

Concluding Summary of Galatians
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A. Overview

Note the regular structure of the whole, particularly the way in which the introduction and summary are in just the opposite order to the detailed portions, leaving us with aB(x)Ab, where (x) is the transition.

B. 1:1-5, Epistolary Opening

Suggests already the two major issues to be discussed in the epistle:

1. v.1, emphasizing Paul's authority, reflects the attack against the Messenger (Paul).
2. v.3-5, the most involved "Grace to you" section in any Pauline letter, reflects the attack against the Message (the gospel of grace).
3. **Application:** Beware of the two fronts on which the enemy may attack. If he can discredit us personally, that will be just as damaging as pulling us into doctrinal error. We must be *blameless*.

C. 1:6-10, Introduction to the Conflict: The Message

The emphasis in this section is on the content of the gospel, and the importance of holding to it no matter who says anything different.

The reference of v.10 to the messenger is the first of a pair of balanced links, the second of which is 1:11, which though part of the next paragraph (cf. use of vocative in 1:11) is nevertheless dealing with the content of the gospel (*kata anq.*).

Application: Don't compromise the message!

D. 1:11-2:14, Detailed Discussion of the Messenger

A series of episodes, alternating in and out of Jerusalem, that show his independence of and parity with Jerusalem. The culminating episode shows how his authority is equal with that of Peter, the most prominent of the Jerusalem apostles.

1. 1:13-14, His life before salvation.
2. 1:15-17, Acts 9a, His salvation, away from Jerusalem.
3. 1:18-20, Acts 9b, in Jerusalem.
4. 1:21-24, Acts 10, away from Jerusalem.
5. 2:1-10, Acts 11 or 15? In Jerusalem.
6. 2:11-14, Peter in Antioch, away from Jerusalem.

E. 2:15-21, Transition from Messenger to Message

1. Note shift in pronouns, thou (Peter) -> we -> I -> you (Galatians).
2. The section is cast as the continuation of his rebuke to Peter, and

undoubtedly preserves material from that conversation. But that material all concerns, not Paul's credentials, but the substance of the Gospel. Thus it is a link to the next section.

F. **3:1-6:10, Detailed Discussion of the Message**

Each of the three sections in this half of the discussion begins with a personal appeal to the Galatian's past experience and faithfulness (marked by a cluster of 2nd person plural pronouns), and then develops a contrast that shows the error with which they are being confronted. The characterization of the error moves from abstract to concrete as we progress through the three sections.

Application: We need to deal with one another both on the basis of personal love and concern and on the foundation of Scripture. To omit either is to fall short of the biblical example.

1. 3:1-4:7, contrast of *works/law/childhood* with *faith/promise/sonship*.
 - a) 3:1-5, personal rebuke to Galatians
 - b) 3:6-29, We get what Abraham was promised.
 - 1) 3:6-14 Superiority of faith to law: synchronic
 - 2) 3:14-22 Diachronic: superiority of promise to law
 - 3) 3:23-29 Diachronic: law yields to faith.
 - 4) 4:1-7 Diachronic: from bondage to freedom.
 - c) **Application:** Don't forget where we started. Ephesus in Rev: "left thy first love."
2. 4:8-5:1, contrast of *bondage* with *freedom*.
 - a) 4:8-20, personal appeal: has he wasted his labor on them?
 - b) 4:21-5:1, Allegorical argument for freedom over bondage
 - c) **Application:** Paul's patience toward them in their weakness and error is an example for us toward one another.
3. 5:2-6:10, contrast of *flesh* with *spirit*.
 - a) 5:2-12 On the basis of 5:7 (compare 3:1), this qualifies as a personal section. First addresses the issue of their circumcision, which is the real issue (as it comes out in 6:12-13). But 6:12-13 make another point that is also developed earlier: the circumcisers' motive (self-aggrandizement) is one to which the Galatians are also subject, even if they succeed in rejecting the Judaizing tendency.
 - b) 5:13-6:10, flesh and spirit: the proper use of liberty
 - 1) 5:13-6:2, The Conflict of Flesh and Spirit.
 - 2) 6:1-6:5, Correcting errors in others and in ourselves.
 - 3) 6:6-10, Caring Positively for one another.

c) **Application:** Be on guard for the specific dangers that the flesh poses.

G. **6:11-17, Summary of the Messenger**

Paul contrasts his selfless service and the scars he bears with the selfish way the Judaizers want to inflate themselves over the circumcision of the Galatians.

Application: Warns us against the danger of serving God for selfish motives.

H. **6:18, Epistolary Closing**

Note the final acknowledgment of them as brethren, in spite of the harsh things he has had to say.