

# English: Unlocked Literal Bible for Galatians

Formatted for Translators

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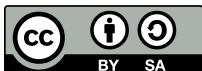
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# Introduction to Galatians

## Part 1: General Introduction

### Outline of the Book of Galatians

1. Paul declares his authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ; he says that he is surprised by the false teachings that the Christians in Galatia have accepted from other people (1:1-10).
2. Paul says that people are saved by trusting in Christ alone, not by keeping the law (1:11-2:21).
3. God puts people right with himself only when they trust in Christ; the example of Abraham; the curse which the law brings (and not a means of salvation); slavery and freedom compared and illustrated by Hagar and Sarah (3:1-4:31).
4. When people are joined to Christ, they become free from having to keep the law of Moses. They are also free to live as the Holy Spirit guides them. They are free to refuse the demands of sin. They are free to bear each other's burdens (5:1-6:10).
5. Paul warns the Christians not to trust in being circumcised and in keeping the law of Moses. Instead, they must trust in Christ (6:11-18).

### Who wrote the Book of Galatians?

Paul from the city of Tarsus was the author. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he began to trust in Jesus Christ, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

It is uncertain when Paul wrote this letter and where he was when he wrote it. Some scholars think Paul was in the city of Ephesus and wrote this letter after the second time he traveled to tell people about Jesus. Other scholars think Paul was in the city of Antioch in Syria and wrote the letter soon after the first time he traveled.

### What is the Book of Galatians about?

Paul wrote this letter to both Jewish and non-Jewish Christians in the region of Galatia. He wanted to write against the false teachers who said that Christians need to follow the law of Moses. Paul defended the gospel by explaining that a person is saved by believing in Jesus Christ. People are saved as result of God being kind and not as a result of people doing good works. No person can perfectly obey the law. Any attempt to please God by obeying the law of Moses will only result in God condemning them. (See: goodnews, save, faith and lawofmoses and works)

### How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Galatians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Letter to the Church in Galatia."

## Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

### What does it mean to "live like Jews" (2:14)?

To "live like Jews" means to obey the law of Moses, even though one trusts in Christ. The people among the early Christians who taught that this was necessary were called "Judaizers."

## Part 3: Important Translation Issues

### How did Paul use the terms "law" and "grace" in the Book of Galatians?

These terms are used in a unique way in Galatians. There is an important teaching in Galatians about Christian living. Under the law of Moses, righteous or holy living required a person to obey a set of rules and regulations. As Christians, holy living is now motivated by grace. This means that Christians have freedom in Christ and are not required to obey a specific set of rules. Instead, Christians are to live a holy life because they are thankful that God has been so kind to them. This is called "the law of Christ." (See: righteous and holy)

### What did Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

This kind of expression occurs in 1:22; 2:4, 17; 3:14, 26, 28; 5:6, 10. Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers—that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the the context, the word "in" can mean "because of," "by means of," "that agrees with," "in submission to," "in the manner of," or "in regard to." See, for example, "when we seek for God to justify us in Christ" (2:17), where Paul spoke of being justified by means of Christ. The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of "in union with." (See: inchrist)

### What are the major issues in the text of the Book of Galatians?

- "Foolish Galatians! Who has put a spell on you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly displayed as crucified"

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## Galatians

<sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle—not an apostle from men nor by human agency, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—<sup>2</sup>and all the brothers with me, to the churches of Galatia:

<sup>3</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>4</sup>who gave himself for our sins so that he might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father:<sup>5</sup>to him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

<sup>6</sup>I am amazed that you are turning away so quickly from him who called you by the grace of Christ. I am amazed that you are turning to a different gospel,<sup>7</sup>not that there is another gospel, but there are some men who cause you trouble and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

<sup>8</sup>But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a gospel other than the one we proclaimed to you, let him be cursed.<sup>9</sup>As we have said before, so now I say again, "If someone proclaims to you a gospel other than the one you received, let him be cursed."<sup>10</sup>For am I now seeking the favor of men or of God? Am I seeking to please men? If I am still trying to please men, I am not a servant of Christ.

<sup>11</sup>For I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I proclaimed is not man's gospel.<sup>12</sup>I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it. Instead, it was by revelation of Jesus Christ to me.

<sup>13</sup>You have heard about my former life in Judaism, how I was persecuting the church of God beyond measure and that I was trying to destroy it.<sup>14</sup>I advanced in Judaism beyond many of those who were my own age, from out of my own people. That is how extremely zealous I was for the traditions of my fathers.

<sup>15</sup>But when God, who had set me apart from my mother's womb, and who called me through his grace, was pleased<sup>16</sup>to reveal his Son in me, so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood.<sup>17</sup>I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who had become apostles before me. Instead, I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus.

<sup>18</sup>Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to get to know Cephas and I stayed with him fifteen days.<sup>19</sup>But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.<sup>20</sup>In what I write to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.  
<sup>21</sup>Then I went to the regions of Syria and Cilicia.<sup>22</sup>I was still not known by face to the churches of Judea that are in Christ.<sup>23</sup>They only heard it being said, "The man who once persecuted us is now proclaiming as good news the faith he once tried to destroy."<sup>24</sup>So they glorified God because of me.

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# Galatians 1 General Notes

## Structure and formatting

Paul started this letter differently than his other letters. He adds that he was "not an apostle from men nor by human agency, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead ones." Paul probably included these words because false teachers were opposing him and trying to undermine his authority.

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Heresy

God eternally saves people only through the true, biblical gospel. God condemns any other version of the gospel. Paul asks God to curse those who teach a false gospel. They might not be saved. They should be treated as non-Christians. (See: save, eternity, goodnews and condemn and curse)

### Paul's qualifications

Some people in the early church were teaching that Gentiles needed to obey the law of Moses. To refute this teaching, in verses 13-16 Paul explains how he was formerly a zealous Jew. But God still needed to save him and show him the true gospel. As a Jew, and the apostle to Gentile people, Paul was uniquely qualified to address this issue. (See: lawofmoses)

## Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"You are turning so quickly to a different gospel"

The Book of Galatians is one of Paul's earliest letters in Scripture. It shows that heresies troubled even the early church.

## Links:

- [Galatians 1:1 Notes](#)
  - [Galatians intro](#)
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Galatians 1:1	who raised him
General Information:	"who caused him to live again"
Paul, an apostle, writes this letter to the churches in the area of Galatia. Unless noted otherwise, all instances of "you" and "your" in this letter refer to the Galatians and are plural.	Galatians 1:2  brothers  Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women, since all believers in Christ are members

of one spiritual family, with God as their heavenly Father. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters"

Galatians 1:3

General Information:

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Galatians 1:4

for our sins

"Sins" is a metonym the punishment for sin. Alternate translation: "to take the punishment we deserved because of our sins"

that he might deliver us from this present evil age

Here "this ... age" represents the powers at work in the age. Alternate translation: "that he might bring us to a place of safety from the evil powers at work in the world today"

our God and Father

This refers to "God our Father." He is our God and our Father.

Galatians 1:5

General Information:

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Galatians 1:6

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives his reason for writing this letter: he reminds them to continue to understand the gospel.

I am amazed

"I am surprised" or "I am shocked." Paul was disappointed that they were doing this.

you are turning away so quickly from him

Here "turning away ... from him" is a metaphor for started to doubt or no longer trust God. Alternate translation: "you are so quickly starting to doubt him"

him who called you

"God, who called you"

called

Here this means God has appointed or chosen people to be his children, to serve him, and to proclaim his message of salvation through Jesus.

by the grace of Christ

"because of Christ's grace" or "because of Christ's gracious sacrifice"

you are turning to a different gospel

Here "turning to" is a metaphor that means to start to believe something. Alternate translation: "you are instead starting to believe a different gospel"

Galatians 1:7

some men

"some people"

Galatians 1:8

But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim ... let him be cursed

Paul said this to show how strongly he felt about anyone who might proclaim a gospel other than the one he had proclaimed. If anyone would do that, that person should be cursed. Alternate translation: "But even if we or an angel from heaven were to proclaim ... let him be cursed"

But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim

The word "even" shows that Paul did not believe that they or an angel from heaven would ever proclaim a different gospel. But he includes himself and angels in his statement to emphasize how wrong it would be for anyone to proclaim a different gospel.

other than the one

"different from the gospel" or "different from the message"

let him be cursed

"God should punish that person forever." If your language has a common way of calling a curse down on someone, you should use that.

## Galatians 1:9

General Information:

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## Galatians 1:10

For am I now seeking the favor of men or of God? Am I seeking to please men?

These rhetorical questions expect the answer "no."  
Alternate translation: "I do not seek the favor of men, but instead I seek the favor of God. I am not seeking to please men."

If I am still trying to please men, I am not a servant of Christ

Both the "if" phrase and the "then" phrase are contrary to fact. "I am not still trying to please men; I am a servant of Christ" or "If I were still trying to please men, then I would not be a servant of Christ"

## Galatians 1:11

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains that he did not learn the gospel from others; he learned it from Jesus Christ.

brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

is not man's gospel

By using this phrase, Paul was not trying to say that Jesus Christ is not himself human. Because Christ is both man and God, however, he is not a sinful human being. Paul is writing about where the gospel came from; it did not come from sinful human beings, but it came from Jesus Christ.

## Galatians 1:12

it was by revelation of Jesus Christ to me

Possible meanings are 1) "Jesus Christ himself revealed the gospel to me" or 2) "God made me know the gospel when he showed me who Jesus Christ was."

## Galatians 1:13

former life

"behavior at one time" or "prior life" or "earlier life"

## Galatians 1:14

I advanced

This metaphor pictures Paul as being ahead of other Jews his age in their goal to be perfect Jews.

those who were my own age

"the Jewish people who are the same age as I am"

my fathers

"my ancestors"

## Galatians 1:15

and who called me through his grace

Possible meanings of "through his grace" are 1) this tells why God called Paul. Alternate translation: "and who called me to serve him because he is gracious" or 2) this tells how God called Paul. Alternate translation: "and who called me by means of his grace."

## Galatians 1:16

to reveal his Son in me

Possible meanings are 1) "to allow me to know his Son" or 2) "to show the world through me that Jesus is God's Son."

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

preach him

"proclaim that he is God's Son" or "preach the good news about God's Son"

consult with flesh and blood

This is an expression that means talking with other people. Alternate translation: "ask people to help me understand the message"

#### Galatians 1:17

go up to Jerusalem

"go to Jerusalem." Jerusalem was in a region of high hills, making it necessary to climb many hills in order to get there, and so it was common to describe travel to Jerusalem as "going up to Jerusalem."

#### Galatians 1:18

General Information:

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#### Galatians 1:19

I saw none of the other apostles except James

This double negative emphasizes that James was the only apostle whom Paul saw. Alternate translation: "I saw only one of the other apostles, and that was James" or "the only other apostle I saw was James"

#### Galatians 1:20

before God

Paul wants the Galatians to understand that Paul is completely serious and that he knows that God hears what he says and will judge him if he does not tell the truth.

In what I write to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying

Paul uses litotes to emphasize that he is telling the truth. Alternate translation: "I am not lying to you in the messages I write to you" or "in the things I write to you I am telling you the truth"

#### Galatians 1:21

the regions of Syria and Cilicia

"the parts of the world called Syria and Cilicia"

#### Galatians 1:22

I was still not known by face to the churches of Judea that are in Christ

"No one in the churches of Judea that are in Christ knew what I looked like" or "None of the people in the churches of Judea that are in Christ had ever met me"

#### Galatians 1:23

They only heard it being said

"They only knew what they heard others saying about me"

#### Galatians 1:24

General Information:

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<sup>2</sup> Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me.<sup>3</sup> I went up because of a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I spoke privately to those who seemed to be important, in order to make sure that I was not running—or had not run—in vain.

<sup>3</sup> But not even Titus, who was with me and who was a Greek, was forced to be circumcised.<sup>4</sup> The false brothers came in secretly to spy on the liberty we have in Christ Jesus. They desired to enslave us,<sup>5</sup> but we did not yield in submission to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.

<sup>6</sup> But those who seemed to be important (whatever they were does not matter to me; God shows no partiality)—those, I say, who seemed important added nothing to me.<sup>7</sup> On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to those who are uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to those who are circumcised.<sup>8</sup> For God, who worked in Peter for the apostleship to those who are circumcised, also worked in me to the Gentiles.

<sup>9</sup> When James, Cephas, and John, who had a reputation as pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles and they should go to the circumcised.<sup>10</sup> They requested only that we remember the poor, the very thing that I was eager to do.

<sup>11</sup> But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned.<sup>12</sup> Before certain men came from James, Cephas was eating with the Gentiles. But when these men came, he stopped and kept away from the Gentiles. He was afraid of those who were demanding circumcision.

<sup>13</sup> Also the rest of the Jews joined in this hypocrisy. Even Barnabas was led astray with them by their hypocrisy.

<sup>14</sup> But when I saw that their behavior was not following the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of all of them, "If you are a Jew but are living like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

<sup>15</sup> We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners;<sup>16</sup> yet we know that no person is justified by the works of the law but through faith in Christ Jesus. So we also have believed in Christ Jesus so that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law. For by the works of the law no flesh will be justified.

<sup>17</sup> But if, while we seek to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? Absolutely not!<sup>18</sup> For if I rebuild those things I once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor.<sup>19</sup> For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>20</sup> It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.<sup>21</sup> I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, then Christ died for nothing!

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<sup>1</sup> Some translations include this sentence with verse 20.

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## Galatians 2 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Paul continues to defend the true gospel. This began in [Galatians 1:11](#).

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Circumcised and uncircumcised

The law of Moses required Jewish males to be circumcised. The Jews called Gentiles "the uncircumcised."

#### Slavery and freedom

Paul introduces these ideas in Galatians 2:4. He uses the metaphor of slavery for people who are obligated to obey the law of Moses. He uses the metaphor of freedom, or liberty, for people who are not obligated to obey the law of Moses because they trust in Jesus Christ to make them righteous.

## The false brothers

When Paul says that false brothers wanted to make the believers slaves, he is referring to Jews who claimed to be Christians and who wanted to convince Gentile Christians to obey the law of Moses.

## The hypocrisy of Cephas

Jews normally did not eat with Gentiles because Gentiles did not obey the law of Moses. Cephas knew that Gentile Christians are not obligated to obey the law of Moses, and because of this, he knew that it was permissible to eat with them. However, when some men came saying that Gentile Christians are obligated to obey the law, Cephas stopped eating with the Gentiles Christians, as if he, too, believed that they need to obey the law of Moses. Paul rebuked Cephas for treating the Gentile Christians like that.

## Links:

- [Galatians 2:1 Notes](#)

### Galatians 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to give the history of how he learned the gospel from God, not the apostles.

went up

"traveled." Jerusalem is located in hilly country. The Jews also viewed Jerusalem as the place on earth that is closest to heaven, so Paul may have been speaking figuratively, or it may be that it was reflecting the difficult, uphill, journey to get to Jerusalem.

### Galatians 2:2

those who seemed to be important

"the most important leaders among the believers"

I was not running—or had not run—in vain

Paul uses running as a metaphor for work. Alternate translation: "I was doing, or had done, profitable work"

in vain

"for no benefit" or "for nothing"

### Galatians 2:3

to be circumcised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to have someone circumcise him"

### Galatians 2:4

The false brothers came in secretly

"People who pretended to be Christians came into the church," or "People who pretended to be Christians came among us"

spy on the liberty

secretly watch people to see how they live in liberty

liberty

freedom

They desired

"These spies desired" or "These false brothers wanted"

to enslave us

"to make us slaves to the law." Paul is speaking about being forced to follow the Jewish rituals that the law commanded. He is speaking about this as if it were slavery. The most important ritual was circumcision. Alternate translation: "to force us to obey the law"

### Galatians 2:5

yield in submission

"submit" or "listen"

## Galatians 2:6

added nothing to me

The word "me" here represents what Paul was teaching. Alternate translation: "added nothing to what I teach" or "did not tell me to add anything to what I teach"

## Galatians 2:7

On the contrary

"Instead" or "Rather"

I had been entrusted ... Peter had been entrusted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God trusted me ... God trusted Peter"

had been entrusted with the gospel to those

"had been given the responsibility of preaching the gospel to those"

## Galatians 2:8

General Information:

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## Galatians 2:9

who had a reputation as pillars

A pillar is a post that supports a building. This is a metaphor meaning important leaders. Alternate translation: "who were known to be important leaders" or "who were known to be important leaders of the church"

recognized the grace that had been given to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "recognized the grace that God had given to me"

the grace that had been given to me

The abstract noun "grace" can be translated with the phrase "be kind." Alternate translation: "that God had been kind to me"

gave ... the right hand of fellowship

Grasping and shaking the right hand was a symbol of fellowship. Alternate translation: "welcomed ... as fellow workers" or "welcomed ... with honor"

## Galatians 2:10

remember the poor

You may need to make explicit what about the poor he was to remember. Alternate translation: "remember to take care of the needs of the poor"

## Galatians 2:11

I opposed him to his face

The words "to his face" are a metonym for "where he could see and hear me." Alternate translation: "I confronted him in person" or "I challenged his actions in person"

## Galatians 2:12

Before

in relation to time

he stopped

"he stopped eating with them"

He was afraid of those who were demanding circumcision

The reason Cephas was afraid can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "He was afraid that these men who required circumcision would judge that he was doing something wrong" or "He was afraid that these men who required circumcision would blame him for doing something wrong"

those who were demanding circumcision

Jews who had become Christians, but who demanded that those who believe in Christ live according to Jewish customs

kept away from

"stayed away from" or "avoided"

## Galatians 2:13

this hypocrisy

Paul calls Peter's staying away from the Gentiles "this hypocrisy" because Peter was pretending to be like those Jews who say that Gentile Christians have to be circumcised.

Even Barnabas was led astray with them by their hypocrisy

Here to be "led astray" is a metaphor for being persuaded to do something wrong. Alternate translation: "Even Barnabas was persuaded to be a hypocrite because of them"

## Galatians 2:14

their behavior was not following the truth of the gospel

"they were not living according to the truth of the gospel"

how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?

This rhetorical question is a rebuke and can be translated as a statement. The word "you" is singular and refers to Peter. Alternate translation: "you are wrong to force the Gentiles to live like Jews."

force

Possible meanings are 1) force by using words or 2) persuade.

## Galatians 2:15

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells the believers that Jews who know the law, as well as Gentiles who do not know the law, are saved only by faith in Christ and not by keeping the law.

not Gentile sinners

"not those whom the Jews call Gentile sinners"

## Galatians 2:16

we

This probably refers to Paul and others but not to the Galatians, who were primarily Gentiles.

no flesh

The word "flesh" is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "no person"

## Galatians 2:17

while we seek to be justified in Christ

The phrase "justified in Christ" means justified because we are united with Christ and justified by means of Christ.

we too were found to be sinners

The words "were found to be" are an idiom that emphasizes that "we are" certainly sinners. Alternate translation: "we see that we also certainly are sinners"

Absolutely not!

"Of course, that is not true!" This expression gives the strongest possible negative answer to the preceding rhetorical question "Does Christ become a servant of sin?" You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here.

## Galatians 2:18

General Information:

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## Galatians 2:19

General Information:

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## Galatians 2:20

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

## Galatians 2:21

I do not set aside the grace of God

"I do not reject the grace of God" or "I do not consider God's grace to be worthless"

the grace of God

Paul is speaking of God's kindness to us. Christ died for us so that we can be justified.

if righteousness could be gained through the law, then Christ died for nothing

Paul uses this statement to argue that righteousness cannot be gained through the law. If it could be then there was no need for Christ to die to give us

righteousness, because we could gain it ourselves by obeying the law.

if righteousness could be gained through the law

"if people could become righteous by obeying the law"

then Christ died for nothing

"then Christ would have accomplished nothing by dying"

**3** <sup>1</sup>Foolish Galatians! Who has put a spell on you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly displayed as crucified.<sup>2</sup>This is the only thing I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?<sup>3</sup>Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now going to be perfected by the flesh?

<sup>4</sup>Have you suffered so many things for nothing—if indeed it was for nothing?<sup>5</sup>Does he who gives the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?

<sup>6</sup>Just as Abraham "believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness,"<sup>7</sup>in the same way, understand, then, that those of faith are the children of Abraham.<sup>8</sup>The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you all the nations will be blessed."<sup>9</sup>So then, those of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

<sup>10</sup>All who rely on the works of the law are under a curse; and so it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law, and do them."<sup>11</sup>Now it is clear that no one is justified before God by the law, because "the righteous will live by faith."<sup>12</sup>But the law is not of faith; rather, "The person who does the works of the law must live by them."

<sup>13</sup>Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"—<sup>14</sup>so that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

<sup>15</sup>Brothers, let me speak in human terms. Once a man-made contract is established by law, no one can set it aside or add to it.<sup>16</sup>Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his descendant. It does not say, "to descendants," referring to many, but instead to only one, "and to your descendant," who is Christ.

<sup>17</sup>Now what I am saying is this: The law, which came 430 years afterward, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God, to nullify the promise.<sup>18</sup>For if the inheritance comes by the law, then it no longer comes by promise. But God freely gave it to Abraham by a promise.

<sup>19</sup>What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the descendant of Abraham would come to whom the promise had been made. The law was ordained through angels by the hand of an intermediary.<sup>20</sup>Now an intermediary implies more than one person. But God is one.

<sup>21</sup>So is the law against the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.<sup>22</sup>But the scripture imprisoned everything under sin so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

<sup>23</sup>Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until faith should be revealed.<sup>24</sup>So then the law became our guardian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith.<sup>25</sup>But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.<sup>26</sup>For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

<sup>27</sup>For as many of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.<sup>28</sup>There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.<sup>29</sup>Then if you are Christ's, you are Abraham's descendants, and heirs according to promise.

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## Galatians 3 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Equality in Christ

All Christians are equally united to Christ. Ancestry, gender, and status do not matter. All are equal with each other. All are equal in the eyes of God.

## Important figures of speech in this chapter

### Rhetorical Questions

Paul uses many different rhetorical questions in this chapter. He uses them to convince the Galatians of their sin. (See: and sin)

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### Flesh

This is a complex issue. "Flesh" is possibly a metaphor for our sinful nature. Paul is not teaching that the physical part of man is sinful. "Flesh" is used in this chapter to contrast with that which is spiritual. (See: flesh)

"Those of faith are children of Abraham"

Scholars are divided on what this means. Some believe Christians inherit the promises that God gave to Abraham, so Christians replace the physical descendants of Israel. Others believe Christians spiritually follow Abraham, but they do not inherit the promises that God gave to Abraham. In light of Paul's other teachings and the context here, Paul is probably writing about the Jewish and Gentile Christians sharing the same faith as Abraham did.

## Links:

- [Galatians 3:1 Notes](#)

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### Galatians 3:1

It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly displayed as crucified

#### General Information:

Paul is rebuking the Galatians by asking rhetorical questions.

Paul speaks of his clear teaching of Jesus being crucified as if he had put on public display a picture of Jesus being crucified. And he speaks of the Galatians having heard his teaching as if they had seen the picture. Alternate translation: "You yourselves heard the clear teaching about Jesus being crucified"

#### Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the believers in Galatia that God gave them his Spirit when they believed the gospel, not because they obeyed his law.

### Galatians 3:2

Who has put a spell on you?

This is the only thing I want to learn from you

Paul is using irony and a rhetorical question to say that the Galatians are acting as though someone has put a spell on them. He does not really believe that someone has put a spell on them. Alternate translation: "You behave as if someone has put a spell on you!"

This continues the irony from verse 1. Paul knows the answers to the rhetorical questions he is about to ask.

Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?

put a spell on you

Translate this rhetorical question as a question if you can, because the reader will be expecting a question here. Also, be sure that the reader knows that the answer to the question is "by the hearing of faith," not "by doing what the law says." Alternate translation: "You received the Spirit, not by doing what the law says, but by the hearing of faith."

"done magic on you" or "done witchcraft on you"

the hearing of faith

"believing what you heard"

Galatians 3:3

Are you so foolish?

This rhetorical question shows that Paul is surprised and even angry that the Galatians are foolish. Alternate translation: "You are very foolish!"

by the flesh

The word "flesh" is a metonym for effort. Alternate translation: "by your own effort" or "by your own work"

Galatians 3:4

Have you suffered so many things for nothing—if indeed it was for nothing?

Paul uses this question to rebuke the Galatians for behaving as though their faith in Christ and their suffering for it were for nothing. Alternate translation: "You have suffered so many things: Do not let it be for nothing!" or "You suffered so many things from those who opposed your faith in Christ. If you now think that righteousness comes by obeying the law, then your suffering was for nothing!"

Have you suffered so many things

The Galatians had believed that God makes people righteous because they trust in Jesus Christ, not because they obey the law. Because of this, they suffered many things from those who opposed their faith in Christ.

for nothing

"uselessly" or "without benefit to you"

Galatians 3:5

Does he ... do so by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?

Paul asks another rhetorical question to remind the Galatians how people receive the Spirit. Alternate translation: "He ... does not do it by the works of the law; he does it by hearing with faith."

by the works of the law

This represents people doing the works that the law requires. Alternate translation: "because you do what the law tells us to do"

by the hearing of faith

Your language may require that what the people heard and whom they trusted be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "because you heard the message and had faith in Jesus" or "because you listened to the message and trusted in Jesus"

Galatians 3:6

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Galatian believers that even Abraham received righteousness by faith and not by the law.

it was credited to him as righteousness

God saw Abraham's faith in God, so then God considered Abraham righteous.

Galatians 3:7

those of faith

"those who have faith." The meaning of the noun "faith" can be expressed with the verb "believe." Alternate translation: "those who believe"

the children of Abraham

This represents people whom God views as he viewed Abraham. Alternate translation: "righteous in the same way that Abraham was righteous"

Galatians 3:8

The scripture, foreseeing ... faith, preached the gospel

Because God's promise to Abraham was written in the scripture before Christ fulfilled the promise, the scripture is like someone who knows the future before it happens and who preaches the gospel. Alternate translation: "In the scripture, God showed before it happened ... faith, and he presented the gospel"

In you

The word "you" refers to Abraham. Ultimately God would bless the nations through one of Abraham's

descendants. Alternate translation: "Because of you" or "Through you"

all the nations

"all the people-groups in the world." God was showing that his plan of salvation was not only for the Jewish people, but for both Jews and non-Jews.

Galatians 3:9

the man of faith

Possible meanings are 1) Abraham was the man who believed and trusted in God or 2) Abraham was faithful to God.

Galatians 3:10

All who rely on ... the law are under a curse

Being under a curse represents being cursed. Here it refers to being eternally punished. "Those who rely on ... the law are cursed" or "God will eternally punish those who rely on ... the law"

the works of the law

"what the law says we must do"

Galatians 3:11

Now it is clear

What is clear can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "The scriptures are clear" or "The scriptures teach clearly"

no one is justified before God by the law

This can be stated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "God justifies no one by the law"

no one is justified before God by the law

Paul is correcting their belief that if they obeyed the law, God would justify them. Alternate translation: "no one is justified before God by obeying the law" or "God does not justify anyone for their obedience to the law"

the righteous will live by faith

The nominal adjective "righteous" refers to righteous people. Alternate translation: "righteous people will live by faith"

Galatians 3:12

must live by them

Possible meanings are 1) "must obey them all" or 2) "will be judged by his ability to do what the law demands."

Galatians 3:13

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds these believers again that keeping the law could not save a person and that the law did not add a new condition to the promise by faith given to Abraham.

from the curse of the law

The noun "curse" can be expressed with the verb "curse." Alternate translation: "from being cursed because of the law" or "from being cursed for not obeying the law"

from the curse of the law ... becoming a curse for us ... Cursed is everyone

The word "curse" here is a metonym for God condemning the person whom he has cursed. Alternate translation: "from us having God condemn us because we broke the law ... having God condemn him instead of us ... God condemns everyone"

hangs on a tree

Paul expected his audience to understand that he was referring to Jesus hanging on the cross.

Galatians 3:14

so that the blessing of Abraham might come

"and because Christ became a curse for us, the blessing of Abraham will come"

so that by faith we might receive

Possible meanings are 1) this is because Christ became a curse for us. Alternate translation: "and because Christ became a curse for us, we will receive by faith" or 2) this is because the blessing in Abraham came in Christ Jesus. Alternate translation: "and because the blessing in Abraham came in Christ Jesus, we will receive by faith"

we might receive the promise

The word "we" includes the people who would read the letter and so is inclusive.

Galatians 3:15

Brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

in human terms

"as a person" or "of things most people understand"

Galatians 3:16

Now

This word shows that Paul has stated a general principle and is now beginning to introduce a specific case.

referring to many

"referring to many descendants"

to your descendant

The word "your" is singular and refers to a specific person, who is a particular descendant of Abraham

Galatians 3:17

The law, which came 430 years afterward, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God

In some languages it might be strange to speak of a law coming or setting aside a covenant. It might be clearer to make explicit who gave the law. Alternate translation: "When God gave the law 430 years later, he did not set aside the covenant that he had previously established"

set aside

"cancel"

430 years

"four hundred and thirty years"

God, to nullify the promise

"God; that is, it does not nullify the promise"

nullify the promise

"to make the promise worthless" or "to make things as if the promise had never been made"

Galatians 3:18

For if the inheritance comes by the law, then it no longer comes by promise

Paul uses this argument to show that the inheritance does not come by obeying the law but by believing God's promise. Alternate translation: "If people could receive the inheritance by obeying the law, then it would no longer be true that people receive the inheritance by believing God's promise"

the inheritance

Paul speaks of what God has promised to give to believers as if it were an inheritance of property and wealth from a family member. Alternate translation: "the gift"

Galatians 3:19

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells the believers in Galatia why God gave the law.

What, then, was the purpose of the law?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to introduce the next topic he wants to discuss. It can also be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I will tell you what the purpose of the law is." or "Let me tell you why God gave the law."

It was added

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God added it" or "God added the law"

The law was ordained through angels

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God ordained the law through angels" or "God gave the law through angels"

by the hand of an intermediary

The words "by the hand of" are a metonym for the intermediary himself. An intermediary represents one person to another. Paul was probably talking about Moses, who represented God to the people of Israel.

Alternate translation "by an intermediary" or "by his representative, Moses"

Galatians 3:20

Now an intermediary implies more than one person

An intermediary represents one person to another. Alternate translation: "Now if we say that there was an intermediary, that means that there must have been more than one person."

intermediary

representative

But God is one

Paul uses this statement to contrast the law and the promise. Paul seems to be saying that the promise is superior to the law since God used an intermediary to give the law, but he did not use an intermediary when he made the promise. "God is one" is an important statement from the Old Testament, so it would be best to translate it as Paul wrote it. If this does not make sense in your language, you could translate it as "God is one God."

Galatians 3:21

against the promises

"opposed to the promises" or "in conflict with the promises"

if a law had been given that could give life

This can be stated in active form, and the abstract noun "life" can be translated with the verb "live." Alternate translation: "if God had given a law that enabled those who kept it to live"

righteousness would certainly have come by the law

"we could have become righteous by obeying that law"

Galatians 3:22

the scripture imprisoned everything under sin

The idea of being imprisoned under sin represents being controlled by sin. Possible meanings are 1) "the scripture caused everyone to be controlled by sin" or 2) "the scripture says that everyone is controlled by sin."

the promise by faith in Jesus Christ

The word "promise" represents what God promised. Alternate translation: "what God promised to those who have faith in Christ"

Galatians 3:23

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds those in Galatia that believers are free in God's family, not slaves under the law.

we were held captive under the law, imprisoned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the law held us captive and we were in prison" or "the law held us captive in prison"

we were held captive under the law, imprisoned

The way the law controlled us is spoken of as if the law were a prison guard holding us as captives. Alternate translation: "the law controlled us like a prison guard"

until faith should be revealed

This can be stated in active form, and who this faith is in can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "until God would reveal that he justifies those who have faith in Christ" or "until God would reveal that he justifies those who trust in Christ"

Galatians 3:24

guardian

More than simply "one who gives oversight to a child," this was usually a slave who was responsible for enforcing rules and behaviors given by the parent and would report to the parent on the child's actions.

until Christ came

"until the time when Christ came"

so that we might be justified

Before Christ came, God had planned to justify us. When Christ came, he carried out his plan to justify us. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that God would declare us to be righteous"

Galatians 3:25

General Information:

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Galatians 3:26

General Information:

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Galatians 3:27

For as many of you who were baptized into Christ

"For all of you who were baptized into Christ"

have clothed yourselves with Christ

Possible meanings are 1) this is a metaphor meaning that they have been united to Christ. Alternate

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translation: "have become united with Christ" or "belong to Christ" or 2) this is a metaphor meaning that they have become like Christ. Alternate translation: "have become like Christ"

Galatians 3:28

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female

"God sees no difference between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female"

Galatians 3:29

heirs

The people to whom God has made promises are spoken of as if they were to inherit property and wealth from a family member.

<sup>4</sup> <sup>1</sup>I am saying that the heir, for whatever time he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is owner of the entire estate.<sup>2</sup> But he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father.

<sup>3</sup> So also, when we were children, we were enslaved to the elemental principles of the world.<sup>4</sup> But when the fullness of time had come, God sent out his Son, born of a woman, born under the law<sup>5</sup> so that he might redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

<sup>6</sup> And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, who cries out, "Abba, Father."<sup>7</sup> So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then you are also an heir through God.

<sup>8</sup> But at that time, when you did not know God, you were made to be slaves to those who are, by their natural powers, not gods at all.<sup>9</sup> But now that you have come to know God, or rather that you are known by God, how is it that you are turning back to the weak and worthless elemental principles? Do you want to be enslaved all over again?

<sup>10</sup> You observe days and new moons and seasons and years!<sup>11</sup> I am afraid for you that somehow my labor with you may have been for nothing.

<sup>12</sup> I beg you, brothers, become like me, for I also have become like you. You did me no wrong.<sup>13</sup> But you know that it was because of a disease of the flesh that I proclaimed the gospel to you the first time,<sup>14</sup> and though my physical condition put you to the test, you did not despise or reject me. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself.

<sup>15</sup> Where then is your blessing now? For I testify to you that, if it were possible, you would have torn out your own eyes and given them to me.<sup>16</sup> So then, have I become your enemy because I am telling you the truth?

<sup>17</sup> They are zealous to win you over, but for no good purpose. They want to shut you out so you may be zealous for them.<sup>18</sup> It is always good to be zealous for a good purpose, and not only when I am present with you.

<sup>19</sup> My little children, again I am suffering the pains of childbirth for you until Christ is formed in you.<sup>20</sup> I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you.

<sup>21</sup> Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law?<sup>22</sup> For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave girl and one by the free woman.<sup>23</sup> One was born by the slave girl according to the flesh, but the other was born by the free woman through promise.

<sup>24</sup> These things may be interpreted as an allegory, for these women represent two covenants. One of them is from Mount Sinai and she bears children into slavery. This is Hagar.<sup>25</sup> Now Hagar represents Mount Sinai in Arabia; and she represents the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.

<sup>26</sup> But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.<sup>27</sup> For it is written,

"Rejoice, you barren one who does not give birth;  
cry out and shout for joy,  
you who are not suffering the pains of childbirth;  
because the children of the desolate woman are more numerous  
than those of the woman who has a husband."

<sup>28</sup> But you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.<sup>29</sup> At that time the one who was born according to the flesh persecuted the one born according to the Spirit. It is the same now.

<sup>30</sup> But what does the scripture say? "Send away the slave girl and her son. For the son of the slave girl will not share in the inheritance with the son of the free woman."<sup>31</sup> Therefore, brothers, we are not children of a slave girl, but of the free woman.

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## Galatians 4 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 27, which is quoted from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Sonship

Sonship is a complex issue. Scholars have many views on Israel's sonship. Paul uses sonship to teach how being under the law differs from being free in Christ. Not all of Abraham's physical descendants inherited God's promises to him. Only his descendants through Isaac and Jacob inherited the promises. And God only adopts into his family those who follow Abraham spiritually through faith. They are children of God with an inheritance. Paul calls them "children of promise." (See: inherit, promise, spirit and faith and adoption)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Abba, Father

"Abba" is an Aramaic word. In ancient Israel, people used it to informally refer to their fathers. Paul "transliterates" its sounds by writing them with Greek letters.

Links:

- [Galatians 4:1](#)

Galatians 4:1	when we were children
Connecting Statement:	Here "children" is a metaphor for being spiritually immature. Alternate translation: "when we were like children"
Paul continues to remind the Galatian believers that Christ came to redeem those who were under the law, and that he changed them from being slaves into being sons.	we were enslaved to the elemental principles of the world
no different from	Here "enslaved" is a metaphor for being unable to stop one's self from doing something. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the elemental principles of the world controlled us" or "we had to obey the elemental principles of the world as if we were slaves"
"the same as"	
Galatians 4:2	
guardians	the elemental principles of the world
people with legal responsibility for children	These words could refer to 1) the laws or moral principles of the world, or 2) spiritual powers that some people thought control what happens on earth.
managers	
people whom others trust to control what is valuable, in this case children	Galatians 4:4
Galatians 4:3	Son
General Information:	This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.
The word "we" here refers to all Christians, including Paul's readers.	Galatians 4:5
	redeem
	Paul uses the metaphor of a person buying back lost property or buying the freedom of a slave as a picture

of Jesus paying for his people's sins by dying on the cross.

Galatians 4:6

you are sons

Paul uses the word for male children here because the subject is inheritance. In his culture and that of his readers, inheritance passed most commonly, but not always, to male children. He was neither specifying nor excluding female children here.

God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, who cries out, "Abba, Father."

By crying out "Abba, Father" the Spirit assures us that we are God's children and he loves us.

God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts

The heart is metonym for the part of a person that thinks and feels. Alternate translation: "God has sent his Son's Spirit to show us how to think and act"

his Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

who cries

The Spirit is the one who cries.

Abba, Father

This is the way a young child would address his father in Paul's home language, but not in the language of the Galatian readers. To keep the sense of a foreign language, translate this as a word that sounds as much like "Abba" as your language allows.

Galatians 4:7

you are no longer a slave, but a son

Paul uses the word for male child here because the subject is inheritance. In his culture and that of his readers, inheritance passed most commonly, but not always, to male children. He was neither specifying nor excluding female children here.

you are no longer a slave ... you are also an heir

Paul is addressing his readers as though they are one person, so "you" here is singular.

heir

The people to whom God has made promises are spoken of as if they were to inherit property and wealth from a family member.

Galatians 4:8

General Information:

Paul continues to rebuke the Galatians by asking rhetorical questions.

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Galatian believers that they are again trying to live under God's laws rather than living by faith.

those who are

"those things that are" or "those spirits who are"

Galatians 4:9

you are known by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God knows you"

how is it that you are turning back to ... principles?

Here "turning back to" is a metaphor for starting to pay attention to something again. This is the first of two rhetorical questions. Alternate translation: "you should not start paying attention to ... principles." or "you should not be concerned with ... principles."

elemental principles

See how you translated this phrase in Galatians 4:3.

Do you want to be enslaved all over again?

Paul uses this question to rebuke the people for behaving in a way that would make them like slaves. Alternate translation: "It seems that you want to be slaves again." or "You behave as though you wanted to be like slaves again."

Do you want to be enslaved all over again?

Here being "enslaved" is a metaphor for being obligated to obey certain rules or customs. Alternate translation: "Do you want to have to obey rules again"

like a slave has to obey his master?" or "It seems that you want to be controlled all over again!"

Galatians 4:10

You observe days and new moons and seasons and years

Paul is speaking of their being careful to celebrate certain times, thinking that doing that will make them right with God. Alternate translation: "You carefully celebrate days and new moons and seasons and years"

Galatians 4:11

may have been for nothing

"may have been useless" or "has not had any effect"

Galatians 4:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Galatian believers how kindly they treated him when he was with them, and he encourages them to continue to trust him while he is not there with them.

beg

Here this means to ask or urge strongly. This is not the word used to ask for money or food or physical objects.

brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

You did me no wrong

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "You treated me well" or "You treated me as you should have"

Galatians 4:13

disease of the flesh

"physical disease" or "disease of the body"

Galatians 4:14

and though my physical condition put you to the test

"and though it was difficult for you to see me so physically ill"

my physical condition

Paul was speaking about a health problem that he had. We do not know what the problem was.

despise

hate very much

Galatians 4:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Galatians 4:16

General Information:

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Galatians 4:17

to win you over

"to convince you to join them"

to shut you out

"to shut you out from us" or "to make you stop being loyal to us"

zealous for them

"zealous to do what they tell you to do"

Galatians 4:18

General Information:

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Galatians 4:19

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells believers that grace and law cannot work together.

My little children

This is a metaphor for disciples or followers. Alternate translation: "You who are disciples because of me"

I am suffering the pains of childbirth for you until Christ is formed in you

Paul uses childbirth as a metaphor for his concern about the Galatians. Alternate translation: "I am in pain as though I were a woman having to give birth to you, and I will continue to be in pain until Christ truly controls you"

Galatians 4:20

change my tone

Paul wishes he could sound happy instead of sounding angry or confused. Alternate Translation: "change the way I sound" or "change the way I am speaking to you" or "speak to you differently"

Galatians 4:21

Tell me, you ... law, do you not listen to the law?

Paul is introducing what he will say next. Alternate translation: "I want to tell you something, you ... law; you need to learn what the law really says." or "Let me tell you who ... law what the law really says."

Galatians 4:22

General Information:

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Galatians 4:23

General Information:

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Galatians 4:24

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins a story to illustrate a truth—that law and grace cannot exist together.

These things may be interpreted as an allegory

"This story of the two sons is like a picture of what I will tell you now"

as an allegory

An "allegory" is a story in which the people and things in it represent other things. In Paul's allegory, the two

women referred to in Galatians 4:22 represent two covenants.

women represent

"women are a picture of"

Mount Sinai

"Mount Sinai" here is a synecdoche for the law that Moses gave to the Israelites there. Alternate translation: "Mount Sinai, where Moses gave the law to Israel"

she bears children into slavery

Paul treats the law as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "the people under this covenant are like slaves who have to obey the law"

Galatians 4:25

she represents

"she is a picture of"

she is in slavery with her children

Hagar is a slave and her children are slaves with her. Alternate translation: "Jerusalem, like Hagar, is a slave, and her children are slaves with her"

Galatians 4:26

is free

"is not bound" or "is not a slave"

Galatians 4:27

Rejoice

be happy

you barren one ... you who are not suffering

Here "you" refers to the barren woman and is singular.

Galatians 4:28

brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

children of promise

Possible meanings are that the Galatians have become God's children 1) by believing God's promise or 2) because God worked miracles to fulfill his promises to Abraham, first by giving Abraham a son and then by making the Galatians children of Abraham and thus sons of God.

Galatians 4:29

according to the flesh

This refers to Abraham's becoming Ishmael's father by taking Hagar as a wife. Alternate translation: "by means of human action" or "because of what people did"

according to the Spirit

"because of something the Spirit did"

Galatians 4:30

General Information:

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Galatians 4:31

brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

of a slave girl, but of the free woman

The words "we are children" are understood from the previous phrase. This can be translated as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: "of a slave girl. Rather, we are children of the free woman"

5 <sup>1</sup>For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not again be subject to a yoke of slavery.

<sup>2</sup>Look, I, Paul, say to you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will not benefit you in any way.

<sup>3</sup>I testify again to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law.<sup>4</sup>You are cut off from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you no longer experience grace.

<sup>5</sup>For through the Spirit, by faith, we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.<sup>6</sup>In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has value, but only faith working through love.<sup>7</sup>You were running well. Who prevented you from obeying the truth?<sup>8</sup>This persuasion does not come from him who calls you!

<sup>9</sup>A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough.<sup>10</sup>I have confidence in the Lord that you will think nothing different. The one who is troubling you will suffer the judgment, whoever he is.

<sup>11</sup>Brothers, if I still proclaim circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the stumbling block of the cross has been removed.<sup>12</sup>As for those who are disturbing you, I wish they would cut themselves off!

<sup>13</sup>For you were called to freedom, brothers. But do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; rather, through love serve one another.<sup>14</sup>For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You must love your neighbor as yourself."<sup>15</sup>But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

<sup>16</sup>But I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.<sup>17</sup>For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh. For these oppose each other, so that you cannot do the things you want.<sup>18</sup>But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

<sup>19</sup>Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,<sup>20</sup>idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, rivalry, dissension, divisions,<sup>21</sup>envy, drunkenness, drunken celebrations, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

<sup>22</sup>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith,<sup>23</sup>gentleness, and self-control; against such things there is no law.<sup>24</sup>Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

<sup>25</sup>If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.<sup>26</sup>Let us not become boastful, provoking one another, envying one another.

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## Galatians 5 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Paul continues writing about the law of Moses as if it were something that traps or enslaves a person. (See: lawofmoses)

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Fruit of the Spirit

The phrase "the fruit of the Spirit" is not plural, even though it begins a list of several things. Translators should keep the singular form if possible. (See: fruit)

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Illustrations

Paul uses several metaphors in this chapter to illustrate his points and help explain complicated issues.

## Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"You are cut off from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you no longer experience grace."

Some scholars think Paul teaches that being circumcised causes a person to lose their salvation. Other scholars think Paul means that obeying the law to try to get right with God will keep a person from being saved by grace. (See: grace)

## Links:

- [Galatians 5:1 Notes](#)

### Galatians 5:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul applies the allegory in the previous chapter by reminding the believers to use their liberty in Christ because all the law is fulfilled in loving neighbors as ourselves.

For freedom Christ has set us free

"It is so that we can be free that Christ has set us free." It is implied that Christ sets believers free from the old covenant. Here freedom from the old covenant is a metaphor for not being obligated to obey it. Alternate translation: "Christ has set us free from the old covenant so that we might be free" or "Christ has set us free so that we might live as free people"

Stand firm

Standing firm here represents being determined not to change. How they are not to change can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Do not give in to the arguments of people who teach something else" or "Be determined to stay free"

do not again be subject to a yoke of slavery

Here being under control of a yoke of slavery represents being obligated to obey the law. Alternate translation: "do not live like one who is under the control of a yoke of slavery to the law"

### Galatians 5:2

if you let yourselves be circumcised

Paul is using circumcision as a metonym for Judaism. Alternate translation: "if you turn to the Jewish religion"

### Galatians 5:3

I testify

"I declare" or "I serve as a witness"

to every man who lets himself be circumcised

Paul is using circumcision as a metonym for being Jewish. Alternate translation: "to every person who has become a Jew"

he is obligated to obey

"he must obey"

### Galatians 5:4

You are cut off from Christ

Here "cut off" is a metaphor for separation from Christ. Alternate translation: "You have ended your relationship with Christ" or "You are no longer united with Christ"

you who would be justified by the law

Paul is speaking ironically here. He actually teaches that no one can be justified by trying to do the deeds required by the law. Alternate translation: "all you who think you can be justified by doing the deeds required by the law" or "you who want to be justified by the law"

you no longer experience grace

Who that grace comes from can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "God will not be gracious to you"

## Galatians 5:5

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Paul and those who oppose the circumcision of Christians. He is probably including the Galatians.

For through the Spirit

"This is because through the Spirit"

by faith, we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness

Possible meanings are 1) "we are waiting by faith for the hope of righteousness" or 2) "we are waiting for the hope of righteousness that comes by faith."

we eagerly wait

"We wait with excitement" or "we wait with great desire"

for the hope of righteousness

They confidently expect that God will make them righteous. Alternate translation: "for the righteousness that we hope for" or "for the righteousness that we confidently expect to receive"

## Galatians 5:6

neither circumcision nor uncircumcision

These are metonymy for being a Jew or a non-Jew. Alternate translation: "neither being a Jew nor not being a Jew"

neither ... has value, but only faith working through love

"neither ... has value; rather, God is concerned with our faith in him, which we show by loving others"

has value

"has meaning" or "gives value to a person" or "makes God think a person is important"

## Galatians 5:7

You were running

"You were practicing what Jesus taught"

## Galatians 5:8

This persuasion does not come from him who calls you

"The one who persuades you to do that is not God, the one who calls you"

him who calls you

What he calls them to can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "the one who calls you to be his people"

persuasion

To persuade someone is to get that person to change what he believes and so to act differently.

## Galatians 5:9

A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough

Paul uses this proverb to mean that a small part of something affects the whole thing. In this case, one person who is teaching something false can harm the entire Christian community.

## Galatians 5:10

you will think nothing different

"you will not believe anything different from what I am telling you"

The one who is troubling you will suffer the judgment

"God will punish the one who is troubling you"

is troubling you

"is causing you to be uncertain about what is truth" or "stirs up trouble among you"

whoever he is

Possible meanings are 1) Paul does not know the names of the people who are telling the Galatians that they need to obey the law of Moses or 2) Paul does not want the Galatians to care about whether those who "confuse" them are rich or poor or great or small or religious or not religious.

## Galatians 5:11

Brothers, if I still proclaim circumcision, why am I still being persecuted?

Paul uses this rhetorical question to show the evidence that he is not proclaiming circumcision. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "Brothers, you can see that I am not proclaiming circumcision because I am still being persecuted."

Brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

if I still proclaim circumcision

"if I still proclaim that men have to be circumcised"

why am I still being persecuted?

This can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: "why are the Jews still persecuting me?" (See:

In that case the stumbling block of the cross has been removed

Paul is describing a situation that has not happened as evidence that he does not preach circumcision. Since the stumbling block of the cross has not been removed, that is evidence that Paul does not preach circumcision.

In that case the stumbling block of the cross has been removed

Paul had just said that he was still being persecuted. Here he implies that if the offense of the cross were removed, the Jews would have no reason to persecute him. The relationship between the two sentences can be made clearer by making this implied information explicit. Alternate translation: "If I am still preaching circumcision, then the stumbling block of the cross has been removed, and there is no reason for the Jews to persecute me"

In that case

"If I were still proclaiming circumcision" or "If I were still saying that people need to be circumcised"

the stumbling block of the cross has been removed

This can be expressed without the passive form. Alternate translation: "the cross would no longer be a stumbling block" or "the cross would no longer cause people to stumble"

the stumbling block of the cross

Here the words "stumbling block" are a metaphor for something that angers or offends some people and leads them to reject the truth. In this case, teaching that people are saved by "the cross" offends those who believe a person is saved by obeying the law. These people "stumble" when they reject the teaching about the cross.

the cross

Here "the cross" is a metonym for the teaching that because Jesus Christ died on the cross and is alive again, God saves people who believe in Christ. People do not have to be circumcised or become Jews. Alternate translation: "the message about the cross"

## Galatians 5:12

cut themselves off

Possible meanings are 1) literal, to cut off their male organs so as to become eunuchs or 2) metaphorical, completely withdraw from the Christian community.

## Galatians 5:13

For

Paul is giving the reason for his words in Galatians 5:12.

you were called to freedom

This can be expressed in an active form. Alternate translation: "Christ has called you to freedom"

you were called to freedom

It is implied that Christ has set believers free from the old covenant. Here freedom from the old covenant is a metaphor for not being obligated to obey it. Alternate translation: "You were called to freedom from the old covenant" or "Christ has chosen you to not be obligated to the old covenant"

brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

an opportunity for the flesh

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for people's sinful nature. The relationship between the opportunity and

the sinful nature can be stated more clearly. Alternate translation: "an opportunity for you to behave according to your sinful nature"

#### Galatians 5:14

the whole law is fulfilled in one word

The word "word" here is a metonym for a commandment. Possible meanings are 1) "you can state the whole law in just one commandment, which is this" or 2) "by obeying one commandment, you obey all the commandments, and that one commandment is this."

You must love your neighbor as yourself

The words "you," "your," and "yourself" are all singular.

#### Galatians 5:15

General Information:

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#### Galatians 5:16

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains how the Spirit gives control over sin.

walk by the Spirit

Walking is a metaphor for living. Alternate translation: "conduct your life in the power of the Holy Spirit" or "live your life in dependence on the Spirit"

you will not carry out the desires of the flesh

"you will not do what your sinful nature desires" or "you will not do the sinful things that you, a sinner, want to do"

the desires of the flesh

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for the sinful nature and is spoken of as if it were a person and wanted to sin. Alternate translation: "what you want to do because of your sinful nature" or "the things you want to do because you are sinful"

#### Galatians 5:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Galatians 5:18

not under the law

"not obligated to obey the law of Moses"

#### Galatians 5:19

the works of the flesh

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for the sinful nature. The sinful nature is spoken of as if it were a person who does things. The abstract noun "works" can be translated with the verb "does." Alternate translation: "the things the sinful nature does" or "the things people do because of their sinful nature" or "the things people do because they are sinful"

#### Galatians 5:20

General Information:

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#### Galatians 5:21

inherit

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member.

#### Galatians 5:22

the fruit of the Spirit is love ... faith

Here "fruit" here is a metaphor for "result" or "outcome." Alternate translation: "what the Spirit produces is love ... faith" or "the Spirit produces in God's people love ... faith"

#### Galatians 5:23

gentleness ... self-control

The list of characteristics described as "the fruit of the Spirit," which begins in the previous verse with the words "love, joy, peace," ends here. The word "fruit" is a metaphor for "result" or "outcome."

## Galatians 5:24

have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires

Paul speaks of the sinful nature of Christians who have refused to live by it as if it were a person and they have killed it on a cross. Alternate translation: "refuse to live according the sinful nature with its passions and desires, as if they killed it on a cross"

the flesh with its passions and desires

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for the sinful nature. The sinful nature is spoken of as if it were a person that had passions and desires. Alternate translation: "their sinful nature and the things they strongly want to do because of it"

passions and desires

If your language does not have different words for "passions" and "desires," you can treat this as a

hendiadys or doublet that simply emphasizes the idea of desires that are wrong, that harm the one who desires and if fulfilled would harm other people.

## Galatians 5:25

If we live by the Spirit

"Since God's Spirit has caused us to be alive"

walk by the Spirit

"Walk" here is a metaphor for living every day. Alternate translation: "allow the Holy Spirit to guide us so we do things that please and honor God"

## Galatians 5:26

Let us

"We should"

<sup>6</sup> Brothers, if someone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Be concerned about yourself, so you also may not be tempted.<sup>2</sup> Carry one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

<sup>3</sup> For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.<sup>4</sup> Each one should examine his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in someone else.<sup>5</sup> For each one will carry his own burden.

<sup>6</sup> The one who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches.<sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived. God is not mocked, for whatever a man plants, that he will also reap.<sup>8</sup> For he who plants seed to his own flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction. The one who plants seed to the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

<sup>9</sup> Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the right time we will reap a harvest, if we do not give up.<sup>10</sup> So then, as we have the opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the household of faith.

<sup>11</sup> See what large letters I write to you with my own hand.<sup>12</sup> Those who want to make a good impression in the flesh are trying to compel you to be circumcised. They do this only to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ.

<sup>13</sup> For not even those who circumcised themselves keep the law, but they want you to be circumcised so that they may boast about your flesh.

<sup>14</sup> But may I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.<sup>15</sup> For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but what counts is a new creation.<sup>16</sup> To all who walk according to this standard, peace and mercy be upon them, even upon the Israel of God.

<sup>17</sup> From now on let no one trouble me, for I carry on my body the marks of Jesus.

<sup>18</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

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## Galatians 6 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

This chapter concludes Paul's letter. His final words address some issues that do not seem to be connected to the rest of his letter.

#### Brothers

Paul writes the words in this chapter to Christians. He calls them "brothers." This refers to Paul's Christian brothers and not his Jewish brothers.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### New Creation

People who are born again are a new creation in Christ. Christians have been given new life in Christ. They have a new nature in them after they come to faith in Christ. To Paul, this is more significant than a person's ancestry. (See: bornagain and faith)

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### Flesh

This is a complex issue. "Flesh" is contrasted with "spirit." In this chapter, flesh is also used to refer to the physical body. (See: flesh and sin and spirit)

## Links:

- [Galatians 6:1 Notes](#)
- 

Galatians 6:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul teaches believers how they should treat other believers and how God rewards.

Brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

if someone

"if anyone among you"

if someone is caught in any trespass

Possible meanings are 1) someone else found that person in the act. Alternate translation: "if someone is discovered in an act of sin" or 2) that person committed the sin without intending to do evil. Alternate translation: "if someone gave in and sinned"

you who are spiritual

"those of you who are guided by the Spirit" or "you who are living in the guidance of the Spirit"

restore him

"correct the person who sinned" or "exhort the person who sinned to return to a correct relationship with God"

in a spirit of gentleness

Possible meanings are 1) that the Spirit is directing the one who is offering correction or 2) "with an attitude of gentleness" or "in a kind way."

Be concerned about yourself, ... tempted.

These words treat the Galatians as though they are all one person to emphasize that he is talking to each of them. Alternate translation: "Be concerned about yourselves ... tempted." or "I say to each one of you, 'Be concerned about yourself, ... tempted.'"

so you also may not be tempted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that nothing will tempt you also to sin"

Galatians 6:2

General Information:

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Galatians 6:3

For if

"Because if." The words that follow tell why the Galatians should 1) "carry one other's burdens" (Galatians 6:2) or 2) be careful that they themselves are not tempted (Galatians 6:1) or 3) "not become conceited" (Galatians 5:26).

he is something

"he is someone important" or "he is better than others"

he is nothing

"he is not important" or "he is not better than others"

Galatians 6:4

Each one should

"Each person must"

Galatians 6:5

each one will carry his own burden

"each person will be judged by his own work only" or "each person will be responsible for his own work only"

each one will

"each person will"

## Galatians 6:6

The one

"The person"

the word

"the message," everything God has said or commanded

## Galatians 6:7

for whatever a man plants, that he will also reap

Planting represents doing things that end in some kind of result, and gathering in represents experiencing the results of what one has done. Alternate translation: "for just as a farmer gathers in the fruit of whatever kind of seeds he plants, so everyone experiences the results of whatever he does"

whatever a man plants

Paul is not specifying males here. Alternate translation: "whatever a person plants" or "whatever someone plants"

## Galatians 6:8

plants seed to his own flesh

Planting seeds is a metaphor for doing deeds that will have consequences later. In this case, the person is doing sinful actions because of his sinful nature. Alternate translation: "plants seed according to what he wants because of his sinful nature" or "does the things he wants to do because of his sinful nature"

will reap destruction

God punishing the person is spoken of as if the person were harvesting a crop. Alternate translation: "will receive punishment for what he did"

plants seed to the Spirit

Planting seeds is a metaphor for doing deeds that will have consequences later. In this case, the person is doing good actions because he is listening to God's Spirit. Alternate translation: "does the things God's Spirit loves"

from the Spirit will reap eternal life

"will receive eternal life as a reward from God's Spirit"

## Galatians 6:9

Let us not become weary in doing good

"We should continue to do good"

doing good

doing good to others for their well-being

for at the right time

"for in due time" or "because at the time God has chosen"

## Galatians 6:10

So then

"As a result of this" or "Because of this"

especially to those

"most of all to those" or "in particular to those"

those who belong to the household of faith

"those who are members of God's family through faith in Christ"

## Galatians 6:11

Connecting Statement:

As Paul closes this letter, he gives one more reminder that the law does not save and that the Galatians should remember the cross of Christ.

large letters

This can mean that Paul wants to emphasize 1) the statements that follow or 2) that this letter came from him.

with my own hand

Possible meanings are 1) Paul probably had a helper who wrote most of this letter as Paul told him what to write, but Paul himself wrote this last part of the letter or 2) Paul wrote the whole letter himself.

## Galatians 6:12

make a good impression

"cause others to think well of them" or "cause others to think that they are good people"

in the flesh

"with visible evidence" or "by their own efforts"

to compel

"to force" or "to strongly influence"

only to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ

"so that the Jews will not persecute them for claiming that the cross of Christ alone is what saves people"

the cross of Christ

These words are a metonym for faith that Christ died on the cross so God would forgive his people's sins. Alternate translation: "believing that God forgives his people's sins because Jesus died on the cross"

## Galatians 6:13

so that they may boast about your flesh

"so that they may be proud that they have added you to the people who try to keep the law"

## Galatians 6:14

But may I never boast except in the cross

"I do not ever want to boast in anything other than the cross" or "May I boast only in the cross"

the world has been crucified to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I think of the world as already dead" or "I treat the world like a criminal God has killed on a cross"

I to the world

The words "have been crucified" are understood from the phrase before this. Alternate translation: "and I have been crucified to the world"

I to the world

Possible meanings are 1) "the world thinks of me as already dead" or 2) "the world treats me like a criminal that God has killed on the cross"

the world

Possible meanings are 1) the people of the world, those who care nothing for God or 2) the things that those who care nothing for God think are important.

## Galatians 6:15

neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision

"neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is important to God"

a new creation

Possible meanings are 1) a new believer in Jesus Christ or 2) the new life of a believer.

## Galatians 6:16

walk according to this standard

The word "walk" here is a metaphor for living life, and a standard is something against which people measure other things. Alternate translation: "live this way"

peace and mercy be upon them, even upon the Israel of God

Possible meanings are 1) that believers in general are the Israel of God or 2) "may peace and mercy be upon Gentile believers and upon the Israel of God" or 3) "may peace be upon those who follow the rule, and may mercy be upon even the Israel of God."

## Galatians 6:17

From now on

This can also mean "Lastly" or "As I end this letter."

let no one trouble me

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is commanding the Galatians not to trouble him, "I am commanding you this: do not trouble me," or 2) Paul is telling the Galatians that he is commanding all people not to trouble him, "I am commanding everyone this: do not trouble me," or 3) Paul is expressing a desire, "I do not want anyone to trouble me."

trouble me

Possible meanings are 1) "speak of these matters to me" or 2) "cause me hardship" or "give me hard work."

for I carry on my body the marks of Jesus

These marks were scars from people who beat and whipped Paul because they did not like him teaching about Jesus. Alternate translation: "for the scars on my body show that I serve Jesus"

Galatians 6:18

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit

The word "your" here refers to the Galatians and so is plural. The words "your spirit" are a synecdoche and represent the people themselves. Alternate translation: "May our Lord Jesus Christ be kind to you"

brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

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