

APOSTASY TO PAGANISM: THE RHETORICAL STASIS OF THE GALATIAN CONTROVERSY

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The rhetorician faces a monumental task in reconstructing a controversy from a single letter written by only one of the disputing parties.¹ Nevertheless, a reconstruction of the controversy is absolutely necessary for the recovery of at least part of the original context. The elder Seneca begins each of his *controversiae* with a short description of the situation causing the controversy. His practice demonstrates the difficulty of reading a response of one participant in a debate without knowing the context of the dispute.

Paul's letter to the Galatians poses just such a situation for the rhetorician. Although the task is formidable, rhetorical theory provides important tools for reconstructing this controversy. In particular, stasis theory furnishes a means for moving from Paul's accusations and arguments to his understanding of the basic issue of the dispute. In addition, the theory of argumentation permits identification of the positions Paul thinks the Galatians are taking or may take in response to his accusations. Both stasis and argumentative theory are important tools for understanding Paul's controversy with the Galatians.²

The following essay will investigate the Galatian controversy by using

¹ I am grateful to George Lyons for reading an early draft of this essay and for offering several helpful suggestions.

² Several different methods have been employed in reconstructing the situation in Galatia. J. B. Tyson, among others, extracts the opponents' charges leveled against Paul from his responses to these troublemakers ("Paul's Opponents in Galatia," *NovT* 10 [1968] 241–54). For a summary and critique of this method, see G. Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography* (SBLDS 73; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985) 79–121; and G. Howard, *Paul: Crisis in Galatia* (SNTSMS 35; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 7–11. Other scholars rely on certain "key" words or phrases, but determining the criteria for identifying these "key" passages is problematic for this approach. The present article avoids these defects in method by relying on ancient stasis and argumentative theory to ascertain the "key" passages and how these passages relate to one another. This theory accords primary significance to Paul's accusations against the Galatians, and these accusations occur in the text of Galatians itself.

rhetorical theory. Following a short summary of stasis and argumentative theory, this essay will determine the principal and secondary stases of the controversy and then will classify the principal stasis. Next, a detailed explanation of how the stases generate the arguments of the letter will follow. Finally, this essay will offer some brief remarks concerning the species of rhetoric to which Galatians belongs.³

I. Stasis and Argumentative Theory

The Greek term στάσις comes from the root STA and means “a standing still.” In Aristotelian physics, stasis refers to the pause between the end of one motion and the beginning of another.⁴ A stasis must necessarily exist between opposite or contrary movements since an immobility or station must be established before a change in direction can occur.⁵ Not every cessation of motion, however, is a stasis. If the “standing still” following a motion endures or continues, the “standing still” is a rest (ἡρεμία), not a stasis.

In rhetoric, a stasis refers to the pause following an affirmation or accusation (κατάφασις) and preceding a response or answer (ἀπόφασις) to that affirmation or charge. The response or answer determines whether or not a stasis exists. If the response agrees completely with the initial affirmation or accusation, then a rest (ἡρεμία) or agreement occurs instead of a stasis. Only when the response takes some issue with the κατάφασις does a stasis arise. Thus, a stasis is determined by joining the κατάφασις with its ἀπόφασις.⁶

The development of a stasis produces a controversy in which two parties disagree. The stasis of the disagreement is determined by joining the accusing statement made by the first party with the defensive response of the second party. When the conflicting statements of both parties are conjoined, the basis or stasis of the disagreement becomes evident. This principal stasis (*prima conflictio*) produces a controversy (*secunda controversia*) when the first party for-

³ R. C. Hall argues that the application of stasis theory to Galatians prejudices the determination of the species of rhetoric (“The Rhetorical Outline for Galatians: A Reconsideration,” *JBL* 106 [1987] 281 n. 12, 285 n. 16). Since several ancient rhetoricians include deliberative as well as forensic rhetoric in their stasis theory, applying this theory to Galatians does not prejudice the case as Hall contends. See R. Nadeau, “Classical Systems of Stases in Greek: Hermagoras to Hermogenes,” *GRBS* 2 (1959) 59, 65; idem, “Hermogenes’ On Stases: A Translation with an Introduction and Notes,” *Speech Monographs* 31 (1964) 377, 381, 384–86, 411–13.

⁴ Modern stasis theorists understand Aristotelian physics as the basis for rhetorical stasis theory. See O. A. L. Dieter, “Stasis,” *Speech Monographs* 17 (1950) 349–51; and Nadeau, “Hermogenes,” 370–72. For a discussion of stasis theory, see G. A. Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World 300 B.C.–A.D. 300* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972) 623; idem, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963) 306–12.

⁵ Dieter, “Stasis,” 349–51.

⁶ Ps. Cicero, *Ad Herennium* 1.11; H. Caplan, *Cicero: Ad Herennium* (LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977) 32–33; Nadeau, “Hermogenes,” 374; Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 7.1.6; H. E. Butler, *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian* (LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963) 3. 8–9.

mulates a new charge in reaction to the defending party's response, and the defending party composes an appropriate rejoinder.⁷ This process of accusation and defense generates secondary stases that represent subsequent contrary positions taken by both parties in the debate. This process continues until the controversy is resolved or until the parties despair of resolution.

The principal stasis, formed by the initial accusation and response, limits the scope of the controversy and controls the arguments advanced by the conflicting parties.⁸ The initial accusation (*κατάφασις*) reveals the cause (*αἰτία*) of the dispute, while the initial response (*ἀπόφασις*) provides the containment (*συνέχον*) of the controversy by identifying the chief issue to be decided. For example, in a stasis of conjecture an accuser alleges, "You did this." The accused responds, "I did not do this." The alleged action is the cause of the dispute, and the denial indicates the chief issue to be decided—in this case, whether or not the accused performed the alleged action. This chief issue represents the principal stasis of the entire controversy. All countercharges and defensive statements must flow from this principal stasis to be pertinent to the dispute and useful for advancing the arguments of the accuser or accused.

The principal stasis falls into one of four classifications.⁹ The stasis of conjecture (*στοχασμός*) arises when the performance of an alleged act is denied by the accused. For example, an accused murderer may deny participation in the murder. If the accused admits the act but then redefines it, a stasis of definition (*ὅρος*) occurs. The accused murderer may accept responsibility for the death of the victim but plead self-defense or manslaughter. If both the act and the definition of the act are accepted by the accused, the accused may appeal to some mitigating circumstances such as the victim deserved death, some benefit accrued from the victim's death, someone else is really to blame, or leniency should be shown in this case. This appeal to extenuating circumstances represents a stasis of quality (*ποιότης*).¹⁰ When a defendant does not pursue any of the preceding options but objects to the entire proceedings because of a technicality, the case rests on a stasis of objection (*μετάληψις*). According to the rhetoricians, the principal stasis in every controversy assumes one of these four classifications.

The classification of the principal stasis determines the purpose and controls the development of the arguments. According to the theory of argumentation, arguments either prove one's claims or refute the claims of another.¹¹

⁷ Dieter, "Stasis," 355, 362–67; Nadeau, "Classical Systems," 54–55; idem, "Hermogenes," 369.

⁸ Dieter, "Stasis," 355.

⁹ Nadeau, "Hermogenes," 370, 372–73, 382–86; idem, "Classical Systems," 53–54; and Dieter, "Stasis," 356–58. Some identify only three stases by omitting the stasis of objection (Nadeau, "Hermogenes," 364).

¹⁰ A stasis of quality is the most complicated of the four types. See Nadeau, "Classical Systems," 55–56; idem, "Hermogenes," 393–94, 406–9.

¹¹ [Cicero], *Ad herennium* 1.3.4; 1.10.18; Caplan, *Ad herennium* 8–11, 32–33; and Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 5.Pr.2 and 5.13.53; Butler, *Quintilian*, 2.254–57, 344–45.

Thus, arguments become important indicators of both parties' positions in a debate. Nevertheless, arguments may not always describe the actual positions taken by participants since arguments are sometimes constructed hypothetically. Carefully ascertaining the positions that arguments intend to prove or refute illuminates the positions both parties are taking or may take in a debate.

This brief discussion of stasis and argumentative theory describes the rhetorical tools needed to reconstruct the Galatian controversy from Paul's perspective. The primary and secondary stases of the dispute will now be determined.

II. Determining and Classifying the Stases

To determine the principal and secondary stases of the Galatian controversy, Paul's accusations must be joined to the anticipated responses of the Galatians.¹² The former are explicitly expressed in the text of Galatians itself; the latter must be reconstructed from both the accusations Paul makes against the Galatians and the arguments Paul develops in the letter. Since arguments may visualize hypothetical as well as actual situations, Paul's accusations take precedence over his arguments in reconstructing the responses he anticipates from the Galatians. The joining of Paul's accusations and the anticipated Galatian responses permits the stases of the controversy to emerge.

Although previous studies identify only one accusation against the Galatians, there are actually two.¹³ The first occurs in Gal 1:6–9; the second in 4:8–11.¹⁴ In Gal 1:6–9, Paul charges the Galatians with exchanging his gospel for a different gospel, which requires circumcision and observance of the Jewish law. In 4:8–11, Paul accuses the Galatians of apostatizing to paganism. Since these two charges appear irreconcilable, traditional scholarship dismisses the latter in favor of the former.¹⁵ However, recognizing both these charges is necessary for determining the principal and secondary stases of the controversy.

¹² Quintilian discusses both the role and dangers of anticipation (*Institutio Oratoria* 5.13.44–49; Butler, *Quintilian*, 2. 338–43).

¹³ Proponents of the two-front hypothesis such as W. Lütgert (*Gesetz und Geist* [BFCT 22.6; Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1919]) and J. H. Ropes (*The Singular Problem of the Epistle to the Galatians* [HTS 14; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929]) are exceptions. Their "two-front" hypothesis does not, however, rely on an analysis of the rhetorical stases of Gal 1:6–9 and 4:8–11. Instead, it relies on a misunderstanding of the purpose of Gal 5:7–6:10.

¹⁴ J. D. Hester locates the stasis in Gal 1:11–12, but this passage is a proof to establish the proposition in Gal 1:10 and not an accusation ("The Rhetorical Structure of Galatians 1:11–14," *JBL* 103 [1984] 223).

¹⁵ H. D. Betz, *Galatians* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 46–47; P. Bonnard, *L'épître de Saint Paul aux Galates* (CNT 9; Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1972) 22; E. Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (ICC; Edinburgh: Clark, 1921) 18; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 19–20; J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (New Testament Theology; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 29; D. Lührmann, *Galatians* (Continental Commentary; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 12, 83; F. Mussner, *Der Galaterbrief* (HTKNT 9; Freiburg:

It is possible for both charges to stand as stated because the Galatians' decision relative to the valid Christian gospel must be distinguished from their decision to live or not live according to this gospel. The Galatians could accept the circumcision gospel as the legitimate Christian gospel and still reject its claims upon their lives. In such a case, they agree with Paul's opponents that circumcision and observance of the Jewish law are proper requirements of the gospel.¹⁶ Nevertheless, they decline to submit to circumcision and decide to return to paganism instead. Several considerations indicate that Paul simultaneously accuses the Galatians both of exchanging his gospel for the circumcision gospel and of returning to paganism.

First, Paul does not consider any of the Galatians to have submitted to circumcision even though he accuses them of accepting the circumcision gospel (Gal 1:6; 3:1–5; 5:7).¹⁷ If they had already become circumcised, Paul's argument against this practice would be pointless because the process cannot be reversed (Gal 5:2–12).¹⁸ Paul's argument in Gal 3:5 presupposes that the Galatians have not submitted to circumcision or the law.¹⁹ Furthermore, the opponents' desire to shut out the Galatians dissipates when the Galatians submit to circumcision (4:17). Consequently, the opponents' desire indicates that the Galatians have not yet submitted to circumcision (6:13). Since the operation requires only a few minutes, the Galatians' uncircumcised state even after they accept the circumcision gospel as valid demonstrates a reticence rather than an eagerness to submit to circumcision.

Second, the willingness of the Gentile Galatians to submit to circumcision when they recognize the circumcision gospel as legitimate should not be assumed.²⁰ Judaism had long provided the Galatians with the option of circum-

Herder, 1988) 53–54, 290; H. Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 169; H. N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956) 46, 160; H. Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater* (MeyerK 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962) 36, 201–3; and F. Sieffert, *Der Brief an die Galater* (MeyerK 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1899) 41, 254. For other attempts to subsume 4:8–11 to 1:6–9, see the survey by Howard (*Crisis*, 66–76). In contrast to traditional scholarship, the two-front hypothesis more clearly emphasizes the pagan dimension of 4:8–11.

¹⁶ These opponents are traditionally called judaizers, but Dunn appropriately criticizes this label (*Theology*, 10). The present study avoids this term in favor of designations such as “troublemakers,” “agitators,” “opponents,” or “other missionaries.” The term *opponent* is used even though it too may be inappropriate. See Lyons, *Autobiography*, 78–79.

¹⁷ Lyons provides several arguments proving the Galatians have not yet submitted to circumcision (*Autobiography*, 126–27).

¹⁸ A. Oepke, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater* (THKNT 9; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1957) 118. The surgery cannot be reversed, but it can be masked by a procedure called epispasm.

¹⁹ Betz, *Galatians*, 136.

²⁰ D. J. Lull examines three external arguments to explain the Galatians' eagerness to be circumcised; none is convincing (*The Spirit in Galatia* [SBLDS 49; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980] 29–39).

cision and submission to the law; however, they had refused to take such steps.²¹ The Gentile abhorrence of circumcision prevented the widespread acceptance of this Jewish practice.²² Among Gentiles, the adult circumcision of entire social groups is not attested except in rare instances of military compulsion. Unless the Galatian situation is a phenomenon unique to the Greco-Roman world, the Galatian churches are not contemplating circumcision even though they accept the circumcision gospel as the true Christian gospel.

Finally, the social structure of the Galatian churches contests their submission to circumcision. The Galatian churches were preexisting household units before conversion to Paul's gospel.²³ The decision of the head of the household determined the religious status of that household. Paul does not address individuals within the churches that are causing disruption. Instead, he addresses the churches as a whole, and he treats them homogeneously.²⁴ Even if a few of the Galatian churches accept circumcision, the unanimous acceptance of this practice by all of these autonomous Gentile units is extremely unlikely. Paul's argument suggests either that they have all agreed to submit to circumcision or none of them has. Among a diverse group of Gentiles, the latter is much more probable than the former. Consequently, it is unlikely that the Galatian churches have unanimously agreed to circumcision in spite of their recognizing circumcision as a requirement of the Christian gospel.²⁵

Since both of these accusations in 1:6–9 and 4:8–11 are possible, the rhetorician should seriously consider both in reconstructing the Galatian controversy. Either 1:6–9 or 4:8–11 functions as the principal stasis of the controversy. Traditional scholarship identifies the accusation in 1:6–9 as the accusation (κατάφασις) of the principal stasis.²⁶ Two factors deny that this accusation provides the κατάφασις of the principal stasis. On the one hand, locating the principal stasis in 1:6–9 places Paul's accusation in 4:8–11 outside the containment (συνέχον) of the controversy.²⁷ Hence, scholars who identify 1:6–9 as the central issue must dismiss the accusation in 4:8–11 in one way or another. On the other hand, recognizing 4:8–11 as the accusation of the principal stasis per-

²¹ J. Eckert discusses the barrier circumcision posed for Jewish proselytization (*Die urchristliche Verkündigung im Streit zwischen Paulus und seinen Gegnern nach dem Galaterbrief* [BU 6; Regensburg: Pustet, 1971] 57).

²² R. Meyer, "περιτέμνω," *TDNT* 6. 78–79. See also Eckert, *Verkündigung*, 56–57.

²³ W. A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983) 75–77.

²⁴ B. H. Brinsmead, *Galatians: Dialogical Response to Opponents* (SBLDS 65; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982) 187.

²⁵ J. M. G. Barclay perceives the improbability of a group of Gentiles voluntarily submitting to circumcision (*Obeying the Truth* [Studies of the New Testament and its World; Edinburgh: Clark, 1988] 46–47).

²⁶ Brinsmead, *Galatians*, 49; Lyons, *Autobiography*, 173–74; and B. C. Lategan, "The Argumentative Situation of Galatians," *Neot* 26 (1992) 269.

²⁷ For a discussion of containment in stasis theory, see Dieter ("Stasis," 355) and Nadeau ("Classical Systems," 54).

mits the accusation in 1:6–9 to fit appropriately into the containment of the controversy. Paul seeks to discredit the circumcision gospel and those who proclaim it because the Galatians' acceptance of this gospel excuses both their apostasy to paganism and their failure to honor their initial agreement with Paul and, ultimately, God. Thus, 4:8–11 is the accusation of the principal stasis of the controversy.

This principal stasis is a stasis of quality (ποιότης), since the charge is neither denied (στάσις στοχασμός) nor redefined (ὄρος) nor rejected on technical grounds (μετάληψις).²⁸ This class of stasis investigates the seriousness of the alleged action “from the standpoint of its non-essential attributes and attendant circumstances.”²⁹ The stasis of quality subdivides into four types, based on whether or not the nonessential attributes and circumstances relate to a person (epideictic, *περὶ προσώπου*), to the future (deliberative, *περὶ αἰρετῶν καὶ φευκτῶν*), to the past (forensic, *δικαιολογική*), or to legal questions (pragmatic, *πραγματική*).³⁰

Since the principal stasis of Galatians pertains to the past act of the Galatians' apostasy (4:8–11) and the secondary stasis to their prior exchange of Paul's gospel for the circumcision gospel (1:6–9), the qualitative stasis of the Galatian controversy is forensic (*δικαιολογική*). The forensic type subdivides into actions forbidden (*ἀντίθεσις*) and not forbidden (*ἀντίληψις*). The past actions of the Galatians fall into the former category, which further subdivides into countercharge (*ἀντέγκλημα*), counterplea (*ἀντίστασις*), shifting of blame (*μετάστασις*), and plea for leniency (*συγγνώμη*). Paul's response to the Galatians' actions indicates that shifting of blame (*μετάστασις*) is the specific sub-stasis of the Galatian controversy.³¹ The blame for the Galatians' apostasy rests squarely on the proponents of the circumcision gospel (1:7–9; 4:17; 5:8, 10, 12). Thus, the stasis of the Galatian controversy is a qualitative stasis of the forensic type, subdivided into a substasis of actions forbidden and further subdivided into a substasis of shifting of blame.

This classification of the stasis and the identification of 4:8–11 as the accusation of the principal stasis, as well as the joining of Paul's accusations with his anticipated responses from the Galatians, permit a reconstruction of the Gala-

²⁸ Even though he considers the stasis differently, Betz correctly understands Paul's arguments as a response to an issue of quality (*Galatians*, 129). Hall dismisses the idea of a stasis in Galatians but admits that a stasis of fact would be the most appropriate stasis for Galatians (“Rhetorical Outline,” 285 n. 16). Hall's confusion about the stasis arises from his assumption that the stasis, if there is one, must arise from accusations against Paul instead of Paul's accusations against the Galatians.

²⁹ Nadeau, “Classical Systems,” 54; see also Nadeau, “Hermogenes,” 370, 372–73, 406–13; and Dieter, “Stasis,” 355–58.

³⁰ Nadeau, “Classical Systems,” 56; idem, “Hermogenes,” 375, 383–86.

³¹ For a treatment of this specific substasis, see Nadeau, “Hermogenes,” 394. For definitions of these rhetorical terms, see Nadeau's index (“Hermogenes,” 419–20).

tian controversy.³² Paul accuses the Galatians of abrogating their initial agreement with him by apostatizing from Christianity to paganism (4:8–11). He anticipates that the Galatians will agree with the charge but will contend that they were innocent in taking this course of action because the *true* Christian gospel requires circumcision and observance of the Jewish law (3:1–5; 6:12–13), two requirements Paul had failed to mention.³³ Paul levels a new charge that they are then guilty of altering the original agreement because the true Christian gospel does not require circumcision and observance of the Jewish law (1:6–9; 2:3, 7–9, 14, 21; 3:2, 5, 10–12; 4:21; 5:2–6, 11; 6:12–15). To this charge, he expects the Galatians will respond that they are blameless in accepting this gospel because some people have arrived and told them the truth about the actual requirements of the gospel (1:7–9; 4:16–17; 5:8–12; 6:12–13).³⁴ Paul's letter to the Galatians is dispatched at this stage of the controversy and attempts to nullify both excuses. Consequently, the letter begins at this point in the *secunda controversia* (1:6–9) and then moves to the *prima conflictio* (4:8–11). If the Galatians persist in their present course of action, they will behave unjustly toward Paul (οὐδὲν με ἠδικήσατε, Gal 4:12) since Paul's arguments have removed both of their actual or anticipated excuses.³⁵ After they receive this letter, the Galatians will be without excuse and must bear the consequences for their breach of contract if they continue in their apostasy.

This identification and classification of the stases produce a reconstruction of the controversy that differs at several points from traditional interpretations of Galatians.³⁶ First, this reconstruction seriously considers both of Paul's accusations and not only Gal 1:6–9. Second, the accusation in 4:8–11 represents the

³² This process of reconstruction yields rhetorical data, not historical data. Paul's arguments reveal only the responses he thinks the Galatians are making or will make to his accusations, and Paul could be misinformed or even mistaken. Establishing the historicity of the situation is a separate issue from determining the rhetorical stasis.

³³ Barclay says 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). On this issue, see Howard, *Crisis*, 44–45; and P. Borgen, "Paul Preaches Circumcision and Pleases Men," in *Paul and Paulinism* (ed. M. D. Hooker and S. C. Wilson; London: S.P.C.K., 1982) 37–46.

³⁴ Paul's report that even Peter and Barnabas were persuaded by a similar group of people at Antioch implies that the Galatians should not be severely blamed for not withstanding these people either (2:12–13).

³⁵ In Gal 4:12, Paul states that the Galatians have not yet wronged him. Thus, he recognizes the validity of their excuses for their actions. Once these excuses are removed, however, the Galatians must act differently to avoid mistreating Paul.

³⁶ If this reconstruction of the controversy is accepted, then Paul's theology must be reconsidered since Galatians represents a significant source. It is beyond the scope of the present article to determine how this reconstruction affects "the new perspective on Paul" that E. P. Sanders introduced (*Paul and Palestinian Judaism* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977]) and J. D. G. Dunn explicated ("The New Perspective on Paul," in *Jesus, Paul, and the Law* [Louisville: Westminster, 1990] 183–206). See the evaluation of Sanders's and Dunn's positions by H. Räisänen ("Galatians 2.16 and Paul's Break with Judaism," *NTS* 31 [1985] 543–53).

basic accusation (κατάφασις) and along with the Galatians' anticipated response constitutes the principal stasis of the controversy. Third, Paul's accusations, not his arguments, determine the actual issues of the debate. Paul's strong argument against circumcision leads exegetes to conclude that the Galatians are seeking circumcision.³⁷ However, the present reconstruction, which considers Paul's accusations to be more reliable than his arguments, concludes that the Galatians have not and never intend to let themselves be circumcised.

III. Arguing the Stasis

Epistolary Prescript

Paul responds to the Galatian controversy by dispatching a letter to the churches of Galatia. He begins this letter affirming his apostleship through Jesus Christ and through God the Father (1:1).³⁸ This affirmation, introduced in the prescript, is repeatedly mentioned throughout the letter. Paul mentions his divinely ordained mission (1:10–12, 15–16; 2:9; 5:11; 6:17) and reminds the Galatians that when he first arrived in Galatia, they recognized his apostleship by receiving him as a messenger from God and as Christ Jesus himself (4:14). At the end of the letter, Paul asserts his legitimacy because he bears in his own body the marks of Jesus Christ (6:17).³⁹ Thus, beginning with the prescript and continuing throughout the letter, Paul establishes as a matter of record that he is the authorized representative of the deity the Galatians reject in their return to paganism. Consequently, he can accuse the Galatians of abrogating their initial agreement with him and the deity he represents (4:8–11). He can then summon them to fulfill the terms of this original agreement (5:7–8; 6:14–16) and avoid an unpleasant face-to-face confrontation (4:20).

Body-Opening

Paul proceeds directly from the epistolary prescript to the body-opening (1:6–9), where he outlines the topics treated in the letter.⁴⁰ He expresses astonishment that the Galatians have rejected the validity of his gospel in favor of another gospel (1:6) that is dependent on circumcision and observance of the law (2:3–5, 12, 15–17; 3:2–5, 10–12; 4:21; 5:2–4; 6:12–13).⁴¹ He anathematizes

³⁷ Dunn, *Theology*, 9.

³⁸ In spite of the general assumption that these affirmations respond to attacks on Paul, Paul's gospel, and not his apostleship, provides the focus of the controversy. See C. H. Cosgrove, *The Cross and the Spirit* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988) 25; and B. Lategan, "Is Paul Defending his Apostleship in Galatians?" *NTS* 34 (1988) 411.

³⁹ Eckert, *Verkündigung*, 38.

⁴⁰ For a discussion of the nature and function of the body-opening in letters, see J. L. White, *The Form and Function of the Body of the Greek Letter* (SBLDS 2; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1972) 33–41. See also the works cited by D. E. Aune, *The New Testament and Its Literary Environment* (Library of Early Christianity; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987) 180–82, 222–25.

⁴¹ J. L. White lists expressions of astonishment as a way of introducing the body-opening ("Introductory Formulae in the Body of the Pauline Letter," *JBL* 90[1971] 91–97).

those who proclaim such a gospel and disrupt the Galatian churches (1:7–9). In the body-opening, Paul appropriately introduces the topics he intends to discuss with the Galatians, and he treats these topics in the order in which they are introduced. Paul begins by arguing for the validity of his gospel over against the other gospel proclaimed by the agitators (1:10–4:20). He then refutes the troublemakers themselves (4:21–5:10) and reaffirms the essential requirements of his own gospel (5:11–6:10).

These topics introduced in the body-opening coherently develop from the primary stasis described above. Paul already knows that the Galatians have apostatized from Christianity to paganism. He anticipates that they will defend their action by shifting blame to his failure to tell them the truth that circumcision and observance of the Jewish law are requirements of the true Christian gospel. In his letter, Paul reaffirms the truth of his initial proclamation and rejects these added requirements as perversions of the true gospel (1:10–4:20). Furthermore, he shifts the blame for the Galatians' apostasy to those who insist on the practice of circumcision. According to Paul, these troublemakers pervert the true gospel and actually place themselves outside the Christian community of grace (4:21–5:10). Finally, Paul reiterates the essential requirements of his gospel of freedom as a reminder to the Galatians of the original agreement made between themselves on the one hand and himself and the deity he represents on the other (5:11–6:10).⁴² He desires for the Galatians to honor this agreement, reject the validity of the circumcision gospel, reverse their return to paganism, and live in peace as Christians according to his gospel of freedom (6:11–17).

Body-Middle

Following the body-opening, the various sections of the body-middle treat each of these topics in detail. Paul moves to each section of the body-middle by posing a question (1:10; 3:1–4; 4:8–9, 21; 5:7, 11). These questions introduce the topic for the section and set up the argumentative situation. Each of these questions, the topics they introduce, and Paul's argument must be investigated more thoroughly.

(a) 1:10: First Transitional Question

At the beginning of the body-middle, Paul asks the Galatians in 1:10, "Am I now persuading humans or God, or am I *still* seeking to please humans?"⁴³

⁴² For a discussion of the various ways the function of Gal 5:11–6:10 has been understood, see Barclay, *Obedying*, 9–26; and Howard, *Crisis*, 11–14. The present article understands this section neither as an attack by the opponents nor as a defense of Paul's own gospel but as a rearticulation of Paul's original agreement with the Galatians.

⁴³ Oepke correctly notes the role this question plays in this section of the epistle (*An die Galater*, 26–27). Usually scholars consider the two portions of this question parallel and interpret the former by the latter. However, this approach disregards the meaning of *καίτοι* in the active

This question considers Paul's two available options; either circumcision is or is not a requirement of his gospel. The latter portion of this question asks if Paul is still (ἔτι) seeking to please humans by advocating circumcision as he once did (1:13–14; 5:11). Paul curtly dismisses this option by stating that if he were still advocating circumcision, he would not be the slave of Christ (1:10d).

Having dismissed the circumcision option, Paul now considers in more detail the validity of his current (ἄρτι) rejection of circumcision, which the former portion of his question in 1:10a raises.⁴⁴ Paul asks, "Am I persuading humans to accept my gospel or God?" If Paul is trying to persuade God to accept his gospel and to relinquish the requirements of circumcision and law-keeping, then the validity of Paul's gospel is questionable. If Paul is trying to persuade humans, however, then the validity of his gospel should not be impugned. Paul answers this portion of the question with an emphatic denial of his attempt to persuade God (1:11). On the contrary, God gave him this gospel through revelation (1:12), and Paul narrates his call to demonstrate that he does not persuade God (1:13–17).⁴⁵ Since God entrusted him with this gospel (1:15–16), it is absurd to think that Paul now must persuade God of its validity.⁴⁶

Instead of God, it is humans who require convincing, and Paul illustrates this point by recounting three journeys in which he interacts with other Christians (1:18–2:10).⁴⁷ Paul briefly describes a trip he made to Jerusalem to visit (ἰστορησά) Cephas (1:18a). He spent two weeks with him and also saw James, the Lord's brother (1:18b–19). This brief account tacitly suggests Paul's acceptance by certain important figures in Jerusalem. Paul then narrates his journey to Syria and Cilicia but only to explain his absence from Judea, where a report about him circulated (1:21–23). This report implies the acceptance of Paul's gospel as valid among the churches of Judea (1:23–34). Even though these two journeys are only briefly summarized, they illustrate Paul's efforts to associate

voice and ignores the disjunctive ἢ that connects the two portions of the question. Further, the adverb ἄρτι in the first portion indicates an action in which Paul is now engaged, whereas the adverb ἔτι, associated with the latter portion, implies an activity in which Paul was once engaged but is no longer. Therefore, the latter portion is not parallel to the first. See Rudolf Bultmann, "πειθω," *TDNT* 6. 2.

⁴⁴ The traditional view of 1:13–2:14 holds that Paul's autobiographical remarks establish his independence from Jerusalem. This view does not adequately assess the significance of the question Paul poses in 1:10. Gal 2:2 substantiates that Paul's autobiographical remarks demonstrate his attempt to persuade other church leaders of the validity of his gospel, not his independence from them, as Lührmann (*Galatians*, 12) and Howard (*Crisis*, 21–45) correctly observe.

⁴⁵ Paul's oath in 1:20 has a rhetorical function (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 5.6.1–2; Butler, *Quintilian*, 2. 164–67).

⁴⁶ Even though Dunn considers independence an important goal of Paul's argument, he correctly perceives that the argument intends to safeguard Paul's claim for the divine origin of his gospel ("The Relationship between Paul and Jerusalem according to Galatians 1 and 2," *NTS* 28 [1982] 465). Dunn sees the validity of Paul's gospel as the primary issue in Paul's visit to Jerusalem ("Paul and Jerusalem," 468).

⁴⁷ The adverb *then* (ἔπειτα) introduces each example (1:18, 21; 2:1).

with Jewish Christianity and imply initial success. Paul narrates in greater detail a third journey, where he seeks explicit validation for his gospel in Jerusalem (2:1–10).⁴⁸ Even though he encountered stiff opposition from some who operate from devious motives (2:4–5), he successfully convinced James, Cephas, and John, who were the pillars of the community (2:9).⁴⁹ These three journeys illustrate Paul's attempts to commend his gospel to humans. From these reports, therefore, the Galatians should conclude that Paul directs his persuasive efforts toward humans and not toward God.

Paul's argument concerning his persuasive efforts culminates in his report of an incident at Antioch. In contrast to the positive results of his overtures to the churches in Jerusalem and Judea, the arrival in Antioch of Cephas and later of some others from Jerusalem had disastrous results. Paul was compelled to champion the implications of his gospel before the hypocrisy of Cephas, Barnabas, and the rest of the Jews, who practiced the distinctions of circumcision and rejected the effectiveness of Paul's gospel to place the Gentiles on equal standing with themselves (2:11–21).⁵⁰ Paul's summary of his position in 2:15–21 insinuates that he was successful, but he gives no clear statement of the final outcome.⁵¹ Perhaps Paul leaves the outcome in question because the problem the Galatians now face proves that Paul has not been completely successful in convincing everyone that his understanding of the circumcision-free gospel is valid. Nevertheless, Paul implies that he was at least partially successful, and his summary of the incident should convince the Galatians his position is correct.

⁴⁸ Paul's need to persuade others of the validity of his gospel, not the needs of the Jerusalem community, occasioned his visit. See Sieffert, *An die Galater*, 91–92; Schlier, *An die Galater*, 66–69; and Dunn, "Paul and Jerusalem," 466–68. For a contrary position, see W. Schmithals, *Paul and James* (SBT 46; Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1965) 43.

⁴⁹ Dunn, *Theology*, 70.

⁵⁰ Commentators recognize the difficulty of explaining the actions of Cephas, Barnabas, and the emissaries of James in Gal 2:11–21. If the chronological sequence of 2:1–21 follows the narrative sequence, then the accord reached at the Jerusalem Assembly reported in 2:1–10 appears to contradict their actions. However, the Jerusalem accord only recognized the acceptance of uncircumcised Gentiles into the Christian community (2:3) on the basis of faith in Christ (2:16). The distinctions of circumcision still remained (2:9). The incident at Antioch addresses the issue of how this distinction is to be maintained. Under pressure from James's emissaries, Cephas and Barnabas shift their position from the complete equality of Jew and Gentile to a position of inequality. This issue was not decided at Jerusalem. See Dunn, *Theology*, 69–80; idem, "The Incident at Antioch," *JSNT* 18 (1983) 37–38.

⁵¹ Dunn concludes from Paul's silence about the outcome that Paul lost this confrontation (*Theology*, 13–14; "Incident," 38). If Paul were defeated at Antioch as Dunn and others conclude, however, Paul should have suppressed this incident and focused on the Jerusalem accord instead. Indeed, J. C. O'Neill proposes that Paul does not report a victory over Cephas because "the victory had already been reported in the favorable judicial decision at Jerusalem" (*The Recovery of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* [London: S.P.C.K., 1972] 44). See D. Cohn-Sherbok's critique of Dunn's position ("Some Reflections on James Dunn's: 'The Incident at Antioch,'" *JSNT* 18 [1983] 72–73).

(b) 3:1: Second Transitional Question

Following his argument that he persuades humans rather than God, Paul continues to establish the validity of his gospel by appealing to the Galatians' experience and to scripture (3:1–4:7).⁵² Paul asks the Galatians who has maligne (ἐβίασκανεν) them into denying their own sense experience (3:1).⁵³ He queries them as to whether they received the Spirit by the observance of the law or by the hearing of faith (3:2). He questions their intelligence if they think they mature by the flesh after beginning by the spirit (3:3).⁵⁴ Finally, he asks whether their supply of spirit and miracles comes from works of law or the hearing of faith (3:5). Of course, the Galatians' experiences are sufficient to answer all these questions.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, Paul proceeds to substantiate their experiences by detailed scriptural exegesis (3:7–4:7). The scriptures prove that the covenant with Abraham was based on faith in God's promise (3:7–20), and the imposition of the law does not nullify the promise (3:21–4:5).⁵⁶ The Galatians' experiences engendered by Paul's circumcision-free gospel are valid (4:6–7); consequently, Paul's gospel is also valid.

(c) 4:8: Third Transitional Question

In Gal 4:8–20, Paul applies his preceding demonstration of the validity of his gospel (1:10–4:7) to the Galatians' behavior. He asks the Galatians for the reason they are returning to their paganism (4:9), as evidenced by their renewed observance of their former pagan time-keeping scheme (4:10).⁵⁷ Paul reminds them of their original just treatment of him (4:12b–15), but he implies

⁵² According to Betz, the argumentative section of the letter begins here (*Galatians*, 130).

⁵³ The verb βίασκειν, used to describe the opposition's persuasive methods, can mean either "bewitch" or "malign." The better translation is "malign" since these methods are described in 4:17 as "shutting out," in 6:12 as pride, and possibly in 4:29 as persecution.

⁵⁴ Interpreters equate the Galatians' "finishing up in the flesh" in Gal 3:3 with their desire to be under law (Dunn, *Theology*, 103–4) or to submit to circumcision (Betz, *Galatians*, 134; Eckert, *Verkündigung*, 75). In addition to lacking proof that the Galatians desired to be under law or to submit to circumcision, this interpretation renders unintelligible the statement in 3:4 that such a shift from spirit to flesh makes their prior suffering vain. If 4:8–9 describes the Galatians' reversion to their pagan life-style, then "finishing up in the flesh" in 3:3 describes the Galatians' return to paganism, and Gal 3:4 becomes intelligible. When the Galatians accepted Paul's gospel and renounced their paganism, they probably suffered the social pressures associated with such a conversion and renunciation as Barclay notes (*Obeying*, 58). The Galatians' return to their former life-style renders vain whatever trials they experienced as a result of their brief trek into Christianity. Thus, Gal 3:3 does not refer to the Galatians' intention to submit to circumcision or the law.

⁵⁵ Dunn discusses the various aspects of the Galatians' experiences (*Theology*, 52–63); he also observes the dual argument Paul makes from the Galatians' experience and scripture ("Works of the Law," 533).

⁵⁶ For an explanation of Paul's use of scripture to discount the law in favor of faith, see E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 160–62.

⁵⁷ For substantiation of the pagan nature of this list, see T. Martin, "Pagan and Judeo-Christian Time-Keeping Schemes in Gal 4:10 and Col 2:16," *NTS* (forthcoming).

by his present concern and perplexity for them that they currently are injuring him by rendering his labor in vain and by forcing him to repeat tasks he had already performed (4:11, 19–20).⁵⁸ He questions their steadfastness (4:15a) and asks if he is now their enemy in spite of his continued faithfulness to them (4:16). Paul's preceding demonstration of the validity of his gospel removes the one excuse the Galatians could have offered for the unjust actions they are now taking toward Paul (4:11–20) and toward God (4:8–10).

(d) 4:21: *Fourth Transitional Question*

Having dismantled the Galatians' excuse for the abrogation of their initial agreement, Paul now addresses their excuse for preferring the circumcision gospel over his own. In the concluding section of 1:10–4:20, Paul abruptly introduces the proponents of the circumcision-law gospel (4:17–18). He questions their sincerity in *shutting out* or excluding the Gentile Galatians. In the next section (4:21–5:6) of the body-middle, Paul summons these troublemakers to account for their misrepresentation of the true gospel of Jesus Christ. He refutes them by scripture (4:21–5:1) and by his own understanding of the gospel (5:2–6). Paul's dismissal of these proponents of circumcision removes any excuse the Galatians might make for recognizing the circumcision gospel as the true Christian gospel.

The identification of the addressees is the most significant exegetical problem in 4:21–5:6. Paul either addresses the Galatians as a whole, a group of Galatians who are prepared to follow a judaizing line, or the proponents of the circumcision gospel.⁵⁹ Although this problem is difficult for later interpreters,

⁵⁸ J. van W. Cronje, "The Stratagem of the Rhetorical Question in Gal 4:9–10 as a Means toward Persuasion," *Neot* 26 (1992) 417–24.

⁵⁹ Almost all commentators identify the Galatians as the addressees of this section. See Bonnard, *Aux Galates*, 95; Burton, *Galatians*, 252; Lührmann, *Galatians*, 89; Mussner, *Galaterbrief*, 317; Oepke, *An die Galater*, 110; and Schlier, *An die Galater*, 216. Lütgert (*Gesetz*, 11, 88) and Sieffert (*An die Galater*, 278), however, argue that only a portion of the Galatians who are prepared to follow a judaizing line are addressed. Schmithals holds that Gal 3:6–4:7, 21–31 addresses neither the Galatians nor the opponents since it is drawn from Paul's debates with the Jews (*Paul and the Gnostics* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1972] 41). As the following discussion demonstrates, H. Ulonska correctly perceives that Paul addresses the opponents in 4:21–27 ("Die Funktion der alttestamentlichen Zitate und Anspielungen in den paulinischen Briefen" [dissertation, Münster, 1963] 65). Ulonska begins by arguing that the phrase "those under the law" (4:21) refers to the opponents whom Paul polemically asks, "Do you not understand the law?" (p. 65). Paul then develops the argument by using an authority accepted by the opponents—namely, the OT (pp. 65–66). Ulonska contends that Paul uses the pronoun ἡμῶν in 4:26 to associate himself with his Jewish opponents and then shifts the pronoun to ὑμεῖς in 4:28 to address again the entire community as brothers (pp. 68–71). Ulonska's first argument is convincing, but his second argument is inconclusive since the Galatians as well as the agitators respected the OT. His third argument is not persuasive because it rests on the dubious assumption that Paul could not shift pronouns without changing his addressees. In Gal 2:14–15, Paul shifts from a second personal pronoun to a first personal pronoun in his conversation with Peter. Even though Ulonska recognizes that the opponents are addressed

the Galatians would have known immediately to whom Paul was speaking. According to the present essay, the stasis of the controversy specifies that the Galatians as a whole had no intentions of submitting to circumcision or keeping the Jewish law. Consequently, Paul addresses the proponents of the circumcision gospel in this section, not the Galatians either in whole or in part.⁶⁰ However, this problem of the addressees must be resolved without appeal to the hypothesis of the present essay to avoid circular reasoning.

Several considerations indicate that Paul addresses the troublemakers in 4:21–5:6 instead of the Galatians themselves.⁶¹ The most important clues occur in the references to circumcision in this section. The verb περιτέμνω and the noun περιτομή refer either to an act, a state, or a practice.⁶² An act, circumcision relates to the physical operation itself. Following this surgery, a person then lives in a state of circumcision.⁶³ Even though circumcised persons have no choice but to live in a circumcised state, they still must decide if they will practice the distinctions associated with the covenant of circumcision (Gen 17:14). The author of Maccabees describes those who have been circumcised and live in a circumcised state but erase the distinction between themselves and the Gentiles (1 Macc 1:11–15, 52). Paul uses all three of these meanings in his discussion of circumcision in 1 Cor 7:18–20. For Paul, the act and the state of circumcision pose no hindrance for Christianity; however, the new community established by Jesus Christ excludes the practice of distinguishing between circumcised and uncircumcised members. Paul's succinct statements in 1 Cor 7:18–20 accurately describe his position in Galatians as well. Each reference to circumcision in Galatians must be carefully scrutinized to determine which meaning Paul intends.

Paul uses the participle περιτεμνόμενοι in 6:13a to describe the agitators in Galatia.⁶⁴ Because they are already circumcised, the participle cannot mean

in 4:21–27, he has presented neither sufficient argumentation nor correct identification of the extent of Paul's address to the opponents.

⁶⁰ Paul addresses the proponents of the circumcision gospel as brothers and includes them within the Christian community since they were Jewish Christians. Nevertheless, he attempts to demonstrate the defects in their understanding of faith in Christ. See Sanders, *Jewish People*, 19; and J. D. C. Dunn, "Echoes of Intra-Jewish Polemic in Paul's Letter to the Galatians," *JBL* (1993) 459–77.

⁶¹ Oepke (*An die Galater*, 110) and Ridderbos (*To Galatia*, 173), among others, note a distinct break in the letter between 4:20 and 4:21.

⁶² Eckert discusses all these meanings (*Verkündigung*, 49–53).

⁶³ J. B. Tyson, "'Works of the Law' in Galatians," *JBL* 92 (1973) 428.

⁶⁴ Schlier, *An die Galater*, 281; Eckert, *Verkündigung*, 34 n. 4; and Bruce, *Galatians*, 269–70. Burton's contention that this participle refers to the Galatians and not the agitators requires a change of subject in the passage without a corresponding grammatical marker (*Galatians*, 352–54). His suggestion is not convincing. E. Hirsch concludes that the participle designates the Gentile converts of the judaizers. These converts compensated for their inability to keep the law by convincing other Gentiles to submit to circumcision ("Zwei Fragen zu Gal 6," *ZNW* 29 [1930] 192–97). Hirsch's position is superior to Burton's because it does not require a shift in the subject of this

become circumcised or let yourself be circumcised.⁶⁵ Thus, this participle cannot refer to the act of circumcision. Neither can it designate the state of circumcision since Paul would then be including himself among the opponents of the Galatians.⁶⁶ Consequently, only the meaning of circumcision as the practice of distinguishing between circumcised and uncircumcised makes sense in Gal 6:13a. Even the present tense of this participle emphasizes the ongoing, continuous nature of this action.⁶⁷ Therefore, the best translation of the participle in 6:13a is *those who practice the distinctions of circumcision*.⁶⁸

The reference to circumcision in Gal 2:12 must also refer to practicing the distinctions of circumcision since any other meaning does not differentiate between the agitators at Antioch on the one hand and Paul, Peter, and Barnabas on the other.⁶⁹ This reference indicates that the practice of circumcision includes more than simply performing the physical act itself. Practicing circumcision also means maintaining distinctions between the circumcised and the uncircumcised (Gen 17:14) especially by refusing to engage in table fellowship. Paul states that before some of James's people arrived, Peter and the other Jews were not observing the distinction of circumcision by excluding the Gentiles. Out of fear for those who practice circumcision (τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς, 2:12), however, Peter and the other Jews separate themselves from the uncircumcised.⁷⁰ Paul views this separation as hypocrisy (2:13–14) since both circumcised and

verse. However, Hirsch's position requires different groups among the Galatian churches, and this idea is rejected by the majority of scholars.

⁶⁵ Dunn argues along with the majority of scholars that the troublemakers are Jewish Christians (*Theology*, 8–12). However, J. Munck contends that the agitators are Gentiles since the present middle participle always means "those who receive circumcision" (*Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* [Richmond: John Knox, 1959] 87–89). Munck's proposal has been adequately critiqued by Howard (*Crisis*, 17). Furthermore, Munck's argument is refuted by Gal 5:3, where this participle does not mean "those who receive circumcision."

⁶⁶ R. Jewett astutely formulates this argument against understanding circumcision in Gal 6:13 as a state ("The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation," *NTS* 17 [1971] 202). Nevertheless, his suggestion of congruity in the meaning of circumcision in 6:13a and 6:13b is misleading. Circumcision in 6:13a relates to the agitators, while circumcision in 6:13b pertains to the Galatians. The subject of the participle περιτεμνόμενοι is not the same as the subject of the infinitive περιτέμνεσθαι. This shift in subject indicates that the meaning of this verb also shifts between its first and second occurrences.

⁶⁷ Some manuscripts place this participle in the perfect tense to emphasize the past definite action of circumcision and its continuous results. The textual evidence, however, favors the present tense.

⁶⁸ Even though the agitators are primarily in view, this meaning of the participle would not exclude any Jew who practices the distinctions of circumcision. See Oepke, *An die Galater*, 160.

⁶⁹ See Dunn, *Theology*, 73–74; idem, "Incident," 3–41; idem, "New Perspective," 198, 200.

⁷⁰ Schmithals's suggestion that *circumcision* in Gal 2:12 refers only to Jews and not Jewish Christians should be rejected (*Paul and James*, 66–68). For the association between the positions of the agitators at Antioch and Galatia, see Schlier, *An die Galater*, 84; and M. Bachmann, *Sünder oder Übertreter* (WUNT 59; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1992) 110. See also the similar perspective of the party in Acts 11:2–3.

uncircumcised are justified by faith in Christ and not from observance of the law (2:16). Therefore, the practice of circumcision that requires separation from the uncircumcised is contrary to the true, inclusive Gospel of Jesus Christ (2:14).⁷¹

This understanding of the practice of circumcision explains Paul's use of περιτέμνω in 5:2–3. In 5:2 Paul says, "If you practice circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you." In 5:3 he says, "Every man who practices circumcision is obligated to observe the whole law." Many commentators understand the middle voice of these verbal forms in 5:2–3 as causative or permissive middles and understand περιτέμνω as a reference to the surgical operation. They then translate the finite verb περιτέμνησθε as "you become circumcised" or "you permit yourself to become circumcised."⁷² Correspondingly, they translate the participle περιτεμνομένων as "one who becomes circumcised" or "one who lets himself be circumcised." These commentators then apply these circumcision references in 5:2–3 to the Galatians and not the agitators in spite of the participle's use in 6:13 as a clear reference to the troublemakers. These commentators' explanation fails to explain why the Galatians would be excluded from Christ's benefit if they become circumcised while Paul, as a circumcised person, enjoys these same benefits.⁷³ After all, the Galatians' submission to circumcision really should not matter since in Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision makes any difference (5:6). Thus, the references here cannot refer to the act or state of circumcision as almost all commentators assume because Paul receives Christ's benefits and does not consider himself obligated to observe the whole law even though he is circumcised.

Rather, the references to circumcision in 5:2–3 designate the practice of circumcision.⁷⁴ In v. 2, Paul addresses those who practice circumcision as a means of determining the members of the covenant.⁷⁵ For Paul, the benefit of circumcision excludes the benefit of Christ and vice versa (cf. Rom 4:14).⁷⁶ In v. 3, Paul restates his contention that those who practice circumcision in this way are obligated to observe the entire law (Gal 3:10).⁷⁷ Because circumcision is only of benefit if the entire law is observed (cf. Rom 2:25), circumcision is nullified if the law is broken.⁷⁸ Therefore, Paul warns that those who practice

⁷¹ Dunn, "Incident," 35–37.

⁷² Bonner, *Aux Galates*, 103; Burton, *Galatians*, 272–74; Bruce, *Galatians*, 228–29; Lührmann, *Galatians*, 94–96; and J. B. Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians* (Zondervan Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957) 203–4.

⁷³ Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, 190.

⁷⁴ Oepke, *An die Galater*, 118; Mussner, *Galaterbrief*, 346; and Ridderbos, *To Galatia*, 187.

⁷⁵ Betz, *Galatians*, 258.

⁷⁶ Eckert, *Verkündigung*, 41, cf. 33, 39–40. Eckert views circumcision as the primary issue between Paul and his opponents (*Verkündigung*, 31).

⁷⁷ Schlier notes that πάλιν in 5:3 is omitted in some manuscripts because Paul's statement lacks a prior referent (*An die Galater*, 231). Πάλιν could indicate a prior communication of Paul to the Galatians, or it could refer loosely to the previous verse. The least problematic explanation, however, is that it alludes to Paul's quotation in Gal 3:10.

⁷⁸ Many understand individual transgressions as constitutive of breaking the law. See Räisä-

circumcision as a sign of the covenant are abolished from Christ and fallen from grace (Gal 5:4).⁷⁹

This practice of circumcision is a distinguishing characteristic of the agitators (6:13; 2:12) and indicates that Paul addresses the agitators in 5:2–3, not the Galatians. If Paul addresses the agitators in 5:2–3, as these references to circumcision indicate, then the agitators are probably also addressed in the entire section of 4:21–5:6. Indeed, two other considerations support this interpretation. Paul's exhortation in 5:1 and his description of the addresses in 4:21 pertain to the agitators more than to the Galatians.

According to context, Paul's exhortation in 5:1 to avoid submitting again to a yoke of slavery describes the agitators' pre-Christian state, not the Galatians'. Even though Oepke astutely notes that both were in a state of slavery, the yoke metaphor in this passage relates only to those enslaved under the law—namely, Jews.⁸⁰ This type of slavery does not pertain to the Galatians, who were enslaved to false deities and not the law (4:8–10).⁸¹ The pre-Christian slavery of Jews is different from that of Gentiles (Acts 15:10). Jews were under the tutelage of the law; they were under a *paidagōgos* until the Father's appointed time (Gal 3:23–25).⁸² Their slavery thus served some purpose in the plan of salva-

nen, *Paul and the Law*, 94–96; and H. Hübner, *Law in Paul's Thought* (Studies of the New Testament and its World; Edinburgh: Clark, 1984) 18–19. Since the law provides a means of addressing individual transgressions, Dunn argues that breaking the law refers to the breach of the covenant upon which the law is based since living from the law (Gal 3:10) excludes living from faith (*Theology*, 83–87). Either interpretation serves the argument of the present essay. However, Dunn's understanding is preferred. See the debate between C. E. B. Cranfield (“The Works of the Law” in the Epistle to the Romans,” *JSNT* 43 [1991] 89–101) and Dunn (“Yet Once More—The Works of the Law,” *JSNT* 46 [1992] 99–117).

⁷⁹ Dunn, *Theology*, 86; idem, “New Perspective,” 196–200.

⁸⁰ Oepke, *An die Galater*, 101–3. See also Betz, *Galatians*, 204; and F. Hahn, “Das Gesetzesverständnis im Römer- und Galaterbrief,” *ZNW* 67 (1976) 59. According to Hahn, the discussion of the law in Galatians primarily pertains to Jews, not Gentiles (pp. 51–53). Hahn admits that the law is not completely irrelevant to Gentiles, but the law pertains differently to Gentiles, who do not possess it, than to Jews, who do (pp. 34–35). Thus, he understands Gal 2:16 and 3:22, which place all under sin and deny the law the ability to justify anyone, as the only passages in Galatians that relate the law to the Gentiles (p. 52). On this issue of the relationship of Gentiles to the law, see Sanders, *Jewish People*, 81–82; and M. Barth, “Die Stellung des Paulus zu Gesetz und Ordnung,” *EvT* 33 (1973) 508–11.

⁸¹ Sanders, *Jewish People*, 69. Sanders, however, obscures this distinction. Dunn cogently argues that the phrase *ὑπὸ νόμου* includes Jews but not Gentiles (“Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law (Galatians 3:10–14),” *NTS* 31 [1985] 529). See also T. L. Donaldson, “The ‘Curse of the Law’ and the Inclusion of the Gentiles: Galatians 3.13–14,” *NTS* 32 (1986) 94–112.

⁸² To include the Gentiles under the *paidagōgos* metaphor, Sanders must ignore the shift in pronouns throughout this passage (*Jewish People*, 68–69). He concurs with B. Reicke that the first and second personal pronouns in this section do not refer to different groups (“The Law and this World According to Paul,” *JBL* 70 [1951] 259–76). Paul's argument in this section rests on his statement in 3:13–14 and depends on the first personal pronouns referring to Jews and the second personal pronouns to the Gentile Galatians. Christ redeemed the Jews from the curse of the law so that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles. Paul uses sudden shifts in the person of

tion.⁸³ The slavery of the Gentiles on the other hand was vain and led to no positive results.⁸⁴ The yoke metaphor in 5:1 can only be applied to the Galatians' pre-conversion state if important distinctions between the slavery of Jews and Gentiles are ignored.⁸⁵ According to Paul's gospel of freedom, the agitators were under the yoke of the law before becoming Christian; the Galatians, however, were not. Thus, 5:1 refers to the agitators, not the Galatians.

Paul's description of his addressees in 4:21 as those who desire to be under law also specifies the agitators, not the Galatians.⁸⁶ Throughout the letter, Paul describes the agitators as those who desire to be under law (2:4–5, 12; 3:1–2; 5:1, 4, 12; 6:12–13). In contrast, this desire is never attributed to the Galatians.⁸⁷ Interpreters usually cite the observance of the days, months, seasons, and years in Gal 4:10 as evidence for the Galatians' intention to live under law.⁸⁸ However, this passage designates a pagan temporal scheme, not a Jewish one.⁸⁹ There is simply no evidence in the letter to prove the Galatians desired to live according to the Jewish law. Indeed, the argument in Gal 3:5 presupposes that

the pronouns to make this point explicit. Since Jews as well as Gentiles are saved by faith in God's promises and not by the observance of the law, there can be no distinction between the two groups in the church (Gal 3:28). Paul uses pronouns to make a similar contrast between Jews and Gentiles in Gal 2:15. This contrast does not apply to every section of Galatians, however, and the antecedents of the personal pronouns in each section must be carefully considered from the standpoint of the flow of thought.

⁸³ Hahn, "Gesetzesverständnis," 56; see also Dunn, *Theology*, 88–90; and R. N. Longenecker, "The Pedagogical Nature of the Law in Galatians 3:19–4:7," *JETS* 25 (1982) 57–59.

⁸⁴ Lightfoot, however, argues that both Judaism and paganism had a salvific purpose (*Galatians*, 173).

⁸⁵ See Oepke, *An die Galater*, 102; and K. H. Rengstorf, "Ζυγός," *TDNT* 2. 899.

⁸⁶ The determination of the addressees in 4:21 relates to the discussion of those under law in 3:21–4:11, where Paul describes Jews and not Gentiles as those under law as Donaldson has demonstrated ("Curse," 94–112). Paul's use of the pronouns *we* and *you* suggests that he does not confuse the two groups. L. L. Belleville argues that the first person pronouns in 3:21–25 and 4:1–5 "refer specifically to pre-Christian, Jewish life under the law" ("Under Law: Structural Analysis and the Pauline Concept of Law in Galatians 3:21–4:11," *JSNT* 26 [1986] 68). In contrast, Paul uses second person pronouns in 3:26–29 and 4:6–11 to address his Gentile readers. Older commentators adopt a similar point of view. However, Schlier (*Galatians*, 193), Bruce (*Galatians*, 181), and Betz (*Galatians*, 204) take the alternative view that Paul refers to the pre-Christian state of both Jew and Gentile in 4:1–5. For a list of commentators on both sides of this issue, see Betz, *Galatians*, 204 n. 25. See also the excellent discussion by G. S. Duncan, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians* (MNTC; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1934) 129–30.

⁸⁷ Commentators who argue that the Galatians desire to be under law usually cite 4:21. See Burton, *Galatians*, 252; Mussner, *Galaterbrief*, 317; Oepke, *An die Galater*, 110; Ridderbos, *To Galatia*, 173; and Schlier, *An die Galater*, 216. Of course, these commentators' argument dissipates if 4:21 addresses the agitators and not the Galatians.

⁸⁸ For example, see Bonnard, *Aux Galates*, 90–91; Bruce, *Galatians*, 205; Burton, *Galatians*, 232–33; Dunn, *Theology*, 94; Ridderbos, *To Galatia*, 161–62, 173; and Schlier, *An die Galater*, 204. Betz (*Galatians*, 217) and Mussner (*Galaterbrief*, 303) agree that this temporal scheme relates to life under the law, but they do not think the Galatians are yet practicing this scheme.

⁸⁹ See Martin, "Time-keeping," *passim*.

the Galatians have not yet begun to live “under law.”⁹⁰ Thus, this description in 4:21 is more apropos to the agitators than the Galatians. Furthermore, Paul’s use of this descriptive phrase is necessary to denote a shift of subject from the preceding verse, where the Galatians are addressed, to v. 21, where the agitators are addressed in diatribe style.⁹¹

These arguments provide substantial warrant for viewing the agitators as those whom Paul addresses in 4:21–5:6. This understanding explains why the scriptural argument here is separated from the scriptural arguments in the previous section (3:7–4:7), where Paul validated his gospel over that of the agitators.⁹² In 4:21–5:6, Paul invalidates the agitators themselves.⁹³ He calls the agitators to account for their desire to be under law after the coming of Christ (4:21) and constructs an allegory from Abraham’s two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, to erode the agitators’ claim of being Abraham’s elect offspring.

A most important yet unstated assumption for this allegory is that both Ishmael and Isaac were circumcised (Gen 17:23–26; 21:4).⁹⁴ Nevertheless, only through Isaac, the son of promise, were Abraham’s descendants named (Gen 21:12) even though Ishmael, the son of the slave woman, would produce a nation (Gen 21:13). Paul describes Ishmael as born completely through human design (κατὰ σάρκα, Gal 4:23, 29) from the slave woman even though he bore the mark of circumcision. Furthermore, he did not receive the inheritance (4:30) and persecuted Isaac (4:29b). The distinguishing mark of Abraham’s elect son was birth from a free mother according to the promise (Gal 4:22–23). For Paul, those who desire to be under law identify with the slave Ishmael (4:25, 30–31), originate from human design (4:29a), fail to gain the inheritance (4:30), and persecute the promised heirs (4:29b). In contrast, Abraham’s true heirs are free (4:26, 30–31), originate from promise (4:28) and spirit (4:29), and receive Abraham’s inheritance (4:30).⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Betz, *Galatians*, 136.

⁹¹ Donaldson, “Curse,” 97.

⁹² For other solutions to this problem, see Betz, *Galatians*, 239 nn. 4, 5. The usual criticisms are that the scriptural argument is superfluous or misplaced.

⁹³ Betz correctly notes that Paul returns to *interrogatio* in this section (*Galatians*, 240); however, he identifies the Galatians, not the agitators, as those being addressed. C. K. Barrett connects the origin of this allegory with the opponents and their propaganda (“The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians,” in *Rechtfertigung: Festschrift für Ernst Käsemann* [ed. J. Friedrich; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1976] 1–16). He contends, however, that 4:30 is addressed to God’s eschatological agents and expresses the fate of the circumcision party (p. 13).

⁹⁴ This allegory is often understood as a continuation of the scriptural arguments begun in 3:7–4:7 that establish circumcision as an unnecessary mark of the Christian covenant. See Burton, *Galatians*, 251; Oepke, *An die Galater*, 110; and Betz, *Galatians*, 238. Since Ishmael and Isaac were both circumcised, however, this allegory cannot prove the irrelevancy of circumcision as the previous scriptural material does, but it can invalidate the circumcised agitators by associating them with Ishmael rather than Isaac. Paul’s testimony in 5:6 and his previous arguments from scripture in 3:7–4:7 invalidate circumcision as a sign of the Christian covenant; the allegory in 4:21–5:1 invalidates the proponents of circumcision themselves.

⁹⁵ Barrett perceives this connection as the primary point of the allegory. According to Bar-

Paul designs this allegory to prove that those who desire to be under law and practice the distinctions of circumcision are not the elected offspring of Abraham even though they are circumcised. Paul concludes that only those who enjoy the freedom from the law provided by Christ are truly heirs of Abraham (4:30). He exhorts those who desire to be under law not to submit again to the yoke of slavery under the law (5:1). Paul's allegory from scripture excludes those who desire to be under law from the covenant of promise.⁹⁶ This allegory erodes the agitators' insistence upon law and circumcision as marks of the covenant and even places them outside of the covenant since their antagonistic behavior toward the Galatians associates the agitators with Ishmael rather than Isaac.⁹⁷

In 5:2–6, Paul sharpens his refutation of the agitators by bringing his own testimony against them. Paul testifies that those who practice circumcision as a mark of the covenant do not receive Christ's benefits (5:2), become transgressors since they do not actually keep the law (5:3; 6:13; cf. 3:10), are separated from Christ in their attempt to practice the legal distinctions between themselves and others (5:4a), and fall from grace (5:4b).⁹⁸ In contrast, he testifies that those in Christ and not under law expect the hope of righteousness through faith (5:5) and perceive the decisive distinction between themselves and others as faith operating through love (5:6b).⁹⁹ For Christians, the distinction between the circumcised and uncircumcised is irrelevant (5:6a; cf. 3:28).¹⁰⁰ Paul's testimony, like the allegory in the previous section, excludes those who desire to be under law from those in Christ. The agitators seek to exclude the Galatians from the Christian covenant (4:17); Paul through scriptural allegory and testimony excludes the agitators.¹⁰¹

rett, Paul constructs this analogy because the agitators use the plain meaning of the Abraham story to compel the Galatians to circumcise ("Allegory," 10). The present essay argues that the Hagar material is more important to Paul's case than the Sarah material. Cosgrove correctly observes that Paul emphasizes the agitators' connection with Ishmael rather than the Galatians' relationship to Isaac (*Cross*, 81–82).

⁹⁶ Dunn, *Theology*, 91.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 96–97. See also D. H. King, "Paul and the Tannaim: A Study in Galatians," *WTJ* 45 (1983) 368–69; and G. W. Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians* (JSNTSup 29; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989) 146–47.

⁹⁸ Sanders rejects the notion that human inability to keep the law is a basic assumption in Paul's argument (*Jewish People*, 22–25, 27), and Dunn concurs ("Yet Once More," 116). See Phil 3:6. The argument in Gal 3:10, however, requires at the very least an assumption that no one *does* observe all the law even though the argument does not address whether or not one *could* observe all the law. Thus, Paul's assumption is descriptive rather than theoretical. Paul's accusation probably addresses failure to achieve the purpose of the law rather than failure to keep individual precepts. See Barclay, *Obeying*, 139.

⁹⁹ Eckert, *Verkündigung*, 37.

¹⁰⁰ Dunn, *Theology*, 99.

¹⁰¹ In his address to these agitators in 4:21–5:6, Paul uses inclusive language (4:26, 31; 5:1, 5) and Christian labels such as *brother* (4:28, 31) because this discussion is an intra-Christian debate. These circumcised agitators consider themselves to be the true members of the Christian commu-

(e) 5:7: Fifth Transitional Question

In 5:7–10, Paul applies his preceding refutation of the agitators to the Galatians' behavior.¹⁰² He asks the Galatians who has hindered them from obeying the truth (5:7). He asserts that the additional requirements advocated by the agitators were not part of the original agreement made between the Galatians and himself, acting on behalf of God (5:8). He expects the Galatians to agree with him (5:10a) that circumcision and observance of the law are not requirements of the Christian gospel. Paul concludes his refutation of the troublemakers by placing the blame for the troubles in Galatia squarely on them (5:10b).

(f) 5:11: Sixth Transitional Question

Having dismissed the circumcision gospel and those who proclaim it, Paul now proceeds in 5:11–6:10 to reiterate the requirements of his gospel as the basis for his original agreement with the Galatians.¹⁰³ He reminds them of his circumcision-free gospel (5:11) and its sharp contrast with the "other gospel" advocated by his opponents (5:12). Paul's gospel summons the Galatians to live a life of freedom in loving service (*δουλεύετε*) to one another (5:13). Their love for one another fulfills the entire law (5:14; cf. 6:2). As they are led by the spirit and not by the law, they produce the fruit of the spirit in their lives and shun the works of the flesh (5:15–26). Their community life is characterized by relationships arising from the spirit and not the flesh (6:1–10). Paul encourages the Galatians to continue in his gospel by effecting the good for all and especially for the household of faith until the coming of the Lord (6:9–10).

Body-Closing

In the body-closing (6:11–17), which precedes the farewell (6:18), Paul reviews the points he has made in the body-middle. The agitators should be ignored because they possess impure motives and are transgressors of the law (6:12–13).¹⁰⁴ Paul's circumcision-free gospel, which produces a new creation, is the valid Christian gospel since in Christ circumcision and uncircumcision do not matter (6:14–15). Only those who continue in this new creation and do not return to the old pagan life-style are blessed with peace and mercy; it is these

nity. Paul accepts them as Christians but demonstrates that by their desire to be under law they actually exclude themselves from this community.

¹⁰² The shift in subject is marked by Paul's statement, "You were running well" (5:7a). This statement pertains only to the Galatians, not the agitators.

¹⁰³ Barclay surveys the various ways Gal 5:13–6:10 has been related or unrelated to the preceding material (*Obeying*, 9–26).

¹⁰⁴ Howard rejects the view that the agitators taught only part of the law (*Crisis*, 15). Instead, he argues that the function of Gal 6:13 is to damage the influence of the troublemakers by asserting that they do not keep the law perfectly. Eckert discusses the possible relationships of the agitators to the law (*Verkündigung*, 41–42).

who constitute the Israel of God (6:16). Paul summons the Galatians not to furnish him with labors by continuing their apostasy (6:17a; cf. 4:11, 19). He reminds the Galatians that he is the legitimate representative of Jesus Christ and has the right to dispatch this letter to them (6:17b). He certifies that this letter is not a forgery by affixing his own hand (6:11).¹⁰⁵ This body-closing concludes the body of the letter and Paul's argumentation as well.

IV. Identifying the Species of Rhetoric

The preceding investigation has applied rhetorical theory to the Galatian controversy. The stasis of this controversy was identified as a stasis of quality. Paul charges the Galatians with apostasy from Christianity to paganism. The Galatians do not deny this charge but claim justification because the valid Christian gospel requires circumcision and observance of the law, neither of which is acceptable to them. Paul objects that the true gospel does not contain these requirements. The Galatians respond that it does require circumcision because some individuals have told them the truth. Paul's letter dismisses both of the Galatians' justifications by refuting the circumcision gospel as well as its proponents. Paul shifts the blame for the Galatians' apostasy to the agitators. If the Galatians continue in their apostasy after receiving this letter, however, they will be without excuse and will receive Paul's blame when he is again present with them (4:20).

This reconstruction of the Galatian controversy enables identification of the species of rhetoric to which Galatians belongs. H. D. Betz originally placed Galatians in the category of forensic rhetoric, but subsequent scholars increasingly prefer the deliberative category.¹⁰⁶ This disagreement arises both from misunderstanding the stases of the Galatian controversy and from ambiguity in the determining criteria for each of these rhetorical species.¹⁰⁷ Since Paul is not in a court of law and he is seeking to persuade the Galatians to alter their behavior, several scholars conclude that Galatians cannot pertain to forensic rhetoric.¹⁰⁸ However, forensic rhetoric was often practiced outside the courtroom as the numerous classroom examples illustrate. In addition, forensic rhetoric sometimes seeks to persuade someone to adopt a different course of action. For example, a plaintiff may seek the aid of the court to force a defendant in breach of contract to fulfill the original agreement or pay damages.

¹⁰⁵ Quintilian's discussion of these practices may explain why Paul signs his name in such large letters and calls the Galatians to witness his signature (*Institutio Oratoria* 5.5.1; 5.7.1; Butler, *Quintilian*, 2, 164–65, 168–69). Their witness verifies the genuineness of the letter.

¹⁰⁶ Betz, *Galatians*, 24. Hall rejects Betz's forensic identification and argues for the deliberative species instead ("Rhetorical Outline," 277–87). See Bachmann (*Sünder*, 15–18, esp. nn. 125–26), who prefers the deliberative species (pp. 159–60).

¹⁰⁷ For example, compare Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1.3.3–5) with Quintilian (*Institutio Oratoria* 3.4.1–16).

¹⁰⁸ Hall presents the essential contours of this argument ("Rhetorical Outline," 278–82).

Thus, the distinguishing criteria used by scholars in identifying the species of rhetoric are inadequate.

A much more promising approach is that of Seneca the Elder. He distinguishes *controversiae*, which are issues that may be argued in a court of law, from *suasoriae*, which cannot.¹⁰⁹ According to this approach, Galatians is a *controversiae*, not a *suasoriae*. The breach of the original agreement between Paul and the Galatians represents an issue that could be tried in a court of law. Of course, whether this issue would ever come to trial depends on the decision of the plaintiff in this case, namely, Paul.¹¹⁰ Galatians, therefore, belongs in the category of forensic rhetoric as Betz concluded even though its initial reading occurs outside a courtroom.

Although it belongs to forensic rhetoric, Galatians is a letter and not a speech designed for the courtroom.¹¹¹ It is a pre-trial letter written to an offending party to summon that party back to the original agreement. The letter removes two legal maneuvers available to the defendants if the case should ever come to trial. The Galatians cannot shift the blame for their apostasy to a change in the original agreement since Paul verifies that the original agreement remains intact. Neither can the Galatians shift the blame for their acceptance of the circumcision gospel as the valid Christian gospel to the agitators, since Paul refutes these insincere troublemakers as perverters of the true gospel. If this case should ever come to trial, the letter to the Galatians is one of the documents the plaintiff, Paul, would most certainly enter as evidence against the defendants, the Galatians.¹¹²

It is unlikely this case would ever find its way into a Roman courtroom at Paul's instigation. At several places, however, Paul reminds the Galatians of an eschatological judgment.¹¹³ He mentions the judgment borne by the troublemakers (5:10) and warns the Galatians that those who perform the works of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God (5:21). He develops the eschatological judgment metaphor of sowing and reaping in 6:7–10 and threatens more severe

¹⁰⁹ Seneca the Elder usually begins each *controversia* by quoting a law pertinent to the case as well as a short description of the actions in dispute (M. Winterbottom, *The Elder Seneca* [LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974] xvi). He begins his *suasoriae* with the following formula: "X, in circumstances Y, deliberates" (Winterbottom, *Seneca*, xx). See also Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 3.4.6–7; and Nadeau, "Hermogenes," 368.

¹¹⁰ Lyons refutes prior identifications of Galatians as forensic (*Autobiography*, 112–21); however, the studies he dismisses only consider Paul's self-defense or his accusations against opponents. The present study identifies Galatians as forensic in that Paul accuses the Galatians. Thus, Lyons's criticisms do not pertain to the present study.

¹¹¹ Galatians should be analyzed as a letter since it is written in epistolary form. Rhetorical analyses should not indiscriminately superimpose the structure of a speech upon the epistolary structure, as M. M. Mitchell correctly notes (*Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation* [Louisville: Westminster, 1992] 10 n. 33, 22 n. 5).

¹¹² Thus, the letter functions as an inartificial proof (*ἄτεχνος*). See Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 5.1.1–2; Butler, *Quintilian*, 2. 156–57.

¹¹³ Dunn discusses other apocalyptic aspects (*Theology*, 46–52).

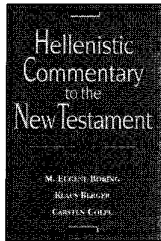
action than the letter when he is again present with the Galatians if they do not return to the agreement (4:20). Further, the conditional blessing in 6:16 carries an implicit threat against those who do not return to life according to Paul's gospel.¹¹⁴ Paul's pre-trial letter removes the potential excuses the Galatians might offer at the eschatological judgment for their abandonment of the deity Paul proclaims. Of course, the Galatians can avoid such an eventuality by renouncing their return to paganism and resuming their life according to Paul's gospel.

Galatians is in the tradition of a divine lawsuit (רִיב). Like the prophets of old, Paul threatens the Galatians with legal proceedings for breach of contract. Paul emphasizes his apostleship to establish his right to represent the deity in the proceedings. Like the prophets, Paul continues addressing his audience as covenant partners because he refuses to ratify their apostasy by letting them go. In the Hebrew Bible, God also refused to accept the apostasy of the Israelites by concluding the legal suit. Both the prophets and Paul exert pressure on the unfaithful partner to return to covenant faithfulness. Perhaps Paul's legal action was more successful than the efforts of his prophetic counterparts, but rendering a verdict on this issue requires further investigation.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Betz, *Galatians*, 321.

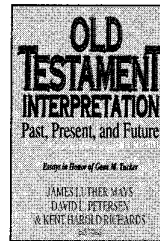
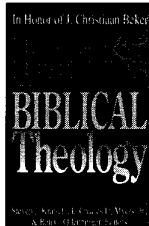
¹¹⁵ If Galatians were written before 1 Cor 16:1, then the Galatians' participation in the collection for Jerusalem indicates that they renounced their apostasy and the letter achieved Paul's objective.

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