

Overview of Galatians

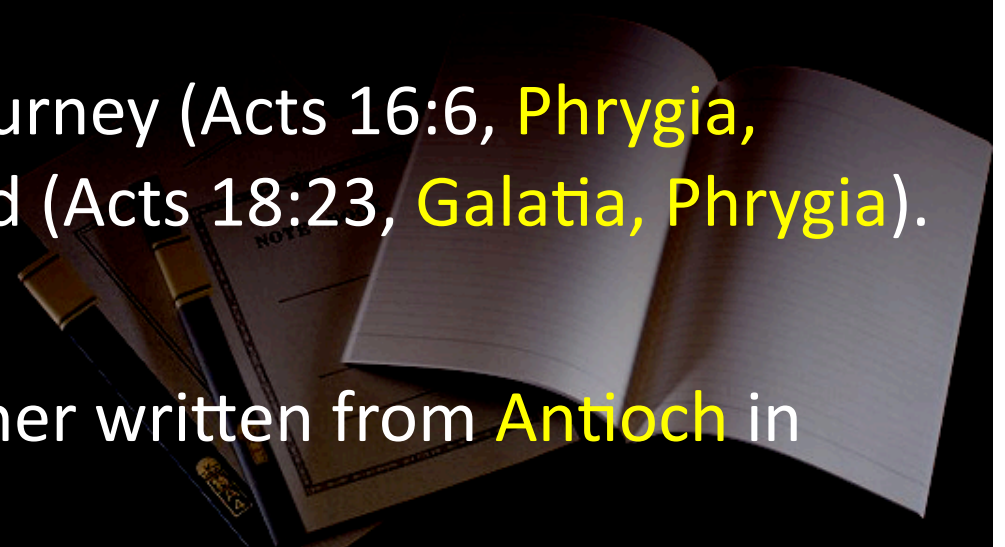
Beginning by the Spirit,
Walking by the Spirit

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Background and Context

- Paul (1:1) addresses this epistle to the churches of the Roman province of Galatia (1:2)
- Paul, with Barnabas, had established churches in this region during the first missionary journey (13:4, Cyprus; 14:19-21, Antioch, Iconium, Derbe, Lystra)
- He visited during his 2nd journey (Acts 16:6, Phrygia, Galatia), and again in his 3rd (Acts 18:23, Galatia, Phrygia).
- The letter was probably either written from Antioch in 48AD, or Ephesus in 56AD

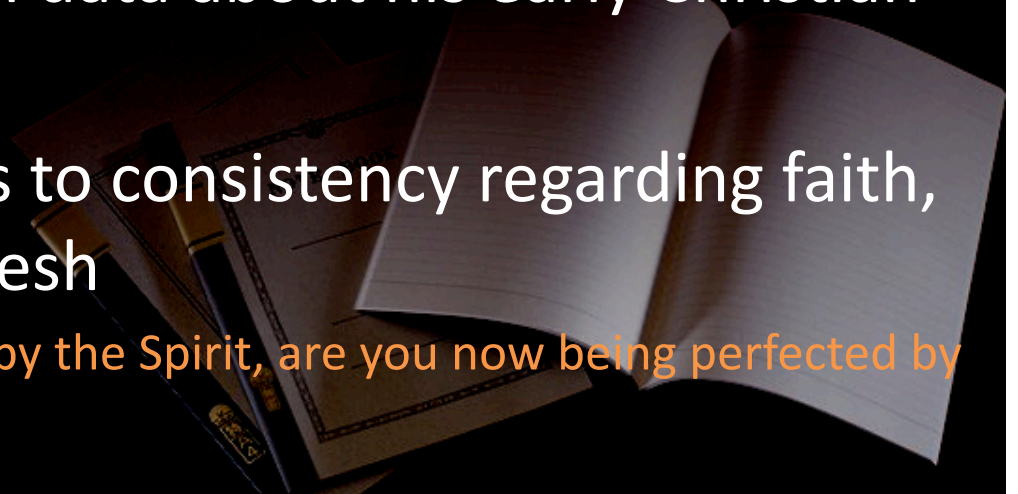


Background and Context



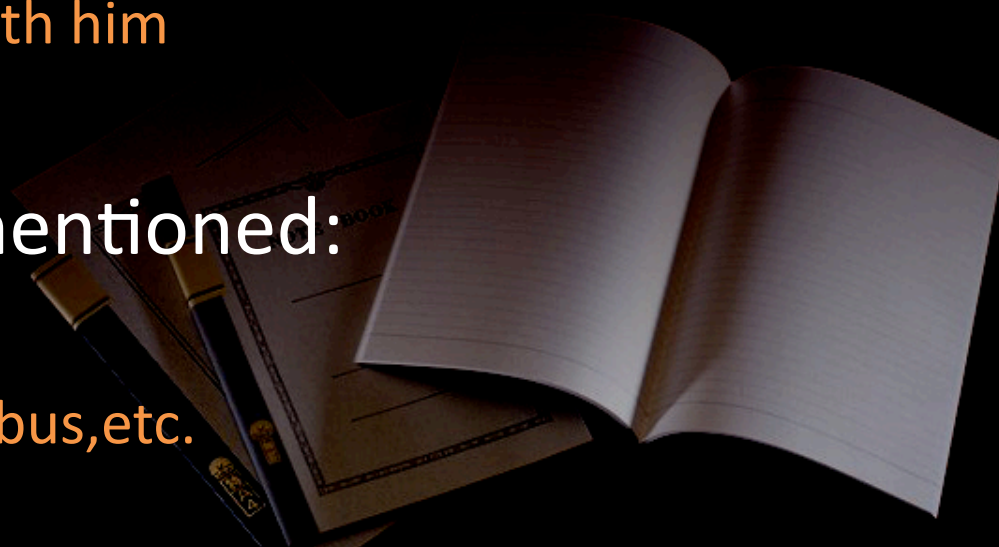
Background and Context

- The Galatian churches had fallen into the same error that the Judaizers of Jerusalem had in about 48AD
 - I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel...even though we, or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed...You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you... (1:6,8; 3:1)
- In support of his authority to address the situation, he gives us tremendous biographical data about his early Christian life (chs. 1-2)
- He challenges the Galatians to consistency regarding faith, works, the Spirit, and the flesh
 - Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? (3:5)

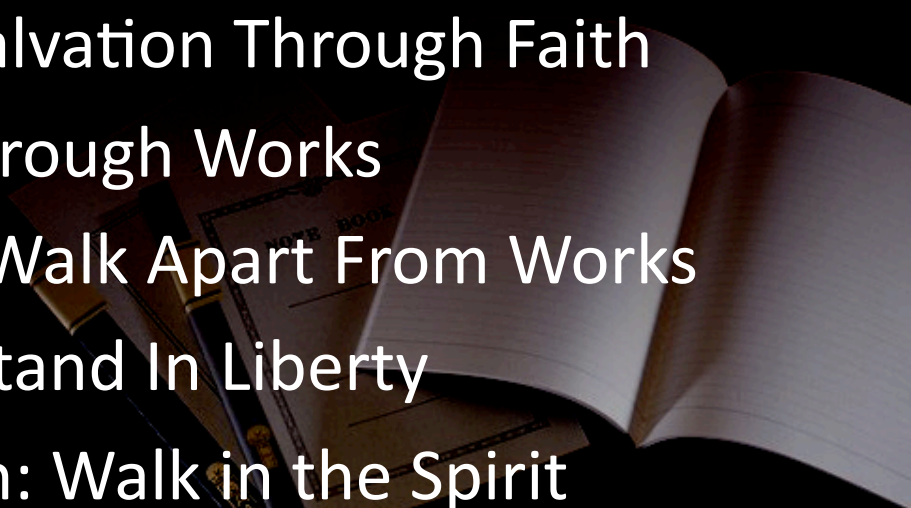


Structural Keys

- **Pronouns** are important structural keys in Galatians
- Most of the interested parties are identified in 1:1-5:
 - I, Paul
 - He, God
 - Us, Paul and the brethren with him
 - You, the Galatians
- Other notable parties mentioned:
 - He, Peter
 - They, Judaizers, Peter, Barnabus, etc.



Structural Keys / Outline

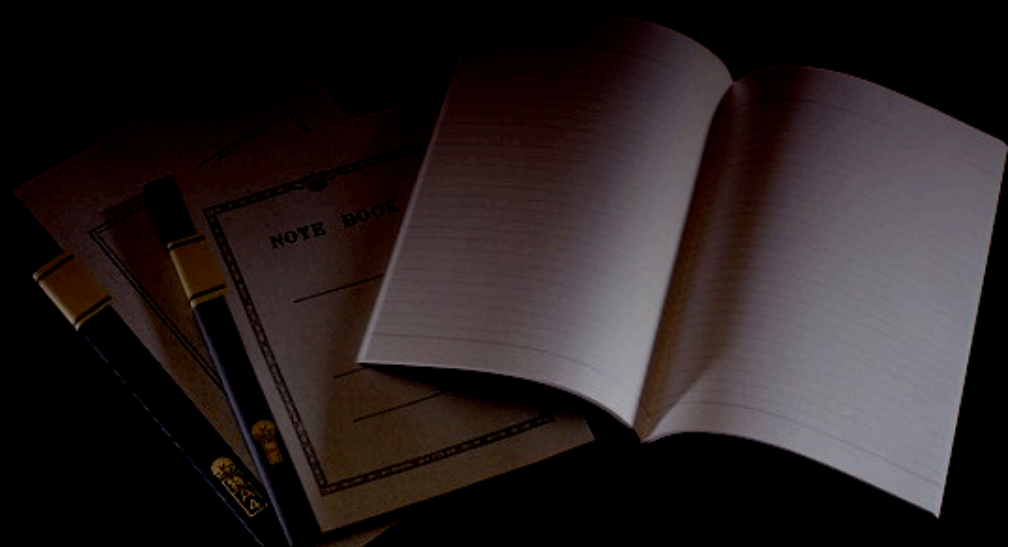
- From structural keys, the letter can be outlined:
 - 1:1-5 Intro
 - 1:6-2:10 The Sanctification Problem, Paul's Authority to Address It
 - 2:11-21 Paul's Track Record in Addressing the Problem
 - 3:1-5 The Error: Salvation Through Works
 - 3:6-4:7 The Correction: Salvation Through Faith
 - 4:8-21 The Error: Walk Through Works
 - 4:22-5:1 The Correction: Walk Apart From Works
 - 5:2-15 The Exhortation: Stand In Liberty
 - 5:16-6:18 The Exhortation: Walk in the Spirit
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Grammatical and Syntactical Keys

- The word “law (νόμος)” is used 32 times in Galatians
- In the NASB, 23 times the word is capitalized (Law), implying reference to the Mosaic Law
- In the NASB, 9 times the word is not capitalized (law), implying reference to the general concept of law or ethics.
- An Important Syntactical Key: In only 10 references (3:10 [2nd reference], 3:12, 17, 19, 21 [1st reference], 24; 4:21 [2nd reference]; 5:3, 14; 6:2), the definite article is used. *In short, there is interpreting by the translators, so we need to pay close attention*

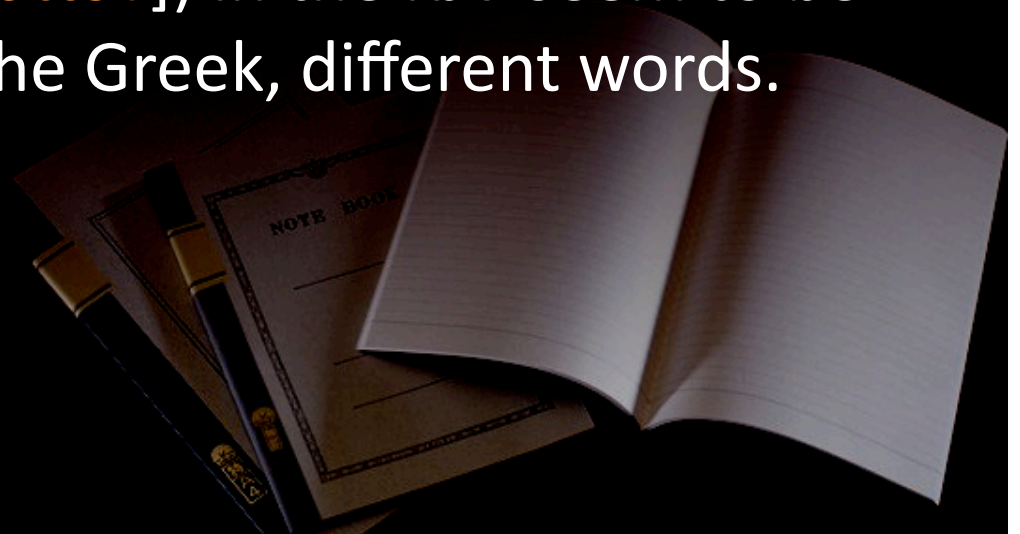
Grammatical and Syntactical Keys

- 3:6 quotes Gen 15:6 from the LXX, and the MT includes the preposition (וְהָאֱמֹן בְּיָהוּה)
- The conditional (ἐὰν περιτέμνησθε) in 5:2 helps us understand 5:2-4 as purely hypothetical, and not talking about the Galatians' losing salvation

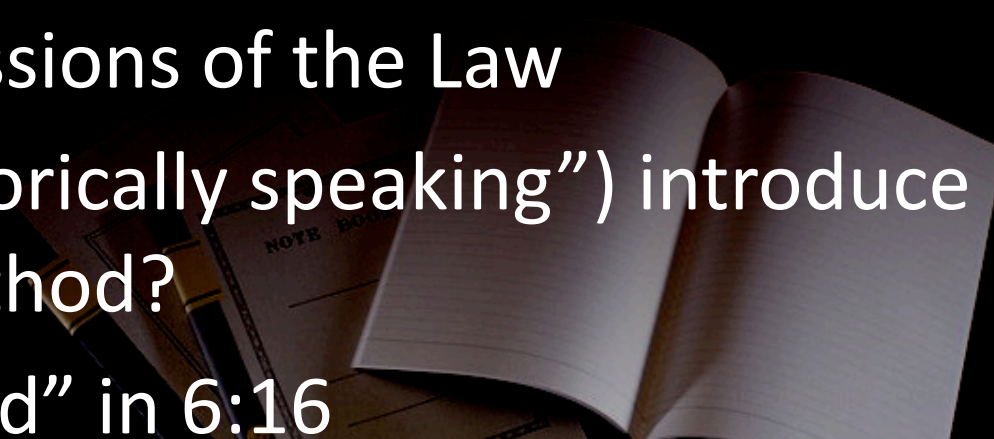


Lexical Keys

- 5:22 discusses “fruit” (καρπὸς). Note that the word is in the singular and has the definite article, so all the fruit of the Spirit is to be understood as one unit, not separate units.
- 6:2 (bear one another’s burdens [βάρη]) and 6:5 (each one bears his own burdens [φορτίον]) in the KJV seem to be contradictory, but note in the Greek, different words.



Biblical and Theological Context

- A Few Key Issues/Highlights:
 - The “sons of Abraham (3:7-9, 28-29)” discussion is explained in Paul’s later letter to the Romans (4). No room for replacement theology here...
 - 3:21-25 identifies **the purpose** of Mosaic Law, and qualifies all other discussions of the Law
 - Does 4:24 (“this is allegorically speaking”) introduce a new hermeneutic method?
 - Who is “the Israel of God” in 6:16
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Biblical and Theological Context

- Paul explains in ch. 5 the spirit/flesh battle that he later addresses in Romans 7
- He explains how we should handle failure (6:1-2) – with gentleness, and bearing the burdens of others.
- His closing exhortation is based on God's righteousness, and presents a comprehensive Christian ethic:
 - **9 Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. 10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.**

