. Smith, ''Εκκλεῖσαι in Galatians 4:17: The Motif of the Excluded Lover as a Metaphor of Manipulation', *CBQ* 58 (1996), 480-99 (495-96).

with 5:7-10 and 6:12-13, it seems clear that he is accusing them of putting on a 'mask' and to serve their own purposes and self-centred desires.[68]

Paul further insinuates that the agitators' rhetoric, motivations and malicious designs do not have any 'religious' value or purpose. According to his critical evaluation of the agitators' activity, their persuasion has detrimental spiritual effects and consequences. It might not only bring about divine judgement (1:8-9) but also spiritual ruin to those who follow them. The Galatians are in danger of putting their spiritual lives at risk if they fail to remain committed to the gospel consonant with their initial reception of the Spirit (3:2-5). Christ will be of no value to those who adhered to the agitators' gospel of law-observance and circumcision (5:2); they will be cut off from Christ, having fallen away from grace (5:4); they will be hindered from obeying the truth (5:7).[69] Being outside Christ, they will receive no benefit from Christ in their desire for righteousness. Indeed, those who observe the law, unlike 'we' who live in the Spirit and by faith, will forfeit their hope of righteousness (cf. 5:5).[70] Paul's preaching and ministry, on the other hand, is the work of God (2:8; 3:5). It is instrumental in the Galatians' reception of and life in the Spirit (3:2-5; 4:6; cf. 5:22); it nurtures Christ-likeness (4:19) and promises the hope of righteousness (5:5; cf. 2:16). Paul's point to the Galatians is clear: 'Be committed to my gospel and continue your life in the Spirit and reject the agitators and their rhetoric'.

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[68] Cf. on 4:17, Betz says, 'He (Paul) portrays them as nothing but shallow, hollow and grabby "flatterers"' (230). On the forging of relationship based on certain self-interests, see Cicero, *Amic.* 26-32. Cf. according to Plutarch (*Mor.* 54C), 'between true friends there is neither emulation nor envy' (ζῆλος, φθόνος).

[69] 5:2-6 is probably Paul's polemical evaluation of his opponents' teaching in order to dissuade the Galatians from taking up circumcision. See F.J. Matera, 'The Culmination of Paul's Argument to the Galatians: Gal. 5,1-6,12', *JSNT* 32 (1988), 83. Matera also sees a parallel between 5:1-12 and 6:11-17.

[70] Martyn (103) notes the polemical distinction drawn between Paul and those who take up the law. Cf. Burton (273) who notes the contrast here between 'two methods of obtaining righteousness'.

4. Conclusion

Our study of the Graeco-Roman conventions of enmity, rhetoric and comparison, and their impact on the Galatians' outlook, allows a reconstruction of the socio-cultural dimension of the crisis. It offers an alternative viewpoint to the one that bases the conflict in the Jerusalem-Paul antithesis anchored primarily either on the basis of theological differences concerning the law and its observance for Gentiles or of his subsequent uneasy relationship with the Jerusalem church after the Antioch incident.[71] Paul is not simply concerned about the extent and detail of law-observance, or about the social boundary between (Christian) Jews and Gentiles. On the other hand, a significant issue facing Paul stemmed from the fact that the agitators might have been Hellenistic Jews familiar with Graeco-Roman socio-cultural traditions and were employing them effectively in Galatia. Indeed, the Galatians, enamoured of the persuasiveness and power of the agitators' claims, might have judged Paul as an ineffective orator. We cannot overlook the fact that a significant aspect of the crisis is the observance of Graeco-Roman social and cultural standards and values by which he is judged. One of Paul's major concerns is the Galatians' attitude and prejudice against his preaching, character and motives, possibly even his (physical) stature, according to the social conventions of the day. It is not simply the theological nature of his apostleship or of his gospel that is being questioned.

Paul, on the contrary, argues that he is not to be a perceived or judged as a typical orator. He is a God-pleaser and not a people pleaser. He does not seek to please or accommodate his message in order to win his audience. He makes clear that his gospel was divinely ordained and was accepted by the Jerusalem 'pillars'. He also defends his motives and intentions, arguing that the Galatians' spiritual well-being has always been the primary goal of his ministry. Indeed, Paul not only seeks to stifle any criticism made against him but also turns the table around and demonstrates that the agitators were the ones who resorted to various rhetorical means to win the

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[71] See Chapter 1 nn.42, 84.

Galatians: play-acting, trickery, manipulation and accommodation.[72] This seems clear from the thematic link between various parts of the letter, in particular, 1:6-2:14; 3:1; 4:17-19; 5:7-11; 6:12-3. Some of these verses are not isolated, emotional outbursts; rather, they reflect Paul's sustained critique of the Galatians' views as well as his opponents and their rhetorical practices. He exposes the opponents' motives and discredits their message and character. He criticises them for their emphasis on 'outward appearance' and for their preaching motivated by rhetorical expediency. Despite their declamation on law-observance and circumcision, their message has no spiritual value. Paul hopes that the Galatians will agree with him and turn away from them, and so restore the relationship that has been damaged by enmity.

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[72] In this regard, the view (e.g. Dunn, 132; N. Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem*, 155-70) that Paul was concerned in his letter to undo the damage done at Antioch, a confrontation which he lost, tends to overlook the ideological construct or strategy of Paul's argument. Indeed, it is unnecessary to speculate on the significance of the outcome at Antioch (especially with regard to his subsequent relationship with the Jerusalem church) or of Paul's silence about it. The apostle, it seems, is less interested in the outcome or in defending his apostolic independence as he is to demonstrate the truth of the gospel and of what it means to please God rather than humans. He also seeks to distance himself from those who accommodated and pleased others for reason of expediency.

Chapter 7

DISCORD IN THE GALATIAN CHURCHES

1. Introduction

It has been argued in the preceding chapters that the Galatians have been influenced, at least in some respects, by an outlook which characterised their former pagan worship and way of life. That this is likely may also be gathered from Paul's warning in 5:19-21 about the lure of their pagan environment. It will be argued in the present chapter that some Christians in the Galatian churches may have also adopted other Graeco-Roman practices and outlooks. This is clearly seen in Paul's evaluation and criticism of their social conduct and practices (5:13-6:10).

It is generally thought that Gal. 5:13-6:10 consists of the paraenetic material or moral exhortation. There is, however, less agreement on Paul's purpose in writing this part of the letter.[1] Interpreters have usually sought to see how this section might relate to earlier parts of the letter. Thus, it has been argued that 5:13-6:10 is Paul's defence against possible objections that his law-free gospel might lead to licentiousness.[2] Accordingly, Paul exhorts the Galatians not to fall into this error but instead to serve one another through love. Others have sought to see 5:13-6:10 as a continuation of Paul's polemic against the agitators' Judaising activity and teaching of the law.[3] It is argued that the issue, as Paul sees it, is not about ethical conduct or licentiousness but about law-observance that leads to the realm of the 'flesh' as opposed to the 'Spirit'.

It has also suggested that there was a link between the agitators' teaching on the law and the social problems within the communities. In particular, it is argued that the

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[1] Barclay has summarised the major scholarly attempts to integrate 5:13-6:10 into the earlier parts of the letter. See his *Obeying,* 9-23.

[2] So Burton, 290; Schlier, 242; Mussner, 367-68.

[3] Thus, Howard (*Crisis,* 12) views Paul's words 'as an attack on his opponents' while Brinsmead sees this section as 'a rhetorical *refutatio,* the final argument against the intruding theology' (*Dialogical,* 190). Cf. Fung, 243.

nomistic campaign of the agitators and its emphasis on nationalistic and socio-ethnic distinctions threatened the unity and the social life of the churches.[4] Such zeal could lead to an undue emphasis on those aspects of the law which mark the Jews as a distinct and chosen people, thereby minimising the necessity of love.[5] Consequently, those who follow the agitators and take up the law have assumed a sense of superiority over against others (6:1, 3), thus provoking envy and pride that is contrary to love and mutual service (5:26, 6:1-5).[6]

Nevertheless, we need to ask whether Paul's concern for appropriate ethical and moral behaviour here can be adequately understood simply as a means to defend or strengthen his position on the law. The focus on Paul as one who continues to engage in polemic against the agitators or the law tends to ignore the significance of ethical problems and social misconduct within the Galatian communities. While it is important to concentrate on the Pauline text, the failure to consider the particular socio-historical context tends to provide a limited view not only of the situation but also of the purpose and function of Paul's exhortation here.

Moreover, although we do not deny the potential effect the agitators' gospel would have had on the Galatians' communal life, it seems that Paul does not make explicit a link between the problems highlighted in 5:13-6:10 and law-observance or Jewish

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[4] For example, according to Brinsmead, 'the ethical section is an important commentary on the opponents' program, theology, spiritualism, self-understanding, and ecclesiology', and 'the "biting and devouring" (5:13-5) which epitomises an ethical breakdown among the Galatians as serious as any "worldly" sins, arises out of the intruders' program of nomistic perfection and spirituality ... the same program which results in a hierarchic exclusivism and a boasting of converts' (*Dialogical,* 180). Similarly, Martyn (545, 549) sees the link between the nomistic campaign and pride and envy. See also the discussion of the problem by Hays, 'Christology and Ethics in Galatians: The Law of Christ', *CBQ* 49 (1987), 268-72. He concludes that Paul argues so strongly against the law (in the earlier part of the letter) because he sees it as a threat to the unity of the new community in Christ, which is the thrust of the exhortation in chs. 5 & 6 (ibid., 289). Cf. also Lull, *The Spirit in Galatia,* 30.

[5] See Dunn, 'Works of the Law' in his *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, 226-27. Cf. Barrett's connection between circumcision and love (or the lack of it) when he says, 'Circumcision is the sort of thing which, if abstracted from the rest of the law, can be performed as an end in itself ... Love, on the other hand, if it is rightly understood, cannot be performed as an end in itself.' See Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation* (London: SPCK, 1985), 74.

[6] So Martyn, 545, 549.

nationalistic zeal/theology. Indeed, it is not necessary to argue that the agitators' activity was the main cause for the discord within the communities. To be sure, the verb ζηλόω in 4:17-18 could suggest factions and strife caused by the teachings of the agitators; but this had affected the relationship between Paul and the Galatians. However, the discord *among* the Galatians mentioned here did not arise out of some taking side with, and others against, the agitators' teaching.[7] Unlike the situation in Corinth, Paul gives no indication in 5:13-6:10 that the strife among the congregations was caused by party splits or personal allegiances.[8]

Others, however, have recognised Paul's concern for the Galatians' social behaviour. But it is postulated that the moral-ethical problem is evidence of some theological (mis)understanding; more specifically, Paul faces the issue of 'spiritual freedom' or libertinistic morals espoused by certain spirituals such as Gnostics or 'Pneumatiker' ('freie Geister').[9] Their (Gnostic) pride in the possession of the Spirit has led to some sort of 'ecstatic licentiousness'.[10] Similarly, in his analysis of 5:25-6:10, Jewett contends that Paul is dealing with the problem of the Galatians' 'typical Hellenistic misunderstanding about the Spirit', where enthusiasm led to a disregard for ethical distinctions, the 'scornful rejection of the impending future judgement' (6:5-10) and a proud self-centredness (5:26; 6:3-4).[11]

These views, however, are not without difficulties. The assumption that the Galatians' ethical conduct is somehow linked to another opposition group or to

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[7] *Pace* Burton, 297; Mussner, 373-74.
[8] Cf. 1 Cor. 1:12-13.
[9] See, for example, the two-front theory proposed by Lütgert (*Gesetz und Geist*) and Ropes (*Singular Problem*). Schmithals (*Paul and the Gnostics*, 13-64) argues that Paul's opponents were Jewish Gnostics who combined circumcision with a libertine style of life. He has, in effect, combined the two parties of Lütgert's two-front hypothesis into a single opposition group.
[10] Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics,* 46. According to him, 'the works of the flesh' are 'typically Gnostic manners of conduct' and that 'Gnostic pneumatics are splendidly described by the characterisation in Gal. 5:26'. See also *Paul and the Gnostics,* 46-49, 52-53.
[11] Jewett, 'The Agitators', 209-12.

supposed theological anomalies has not gained wide acceptance.[12] There is little to suggest that Paul encounters a party of 'spirituals' which threatens the Christians. These arguments also tend to overlook other socio-cultural factors that may account for the Galatians' conduct. They tend to provide only a limited picture of the socio-historical situation.

Some interpreters, while rightly recognising the presence of ethical problems among the Galatians, have argued that it was moral confusion that led Paul to write the paraenesis. More specifically, the lack of adequate moral guidance given by Paul, accompanied by an absence of a code of law, had caused some uncertainty as to how they were to act; consequently, the Galatians were attracted to the law advocated by the agitators.[13] Paul, it is argued, appeals to the Galatians to let their lives be guided by the Spirit since the Spirit can provide the necessary moral guidance that they seek. This approach rightly points out the presence of misconduct in the churches and the importance of seeing Paul's exhortation as conditioned to some extent by the particular circumstances of the letter. Nevertheless, it is not clear whether there was a general concern among the Galatians in the sense of a lack of clear guidelines in Paul's law-free gospel for daily conduct. Indeed, it is difficult to prove that the Galatians were facing moral confusion, especially when we do not know what sort of instructions Paul had given his converts or how extensive or practical they were.[14] We also need to ask whether in this particular situation he was motivated merely by a theological concern to establish the link between his (law-free) gospel and the moral life of his converts.[15]

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[12] Barclay, *Obeying,* 15-16.

[13] See Betz, 273; Martyn, 305-306; Barclay, *Obeying*, 70-71, 218.

[14] Even Barclay admits that 'we do not know how extensive or practical his instructions had been' (*Obeying,* 70).

[15] Barclay (*Obeying,* 216-20), for instance, argues that Paul's paraenetic material is a development and conclusion of his earlier arguments, that is, it is primarily concerned with the status and obedience of Gentile believers. Thus, in 5:13-6:10, according to Barclay, Paul seeks to demonstrate how they can live a moral-ethical Christian life, led by the Spirit, without taking up the law.

It is clear from the observations above that the main difficulty with current interpretation of 5:13-6:10 is the failure to pay sufficient attention to the significance of the Galatians' social behaviour as well as any factors that might have influenced the situation facing Paul.[16] The crucial questions remain, 'What particular circumstances have prompted Paul to write 5:13-6:10?' and 'What purpose or function does it serve?' These questions justify a detailed examination of the specific nature and cause of the Galatians' outlook and conduct.

It will be argued here that the issue confronting Paul may not be principally theological in the sense of being linked either to an aberrant theology or to moral uncertainty influenced by his (law-free) gospel. Rather, it is attributed primarily to secular or socio-political factors. More specifically, Paul is confronting congregations affected by socio-political strife and factions. Hence he writes 5:13-6:10 as a call to love and unity.

2. Discord and socio-politics in the ancient world

In 5:19-21, Paul lists, not exhaustively to be sure, some of the characteristics of the 'works of the flesh', including sexual sins and immorality (πορνεία, ἀκαθαρσία, ἀσέλγεια, v. 19b) as well as idolatry (εἰδωλολατρία) and sorcery or witchcraft (φαρμακεία) (v. 20a). The terms μέθαι and κῶμοι could also refer to regular drinking activities during major feasts in pagan temples, that is, 'carousing or orgies such as accompany bouts of drinking and the festivals honouring the gods, particularly the god Dionysus (or Bacchus)'.[17] According to Ramsay, Komos, the revel, was made a Greek god and his rites were observed regularly in Asia Minor.[18] These terms might point to some form of religious worship or activities associated with the temples.

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[16] *Pace* Mussner (396) who follows Dibelius in seeing 5:13-6:10 as a general paraenesis with universal application but having no specific reference to particular circumstances in the Galatian churches.
[17] Longenecker, 257.
[18] Ramsay, 453.

Whatever the specifics, it is clear that the Galatians are urged to resist returning to the socio-religious milieu that they left behind (v. 21).[19]

In 5:20b, Paul also lists some of the so-called social sins (v. 20b.): enmity (ἔχθραι), strife (ἔρις), rivalry (ζῆλος), anger (θυμοί), selfish ambition (ἐριθεῖαι), divisions (διχοστασίαι), sects (αἱρέσεις) and envy (φθόνοι). Were the Galatians guilty of the practices and behaviour listed in 5:19-21? These verses may be seen as an aspect of Paul's general preaching against idolatry and non-Christian practices; he could have drawn on an earlier catechetical tradition in his moral exhortation to his converts and as such these need not reflect actual events.[20] Nevertheless, one need not doubt it could reflect to some extent real problems of discord within the Galatians congregations. This seems clear from 5:15, where Paul warns the Galatians specifically against factious bickering and disputes. Indeed, this may have already taken place in the Galatian communities, as suggested by the use of εἰ and the present tenses used in the protasis (i.e. 'if you are biting ...'). He warns that their internal fighting could lead to a bitter conclusion. In 5:26, Paul issues instructions against divisive behaviour: 'Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another' (μὴ γινώμεθα κενόδοξοι, ἀλλήλους προκαλούμενοι, ἀλλήλοις φθονοῦντες). The admonition presupposes discord and may allow us to assume that envy, strife and the desire to seek primacy are present among his readers.[21] This is further reinforced in Paul's exhortation to the Galatians to love one another (5:13-14; cf. 6:2) as well as his advice on the restoration of offenders (6:1).[22] Thus, Paul's moral exhortations and warnings do reflect to some extent the socio-historical situation within the congregations.

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[19] Cf. 1 Thess 1:9, where Paul also preached about turning away from idolatry and immorality to the true God.

[20] Barclay, *Obeying,* 217. Cf. also Betz, 281, 284-85. Also worth noting is the fact that the vice-list is not exhaustive, as the phrase καὶ τὰ ὅμοια τούτοις (and these sort of things) in v. 21 suggests.

[21] The problem of discord is well recognised by interpreters. See Barclay, *Obeying,* 153, 154 n.31; Hays, 'Christology', 286.

Paul's use of a constellation of terms in 5:13-26 also suggests that the characteristics of the Galatians' behaviour have direct parallels with Graeco-Roman secular practices. In particular, certain terms or their synonyms belong to the semantic complex of socio-political competition and discord. And this could provide one explanation for the discord within the communities in Galatia.

The language used by Paul in 5:20b (e.g. ἔρις, ζῆλος, διχοστασίαι and φθόνοι) are political terms usually referring to strife between parties vying for power and allegiance.[23] The term ἐριθείαι (selfish ambition), in literature prior to the New Testament, occurs only in Aristotle's *Politics* to refer to political ambition and the pursuit of public office.[24] According to Aristotle, 'civil strife (στασιάζειν) is caused not only by inequality of property, but also by inequality of honours (τιμαί)'.[25] Similarly, 'it is clear also what is the power of honour (τιμή) and how it can cause party faction (στάσις); for men form factions both when they are themselves dishonoured (ἀτιμαζόμενοι) and when they see others honoured (τιμωμένοι)'.[26] Dio also expresses the link between envy (φθόνος) for one another and esteem, reputation or honour when he says, 'The high-minded, perfect man is above material wealth; but in matter of reputation would he perhaps quarrel (ἐρίζοι) with and envy (φθόνοι) those whom he sees more highly honoured by the crowd and winning greater plaudits?'[27]

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[22] The protasis in the conditional statement in 6:1a (ἐάν + future subjunctive verb) indicates a condition that is considered likely to happen.

[23] Cf. L.L. Welborn, 'On the Discord in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Ancient Politics', *JBL* 106 (1987), 86-88; M.M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation. An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 81 nn.94-95; 97 nn.190-91; L.T. Johnson, 'James 3:13-4:10 and the *Topos* ΠΕΡΙ ΦΘΟΝΟΥ', *NovT* 25 (1983), 327-47. As we shall see, other terms such as κενόδοξοι and καταρτίζειν also point to socio-political divisions within the communities.

[24] Aristotle, *Pol.* 5.2.9; 5.2.3; 5.3.4; Bauer/Aland, *Wörterbuch,* 626.

[25] *Pol.* 2.4.7. See also Philo, *Dec.* 151-53.

[26] *Pol.* 5.2.4.

[27] *Or.* 77/8.17; see also *Or.* 11.78; 32.25; 34.17; 39.8.

Enmity is also linked to certain causes such as envy (φθόνος), anger (ὀργή) and rivalry/jealousy (ζῆλος).[28] The terms, as Plutarch sees it, are related to a public or a political career. He comments, 'A government (πολιτεία) which has not had to bear with envy (φθόνος) or jealous rivalry (ζῆλος) or contention (φιλονεικία) - emotions most productive of enmity (ἔχθρα) - has not hitherto existed'.[29] Another term Paul uses, προκαλέω, also occurs in the context of hostility and competition between two contestants or parties.[30] Similarly, ἔρις was widespread in secular Roman politics and the dynamics of social advancement.[31] It was seen as necessary for self-advancement as well as to gain status and importance.[32]

Further insight into the nature of socio-political strife may also be gleaned from the orations of Dio Chrysostom, a near contemporary of Paul who had travelled extensively in the cities of Asia Minor. Living a few decades after Paul, his first speeches, which probably date from around 70 CE, could illuminate certain social and political aspects of city life.[33] However, the socio-political climate of the cities remained quite similar during this period.[34] Of particular interest to us is Dio's criticism of those who sought primacy and honour, which contrasted with his vision

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[28] Plutarch, *Mor.* 86C; 91B; 538E. Cf. according to BAGD, 337, ζῆλος seems to co-ordinate with ἔρις in the sense of 'rivalry' or 'party-attachment'.

[29] Plutarch, *Mor.* 86C.

[30] It is found in diatribe texts, so Betz, 295.

[31] In his book, *Personal Enmity in Roman Politics 218-43 BC* (London and New York: Routledge, 1987), D.F. Epstein has demonstrated the importance of enmity for successful politics within the Roman world.

[32] Epstein notes, 'The pursuit of *inimicitiae* and the destruction of one's enemies were firmly entrenched among those virtues Romans thought necessary for the acquisition of *dignitas, virtus,* status and nobility - qualities the Roman aristocracy pursued from birth' (*Personal Enmity,* 28).

[33] Of city life in the ancient world, Dio's orations could present the other side of the picture, in contrast to inscriptions which, according to C.P. Jones, 'tend naturally to mention those aspects of city life which were thought good examples for posterity: generous benefactions, grateful populaces, civic harmony'. See Jones, *The Roman World,* 25.

[34] Indeed, Dio's speeches on concord may be seen as a representative of many such speeches reflecting similar concern for ὁμόνοια. As C.P. Jones comments, '(They) presumably resemble hundreds of addresses on the same topic now lost, or never written down, for every right-thinking politician was expected to strive for harmony within and between cities' (*The Roman World,* 94). For the issue of changes and developments, see A.H.M. Jones, *The Greek City*, 179-82.

of the ideal Hellenistic city and of the relation between its citizens.[35] His discussion could help to identify a plausible social context for the Galatians' conduct as well as some of Paul's admonitions.

These writings also reveal Dio's concern with 'discord' and the destructive effect it has both among citizens of a city and between cities themselves.[36] According to him, discord stems from strife, created by 'envy and rivalry' (φθόνος καὶ φιλονικία) that seeks to plot against one another (38.43).[37] He also speaks of how envy and strife have also affected public trade and activities, 'arousing strife or greed or contentions or jealousies and base desires for gain' (77/8.39). According to Dio, fighting and the waging of war is no different to the remorseless fighting of wild beasts, yet, 'many even of us treat human beings too as wild beasts and take pleasure in the conflict waged with those of our own kind' (38.17; cf. also 77/8.29). Bickering and strife (στάσις), which could cause the break-up of relationships within community and household (38.15), is the opposite of 'sharing things that are good, unity of heart and mind, rejoicing of both peoples in the same things' (κοινωνίαν ἀγαθῶν, ὁμοφροσύνην, ἐπὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἀμφοτέρων χαράν, 38.43).

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[35] Dio's concern that cities worked toward concord may be set within the larger political context of the cities under the government of the elite. His advice may have been influenced to some extent by the growing dependence of these cities under the rule of the elite, the Roman government and the emperor. That is, his urge for concord could contain a political dimension, i.e. his aim is to keep government in the hands and interests of the upper class and the elite under the Roman rule; he wanted the cities to accept Roman hegemony and to accept that they could not win prominence by engaging in conflicts. Indeed, since Dio himself belonged to the elite, he could more easily criticise the self-seeking competition for honours and offices. See further J. Moles, 'The Career and Conversion of Dio Chrysostom', *JHS* 98 (1978), 93-96.

[36] See, e.g., Dio, *Or.* 38: 'To the Nicomedians , on concord with the Nicaeans'; *Or.* 39: 'On Concord in Nicaea'; *Or.* 40: 'On Concord with Apameia'; *Or.* 41: 'To the Apameians, on Concord'. These writings dated between 70-110 CE. Cf. also Aristides, *Or.* 23: 'Concerning Concord'; *Or.* 24: 'To the Rhodians: Concerning Concord'.

[37] See 77/8.29. Dio in his *Or.* 77/8 has devoted substantial discussion to the topic of 'envy' (φθόνος) and its destructive impact on relationships. The link between φθόνος and στάσις is also clear in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. Rom.* 8.52.1. On the relationship between enmity and envy in socio-political competition and in public office, see also Epstein, *Personal Enmity,* 48-54; Johnson, 'James 3:13-4:10', 336-37.

According to Dio, the Greeks are particularly involved in the problems of strife and the seeking of 'first place'; indeed, they are seen and ridiculed by the Romans to be 'Greek failings' (Ἑλληνικὰ ἁμαρτήματα, 38.38). However, the desire to be 'first' is not surprising, for as C.P. Jones observes, 'Desire for honour and glory was ubiquitous: cities struggled to be first in their province ... individuals struggled to be the "first men" of their city or to wear the gold crown and purple robe of office'.[38]

One important dimension of disputes between citizens of Greek cities concerns the precedence of one over another, that is, the desire to be 'first' or 'primary'. Such problems of strife and discord are not unknown among cities in Asia Minor.[39] For instance, Dio talks about the rivalry between Laodicea and Antioch, between Ephesus and Smyrna, or between Prusa and Apamea.[40] In *Or.* 23, Aelius Aristides attempts to reconcile Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamum from their rivalry for titles and honours.[41] Furthermore, cities such as Tarsus and Nicomedia, which had the status of 'mother-city' (μητρόπολις), also enjoyed primacy and prestige.[42] Such status was bestowed by Rome, but other cities were able to claim such titles and pre-eminence, sometimes taking it away from their rivals (cf. 33.46). That these cities would enjoy pre-eminence is clear from Dio's advice to Tarsus: As the 'mother-city' of the province, it is to act with motherly dignity to the lesser cities (33.17, 46). Similarly, Nicomedia is reminded that it is to show fairness and not to oppress its inferiors for its own gain (38.31).

The problem of κενοδοξία (primacy or vain-glory) is also evident in Dio's discourse in *Or.* 38. It concerns the socio-political contention in Bithynia between the Nicomedians and Nicaeans. According to him, the cities are contending for the title

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[38] Jones, *The Roman World,* 85. Cf. also Philostratus who remarks that the spirit of rivalry can be forgiven 'since human nature holds that the love for glory never grows old' (*Lives,* 491).
[39] Jones, *The Roman World,* 88.
[40] Dio, *Or.* 33.48; elsewhere in *Or.* 33.49-50, he recalls the fatal quarrels between Athens and Sparta. See also Ramsay, 118-19; Jones, *The Roman World,* 78.
[41] On city rivalries, see MacMullen, *Enemies,* 185-91. On the rivalry between Ephesus and Smyrna for pre-eminence in Asia Minor, see Bowersock, *Greek Sophists,* 90.
[42] Jones, *The Roman World,* 72, 84.

of primacy (38.21-24). The dispute between them concerns whether the Nicomedians are justified to call themselves 'first' (πρῶτοι) and to deprive the Nicaeans of it, and whether they have the right to have that made known in their monuments and inscriptions (38.28).

Yet, for Dio, such struggle for primacy is vainglorious (τὸ κενοδοξεῖν) (38.24, 29), for it 'has come to be regarded as a foolish thing even in private individuals, and we ourselves deride and loathe, and end by pitying, those persons above all who do not know wherein false glory differs from the genuine' (38.29). He reminds the Nicomedians that such competition for titles is vain conceit (38.38-40). In the same way a Roman official writes to Phrygian Laodicea condemning 'vain competitiveness' in the struggle for 'primacy'.[43] He also accuses certain individuals of stirring up strife for their own selfish purposes and warns the Nicomedians to be watchful about them (cf. 38.50).[44]

What was Dio's response to discord? He argues that disputes need not have arisen since both cities have enjoyed similar things: trade, intermarriage, kinship ties, worship of the same gods and common religious customs (38.22).[45] Similarly, in his discourse to the Nicaeans, Dio argues that common ancestry and the worship of the same gods ought to be the basis of concord between citizens of the city (39.1-3). Unity should find its basis in personal friendships, common customs, worship of the same gods and similar religious festivals.[46] He says in 39.3:

> I myself rejoice at the present moment to find you wearing the same costume, speaking the same language, and desiring the same things. Indeed what spectacle is more enchanting than a city with singleness of purpose, and what sound is more awe-inspiring than its harmonious voice? ... What city acts

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[43] *MAMA* vi.6; Jones, *The Roman World,* 88.
[44] Cf. also Aristides, *Or.* 23.28, 72, 80.
[45] Disputes over religious customs were not unknown in the ancient world. See Plutarch, *Mor.* 380B-C; Juvenal, *Sat.*15.33-83.

> more smoothly than that which acts together? What city is less liable to failure than that which favours the same policies? To whom are blessings sweeter than to those who are of one heart and mind? To whom are afflictions lighter than to those who bear them together, like a heavy load (ὥσπερ βάρος)?

In the same way, Aristides urges reconciliation among the rival cities of Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamum on the basis on their shared ancestry.[47]

Dio also believes in the divine origin and nature of concord and unity. His speech concerning concord is also combined with a theological appeal.[48] According to him, the gods taught 'us to live on good terms with one another' and that peace is celebrated through the common practice of offering sacrifice and of holding 'high festival' (38.18-9).[49] Friendship, reconciliation and kinship (φιλία, καταλλαγή, συγγένεια, 38.10-11; cf. 40.35-37) are also thought to unite the basic elements of the universe, i.e. fire, air, water and earth; however, men fall short of the blessedness of the gods because of discord. To end the strife in Nicaea, Dio makes a religious appeal with reference to the deities as founders of the community: 'But it is fitting that those whose city was founded by gods (ὑπὸ θεῶν ᾠκισμένοις) should maintain

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[46] In *Panegyricus,* Isocrates makes similar arguments for unity on the basis of common customs and cultic practices. See *Or.* 4.43.

[47] Aristides remarks, 'For its colonists are descended from aboriginal Arcadians, so that from this cause it is reasonable for you to have recognised one another as friends and to have paid each other appropriate honours' (*Or.* 23.26).

[48] Elsewhere, Dio's criticism of those who sought fame and popularity is more clearly influenced by his Cynic-Stoic inclinations. Thus, in *Or.* 67, he presents the ideal person who is a philosopher, one who ignores the pursuit of honour, praise and reputation. On the contrary, the ideal man is one who values personal freedom and peace; he exhibits self-control and obeys the Delphic command: 'Know thyself'. It is worth noting that Dio's attitude toward the seeking of popularity and public honours comes during his exile and withdrawal from political activities; not surprisingly, he is here more critical of the political life and system in the Greek cities. See *Or.* 66.

[49] In *Or.* 12.76, Dio describes Zeus as the 'God of Friendship' (Φίλιος) and the 'God of Comradeship' (Εταιρεῖος), because 'he brings all men together and wills that they be friends of one another and never enemy or foe'. In 39.4 he claims that the gods pay heed to those who live in concord, and elsewhere that concord is 'godlike' (θεῖον) (41.13).

peace and concord and friendship toward one another' (39.2).[50] He invokes the gods (Dionysus, Heracles, Zeus, Aphrodite, Harmony, Nemesis) that they 'may implant in this city a yearning for itself, a passionate love, a singleness of purpose, a unity of wish and thought' and bring to an end 'disunity and contentiousness and jealousy'.[51]

Elsewhere in *Or.* 44, in the context of the ever present competition between Greek cities, Dio presents his vision of an ideal city based on friendship and goodwill. It is free from envy and competition and promotes the philosophical ideal, where free, wise, educated individuals with genuine concern for the city's welfare develop good character and self-control and love for the city.[52] A city in which people do not compete for δόξα, by which he means 'vain glory', but for moral virtue (ἀρετή) and good repute (εὐδοκία) from fellow citizens and friends.[53] He urges love for the city (44.8) and emphasises unity and harmony as important goals. In *Or.* 77/78.38, the ideal person is presented as one who is a philosopher. He will honour virtue and moderation and will also try to lead others by his teaching, seeking to persuade and admonish, 'in the hope that he may thereby rescue somebody from folly and from low desires and intemperance and soft living, taking them aside privately one by one and also admonishing them in groups every time he finds the opportunity' (77/78.38). Such a man is 'not arousing strife or greed or contentions and jealousies and base desires for gain, but reminding men of sobriety and righteousness and promoting concord' (77/78.39).

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[50] The appeal for concord is also made on the basis of the common worship of deity. In urging concord, Aristides says, 'And neither membership in a chorus, nor the companionship of a voyage, not having the same teachers is so great a circumstance, as the gain and profit in having fellow pilgrims at the Temple of Asclepius ...' (*Or.* 23.16).

[51] *Or.* 39.8. Cf. Aristides' speech, combined with a religious appeal, to the Rhodians to end their factionalism: 'Although you dwell in a city sacred to the Sun (Ἥλιος) you are as it were corrupted in darkness. Or do you believe that Odysseus and his Cephallenians will seem to be so cursed by the god as you, if you shall sack his city? Indeed - if this also must be added - as long as they listened to the best counsel and were concordant (ὁμονοεῖν), they abstained from the cows and were saved (σώζεσθαι)', *Or.* 24.51, in regard to *Od.* 12.260-450.

[52] This reflects Dio's Stoic perspective and ideals of harmony and concord. Cf. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy,* 191.

[53] *Or.* 44.10-11 shows the Stoic perspective of Dio, that the character of 'good men' may be formed through education and the pursuit of philosophy. See also above n.48.

It should be pointed out that the problem of discord did not occur only in formal political entities or city-states but also in less formal groups such as religious or philosophical associations and households. For instance, Plutarch speaks of a certain Philip who inquires about the harmony of the Greeks, but because he himself was at odds with his wife and son, he received the reply: 'A glorious thing is for you Philip to be inquiring about the concord of Athenians ... while you let your own household (οἰκία) to be full of all this quarrelling and dissension'.[54]

Dio also comments,

> Again, take our households (οἴκων) - although their safety depends not only on the like-mindedness (ὁμοφροσύνη) of masters and mistress but also on the obedience of the servants, yet both the bickering of master and mistress and the wickedness of the servants have wrecked many households ... The good marriage, what else is it save concord (ὁμόνοια) between man and wife? And bad marriage, what is it save their discord? Moreover, what benefit are children to parents, when through folly they begin to rebel against them?[55]

According to Aristides, 'there is nothing greater and better than this, than when husband and wife maintain their house with concordant thoughts (ὁμοφρονεῖν) ... Yet do not think that a single house would be properly settled in one way but a whole city in another. Rather if concordant thought is the single means of safety for the individual home, cities must be so much more disposed in this way.'[56]

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[54] Plutarch, *Mor.* 70C. Paul's idea of the church as a family in need of unity is consistent with Hellenistic analogues. Note, in particular, the references to 'children' (τέκνα) in Gal. 4:19, to 'members of household of faith' (τοὺς οἰκείους τῆς πίστεως) in 6:10 and to 'brothers' (ἀδελφόι) in Gal. 5:13; 6:1. See also 1 Cor. 4:14, 17; 2 Cor. 6:13; 1 Thess 2:7, 11; Philem. 10.

[55] *Or.* 38.15-16.

[56] *Or.* 24.7-8.

The emphasis or the ideal of concord was applied not only to city-states but also to members of households and associations.[57] Indeed, in response to the speech about concord by the orator Gorgias, Melanthius contends that 'a man ought to have his household well harmonized who is going to harmonise State, Forum and friends'.[58] The importance of working towards unity or harmony and ending factionalism was also stressed in religious communities and philosophical schools.[59]

3. The issue of discord among the Galatians

As citizens of their cities in Asia Minor, the Galatians witnessed to the all-pervasive character of Graeco-Roman culture as a pursuit of glory and honour. They would be familiar with the competition for primacy both between cities and among its citizens played out within the larger domain of the Graeco-Roman world. One should not be too surprised then that they could have also been engaged in some form of socio-political rivalry, even within the ἐκκλησία.[60] The issues for Christians might differ little from that of their non-Christian contemporaries. They too faced discord and envy within the committed relationships of their particular social groups. This seems clear from the social context and the semantic field in which the traits Paul spells out in 5:19-21 and 5:26 occur. In 5:26, for instance, Paul issues an instruction against divisive behaviour: 'Let us not become vain-glorious, provoking one another, envying one another' (μὴ γινώμεθα κενόδοξοι, ἀλλήλους προκαλούμενοι, ἀλλήλοις

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[57] Note, e.g., the speech of Philip to his sons concerning harmony in Polybius, *Hist.* 23.11; Livy, 40.8. This is similar to the speech of the dying Mattathias to his sons in Josephus, *Ant.* 12.283 (μάλιστα δ' ὑμῖν ὁμονοεῖν παραινῶ). On the application of ὁμόνοια to two associations of bakers, see *SEG* 33.1165. On the application of concord in Hellenistic Judaism to a family or household, see also Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 1.138; *Virt.* 119. More generally on household management and social stability, see D.C. Verner, *The Household of God. The Social World of the Pastoral Epistles*, SBLDS 71 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), 27-81.

[58] Plutarch, *Mor.* 144B-C.

[59] The situation in the Corinthian church in 1 Clement is an example of the call for ὁμόνοια in a religious community. On the emphasis on concord in philosophical schools, such as among the Epicureans, see Meeks, *The First Urban Christians,* 83-84.

[60] Cf. Ramsay's remarks: 'We may feel very certain that there were strife and wrangling between the Antiochean Church and the Iconian Church about precedence and comparative dignity' (451).

φθονοῦντες). His language carries strong overtones of discord and strife typical in secular socio-politics. The motivation was 'primacy' which Paul calls 'vain glory' (κενοδοξία).

Further insights into the issue of discord facing Paul may be gleaned from his evaluation of the Galatians' behaviour.[61] In the first place, there seems to be a link, in his mind, between their pagan past and their present conduct and practices; indeed, he warns that those who persist in such a behaviour would not inherit the kingdom of God (5:21b). The Galatians were confronted with the assertion that they were behaving in ways they were accustomed to before becoming Christians and that it could incur divine judgement (see also 6:8-9). According to Paul, such behaviour does not characterise those who are 'of Christ' (5:24).[62] In addition, Paul in 5:15 describes their behaviour as not unlike that of wild animals. This could reflect the language and comparison found in diatribe literature.[63] But this also reminds one of Dio's similar characterisation of those who engaged in bitter rivalry and socio-political strife; such conflicts were 'no different to the remorseless fighting of wild beasts' (*Or.* 38.17). Paul is concerned with the destructive nature of the Galatians' behaviour that could threaten the life and unity of the Christian communities.

In 6:1, Paul talks about 'transgression' (παράπτωμα). He does not specify what παράπτωμα is, and it is probably wise not to restrict it to any particular misdeed. But,

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[61] Stamps recently argued that authors often embed within a letter a particular perspective on a historical situation, where such a reconstruction of social reality (as well as identity) forces the readers to evaluate the perspectives entextualised in the letter. See Stamps, 'Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation', 193-210. The same may be said of Paul's perspectival criticism of the Galatians' social behaviour.

[62] It is perhaps worth pointing out that the Galatians' view of their conduct might have been different from Paul's. It is possible that not all shared Paul's abhorrence of faction. Nevertheless, the rhetorical tension or effect of Paul's address when using religious language (i.e. of divine judgement and 'of Christ') and creating the identity of the readers forces the readers to respond to the perspectives entextualised or presented in the text. Those who are involved in rivalry and discord are compelled to evaluate their own behaviour, relationships and even identity in relation to what Paul says about those who are 'of/in Christ'. See also discussion below. On the other hand, Paul exhortation to the Galatians to work towards concord might be ideologically motivated, see n.68.

[63] Betz, 277.

in view of vv. 1b and 4, the opposite of those with 'a spirit of humility' (πνεῦμα πραΰτητος), we may surmise that the underlying issue is presumption and pride. And when combined with 5:15, 18-26, the implication may be that for Paul such a person is one who has imbibed the (competitive) spirit of his age characterised by vainglory, envy and strife, and has considered himself to be superior to others. Indeed, such a person probably belongs to those who may have been more profoundly influenced by the non-Christian activities of 5:19-21; he or she continues to do ἔργα τῆς σαρκός (5:19) and follows the ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκός (5:17, 24). Such a person is distinguished from those who are spiritual (πνευματικοί). In short, according to Paul, what influenced the social or ethical conduct and threatened the love-unity of the congregations is that the Galatians were behaving like non-Christians.

It should be pointed out that an enquiry into the socio-political nature of the discord within the churches does not rule out its religious dimension.[64] Religious and social or political dimensions of discord cannot be too sharply distinguished; indeed, for Paul, strife among Christians is both a religious and social offence (Gal. 5:15; 6:8).[65] That is why, as we shall see, Paul appeals to Christ as the basis for love and unity within the churches.[66]

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[64] Indeed, the church (ἐκκλησία) may be seen as a socio-political unit. The term 'politics' refers to 'the science and art of government ... dealing with the form, organisation, and administration of a state or part of one ...'; and 'political' can be simply defined as 'of, belonging, or pertaining to the state or body of citizens, its government and policy ...' (Oxf. Eng. Dict.). In this sense, the 'church' (ἐκκλησία; Gal. 1:2) may be seen as a religious association within the *polis* with its own social structure and membership. That the early churches were social and political groups which functioned more or less like socio-political entities in Graeco-Roman antiquity is generally presupposed in such works as Meeks, *The First Urban Christians,* 74-110. On ἐκκλησία as a political term, see J.B. Lightfoot, *Notes on Epistles of St. Paul from Unpublished Commentaries* (London/New York: Macmillan, 1895), 32.

[65] It is worth noting the religious dimension of the political term ὁμόνοια, for in Graeco-Roman religion, Ὁμόνοια is identified as a goddess. See Dio's invocation of the deity in *Or.* 39.8.

[66] This parallels the Graeco-Roman appeal to the goddess Ὁμόνοια as the basis for unity and stability. In the light of this, it is plausible that Paul's lack of reference to ὁμόνοια may be seen as a way of avoiding any possible association with the goddess.

4. Paul's response to discord

If our reading of the socio-political context of the Galatians is fair, then a significant part of writing the letter is to confront divisions within the churches and to urge love-unity and concord among them. To be sure, the term ὁμόνοια, a common and significant socio-political topic discussed in Graeco-Roman antiquity, Hellenistic Judaism and later Christian writings, does not appear here (or in any of the other NT writings).[67] Nevertheless, the language and strategy used by Paul appears to belong within Hellenistic discussion on the problem of discord among citizens in the secular, public domain, although, as we shall see, there are important differences.[68] Also

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[67] For instance, Dio comments, 'Concord (ὁμόνοια) has been lauded by all men always in both speeches and writing. Not only are the works of poets and philosophers alike full of its praises, but also all who have published their histories to provide a pattern for practical applications have shown concord to be the greatest of human blessings' (*Or.* 38.10). See also Jones, *The Roman World,* 83-94. The term ὁμόνοια is also often used in Graeco-Roman political rhetoric (see e.g. Xenophon, *Mem.* 4.4.16; Dio, *Or.* 39.2, 4; 40.26; 49.6). It is also a significant topic in the writings of Plutarch; so C.P. Jones, *Plutarch and Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 112. In Hellenistic Judaism, see Josephus, *Ant.* 12.283. The concern for ὁμόνοια (or ὁμονοέω) against factionalism also frequently appears in later Christian writings, such as 1 Clement (9:4; 11:2; 20:3, 10f; 21:1; 30:3; 4:7; 49:5; 50:5; 60:4; 61:1; 62:2; 63:2; 65:1); on στάσις/στασιάζω, see 1:1; 2:6; 3:2; 4:12; 43:2; 46:7, 9; 47:6; 51:1, 3; 55:1; 57:1; 63:1. On the theme of ὁμόνοια in Ignatius, see W.R. Schoedel, *Ignatius at Antioch. A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 74, 213. See also BAGD, 569; Delling, 'στάσις', *TDNT,* VII, 571. On στάσις, see M.I. Finley, *Politics in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: CUP, 1983), 105-21.

[68] Now Paul is concerned to create concord in the communities, who like Dio, may harbour a political or ideological interest (see above n.35). It is not clear here, however, whether his argument was also partly motivated by a desire that his addressees submit to external, dominant political powers (but cf. Rom. 13:1, 5). On the other hand, there can be little doubt that any discord among the converts would threaten Paul's own ministry and apostolic position (as their founder) and undo the work he has done among them. That he aims to protect and strengthen his position as an apostle to the Gentiles seems clear in the earlier parts of the letter, from his opposition to the agitators on the one hand, and his labour to establish his credibility and apostleship on the other (see, e.g., Gal. 1:7f., 2:7-9 *et. al.*). Further, Paul's exhortation in 5:26 and 6:2-4 that the Galatians are to avoid 'vainglory' and strife and to constrain their ambition and pride would indicate his intention that they, in particular those of the lower status, are to accept a position of humiliation, without harbouring the competitive desire to seek honour or to compete against each other. This might in fact serve to strengthen the position of the upper class or those of the higher status within the communities. On the other hand, we should also point out that his admonition to the Galatians be slaves to one another (through love) and to bear one another's burden will imply a break with the prevailing competitive culture and any sense of superiority over others that some might have hitherto enjoyed.

worth pointing out is the fact that there is, of course, a major difference between those (such as Dio) who address the citizen, political body as such, and Paul, who speaks to much smaller groups. Both speeches have certain given limits and concerns, whether socio-political or religious. Nevertheless, the goals are rather similar - the common good of the social group in question, love and unity instead of factionalism, the necessity to restrain 'lawlessness' as well as personal strive for glory in order to reach these goals. Indeed, Paul seems to share certain values and concerns commonly found in Hellenistic ethics or philosophical discussion of concord applied to communities in the *politeia*.

One might then read 5:13-26 and 6:1-5 as Paul's address on the problem of discord and strife as well as on the struggle for primacy within Christian communities.[69] It may be observed that there is a parallel to the appeal of Dio or Aristides for unity and peace among rival parties on the basis of philosophical ideals as well as the latter's common traditions or religious beliefs and the worship/teaching of the gods (e.g. Ὁμόνοια, Harmony).[70] The basic difference between Paul's approach and those of the politicians or philosophers, it is observed, is that his appeal is based on the work and teaching of Jesus Christ. He does not address citizens of the *polis* as such but as those who are 'of Christ'.

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[69] Here, we should keep in mind the danger of uncritical use of so-called parallels. See also Barclay, *Obeying,* 170-77. For instance, Betz (298-99) argues that 6:1f. could reflect Paul's use of well-known maxims from Hellenistic philosophical and 'friendship' teachings. But it should be noted that Paul has given the motif a new Christian context. More generally, however, Betz's use of Hellenistic philosophy or diatribe literature fails to clarify adequately the differences in Paul's own anthropological and theological perspectives and the social context of the ethical exhortation. His sweeping generalisation of Paul's ethics as that which conforms to Hellenistic philosophy does not always observe the relevance of the parallels he adduces; nor does he take sufficient cognisance of the social context (i.e. socio-political factions) which prompted Paul's instructions. In other words, when discussing 'parallels', we need to take adequate consideration not only of the significance of individual terms but also the context in which they occur. More specifically here in 5:13-6:10, we will need to ask how similar terms and concepts occurred and were discussed by Paul's (near-) contemporaries in the context of socio-political strife and factionalism (the Galatian context!) as well as Paul's own distinctive Christian teachings and ethics.

[70] It has been demonstrated that there are close parallels between Dio's works, which are within the tradition of Stoic/Cynic philosopher-rhetors, and many features of Paul's ministry. See, for instance, G. Mussies, *Dio Chrysostom and the New Testament* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972).

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul reiterates his (previous) warning to his converts against living in a way that characterises their non-Christian past (5:21b). As 5:14-15 indicates, their anti-social behaviour is contrary (expressed by the adversative δέ) to the character of love. Paul therefore urges love-unity, where it is also combined with a theological appeal to Christ. Using the same strategy to combat rivalry and factionalism, Paul appeals to what the Galatians have in common as the basis for love-unity, that is, their 'in Christ' (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) experience and their sense of 'belonging to Christ' (οἱ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, 5:24; cf. 3:28), their life 'in the Spirit' (ζῶμεν πνεύματι, 5:25) and conformity to Christ's teaching and character (cf. 6:2). Differences on the basis of ethnicity or circumcision and non-circumcision are replaced by a common identity in Christ; indeed, this may be seen as a unifying force that binds the communities together in love (5:6; cf. 3:28-29).[71] Indeed, the use of religious categories or designations also creates the rhetorical effect of forcing the readers to evaluate a host of relationships. The Galatians should properly consider themselves as members of the community who are 'in/of Christ' and examine their relationship not only with God in Christ but also with each other.[72] They are to evaluate their own individual identity, relationships and behaviour in relation to the Christian qualities and characteristics set out in the letter (cf. also 5:22-23). Negatively, as 5:13-14, 24 make clear, this should also lead to the renunciation of 'works of the flesh'.

a. Gal. 5:13-26

In 5:13-26, Paul appeals that the Galatians ought not to use freedom (ἐλευθερία) as an opportunity for 'the flesh' but rather to love one's neighbour (5:13-14; see also 5:6).[73]

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[71] Ethnic diversity has been one of the causes of political divisions. See Aristotle, *Pol.* 5.2.10. Not surprisingly, the establishment of a new common identity was seen by political rulers as the basis for bringing together diverse ethnic and political groups. See, e.g., Plutarch, *Mor.* 329C-D.

[72] Cf. also the discussion on 6:2 below.

[73] According to Dio, self-centredness or the lack of neighbourly concern is a major cause of enmity. Cf. *Or.* 40.34: 'For the unwillingness ever to yield (εἴκειν) or make concessions

The issue of freedom often features in party and inter-city political strife. It could become a matter of dispute among political parties, making reconciliation difficult.[74] Aristides, for instance, not only affirms the freedom that each has but also urges unity: 'You are proud of the fact that you are free (ἐλεύθεροι) ... Therefore if for no other reason, then for the sake of being free and doing what you wish, abandon this present conduct so that you may not suffer anxieties which will be as great as your present audacity' (*Or.* 24.22).[75] Freedom could also be appealed to by individuals or conflicting parties to justify certain actions for one's benefits. Indeed, since Greek antiquity, the use of freedom for oneself was one contributing factor that caused strife.[76] People were ambitious for domination and fond of freedom and were fighting continuously against each other for first place.[77] As J. Larsen comments, 'It was this spirit of freedom for oneself but not for others which was largely responsible for the failure of Greek movements for unity'.[78]

Paul here, it seems, is also aware of the socio-political dimension of freedom (from law-observance) and what that might entail. On the one hand, he recognises the freedom the Galatians have (v. 13a); but on the other hand, he appropriately urges them not to appeal to freedom to justify their actions for some personal 'fleshly' advantage or benefit (εἰς ἀφορμὴν τῇ σαρκί). On the contrary, they ought to serve one another through love (ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης). Paradoxically, Paul equates the

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(παραχωρεῖν) to our neighbour (τῷ πλησίον) ... or while receiving some things ourselves, to concede some to the others, is not manly conduct, as some imagine, but, on the contrary, senseless and stupid'.

[74] E.g. Dionysius of Halicarnassus remarks, 'To both parties (plebians and patricians) it seemed that their whole claim to life and liberty (ἐλευθερία) was at stake in this trial' (*Ant. Rom.* 7.59.1). On the other hand, according to the law-giver Lycurgus in Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 7.12.3, concord is the basis by which freedom may be maintained.

[75] Later in *Or.* 24.32-33, Aristides argues that it may be necessary at times to compromise some freedom in order to achieve concord. See also Josephus, *Ant.* 12.283.

[76] Cf. Walbank's remark on Polybius, *Hist.* 5.106.5: 'The association of the ideas of love of liberty and love of domination over others is essentially Greek'. F.W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957-79).

[77] See J.A.O. Larsen, 'Freedom and its Obstacles in Ancient Greece', *CPhil.* 57 (1962), 230-34.

[78] Larsen, 'Freedom', 231.

Galatians' call to freedom (v.13a) to slavery, as the verb δουλεύειν suggests (v. 13b).[79] He is thereby (re)defining Christian freedom, not as a means for exploitation for selfish gain or purpose, but for service to one another. This is pertinent advice to those involved in rivalries, self-aggrandisement or engaged in seeking primacy and glory (5:15, 20b, 26).

Paul's injunction to love takes on further significance in the light of the socio-political strife among the congregations. His appeal reminds one of the social and political nature of ἀγαπᾶν commonly attested in Graeco-Roman literature.[80] In Graeco-Roman antiquity as well as in Hellenistic Judaism, the connection is often made between ἀγαπᾶν (and its synonyms) and harmony or concord. Thus, for Plato, the opposite of strife (στάσις) is ἀγαπᾶν.[81] Similarly, Aristotle maintains that φιλία promotes concord and binds the state together; it is a proper solution to the problem of factionalism (στάσις) and enmity (ἔχθρα).[82] In Polybius' version of Philip's speech to his sons to seek harmony with one another, he advises them that the antidote for faction is to love (στέργειν) one another.[83] Dio in *Or.* 38.15 associates love and friendship (φιλία) with ὁμόνοια. For Plutarch, love is a significant means to deal with the problem of factionalism and to achieve unity for the good of the state.[84] In Hellenistic Judaism, ἀγάπη usually refers to brotherly or neighbourly love[85] and is also linked to concord in some of its writings.[86] For Philo, 'the highest and greatest source

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[79] See 1 Cor. 9:19. For a discussion on the theme of slavery to all, see D. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation,* 117-35.

[80] Though the noun ἀγάπη is rare in Greek literature, the verb ἀγαπᾶν is quite common. See E. Stauffer, 'ἀγαπάω', *TDNT,* I, 21-55, 37-38. For the use of ἀγάπη/αγαπάω and φιλία/φιλεῖν in political associations or alliances, see Polybius 9.29.12; Plutarch, *Caes.* 5.2; Josephus, *War* 1.171, 172, 211; 2.359; Dio, *Or.* 38.38; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. Rom.* 3.29.4; 3.50.4; 4.49.1; 5.1.1.

[81] *Leg.* 3.678E.

[82] *Eth. Nic.* 8.1.4; 9.6.2.

[83] Polybius, *Hist.* 23.11.3.

[84] According to Wardman, Plutarch sees 'love as a force which can unify the state politically' (*Plutarch's Lives,* 60). See further discussion in A. Wardman, *Plutarch's Lives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 57-63.

[85] See O. Wischmeyer, 'Vorkommen und Bedeutung von Agape in der ausserchristlichen Antike', *ZNW* 69 (1978), 236-37.

[86] Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 1.70; Sir. 25:1; *Sib. Or.* 3.373-80; *T. Jos.* 17.2-3.

of this unanimity (ὁμόνοια) is their creed of a single God, through which, as from a fountain, they feel love (φιλία) for each other, uniting them in an indissoluble bond'.[87] In later Christian writings, love also plays a fundamental role in bringing about concord.[88]

For Paul, love is a counterpart and a remedy to the Galatians' factionalism. But Christian love is about more than mutual affection for one another; it probably also includes conformity to Christ who had given himself for the sake of others.[89] Indeed, Paul demonstrates that Christ has brought to completion (the perfect tense πεπλήρωται) the law in the one imperative command to love one's neighbour (5:14; cf. Lev. 19:18).[90] Christ is the foundation of the loving pattern of mutual service in the church.

Paul also urges the Galatians to live by the Spirit. He is confident that the one whose life, with its moral and ethical dimension, is led by the Spirit will be able to resist the flesh (5:16).[91] He wants to inculcate a Christian ethos, distinguished from the secular behaviour and practices of their contemporary cities and communities. In 5:22-23, Paul spells out the traits that ought to characterise the Christian behaviour, which is to be manifested not only in their relationship with God but also with one another.[92]

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[87] Philo, *Virt.* 35.

[88] In the later Christian *Herm. Sim.* 9.15.2, Ὁμόνοια and Ἀγάπη appear together. See also Ignatius, *Smyrn.* 7; 1 Clement 49:5.

[89] See, e.g., Mk. 12:31; Matt. 5:43; 19:19; Rom. 13:9; cf. Lev. 19:18; Jn. 13:1-11; Phil. 2:1-11. According to Schrage (*Ethics,* 211), the extent to which love confirms the centrality of Christ for Paul's theology can be seen from his application to love of terms which are also the predicates of Christ. See W. Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament* (trans. D. Green; Edinburgh & Philadelphia: T & T Clark & Fortress Press, 1988). Cf. V.P. Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), 223. See further discussion below on 6:2.

[90] Barclay (*Obeying*, 140) argues that the verb πληροῦν is used 'to describe the total realization of God's will in line with the eschatological fullness of time in the coming of Christ'. According to Martyn (513), Christ has 'caused the Law's promise and the Law's singular imperative to become - in their coalescence - the unified whole of the Law'. This may be attributed to the fact that the coming of Christ has defeated the cursing voice of the law and restored instead its (pre-Sinaitic) promissory voice. See further, Martyn, 506-14.

[91] Note that 5:17 describes the conflict between Spirit and flesh. Cf. Schlier, 255-56; Oepke, 180; Barclay, *Obeying,* 115, 118.

[92] See Burton, 313; Oepke, 180.

This ought to have become the distinctive Christian feature in their contemporary society. Indeed, this type of behaviour is non-competitive, unselfish and is rewarded with what truly matters, God's gift of eternal life (6:8-9). Those who bear the fruit of the Spirit are 'those of Christ Jesus'.[93] Their behaviour reveals that they belong to Christ and have patterned his example of humiliation. They have 'crucified the flesh with its passions and desires' (5:22, 24). In this sense, Paul's argument and ideals of concord are more radical than Dio's. It is not by education, or the development of qualities like self-control or knowledge and temperance, or the pursuit of philosophical ideals but through transformation and life in the Spirit that believers (cf. 'the spiritual' of 6:1) can break with the secular culture of (socio-political) competition and striving for primacy.

b. Gal. 6:1-10

Realising that some may have sinned by persisting in their former pagan way of life (5:13ff.), Paul talks about their restoration in 6:1. And the task falls on those who are 'spiritual' (πνευματικοί) to restore any offenders in a 'spirit of humility' (πνεῦμα πραΰτητος). The group 'the spiritual' (πνευματικοί) designates a segment of believers in the Galatian congregations that are distinguished from others who have been more profoundly influenced by the pagan and secular behaviour and practices of 5:19-21. This identification is supported by the implied contrast of πνευματικοί with σαρκικοί, which refers to those who still do ἔργα τῆς σαρκός (5:19) and follow the ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκός (5:17, 24).[94] The antithesis between flesh and Spirit is drawn out in 5:16-26. The 'spiritual' are those who bear the fruit of the Spirit. They behave consistently with the principles of the new creation and the service of one another through love (5:6, 13-14; cf. 6:15).

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[93] In contrast to the divisive nature of the characteristic traits listed in the vice list, the singularity idea of 'the fruit (ὁ καρπός) of the Spirit' would suggest the unity and unifying nature of these qualities. See Betz, 286; Witherington, 408.

[94] See also 1 Cor. 3:1.

Furthermore, 'the spiritual' also possess the 'spirit of humility' (πνεῦμα πραΰτητος), a trait no doubt in particular contrast to those described in 5:26 as 'vainglorious' (κενόδοξοι). Πνεῦμα here may refer to either (1) the Holy Spirit as possessed by the believer, in which case πραΰτητος denotes the effect of the Spirit's presence; or, alternatively, (2) πνεῦμα may be human spirit as characterised by πραΰτης.[95] Nevertheless, since 'gentleness' is a fruit of the Spirit (5:23), (2) is inseparable from (1). The Christians' attitude towards one another must be the outworking of their obedience to and life in the Spirit. The gentleness produced by the Spirit manifests as it were, the 'spirit of gentleness' in the one who is filled with the Spirit.[96]

The role of 'the spiritual' is 'to restore' (καταρτίζειν) offenders. The meaning of the verb καταρτίζειν is to 'adjust, put in order, restore'.[97] It is also used in a literal sense as a medical term to refer to the resetting of dislocated bones to their natural positions.[98] In Greek literature, the verb καταρτίζειν is also used metaphorically to describe the 'resetting' or the restoration of broken human relationships and communities caused by factions, especially in discussions of political division and unity.[99] In Plutarch, we note that 'on entering Nola, he (Marcellus) found a state of discord (στάσις), the senate being unable to regulate and reconcile (καταρτίζειν) the people, which favoured Hannibal'.[100] Herodotus also used the verb to suggest the restoration of peace between factions: '... for two generations before this she had

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[95] See Burton, 328.
[96] Ultimately, πραΰτης is conformity to the image of Christ, the meek and gentle. See Matt. 11:29; 2 Cor. 10:1.
[97] LSJ, 910.
[98] In Galen's work *Definitiones medicae* in the second-century CE, the abstractive substantive καταρτισμός is defined as 'a moving of a bone or bones from (an) unnatural position to the natural position' (μεταγωγὴ ὀστοῦ ἢ ὀστῶν ἐκ τοῦ παρὰ φύσιν τόπου εἰς τὸν κατὰ φύσιν). See Galen, *Opera Omnia,* C.G. Kühn (ed.) (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1964-65), 19.8 (p. 461 *l.* 7). Heliodorus, a medical writer at the end of the first century, refers to the substantive and the verb as an activity of resetting dislocations. Note the title of his short piece περὶ διαφορᾶς καταρτισμῶν ('Concerning Ways of Setting a Dislocation') in *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum,* J. Raeder (ed.), vol. 6, pt. 2, vol. 2, *Oribasii Collectionum Medicarum Reliquia* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1933) fr. 49.1 (p.4).
[99] See Lightfoot, *Notes,* 47. It is also a common Pauline word (Rom. 9:22; 1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 13:11; 1 Thess 3:10).
[100] Plutarch, *Marc.* 10.1.

been very greatly troubled by faction (στάσις), till the Parians made peace (καταρτίζειν) among them, being chosen out of all Greeks by the Milesians to be peace-makers (καταρτιστῆρες)'.[101]

Hence Paul's purpose in 6:1 seems clear. He is aware of disputing factions and he wants 'the spiritual' to restore broken human relationships within the congregations. He desires that they work towards an end to factionalism and to 'reset' broken relationships with the offenders in gentleness.[102] But 'the spirituals' are also reminded of their own vulnerability of falling into temptation. Such a reminder is not inappropriate, for 'the spiritual' were Gentiles who shared a common pagan past; and as citizens of their cities, they too were likely to be tempted to adopt a deleterious socio-political outlook and secular practices.

Central to the believers' experience 'in Christ' is the idea of mutuality. This is highlighted in v. 2 by the emphatic position of ἀλλήλων ('one another') at the beginning of the sentence. The noun βάρος (lit. 'weight') here need not be limited to the 'burdens' of temptation spoken of in v. 1;[103] it probably suggests more generally the burdens of life.[104] With regard to the Galatians' particular situation, we are not surprised to hear 6:2.[105] Indeed, in the context of socio-political strife and enmity, Paul's injunction to bear one another's burden bears resemblance to the strategy employed by Dio in *Or.* 39.3.[106] 6:2 may be seen as his address to the Galatian communities to work towards love and unity expressed in their common sharing of

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[101] Herodotus, 5.28. In Ignatius (*Phld.* 8.1), the verb is connected with unity and factionalism.

[102] 6:1 is normally interpreted as a paradigm for (modern) church discipline and the forgiveness of sinners. This view, however, needs to take into account Paul's discussion in the context of socio-political strife within the churches and how that might have affected social relationships. The role of 'the spiritual' here is not simply about restoring or forgiving individual offenders but also about the 'resetting' of relationships within *whole* communities broken by factions.

[103] Cf. also Rom. 15:1; 1 Cor. 12:26; Burton, 329.

[104] Cf. Matt. 20:12; Acts 15:28; 1 Thess 2:7. See also Betz, 299; Longenecker, 274.

[105] This verse need not contradict v. 5. In 6:5, Paul is not so much teaching about the importance of self sufficiency (*pace* Betz, 304) but about Christians who need to distinguish those burdens they must bear themselves and those they need to help others (so Dunn, 326).

one another's burdens in life, good and bad.[107] 6:9-10 also makes clear that they are 'to do good to all' (ἐργαζώμεθα τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς πάντας), especially those in the Christian households.

Similarly, Paul also argues that the horizontal relationships within the communities are to be shaped by the Christians' fulfilment of the law of Christ. Now the origin, meaning and purpose of the expression 'the law of Christ' have been the subject of much discussion.[108] Nevertheless, we must not lose sight of its broader *function* and Paul's purpose here in countering the Galatians' seeming lovelessness and discord (5:15, 26).[109] Indeed, he probably has in mind the Graeco-Roman concept of the

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[106] Cited above in 7.2.

[107] Dio in *Or.* 39.3 talks about being of one purpose, heart and mind, as opposed to faction and discord. And in 38.33, Dio urges the Nicomedians to avoid competing with the Nicaeans for primacy and to seek the common good of all, giving help to those in need and sharing the pain of others. Later in 38.43, he speaks about co-suffering and co-rejoicing in life when he says, 'The things which cause you pain - envy (φθόνος) and rivalry (φιλονικία) and the strife (στάσις) which is their outcome, your plotting against one another, your gloating over the misfortunes of your neighbours, your vexation at their good fortune - and, on the other hand, the introduction into your cities of their opposites - sharing in things which are good, unity of heart and mind, rejoicing of both peoples in the same things.' And in 38.45, Dio speaks with admiration of those who seek the common sharing of property (κοινὸν οἰκοῦντας οἶκον) and wealth (ὁ πλοῦτος). Although Paul does not give further details on how the Galatians ought to bear one another's burdens, it would not be too off the mark if we suggest, with Dio's comments in mind, that this would include the sharing of joy as well as pain in the daily struggles of life's burdens. Cf. also 6:6 on the sharing of 'good things' with those who teach the word. Perhaps Paul's lack of specificity is intentional; it places no limit on the number of ways they could show love-unity or do good to one another. See also 6:9-10.

[108] For instance, the question has been raised over whether it refers to the New Torah of the Messiah in the messianic age. See P. Schäfer, 'Die Torah der messianischen Zeit,' *ZNW* 65 (1974), 27-42; Räisänen, *Paul and the Law,* 77-80. There has also been discussion over whether 'the law of Christ' refers to a general 'principle' or 'norm' of love embodied in Christ (Hays, 'Christology', 276; Bruce, 261) or to the commandment of Lev. 19:18 cited by Paul in 5:14 (Betz, 301; Martyn, 558), or, more likely, Christ's (re)interpretation of the Mosaic law as it was fulfilled by him in love (see Barclay, *Obeying,* 132-34; Martyn, 554-58; Stanton, 'The Law of Moses', 114-16; Longenecker, 'Defining the Faithful Character', 92-93).

[109] Perhaps what is of significance for our purpose here is to note that Paul's concept of the 'law of Christ', it seems, does not reflect so much his polemic against the agitators' nomistic stance (so Betz, 299-301) as his prescription against the Galatians' social problems, i.e. their 'works of the flesh'. It is also not necessary to postulate with Martyn (124-25) that the phrase reflects the agitators' teaching where they had associated Christ with the law. Indeed, Paul does not elaborate on how his understanding might have any differences or similarities

function of laws in general, where the term 'law' is used in a common, broader sense of guiding and controlling or maintaining order and harmony.[110] In fact, Paul's strategy to apply the law (of Christ) is hardly surprising in the context of the socio-political nature of their factions, similar to the exhortation to abide by the established laws often offered by philosophers and politicians to those who cause discord. As a prevention against discord (στάσις), Aristotle argues that 'care must be taken to prevent men from committing any breach of the law ... for transgression of the law (παρανομία) creeps in unnoticed'.[111] As he sees it, the law is significant in bringing about concord, for the 'one wishes to advocate a law has to prove that it will be equal for the citizens, consistent with the other laws, and advantageous for the state, best of all as promoting concord (πρὸς ὁμόνοιαν)'.[112] Similarly, in his advice to Dion's friends beset by στάσις, Plato argues that the common 'laws' (νόμοι) are be enacted to which all may subject (δουλεύειν) themselves, for 'in no other way is it possible for a city at strife within itself to cease from evils'.[113] In the speech περὶ πολιτείας, sometimes attributed to Herodes Atticus, the citizens are urged to put an end to factional strife by living 'according to law' (κατὰ νόμον), instead of destroying one another 'lawlessly' (παρανόμως).[114] The laws were also thought to have brought about the unity and harmony of the Roman state.[115] Xenophon also said that everywhere in Greece there was a law that the citizen should preserve harmony in obedience to the laws, since the prosperity of the city as of the house depended on such harmony.[116] In

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with the agitators' teaching. Furthermore, if the expression 'the law of Christ' was part of Paul's antinomistic tool against the agitators' views, we would expect it to appear earlier in his letter, especially in his argument against 'the other gospel'. On the other hand, the immediate context of 5:13-26 (esp. vv. 15 & 26) suggests that Paul is facing the problem of the Galatians' 'works of the flesh' and lovelessness, a situation which he is compelled to address.

[110] On the broader uses of 'law' elsewhere, see H. Hollander, 'The Meaning of the Term "Law" (NOMOΣ) in 1 Corinthians', *NovT* 50 (1998), 118-35.

[111] Aristotle, *Pol.* 5.7.1.

[112] *Rh. Al.* 2.1424b.

[113] *Ep.* 7.336D-337B.

[114] [Herodes Atticus], περὶ πολιτείας 17-18, 29 in [Erode Attico] ΠΕΡΙ ΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΑΣ, U. Albini (ed.) (Firenze: Monnier, 1968), 32, 34.

[115] According to Ps. Sallustian, *Ep.* 5.3, it was the fact that 'no man's power was superior to the laws' (*nullius potentia super leges erat*) that harmony was possible.

[116] Xenophon, *Mem.* 4.4.16.

4 Maccabees the love between the seven brothers (φιλανθρωπία) and the concord (ὁμόνοια) they have for one another is attributed not only to their virtues, righteousness and zeal for beauty and goodness but also to their training in the same law.[117]

Moreover, in 6:1a, Paul calls those who engaged in socio-political strife (5:26) as those who are 'in some transgression' (ἔν τινι παραπτώματι, 6:1a), suggesting that they had violated or breached an existing law of some sort.[118] Employing the same strategy used by politicians to combat discord and lovelessness, Paul appeals to a law, not, however, any secular or common laws but specifically the law *of Christ* (ὁ νόμος τοῦ Χριστοῦ) which the Galatians are 'to fulfil'.[119] The same can be said of 5:14, where he argues that the love-command, which sums up the whole law (ὁ πᾶς νόμος), is the one that they ought to obey by serving one another through love (δουλεύετε ἀλληλοις).

Unlike Dio or the philosophers and politicians, Paul's appeal is set in a Christian context. We have already tried to draw out certain aspects of his Christian ethics. Indeed, his social ethics are based significantly on a divine-human relationship, rather than on the observance of a set of laws or a mere respect and consideration for one's fellows. There is no prescription of a specific set of regulations or laws by which the congregations are to observe or conduct themselves.

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[117] *4 Macc.* 13:23-26 = H.C. Kee, *OTP,* II, 558-59.

[118] It is not necessary to read ἔν τινι παραπτώματι simply in a theological context with a reference to 'sin' (indeed, the word ἁμαρτία is absent) but more specifically in relation to socio-political aspects of factionalism.

[119] The case for arguing for a socio-political context of Paul's use of 'the law of Christ' here is further enhanced, in my opinion, by the fact that it is linked to burden-bearing (as the καὶ οὕτως in 6:2 indicates) which, as we have noted, points to Dio's strategy to end socio-political strife. Also worth noting is the fact that Paul uses the verb 'to fulfil' rather than 'to do'. The reason for this, as Barclay points out, might be that the term '"fulfilment" conveys a stronger impression of satisfying the law's demands without the exactitude implicit in such terms as "doing" or "keeping" the law'. See *Obeying,* 140.

According to Paul in 6:2, the basis for right socio-ethical behaviour and thought is primarily the relationship that obtains between the individual and Christ, for his phrase 'the law of *Christ*', at least in part, also alludes to the model of Christ as the ultimate burden-bearer.[120] Christ's model of love, burden bearing and self-giving sets the paradigm for the Galatians' social behaviour and relationships.[121] The horizontal relationships within the communities are shaped by the Christians' fulfilment of the law of Christ. Indeed, the law of Christ comes to its full and proper expression in the relationships of mutual service and love within the community of those whose lives are being transformed by the Spirit.[122] It is the law of Christ which Paul enjoins the Galatians to fulfil by showing love (5:14) and by bearing one another's burden (as the καὶ οὕτως in 6:2 indicates). This is love in action, for the quintessence of the law of Christ is love: without love there is no obedience nor fulfilment of the law.[123] Indeed, the Galatians' love for one another is only possible if they are 'of Christ' and walk by the Spirit, for love is a fruit of the Spirit (5:16, 22, 24-25).

In 6:3 Paul chastises those who think they are 'something' but in fact are nothing, thus deceiving themselves.[124] 'Something' in the present context probably refers to

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[120] Some scholars have argued that 'the law of Christ' reflects the Jesus tradition and the Christ-event. Cf. according to Barclay, 'the law as redefined and fulfilled by Christ in love' (*Obeying,* 134); see also Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism,* 136-45; Hays, *Faith,* 193-46; Hanson, *Abraham,* 124-25. But others have remained unconvinced, see literature cited in Hays, 'Christology', 274 n.18. Betz (301) and Martyn (558) sees its meaning (or substance) in the love-commandment of Lev. 19:18 cited by Paul in 5:14. M. Winger's view of the phrase as a metaphor for the Spirit tends to play down Paul's reference to the law as that of *Christ*. He also fails to explain adequately why Paul would use the term 'law' or phrase 'law of Christ'. See M. Winger, 'The Law of Christ', *NTS* 46 (2000), 537-46.

[121] See Hays, 'Christology', 268-90; Dunn,, 323; G.M. Styler, 'The Basis of Obligation in Paul's Christology and Ethics' in B. Lindars and S.S. Smalley (eds.), *Christ and the Spirit in the New Testament. Studies in Honour of C.F.D. Moule* (Cambridge: CUP, 1973), 175-87. It is worth noting too that in Rom. 15:1-3, Paul's reason for his appeal for the strong to bear (βαστάζειν) the weakness of another comes from the example of Christ - καὶ γὰρ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτῷ ἤρεσεν (15:3).

[122] See Dunn, 322-24.

[123] Cf. also Rom. 13:8-10.

[124] This verse could reflect the general characteristics of hybris prevalent in the Graeco-Roman world. According to Marshall, 'hybris is conceived of as arrogance or insolence born out of an ignorance of one's true self. The hybristic person's failure to think mortal thoughts leads to an arrogant violation of limits, of both human and divine law. It is primarily a social concept which indicates the breach of one's assigned status and thus

the one who has the attitude denounced in 5:26 as 'vainglorious' (κενόδοξοι).[125] According to Plutarch, the aim of self-praise and the boasting of one's importance and power, including one's own deeds, is often to gratify personal ambition. He says, 'Now the praise is frivolous which men are felt to bestow upon themselves merely to receive it; and it is held in the greatest contempt, as it appears to aim at gratifying ambition and unseasonable appetite for fame.'[126] Those who boast about themselves could evoke much hostility and resentment among listeners.[127] Boasting is linked to envy and glory-seeking and could become a divisive force.[128] Paul therefore urges that no haughty thoughts that produce conflict should be allowed and that the goal should instead be love and mutual care for one another. On the contrary, Paul warns those who sought after primacy that this could lead to self-deception (φρεναπατάω). As Dio puts it, the pursuit of τὸ κενοδοξεῖν is no guarantee of true glory (*Or.* 38.29-30, 40).

On the contrary, according to 6:4, Paul says, 'Let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone, and not in regard to another.' The verb 'test' (δοκιμάζω) means, in this setting, to put to the test for the purpose of determining worth.[129] Each person is to engage in self-assessment, so minimising the possibility of self-deception, and concentrate on his/her own conduct and behaviour,

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results in dishonour and shame. It is commonly caused by undue pride in strength and wealth, both of which are given by the gods' (*Enmity,* 193-94). Paul' concern, then, is focused on social behaviour and relations within the communities which might have comprised individuals of unequal status, and his exhortation to bear one another's burden (presumably without regard to status) and to keep within one's limits may be directed against hybris.

[125] Cf. Mussner, 400. Mussner (402) takes the whole section 5:26-6:5 to be a warning against κενόδοξία.

[126] *Mor.* 540A. In *Mor.* 547E, Plutarch talks about how influential people engaged in self-boasting about their own importance, a practice which he considers odious. On his criticism of boasting and self-praise as being offensive and shameless, see *Mor.* 539A, 542C. He has also devoted much discussion to the subject of boasting in his 'On Praising Oneself Inoffensively' (*De se ipsum citra invidiam laudando*).

[127] Plutarch: '... towards one who praises himself the generality of men feel a great hostility and resentment, but do not feel so strongly against one who praises another, but often even listen with pleasure and voice their agreement' (*Mor.* 542C).

[128] See Plutarch, *Mor.* 539D, 546D, 540D.

which then become the basis for one's boasting (τὸ καύχημα). He or she is not to boast about relative merits and standing by comparing him/herself with others.[130]

For Paul, the focus is love, as the preceding verse 6:2 suggests; in the light of this, it may not be unreasonable too to suggest that in v. 4, to examine one's work, accordingly, would be to assess one's faith and love (5:6). And the reason for one's boast will be sought in one's 'own work' (= love). One practical way, according to 6:6 and 10, that the Galatians can bear another's burdens is to support their teachers and to do good (ἐργαζώμεθα τὸ ἀγαθόν) to all, especially among fellow believers.[131]

Paul then issues a warning of eschatological judgement in 6:7-10, according to which the present labour of sowing, either to the flesh or to the Spirit, is to be requited.[132] The eschatological judgement functions as a discouragement to those who might persist in their former way of life. Paul uses here the metaphor of two soils into which one may sow. To sow in the flesh, in this context, means to continue to engage in the 'works of the flesh', i.e. a secular outlook and practices. They have failed to 'walk in the Spirit' and have become 'vainglorious' and filled with envy, looking upon themselves too highly above others. And they will reap the harvest of 'corruption'. Further, the conditional blessing in 6:16 carries an implicit threat against those who do not return to live according to Paul's gospel.[133] On the other hand, those who have sown into the soil of the Spirit, i.e. those who have manifest the

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[129] Cf. Grundmann's comments (cited by Fung, 290 n.36): 'Christians are summoned to a test of their own accreditation'.

[130] There is no reason to read 6:4 restrictively in the light of 6:1 (*pace* Longenecker, 277), i.e. that Paul here is warning against comparing oneself with the wrongdoer(s) of v. 1 so that as a result, one somehow would feel righteous or better than others. Paul says nothing of such a comparison. The issue here is broader and refers to the common practice of comparison and of boasting, a feature common in the Graeco-Roman world (see, e.g., Forbes, 'Comparison', 1-8). Neither is it necessary to read 6:3-4, with an eye on 6:11-13, as an allusion to the agitators' activity (*pace* Witherington, 426-27), whereby Paul is addressing the agitators' boasting *in* circumcision or their pride of Jewish privileges. His focus here is on the *Galatians'* conduct in the context of 5:13-6:10; nothing is said here about any link between their behaviour and the agitators' teachings.

[131] The topic of material or financial support also occurs elsewhere in Paul's letter. Cf. 2 Cor. 11:7-11; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:7-10; Rom. 15:24; Phil. 1:5, 4:15.

[132] For a discussion of other apocalyptic themes, see Dunn, *Theology,* 46-52.

fruit of the Spirit and have loved, will reap the harvest of eternal life, the glory that truly matters.

5. Conclusion

In the present chapter, we have argued that the Galatians' social as well as ethical problems are not principally theological in nature, linked somehow to their ecstatic life in the Spirit, moral uncertainty, antinomianism or to a (potential) distorted understanding of spiritual freedom. Rather, 5:12-6:10 reflects the influences of the Galatians' pagan past and their socio-political environment, especially the pervasive problem of discord. Key elements such as ἔρις, ζῆλος, ἐριθεῖαι, φθόνοι and κενοδοξία are typical traits used to describe discord or the divisive behaviour of those engaged in socio-political competition in Graeco-Roman society. Hence it seems that according to Paul the Galatians have reverted to a self-regarding and divisive outlook typical of the competitive spirit of the day. Discord, envy and the desire for primacy have influenced the social relationships within the communities. To counter such a divisive behaviour, Paul urges life in the Spirit, the 'resetting' of relationships, love, and burden-bearing (5:13-14, 16-18; 6:1-5).

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[133] Betz, 321.

Chapter 8

CONCLUSIONS

1. Summary

It has been argued in the present study that one of the major issues in Paul's letter to the Galatians is the extent to which significant members in the churches have been influenced by their Graeco-Roman and Anatolian religious and socio-cultural outlooks.

It was suggested in the Introduction that most interpreters of Galatians have ignored the importance of Paul's Anatolian audience. The focus has been primarily on a hypothetical reconstruction of the Jewish identity and background of the agitators. The main difficulty of reading Galatians against this background is that there are gaps in our knowledge of the agitators due to the lack of sufficient or explicit information in the letter. More significantly, this approach also tends to provide a limited picture of the socio-historical situation, for not every issue Paul faces is simply theological in nature, nor is he always engaged in polemical controversy with the agitators or their teachings as such. We cannot overlook the possibility that the Galatians' outlook and conduct might be attributed to other factors, especially local religious as well as socio-cultural factors. Furthermore, rhetorical studies, while bringing the Graeco-Roman context into the picture to a degree, have tended to concentrate primarily on Paul as a writer/speaker. There is a need, however, to take greater consideration of the rhetorical exigency or the historical and social situation that has given rise to this speech/text.

Consequently, the approach adopted here has been to consider the socio-historical context of Paul's audience as a background for considering the letter. Relevant sections of the letter have been interpreted in the light of socio-cultural and religious outlooks and practices prevalent in their surrounding Graeco-Anatolian society. Such

an undertaking illuminated not only the nature of the Galatians' outlook and conduct but also Paul's criticism or arguments.

Thus, in Chapter 2 of the study, we examined epigraphic and literary sources and outlined the general features of Anatolian religiosity. Ancient Anatolia had a lively religious interest as well as a diversity of pagan cults in cities and villages. Significant cults included those that worshipped Zeus, the various Mother Goddesses such as Cybele, Men, and the gods of Justice and Holiness. It can be observed that a common aspect of contemporary religiosity was the notion of the overseeing presence and rulership of the gods and of divine justice and strict piety. We observed how dominant a role was given to the gods, who were also associated or identified with local toponyms such as a city or a mountain. In their role as guardian or enforcer deities and protectors of laws and customs, they dominated the lives and religious conduct of their subjects as well as the landscape.

The co-existence and the social interaction between Jews and Gentiles also provided many opportunities for the latter to come into contact with Jewish religious concepts. Common traditions, vocabulary and forms of piety shared by both pagans and Jews, could further encourage receptivity toward Jewish practices. Both Jews and pagans emphasised the overseeing presence of the deity, the notion of divine justice, the significance of law and religious observances, and the importance of antiquity and traditions.

This leads to the suggestion that the Galatians' receptivity toward the agitators might have been influenced to some extent by similarities shared between Jewish and pagan religious concepts. Indeed, the agitators might have exploited their religious outlook and background in order to emphasise the significance of the law.

We have argued that the Galatians allowed contemporary religious views or assumptions to govern their thinking (Chapters 3 and 4). Their attraction towards works of the law may be attributable in part to their Anatolian perception concerning

the nature of the divine and the significance of the law. They saw God as the guardian-enforcer of the law. The Galatians' religious outlook or estimation of the law was also linked to the fact that they attached toponymic significance to Mount Sinai and the city of Jerusalem and associated them with God and the temple/cultic state. They invested religious significance in the law and its scrupulous observance. In addition, the Galatians have also carried over into their new faith the contemporary view of the divine and cosmic world. For the Galatians, the στοιχεῖα were related to supernatural powers that could influence human conditions. They saw the observance of the law (or its calendrical events) as a means of dealing with fear as well as of securing divine favour and perhaps even protection against hostile powers.

Paul is therefore concerned to correct their (erroneous) perception of the divine and physical realm, to establish the legitimacy of his gospel and to spell out the consequences of their religious conduct. At the same time, he highlights for his audience the proper way, according to the gospel, to relate to and live before God. To achieve his aim, Paul also draws on certain aspects of the contemporary Graeco-Anatolian outlook and values. His arguments are shaped, to some extent, within the framework of his audience's context.

Thus, by appealing to the importance of antiquity and tradition esteemed by many in the ancient world, Paul demonstrates that his gospel has links with antiquity and appeals to and (re)interprets scriptural traditions concerning the ancient promise to Abraham. He argues that it is the divine intention that in Christ through the cross alone God bestows divine gifts and blessings. Since it is God's action in Christ that has brought about the relationship of faith, the appropriate response for the Galatians is therefore not to attach any significance to aspects of religious practices where it is inappropriate. On the other hand, by coming under the law, Paul warns that they are in danger of coming under the curse of the God of Justice.

Contrary to their perception concerning the law and its toponymic significance, Paul inverts their perception and clarifies the (non)significance of the law, the mountain

and the city. He also demonstrates that the law should not be identified with God. It does not have its genesis in God; neither does it express the divine will. In his Hagar-Sarah allegory, Paul warns that if they take on the law and circumcision, they will become enslaved and have no part in the promise of inheritance. On the other hand, the 'free woman', ἐλευθέρα (Sarah) is linked to the 'Jerusalem above', who is the mother of the children of the promise, those who are freed by Christ and are heirs of the inheritance.

Paul also criticises the Galatians' outlook concerning the divine and cosmic world. Indeed, his criticism is close to the contemporary philosophical treatments of superstition and the distinction made between it and *religio*. Paul's contemporary critics saw 'superstition' as a product of fear and ignorance about the nature of the gods, the popular excesses of divine worship and religious behaviour, including the improper evaluation of the effects of ritual and calendrical practices. According to Paul, the Galatians were not unlike the 'superstitious' who approached the world as though it were teeming with forces that must be appeased or overcome in specific ways. They held to some sort of fear about the divine and cosmic realm as well as the notion that the observance of calendrical events would bring divine favour, and perhaps even protection against hostile powers. This could explain why they might be attracted to the law as a way of living free from fear and from the malevolent influence of the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου. Paul, on the other hand, warns that this outlook would effectively lead them back to their (previous) religious enslavement under the powers of the στοιχεῖα, especially when they remain in their seeming ignorance of Christ's accomplishment and fail to continue to participate in the new reality inaugurated by God through faith in Christ's death and resurrection.

In the remaining chapters of our study, we suggested that the Galatians have also adopted certain socio-cultural attitudes and practices from their contemporary secular society. In chapters 5 and 6, we argued that the cumulative evidence in the letter (1:6-2:14; 4:16-17; 5:7-11; 6:12-13) suggests that questions of character, rhetorical stratagems and motives might have been prominent features of the Galatian crisis. It

was argued that Paul's converts (and the agitators) employed categories drawn from certain socio-cultural conventions of the day. In particular, like many who loved to judge orators and their speeches, the Galatians were evaluating Paul's preaching, character and motives according to accepted standard of rhetoric and comparison. As discerning and critical audiences, they now evaluated Paul's rhetoric and subject matter. No doubt this was influenced to some extent by the agitators' persuasive rhetoric. They were enamoured of the agitators' message that the 'true' gospel required circumcision and works of the law. Consequently, Paul was perceived as no different from a mere orator or a declaimer, whose rhetorical form and content was shaped merely to persuade others to his own ideas and to win the opinion and judgement of his audience. In contrast to their previous acceptance of his gospel, the Galatians now evaluated unfavourably the substantive content of his preaching, regarding it as deficient. In addition, they also questioned the consistency and integrity of Paul's character and preaching. He was seen as one who had contravened accepted social norms and, as such, was not to be trusted. He was accused of tailoring his message in order to accommodate or to please his Gentile audience. In the minds of the Galatians these socio-cultural criticisms would then have serious religious implications, leading them to question his position as a bearer of the gospel. Hence they were using social prejudices to assess the legitimacy of his apostleship, and his ministry as well as his gospel. This also explains to some extent the nature of the enmity which characterised the Galatians' relationship with him.

In the light of the Galatians' socio-cultural criticisms and prejudices, Chapter 6 assessed Paul's corresponding defence of his gospel and preaching. Paul distances himself from any perception that he conforms to the purpose and practices of a Graeco-Roman rhetor. He argues that he is a God-pleaser and not a people pleaser. He does not seek to please or accommodate his message in order to win his audience. As such, he is not to be judged as an orator. He makes clear that his gospel was divinely ordained and had been accepted by the Jerusalem 'pillars'. And his focus is to proclaim the message of the gospel revealed to him and he aims to win the

approval of God, making clear that his motives and intention had always been for his converts' spiritual well-being.

Paul also engages in invective against the agitators, distinguishing his message and motives from theirs. He decries the agitators' rhetorical stratagems and argumentation and discredits their message. Despite their declamation concerning law-observance and circumcision, Paul argues that they were influenced by ulterior motives; they failed to obey the law themselves and their wooing activity had no good purpose. According to him, the agitators were the ones who resorted to various rhetorical means and were motivated by expediency to win the Galatians: play-acting, trickery, and accommodation. On the other hand, he consistently demonstrates that there is only one gospel and that it requires the pleasing of God rather than of one's fellow human beings. Paul hopes that the Galatians would agree with him and turn away from the agitators, and so restore the relationship that had been damaged by enmity.

Not only were the Galatians using categories drawn from the accepted conventions of rhetoric and enmity to assess Paul and his preaching, the conduct of many Christians was also influenced by other contemporary socio-cultural outlook and practices. More specifically, as we have argued in Chapter 7, they were engaged in divisive and secular, hence damaging, behaviour. The factions were basically socio-political in nature, stemming from envy and a desire to pursue glory and primacy. According to Paul, the problems of envy, strife, and lovelessness were symptomatic of their non-Christian, 'worldly' and 'fleshly' behaviour.

Paul therefore confronts the Galatian congregations and calls for love and unity. Indeed, he shares similar values and concerns commonly found in Hellenistic ethics or philosophical discussion of concord applied to communities in the *politeia*. These include the concern for love, unity, the need to restrain 'lawlessness' and one's pursuit for primacy and personal glory. But there are also important religious differences. Paul argues that their common identity in Christ, and conformity to

Christ's teaching and character, ought to be the unifying force that bind the communities in love. The Galatians ought not to abuse the freedom they have but to love one another. They are to live by the Spirit, to manifest the fruit of the Spirit and to pattern their lives after Christ. They are to fulfil the law of Christ through love, obedience and the bearing of one another's burdens. Those who are spiritual are also urged to reset broken relationships and to restore those who have transgressed.

It has been argued that a significant aspect of Paul's criticism of the Galatians derives from the fact that contemporary society and its religious and socio-cultural outlook and values have a certain bearing on their conduct. In addition to the influence of the agitators' activity among the Galatians, the crisis may be attributed in part to the influence of two sets of conflicting values and perceptions. On the one hand, the Galatians held the outlook of their Graeco-Anatolian world, and they allowed their pagan outlook (or their past) to make a deeper impression on them than the radical message of the cross. On the other hand, Paul conforms to Christ and is compelled to identify with the cross, and he wants the Galatians to do likewise.

2. Implications and significance

In addition to the specific conclusions which arise from the study and have been included in the summary above, it will be helpful to draw out some of the wider implications of this study as a whole.

On a more general level, we see that socio-historical enquiry, combined with historical-grammatical exegesis, could offer fresh insights into the some of the issues raised in the epistle. It provides additional information that helps clarify its social and religious setting as well as Paul's arguments. It also illuminates issues such as the law, the mountain, the city, the στοιχεῖα, and the problem of enmity and discord. Furthermore, the problems inherent in 'mirror-reading' the social situation can be reduced by using relevant and available evidence which can place the Pauline text within its socio-religious context. The information gathered from such an enquiry

can be added to what we may already know (or not know) about the agitators or the circumstances gleaned from Paul's 'one-sided' views. The difficulties of mirror-reading are at their greatest when we fail to view the letter in its broader social and religious context of Paul's Gentile audience and to reconstruct the situation simply from a hypothetically reconstructed background of the agitators using diverse Jewish sources.

Our investigation also points to the role of Paul's converts in the crisis. Indeed, Gal. 4:16 seems to suggest that Paul's chief 'opponents' (or 'enemies') were the Galatians themselves. We need not always interpret conflicts, here and indeed elsewhere in other epistles, as that mainly between the apostle and his alleged Jewish opponents (from Jerusalem church?).[1] Too often students of Paul interpret his arguments as though it represented nothing more than a direct contradiction of the accusations of his Jewish rivals. On the contrary, we cannot ignore the possibility that Paul's criticisms could be directed at the behaviour and outlook of the converts themselves, in which case the outside rivals could be seen as those who merely exploited the situation. As we have seen in our present study, part of the problems facing the apostle arises from the fact that the Galatians' own outlook and conduct could have been influenced by reasons, perhaps not fully conscious and articulated or otherwise, related to their Anatolian or Graeco-Roman perspectives. We cannot dismiss the potential (vestigial) influences of their religious and socio-cultural background of which they were so much a part of before, and indeed after, becoming Christians. This had affected not only their receptivity of the agitators' teaching but also their critical evaluation of Paul, his character and preaching. Indeed, our interpretation also offers an explanation of why the agitators were able to gain access, even a measure of success, among the Galatians. They were able to exploit the outlook and values of the Galatians already in place in order to win their allegiance.

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[1] For instance, the criticisms levelled against Paul by the Corinthian Christians might have also been influenced by their Graeco-Roman social and cultural values they held. See, e.g., Savage, *Power Through Weakness*; Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth*.

Furthermore, if we are right to argue for the link between (1) the Galatians' attraction to the law and their Graeco-Anatolian perspectives of the divine and physical world; (2) the Galatians' social conduct and their Graeco-Roman values and outlook, it is not necessary to see the centre of strife in Galatia as that between Jewish and Hellenistic or Gentile Christianity. Throughout the letter, Paul was not primarily debating with other (Christian) Jews about the incorporation of Gentiles into God's people or the extent and detail of law observances for non-Jews. Part of the reason why controversies have been frequently viewed in such a one-dimensional manner stems from the failure to pay sufficient attention to the social and religious context of the Gentile audience. Paul was concerned to (re)define, according to his gospel, how his Anatolian converts ought to view his preaching ministry, to view the divine/cosmic world, to relate to God and to each other.

Thus, those whose goal is to describe the context or background of the letter must give far more attention to the religious, socio-political and even rhetorical elements of the situation than has typically been the case. What will no longer do in the light of our investigation is the ignoring of Paul's audience or the Graeco-Anatolian dimensions as unimportant or merely incidental to the issues facing Paul.

The study of Paul's Gentile audience also raises another implication concerning the background of his Jewish opponents. Few topics continually attract the attention of scholars and affect the interpretation of Pauline letters and early Christianity as much as the question of Paul's opponents. In our study of Galatians, we have noted in the Introduction the paucity of explicit information on the agitators; perhaps all we can *really* know is that they were Jewish and outsiders. Nevertheless, our enquiry into the socio-cultural issues of the letter could suggest some pointers regarding their background. For instance, one might suggest that the agitators were probably diaspora, Hellenistic Jews, for they were familiar with Graeco-Roman values and conventions (in particular, the conventions of rhetoric, enmity and comparison) and were employing them effectively in Galatia. Given their familiarity with aspects of the Galatians' Anatolian religiosity, it is possible that they might have even come

from Anatolia. If this is true, it is not necessary to argue, therefore, that Paul's opponents were Palestinian Jewish Christians (or 'Judaizers') who came from the Jerusalem church or to perceive the situation as essentially a Pauline-Petrine conflict.[2] The crisis in Galatia need not be seen as a continuation of the controversies in Jerusalem and Antioch.[3] If this is right, then, Paul's silence about the outcome of his confrontation with Peter (and other Christian Jews) at Antioch becomes explicable. As far as the nature of the issues in Galatia is concerned, the outcome at Antioch, in Paul's mind, is irrelevant.[4]

Our study also leads us to suggest that there are points of contact between Paul's social prescriptions and Hellenistic or philosophical ethics or ideals. In our study, we observed that there are similarities between his concern for love, unity, the necessity to restrain 'lawlessness' and one's pursuit of (vain)glory for the common good, applied to groups of Christian believers on the one hand, and Hellenistic ethics or philosophical discussion of concord or harmony applied to a community of citizens on the other. Nevertheless, there are important differences. Spiritual or religious considerations as well as faith and obedience take precedence over purely social ones which dominated much of the surrounding Hellenistic culture.

This study indicates, I hope, that social and religious aspects of the non-Christian, Gentile milieu in which the Galatians had been converted continued to exert their

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[2] Cf. F.C. Baur's influential thesis on Pauline-Petrine division within early Christianity in his *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ, His Life and Works, His Epistles and His Doctrine,* I, (trans. E. Zeller; 2nd edn.; London: Williams and Norgate, 1876). Similarly, in his approach to Galatians, Schmithals presupposes that there was an organised and active anti-Pauline movement which sought to undermine Paul's authority or supplant his teaching or both. See Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics,* 17. Nevertheless, as Gal. 4:25-26 indicates, this does not dismiss the fact that the agitators would make much of the toponymic significance of Jerusalem (not Jerusalem church!), making the link between it and their teaching on the law.

[3] For example, some scholars saw the Antioch incident as a major cause for the discord between Paul and Peter (and other Jerusalem leaders). Consequently, it has been argued that the whole letter was written to undo the damage done at Antioch, a confrontation in which Paul lost. See, e.g., Dunn, 132; Taylor, *Paul, Antioch, Jerusalem,* 155-70.

[4] Nevertheless, as we have pointed out in Chapter 6, there are thematic links between the two situations. Paul is primarily concerned to demonstrate the truth of the gospel and to set himself apart from those (including Peter) who seek to please humans rather than God.

influence on the worldview and conduct of Paul's recent converts. This fact is not often given sufficient cognisance in the interpretation of the Galatian situation. But Paul, in his missionary work and ministry to the Gentiles, is aware of such a potential pitfall. It could hinder his evangelistic success. On the other hand, Paul's argument is not only influenced by his Jewish background but also by the surrounding social and religious culture. Indeed, he appeals to the Gentile context of his addressees to warn them against living in a way they did in their pagan past and encourages them to press on in their faith, unity and obedience.

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