

PART I

**PAUL'S PARADIGM SWITCH
- A MATTER OF URGENCY!**

CHAPTER I

EXPLORING GALATIANS AS A LETTER OF URGENCY

1. GETTING PERSPECTIVE ON A CRITICAL SITUATION

The urgency of Paul's letter to the Galatians can hardly be over-emphasised. It will be argued that Paul wrote a letter from the heart in a situation in which he was convinced that the truth of the gospel – its very essence – was being seriously threatened. Taking into consideration the distinction between, what was coined by J.C. Beker as Paul's coherency and contingency,¹ one could say that the letter to the Galatians, though illustrating a high degree of internal coherency,² was written in a very contingent (context-related) situation.

It is this contingency that makes it of the utmost importance that the original frame of reference be decided upon as historically, sociologically³ and theologically⁴ accurately as possible. The wide range of well-argued viewpoints with regard to the date, recipients, occasion, rhetorical strategy and Paul's opponents, testify to the difficulty of reconstructing the letter's original setting. In order to seek the truth – the truth of the gospel about which Paul wanted to be straightforward (Gl. 2:14) – in a letter like Galatians, which is as context-related as it is, we have to be as accurate as possible. Considering the objective of this thesis, it does not fall within its scope to make an in-depth and detailed analysis of all the relevant arguments with regard to destination, date, the Pauline opponents and rhetorical mechanisms. This being said, it is important to motivate – albeit in broad outline – a specific stance on these matters in order to have a contextual basis from which to operate and in terms of which disciplined choices of interpretation can be made.

A position on Paul's rhetorical approach in Galatians will have to be taken. Having only the letter in front of us almost 2000 years after being issued, makes it incumbent upon us to understand the rhetorical approaches of his day, as well as his use or disregard of them. With regard to dating, it will be argued that the letter was written very early, in fact, it is probably Paul's earliest extant letter. It has become usual to discuss the dating and addressees together, since defenders of an early date usually opt for a South Galatian address and those in favour of a later date, for a North Galatian address. Be this as it may, because the address has no bearing on our subject, it is assumed that a South Galatian address is slightly

¹ Beker, 1980, 11-6.

² Du Toit, 1990, 159.

³ Green, 1995, 423; Barton, 1995, 61-76.

⁴ Fowl, 1995, 394-410, provides a good orientation on this subject, stressing the dangers of approaching the text with theological presuppositions and not subjecting conclusions to textual scrutiny. A primary factor in overcoming the subjectivity involved is a historical reading of the text. Meeks, 1983², 1-8, is most helpful with this. Cognisance will be taken of the principles laid down by Hays, 1997, 291-310.

more probable.¹ The question as to who the opponents were against whom Paul argued so strongly, is extremely important with a view to fine tuning his arguments and to avoid being side-tracked from the truth of the gospel as understood by Paul. We have to move between the Scylla of decontextualising Paul's arguments as though the opponents were of no consequence in his arguments, and the Charybdis of understanding Paul's letter in terms of the opponents' arguments, as if Paul were actually replying to an earlier letter of theirs addressed to him.

The urgency of Paul's letter to the Galatians will be strongly argued. It seems a very important element in the scenario of Paul's effort to impress on the Galatians the radically different situation that the advent of Christ had brought about – one he describes as freedom. In tandem with this, he wished to impress on them the seriousness of the threat of circumcision and law-observance and the urgency to rectify the situation.

2. A LITERARY PERSPECTIVE

2.1. Rhetoric: about the gospel truth – not about Paul

Paul's style in his letter to the Galatians has been fiercely debated, especially since Betz' influential introduction of the use of classical Greco-Roman rhetoric to our subject. Although his input is not wholly accepted by NT scholars, and is even harshly contested by many, the debate has been irrevocably set on a course on which one must consider his invaluable and laborious scholarship.²

Let it be said from the start: Paul, although sensitive to his Umwelt's stylistic conventions and to some extent conforming to them, would not be dictated to by them, nor slavishly follow them. It is common knowledge that in terms of epistolography alone he deviated from conventions of his day, creating his own characteristic way of writing letters.³ In fact, in Galatians he even deviated from his own characteristic epistolary approach.⁴ The question therefore, is whether Paul deviated from convention because of a lack of literary knowledge, or whether he did it deliberately. In a clear and well-argued article, Andrie du Toit argues that Paul was probably very well informed on Greek rhetoric and philosophy and well versed in the Greek Bible. His written Greek was "not translation Greek. He was thinking in Greek."⁵ This being accepted the deviations are even more obvious and one must conclude that Paul wanted to create a specific effect in each case. One would therefore have to determine his probable intention with each deviation.

¹ Breytenbach, 1996, 149-73; Ramsay, 1900, 314-8; 1897, 97-111; Duncan, 1934, xviii-xxi; Bruce, 1982¹, 12-3; Morris, 1996, 15-20; R.N. Longenecker, 1990, lxviii-lxx; Witherington, 1998¹, 6; Fung, 1988, 1-3; Guthrie, 1970, 452-7.

² Betz, 1975, 353-79; Betz, 1979.

³ Witherington, 1998¹, 69.

⁴ Dunn, 1993¹, 19.

⁵ Du Toit, 2000, 375-402, points to both Tarsus and Jerusalem as vastly influential on Paul. A choice should not be made. However, clearly, even in Jerusalem, because of the need to be persuasive, attention would have been given to Greek rhetoric as serving of Judaism – especially by an open-minded teacher like Gamaliel.

He seems to have been so at home in the Greek world that he could both use and deviate from contemporary style in whatever way he considered necessary to reach his specific goal, always being careful that his audience understood him, for the simple reason that he wanted to persuade them of his position.¹

Betz took his cue from Greco-Roman rhetoric and epistolography, paying special attention to the rhetorical handbooks of Greco-Roman antiquity.² He argues that Paul's letter is mainly a well-structured composition of speeches enclosed by an epistolary framework consisting of a pre- (Gl. 1:1-5) and a postscript (Gl. 6:11-18). In fact, even the postscript is applied as part of a rhetorical structure, serving as the *conclusio* of an apologetic speech.³ Three rhetorical styles were predominantly used in Greco-Roman literature, namely, the juridical (apologetic in nature), deliberative (polemic in nature) and epideictic styles (demonstrative in nature and usually used in funeral orations).⁴ Epideictic rhetoric has not received much attention in Galatian scholarship⁵ and will be ignored in this treatise. We now very briefly reflect on the first two styles.⁶

2.1.1. *Juridical rhetorical approach considered*

Betz argues that Paul made extensive use of rhetoric in the so-called *genus iudiciale*; that is juridical or forensic rhetoric (defence-speech)⁷ common in court. It was used both in defence of and in indictment of the accused,⁸ i.e. as defence and as blame-speech. His baseline is that Paul was involved in an intense debate with his adversaries concerning his apostolic authority. In his letter he was defending his apostleship and the Galatians were the jury who were to decide on the matter.⁹ It therefore, according to Betz, has a strong apologetic air about it. Obviously, if this were the case, part of Paul's self-defence would have included laying blame on his opponents. This was pioneering work by Betz who is credited for introducing modern scholarship to the Greco-Roman rhetoric to which Paul would most probably have been exposed.¹⁰ Paul was probably not merely a Jewish intellectual, but also informed on the Hellenism of his day. His use of the Greek language in itself points in this direction.¹¹ Paul, being conscious of the Hellenistic context in which his readers found themselves, would make use of such mechanisms as helpful means to a gospel-serving end. One is reminded of

¹ Du Toit, 2000, 397, stresses that rhetoric intends to persuade the reader, whatever the genre!

² In this regard Aristotle's, Cicero's and especially Quintilian's handbooks on rhetoric are prominent.

³ Betz, 1979, 15.

⁴ Hester, 1991, 291-307, one of few exponents of this view, provides valuable insight into epideictic in Galatians. He refers to his earlier articles: 1984, 223-33; and 1986, 386-408, in which he regarded Gl. 1:11-2:14 as apologetic.

⁵ W.B. Russell, 1997, 50, probably correctly ascribes this to the lack of dominance of praise and blame features.

⁶ The subject being an intriguing one, it is not within the detailed scope of this study. It is, however, important with regard to exegetical consistency that a position is taken on the matter of style and stylistic methods.

⁷ Betz, 1979, 14.

⁸ Du Toit, 1992², 466.

⁹ Betz, 1974, 78-93; 1975, 353-79; 1979, 14.

¹⁰ Du Toit, 1992¹, 280; W.B. Russell, 1997, 38.

¹¹ Hengel, 1991¹, 61; Witherington, 1998¹, 114, 115, 122.

Paul's remark in 1 Cor. 9: 20-23 with regard to being sensitive to the position of his hearers, for the sake of the gospel and in order that they might believe:

To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win the Jews; to those under the law I became as one under the law – though not being myself under the law – that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law – not being without law toward God but under the law of Christ – that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.¹

However, Betz' comparative analysis poses some major problems:

- In his endeavour to stress the possibility of Galatians as an apologetic document Betz depends too heavily on one type of rhetoric, i.e. juridical or forensic rhetoric, without giving due consideration to other options.²
- By superimposing a specific rhetorical form onto Paul's letter Betz has to seek exceptions to the Quintilian rule³ to accommodate those parts that do not fit the form naturally. He has a problem particularly in accommodating Gl. 3-4⁴ which he himself refers to as the *probatio* and, importantly, "the most decisive of all because in it the 'proofs' are presented. This part determines whether the speech as a whole will succeed."⁵ He also has a problem accommodating the hortative section (Gl. 5:1-6:10). To solve this problem Betz unsuccessfully seeks refuge in an appeal to philosophical diatribes.⁶

¹ One is reminded of Luke's depiction of Paul's speech on the Areopagus where he respectfully – he could have been opportunistic - met his audience on their terrain, claiming to proclaim the unknown god for whom they had erected an altar (Ac. 17:23). For clarity's sake, I accept that Luke's presentation, although possibly slightly pretentious, was not altogether alien to Paul's actual approach. Marshall, 1980, 283 remarks: "[I]t is a summary in Luke's language of the kind of thing Paul said to Gentile audiences and, in particular, to his audience in Athens." For elaboration on this assessment and sources to the contrary, read Nauck, 1956, 11-52; Bruce, 1979, 353-5; J.L. de Villiers, 1983, 73-4. Not wholly applicable, but related, Lindemann, 1996, 275-88, writes on interreligious dialogue in Paul's mission, finding Paul very clear on his stand with regard to Jesus and abrasive with regard to so-called other gods (Gl. 4:8-9; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; 1 Th. 1:9-10). However, Acts reflects missionary speeches aimed mainly at fellow Jews Paul wished to convince of the truth of God's revelation in Christ. The only real interreligious dialogue in Acts is Paul's (Ac. 17). However, he did not get involved in open-ended dialogue in search of common truth. He wished to convince his hearers of the truth in Christ. He is not abrasive in any way. In my view, one should not deduce that Luke distorted Paul's speech, because the actual Paul was not diplomatic, judged by his letters. Lindemann does not do this. He has different concerns. Paul addressed his letters to Christians. When he refers to their former gods abrasively (to which they, now Christians, would surely agree), he tries to correct a position to which they had deteriorated and could no longer hold. In Ac. 17 Paul's dialogue is very sensitive. He addresses Greeks whom he wishes to convince of the truth in Christ, taking it from where they were without engaging in a discussion on religious equality (Lindemann, 1996, 286-8).

² J. Smit, 1989, 7.

³ J. Smit, 1989, 6. He argues, because Quintilian's work was encyclopaedic in nature, it would be possible to find as much comparative evidence there as needed with regard to Paul. "Eclecticism is therefore a threatening danger." Black, 1995, 275, sounds this very warning against Betz.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 129. The reason is "frequent interruption of the argumentative sections by dialogue, examples, proverbs, quotations, etc." He adds: "But this is in conformity with the requirements of Hellenistic rhetoric. In fact, for the rhetoricians of Paul's time, there could be nothing more boring than a perfect product of rhetorical technology."

⁵ Betz, 1979, 128.

⁶ Boers, 1994, 45.

- Smit criticises his use of handbooks for Paul, because Greek rhetoric had already been adapted by the Romans over a period of two to three centuries prior to Quintilian's time (90 CE). The implication being that, if Paul were to have used this rhetoric, he would most probably have used a pre-Quintilian form. His eclectic use of Quintilian to justify the difficulty of finding similarities between the latter and Galatians makes it possible to prove almost anything. It adds dubious matter to the letter's context and could force a meaning not intended by Paul.
- Paul's letters reflect a characteristically Pauline form, a variation on ancient Hellenistic epistolary forms. Galatians fits very well into this form without forcing it into juridical rhetoric.¹ Joubert cautions that there is not enough evidence emanating *from his letters as such* to suppose a formal knowledge of Greco-Roman rhetoric on Paul's part.²
- The juridical approach is misplaced, because it wrongfully stresses Paul's defence of his apostolic authority instead of his defence of the gospel (Gl. 1:6-10; 2:2,5,7) of which the former is only a function.³ A heavy apologetic approach is in conflict with Paul's confession of being crucified with Christ (Gl. 2:19-20). In this regard Du Toit, although he does not align himself with the deliberative approach, points out that the heavy emphasis on the self-apology of Paul in Betz's approach impacts negatively on the very clear pastoral character of the letter.⁴ In conclusion, Boers aptly remarks:

Even though the evidence in favor of a deliberative speech seems overwhelming, there is no reason why Betz' analysis cannot provide insights into the letter. What prevents this from happening is the rigidity with which he forces the letter into the mold of his macro-structure. There is no place for a hermeneutic circle in the sense of Bultmann; everything moves from the theory concerning the letter's meaning to the letter. The letter itself, the subject matter of the interpretation, is left no opportunity to correct and refine the theory. Betz no longer appears to approach the letter with a question; all questions appear to have been answered.⁵

2.1.2. *The deliberative rhetorical approach considered*

Other scholars⁶ follow the classical Greco-Roman deliberative rhetorical approach known as *genus deliberativum* (persuasive speech). It aims at persuading hearers to follow a specific approach on a matter of public debate, focusing on the future and seeking decisions on the matter at hand in terms of the advantages and disadvantages of the taken position.⁷ Scholars following this approach have sound intentions. The central thrust of the argument in favour of this approach is

¹ Du Toit, 1990, 155-64.

² Joubert, 2000, 79. This not necessarily opposes Du Toit's position based on historical and cultural probability. Joubert sticks to the letters. Although one should be cautious, I agree with Du Toit, 2000, 375-402, that Paul's education would have provided him with at least an adequate working knowledge of his Umwelt's rhetorical mechanisms. In fact, Forbes, 1986, 22-4, is convinced Paul was privy to a formal education in Greek rhetoric. This might be taking it too far.

³ Witherington, 1998¹, 38; Hall, 1987, 277, 287; Gaventa, 1986¹, 20; Lategan, 1988, 425-426, 430.

⁴ Du Toit, 1990, 158. Witherington, 1998¹, 114, indicates that from Paul's letters "we gain a clear picture of someone who cares deeply about his converts. Not just the joyful passages but also the angry ones make clear how much he loved them." Koptak, 1990, 102.

⁵ Boers, 1994, 49.

⁶ Amongst others: Kennedy, 1984; Hall, 1987; Witherington, 1998¹.

⁷ Du Toit, 1992², 466.

the fear that the juridical approach unduly emphasises Paul's position as apostle, and his defence of that position, to the detriment of the gospel, which he actually intended to promote. The Galatians were not confronted with a legal question, but had to decide, on the basis of Paul's recounting of past events, what course to follow, the opponents' or Paul's.¹ Paul wanted to be convincing. It was not about Paul, but about what they were going to believe and do.² The value of this approach is its emphasis on Paul's intention of persuading them to stand firm in the gospel of Christ.³

Although this approach greatly improves on Betz' position it has major flaws.⁴

- Like juridical rhetoric, it superimposes on Paul's letter. Recently Philip Kern found that, although Paul could have been thoroughly informed on the subject, even using some of its elements, it seems highly unlikely that he modelled his letter according to a specific rhetorical form. One of his main arguments is that he could find no evidence of any church fathers of even as early as the second century – much nearer to the situation than we are – who interpreted Galatians in terms of classical rhetoric.⁵ After having studied the early Christian authors on Paul, he concludes that early Christians did not think of Paul as a rhetorician, but as "a humble author of weighty letters."⁶ In fact, Origen was of the opinion that Paul's ability to convince has more to do with his uncultured and frank way of conveying the truth of the gospel in the power of the Spirit, than with rhetoric.⁷ One must add though, that Janet Fairweather has found that St. John Chrysostom, granted that he lived much later (345-407 CE),⁸ made ample use of rhetorical criticism in his commentary on Galatians.⁹ She states that he seemingly finds Galatians to be both apologetic and deliberative¹⁰ and then continues to illustrate how he identifies both these elements in the letter. She also finds that Paul used both Hellenistic and Jewish elements in his letter, e.g., θαυμάζω (Gl. 1:6) as a Greek rebuke form and ἀμήν (Gl. 1:5) as a Jewish oddity.¹¹ His greatest departure from standard modes of persuasion, however, was that he based the authority of what he proclaimed on an otherworldly foundation, namely faith,¹² laying down new literary and spiritual terms.¹³
- Smit falls prey to a danger that is the consequence of superimposition. Although the parenetical section (Gl. 5:1-6:10) should fit in well with a delibera-

¹ J. Smit, 1989, 3.

² Kennedy, 1984, 145.

³ Hall, 1987, 278-82.

⁴ Boers, 1994, 45.

⁵ Kern, 1998, 166f.

⁶ Kern, 1998, 203.

⁷ Kern, 1998, 171-5.

⁸ There does not seem to be unanimity on his birth year, although, ironically, sources are sure of his year of death. See De Jong, 1980, 83; Kannengiesser, 1985, 75; and, in the same volume, Schneiders, 1985, 12. The latter makes mention of the fact that he was more a theologian than an exegete.

⁹ Fairweather, 1994¹, 1-38.

¹⁰ Fairweather, 1994¹, 3.

¹¹ Fairweather, 1994², 213-4.

¹² Fairweather, 1994², 237.

¹³ Fairweather, 1994², 243.

tive approach,¹ it does not fit into his specific deliberative rhetorical analysis.² He concludes that Gl. 5:1-6:10 is most probably a later addition.³ This reflects badly on the integrity of the letter, regarded by most as intact.⁴

2.1.3. *A letter from the heart*

Neither Betz nor his critics have been able to argue convincingly in favour of Paul having structured his letter according to a specific classical rhetorical style, adding only an epistolary prescript and a conclusion.⁵ Their insights, however, need not be cast aside and can be of great help if used with due flexibility so as to avoid superimposition and allow Paul to speak for himself and not to be dictated to by stylistic rules.⁶ It remains critically important that a specific style of writing is never imposed on a text to force the text to say what the author did not necessarily intend.⁷ Rather, an author has a message to convey and employs a text to do it for him. In order to communicate his intended message as clearly as possible he chooses a style to suit his message. He could even remould a style or alternate between styles if need be. Form is dictated to by content, and not *vice versa*. In this respect, it is important that not one of the above styles was always used in the same type of setting (forensic in court and deliberative in politics). They were used in a vast array of situations. Together with this multi-faceted application, they were also used in combination, with users applying different elements of the respective styles together in one setting.⁸ The overriding motive in all the stylistic approaches is persuasion.⁹ Klauck makes an important observation.

Apogetische Züge trägt nur der erste Hauptteil. Später überwiegt das deliberative Moment, und Tadel in 1,6-9 z.B. zählt eher zur Epideiktik. In 4:12-20 sind zahlreiche Topoi eines Freundschaftsbriefes auszumachen.¹⁰

¹ Hall, 1987, 281.

² This is not important for our purpose. He argues that Gl. 5:13-6:10 forms a coherent unit breaking the connection between Gl. 5:7-12 and Gl. 6:11-18. See J. Smit, 1989, 8-9.

³ J. Smit, 1989, 9. In fairness, he does not deny Paul's authorship of this section and acknowledges that the letter should presently be read as a unit.

⁴ Du Toit, 1990, 159; Witherington, 1998, 40.

⁵ Boers, 1994, 45; Kennedy, 1984, 86-7; Klauck, 1998, 237. Sängler, 2002, 377-99, argues the case, pointing to the fact that ancient theorists distinguished between oral speech and epistolography. He reaffirms the value of a rhetorical approach. Tolmie, 2004, 36, observes that not even the ancient rhetoricians themselves always followed rhetorical theory as strictly as is sometimes suggested.

⁶ Martín-Asensio, 1999, 84-107, provides a concise overview of how modern scholars have judged the use of Greco-Roman rhetoric since Betz' groundbreaking labour (84-92). Without tending to his main subject here, i.e. a discussion of Halliday's functional grammatical approach, he concludes his article quoting Hasan, 1985, 106, to stress the importance of the time-consuming and laborious exercise of "meticulous linguistic analysis" in order "to arrive at the truth" the author wished to arrive at. Rhetoric alone cannot be decisive. Olbricht, 1999, 108-24, evaluates Betz' position on Galatians, and those of R. Jewett and A. Smith on the Thessalonian correspondence, observing that one should learn from each trend, but never embrace any *in toto* (124). Sound advice to all who superimpose a structure on Galatians.

⁷ In this regard D.F. Watson, 1999, 125-51, is important for stressing the need for a combination of rhetorical and historical analysis – especially from social-scientific studies (151).

⁸ Mack, 1990, 34-5.

⁹ Lambrecht, 1989, 240, 244; Roetzel, 1999, 92; Hall, 1991, 308-20.

¹⁰ Klauck, 1998, 237-8.

An invaluable contribution with regard to the use of classical rhetoric is the safer and more effective route taken by Du Toit. On Aristotle's cue, he points to three modes of persuasion typical of ancient rhetoric, namely *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*.¹ *Ethos* involves the hearers having a positive image of the speaker. There is enough evidence of this in Galatians (Gl. 1:1, 11-2:21). Paul's omission of a thanksgiving actually enhances his standing with the Galatians, underlining his integrity. His disappointment prohibits him from including a thanksgiving. He is honest about his feelings.² His references to his glorying only in the Cross (Gl. 6:14) and his bearing the marks of Jesus (τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ - Gl. 6:17) also enhance his *ethos*. *Logos* refers to the logic of the speaker's argument. Paul uses sound and logical reasoning in e.g., Gl. 1:11-4:11, enhancing his persuasive capacity. *Pathos* is about emotional appeal. Gl. 1:6-10;³ 4:12-20⁴ and 6:1-10⁵ are Pauline examples.⁶ Together with this, there is also the technique of *vituperatio* by which opponents are set in a bad light (Gl. 1:7,9; 3:1; 5:8; 6:12-13) and the readers are praised (Gl. 4:12vv.).⁷ In this regard, the rebuke of the Galatians in Gl. 1:6 is again relevant. By rebuking them as strongly as he does, and following with a rebuke of the opponents, he verbalises his shock and dismay, but lays the blame at the door of the opponents, giving the Galatians an opportunity for exoneration.⁸

It seems a better alternative in view of our knowledge of ancient Greco-Roman and Jewish epistolography⁹ to work on the premise that Paul wrote a letter from the heart¹⁰ in a style of his own. He used whatever rhetorical mechanisms and

¹ Du Toit, 1992², 470-2. See also Loubser, 1994, 170-3.

² This is probably why Paul can move from Gl. 3:1 where he rebukes them, to Gl. 4:12, 19, 28, 31 in which he refers to them in endearing terms. Klauck, 1998, 238.

³ The use of θαυμάζω reflecting profound astonishment, as well as the reference to quick desertion (ταχέως μετατίθεσθε) of Christ for another gospel (Gl. 1:6) that is actually a perversion (Gl. 1:7), cursing even of an angel if need be (Gl. 1:8, 9), and the denouncement of pleasing men (Gl. 1:10).

⁴ After an emotional appeal with regard to their earlier assistance, how they regarded him an angel and would even have plucked out their eyes for him (Gl. 4:13-15) he reiterates his perplexity (Gl. 4:20). Had they become enemies, because of the truth (Gl. 4:16)? He refers to them as τέκνα μου ("my little children" – Gl. 4:19)

⁵ Although it does not reflect the emotive language of the other two sections, its softer tone is drenched in emotional appeal as Paul pronounces one imperative after another.

⁶ Hall, 1991, 312, also emphasises the importance of *pathos* in ancient rhetoric. Facts were handled to enhance *pathos* and suspense. Interestingly, Hall, 1991, 310-4, supports this from Quintillian. Also Howard, 1979, 49.

⁷ Du Toit, 1992², 470-2. Botha, 1992, 17-34, stresses the need to create oral presence in the author's physical absence.

⁸ Patrick (with Scult), 1999, 63-83, argues in favour of a "hermeneutic of affirmation" with regard to rhetoric as opposed to the "suspicious hermeneutics of ideology". In the latter: "Truth-seeking is taken as a ploy, not as an objective shared by rhetorician, audience and interpreter. What matters is the appearance of truth, used as a strategy to persuade particular audiences" (69). The hermeneutic of affirmation, on the other hand, works on the premise that the persuasive power of the text is in accordance with the truth it wishes to convey. Most important, however, is their remark: "Though the author seeks to present a compelling case, the discourse is designed to allow the audience space to re-enact the author's train of thought so that it can discover the truths the text has to convey" (77). So, one could argue: though Paul came across heavy-handedly, he created space for the Galatians to come to their senses after being misled.

⁹ Klauck, 1998, 181, emphasises that the influence of Jewish epistolography should not be underestimated. He follows with a discussion on a magnitude of such letters (181-226).

¹⁰ Dunn, 1993¹, 1. Porter, 1999¹, 222-48, concludes Paul was primarily a letter writer. Joubert, 2000, 79.

aids available to him in order to obtain his goal.¹ This included, to an extent, the eclectic use of rhetoric from the Greco-Roman *Umwelt* as well as from Judaism. It seems almost obvious that, if Paul followed an eclectic approach, it would be impossible to reconstruct a specific rhetorical style in Galatians. We do, on the other hand have clear indications from our text that Galatians follows mainly the conventions of Hellenistic epistolography,² although Paul often deviates to suit his purpose and to include primitive Christian liturgical elements.³ Tolmie correctly suggests that one should be very aware of the rhetorical theories and how they could apply, but that the text should dictate the process, rather than any rhetorical theory.⁴

Thus, Paul's letter was well considered, making eclectic use of whatever he needed in order to persuade his readers of the foolishness of their considerations. It was written from his heart and exudes *urgency* and *concern*.⁵

2.2. Scattered rhetorical indicators of urgency

It has become clearer that Paul's letter was intended to be urgent. It was also granted that Du Toit's⁶ reference to Aristotle's techniques of persuasion is very relevant in enhancing urgency. Not only is the form in which the letter is written important in this regard, but also the choice of vocabulary. Without going into detail, a few semantic marks of urgency will be mentioned and the way in which they enhance the urgency will be briefly illustrated. Because Paul's use of apocalyptic will be dealt with in greater detail in the next chapter, it will not be touched on at all here.

2.2.1. *Θαυμάζω* and associated indicators of urgency

A remark on Gl. 1: 6 and its use of *θαυμάζω* is called for in the light of its strategic position. It certainly enhances the notion of the letter being from Paul's heart. It carries with it a profound sense of rebuke, especially since it is applied at the point where Paul would typically have followed with a few words of thanksgiving and praise with regard to the readers.⁷ In fact, this is the only instance in his authentic letters where Paul deviates so expressly from his usual

¹ Aune, 1984, 147; Witherington, 1998¹, 105, 107; Howard, 1979, 49, state that Paul used any means to promote his theme. Stowers, 1986, 87, 102, 109, 134, 139, provides examples of the available ancient epistolary mechanisms.

² Du Toit, 1990, 157. Bruce, 1982¹, 58. Hansen, 1989, 29. Hansen also cites Funk, 1966, 270, who writes: "It should be emphasised that these elements are subject of variation in both context and order, and that some items are optional, although the omission of anyone calls for explanation. It is put this way around on the view that Paul is not rigidly following an established pattern, but is creating his own letter form – in relation, of course, to the letter as a literary convention. If he has moulded this particular pattern out of the circumstances of his apostolic ministry and his theological understanding, he seems to follow it without conscious regard to its structure. It is just his way of writing letters. It is only in this sense that we can legitimately speak of 'form'."

³ Roetzel, 1999, 81; Doty, 1973, 27-8.

⁴ Tolmie, 2004, 37.

⁵ Cooper, 2000, 135.

⁶ Du Toit, 1992², 470-2.

⁷ D. Cook, 1992, 511; Klauck, 1998, 237.

thanksgiving (εὐχαριστῶ). Of course, 2 Corinthians is another instance, but there it is at least substituted by a blessing (εὐλογητός)¹, so that the deviation is not that prominent. In Galatians Paul replaces his usual thanksgiving with a rebuke (θαυμάζω). Bruce very aptly remarks:

The most probable account of the omission of any thanksgiving here is that Paul was impelled by a sense of overmastering urgency to come straight to the point.²

With this exclamation he sets the tone of the letter. From the start, Paul leaves no uncertainty as to his rejection of the opponents and their message. He is quick to position himself and his gospel, sticking out his neck and being very emotional about it.³ He was astonished and perturbed⁴ – shocked: understanding their actions, or intended actions, as a perversion of the gospel of Christ (Gl. 1:7). In fact, it boiled down to abandoning God⁵ who showed them grace in Christ (Gl. 1:6). They were deserting the very One they were attempting to worship more effectively.⁶ He describes it as reverting to their pre-Christian life of slavery to “beings that by nature are no gods” (Gl. 4:8), and turning “back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits whose slaves you want to be once more” (Gl. 4:9).⁷ This, together with the fact that this is the only occurrence of θαυμάζω in Paul’s extant letters,⁸ enhances the urgency of the letter.

The expression of perplexity constitutes an emotional prelude, leading into the substance of the letter: It indicates with much feeling that the letter intends to provide an answer to the problem that lies at the root of the author’s perplexity. By expressing his perplexity, the author is telling his readers that he intends doing something about it through his letter. The very mention of his perplexity on account of their conduct is intended to make them sit up and take notice, because clearly the letter is going to deal with the problem which has caused the perplexity, intending to suggest its resolution by getting them to change their mistaken ways.⁹

To his mind this was not a tolerable misinterpretation of the gospel. It touched upon the heart of the gospel, completely distorting it. He refers to this position as μετατίθεσθε (Gl. 1:6). Its importance is enhanced by its being a Pauline *hapax*

¹ Stowers, 1986, 22.

² Bruce, 1982¹, 80.

³ Bruce, 1982¹, 79; J.H. Roberts, 1992, 329-38. F.W. Hughes, 1994, 216, mentions that Gl.1:1, 9 is contrary to Paul’s usual politeness.

⁴ Grundmann, 1965, 40, stresses that Paul uses θαυμάζω as a literary form to express surprise at the Galatians’ conduct just like the Greek rhetoricians of antiquity. I must add though, that Paul’s surprise was definitely not intended positively. It was most probably intensely negatively meant. Murphy-O’Connor, 1995, 60-1, even refers to it as: “[H]e is both deeply worried and profoundly disgusted.”

⁵ “The one who called you” could refer to Paul as the one who brought them the gospel in the first place, but scholarship is unanimous that this would not fit in with Paul’s view of subservience. It could refer to Christ (Luther, Calvin, Bengel), but in view of other references in Galatians (1:1; 5:8) and elsewhere (Rm. 4: 17; 8:30; 9:12, 24; 11:2; 1 Cor.1: 9, 26; 7:15, 17-24; Eph.1: 18; Php.3:14; etc.) it is clear that he is referring to God. See R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 15.

⁶ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 15.

⁷ All translations from Greek into English are from the *Revised Standard Version* (second edition, 1971). Where a different translation is done, it is the author’s own.

⁸ Schmoller, 1989, 224, sites only one other occurrence, but then in the broader Pauline corpus of letters, at 2 Th. 1:10; also Bachmann & Slaby, 1987, 806.

⁹ J.H. Roberts, 1992, 336.

legomennon.¹ In Greek literature it is often used to refer to the change from one condition to another, which fits this context well and boils down to apostasy.² In this regard, Pao's labour on Pauline thanksgiving is noteworthy.³ Amongst other characteristics of Pauline thanksgiving, he stresses that Paul's thanksgiving is reserved almost exclusively for God. Added to this, he does not thank God for gifts received, but much rather for divine deeds of grace performed in the lives of fellow believers. He refers to this as dominant in Paul.⁴ Thanksgiving is also closely associated with doxology. In 1 Corinthians Paul affirms that believers can partake of meals sacrificed to gods and idols on condition that God is given thanks. This is born from a theology of creation. He had made everything and by giving thanks to Him one was acknowledging his Lordship over all creation.⁵ Associated with this was the acknowledgement of one's dependency on God and one's own frailty and lack of merit before God, resulting in thanks instead of boasting.⁶ In view of these remarks by Pao⁷ one is warranted to ask whether Paul was not implying more than meets the eye. In view of the above-mentioned notion of apostasy, there is a very real possibility that Paul is already implying their severance from Christ. He could be implying that, despite their former faith, he himself at least, was not certain that he could thank God for doing great works in their lives. Were they not, by reverting to law, actually reverting to independence from God and opening the door for boasting in their own merit once again. Indeed, this was an extremely serious situation that had to be urgently addressed.

Thurén correctly differs from many who hold the position that Paul was probably emotionally so upset that he reacted in anger and that his rhetoric was more about emotion than reason. How should his rhetoric be understood?⁸ Could one honestly hold the position that the urgency of the situation warranted the production of second-rate theology?⁹ It is my contention that it was this very urgency that called for precise theologising. Yes, the letter is emotionally loaded. In Gl. 1:8-9 he expresses a curse on anyone – he himself included – if that person were to present another gospel; but was it written in anger? Given his shock and emotion on receiving the news from Galatia and reflecting on it, could one honestly merely discard the rhetorical elements (*pathos*) on the notion that they are emotional outbursts? Thurén very aptly remarks:

There is, however, reason to doubt whether the author himself was overwhelmed by emotions. He presents himself in the text as perplexed, uncalculating, straightforward and impassioned;

¹ Bachmann & Slaby, 1987, 1254.

² Witherington, 1998¹, 82; Mußner, 1974, 53-5, when reading οὐτως ταχέως together with the verb, sees an allusion to the defections of Israel in the time of the golden calf (Ex. 32:8) and of the Judges (Jdg. 2:17). In the LXX it has the meaning "quickly from the way." One is reminded that the first Christians referred to themselves as of "the Way" (Ac. 9:2; 19:9,23; 22:4; 24:14,22); Bauer, 1979, 513; Tolmie, 2004, 47.

³ Pao, 2002.

⁴ Pao, 2002, 20.

⁵ Pao, 2002, 34-5.

⁶ Pao, 2002, 35-6.

⁷ Indeed this paragraph not even slightly echoes the magnitude of Pao's scholarly contribution in this respect.

⁸ Thurén, 1999, 302-20.

⁹ Thurén, 1999, 311.

the letter seems to be an instant response, a natural primitive reaction, to alarming news from the congregations. Yet a closer look reveals that this purposeful impression is consciously produced by utilizing effective contemporary rhetorical means. One would expect more unorthodox ways of expressing perplexity if the apostle actually were in frenzy.¹

Thurén applies Du Toit's² article on *vilification* to Galatians, finding that Paul applies almost all these devices to his Galatian opponents: hypocrisy (Gl. 2:13), sorcery (Gl. 3:1), moral depravity (Gl. 6:12-13) and a perverting influence (Gl. 1:7; 5:10, 12), and as ludicrous characters (Gl. 5:12) with secret intentions, who are threatened with eschatological judgement (Gl. 1:8-9; 5:10).³ Paul's judgement served on Peter, one of the "pillars" of the church in Jerusalem, can also be included: "I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned" (Gl. 2:11). This method was applied in antiquity, and in Galatians, to wedge readers from the so-called villains, decreasing their *ethos*, and hopefully neutralising their influence.⁴ If one accepts vilification as a strategic rhetorical tool, and there is no reason to doubt this, Paul was not just emotionally shooting from the hip. Equal to his theological arguments, his rhetoric was well considered.

I am unconvinced, though, by Thurén's argument that Paul's portrayal of his theology is as dramatised and radicalised as his rhetoric.⁵ He argues that Paul presented two contradictory positions. In Gl. 5:2-4 he states that all is lost if any other position than his radical position is taken. On the other hand, in Gl. 6:15 he states: "neither circumcision nor non-circumcision counts for anything, but a new creation." Thurén could also have mentioned the earlier and similar sounding Gl. 5:6. He argues that Paul exaggerated his theological position, actually acknowledging the exaggeration in Gl. 6:15 (and Gl. 5:6). He wanted to state that the whole matter of circumcision was neither here nor there. It was about Christ. If I understand correctly, Thurén's position implies that Paul, in the space of two sentences, changes from viewing circumcision as severance from Christ to it being an absolute non-event. In which case one wonders why Paul wrote the letter in the first place; and, if he had actually calmed down and realised that he had overreacted in Gl. 5:6, why he did not call a halt to his letter and discard that which he had already written. Why, if he had overreacted, and acknowledged it as early as Gl. 5:6, does he immediately follow with the same train of thought as before that insight, when he questions the Galatians' obedience (Gl. 5:7)? He, as I will argue, erroneously concludes

the text does not indicate that Paul saw any dramatic difference in the practical life between the two versions of Christianity in Galatia.⁶

Is it not much more plausible to argue that Paul really felt as strongly about the Galatians' reversion as he states; that it was as good as severance from Christ, and that he was equally honest about circumcision being neither here nor there?

¹ Thurén, 1999, 309-10.

² Du Toit, 1994¹, 403-12.

³ Thurén, 1999, 312-3.

⁴ Du Toit, 1994¹, 412.

⁵ Thurén, 1999, 318-9.

⁶ Thurén, 1999, 319.

Paul regarded circumcision as part of a bygone era when it was required of Jews. Whether Jewish Christians continued the practice on a cultural level, was of no concern to him. It no longer had any theological, soteriological or ethical bearing. But, as soon as circumcision is imposed on Christians – Jew or Gentile – some form of theological, soteriological, salvation-historical or ethical reasoning obviously accompanies the imposition. This was a major problem for Paul. It indicated reversion to the present evil age from which Christ had delivered believers radically and absolutely.

If I am correct in discarding the notion that Paul's rhetoric was an emotional outburst, what end did Paul wish to serve? Nanos seeks the answer in irony on Paul's part,¹ describing Paul's rhetoric as "ironic rebuke".² In terms of the use of ironic rebuke between parent and child, its use in antiquity, and given the relationship³ between the congregation and Paul, its founder, ironic rebuke fits the picture very well. He argues that a parent sometimes rebukes an off-spring beyond what is deserved, factually accurate or even necessary. However, the child realises this and discounts it against their common history. Paul's rebuke of the opponents should be understood similarly.⁴ One should be wary of too easily making deductions with regard to the opponents and their views from Paul's reaction. Although I am not in agreement with his conclusion with regard to the agitators (he calls them "influencers"), I accept a strong element of irony in the letter. However, I doubt that one should so embrace⁵ this element as to superimpose it onto Galatians as its hermeneutical key *par excellence*. It would imply that one takes almost everything Paul says in Galatians with a pinch of salt. I am also sceptical of the parallel he draws with the parent to child rebuke as if the situations are emotively on a par. One should distinguish between Paul's emotions leading up to the letter and his *pathos* in the letter. The latter is not raw emotion. It follows after a period of reflection of unknown length. Even if Paul reacted very quickly and was as taken aback as he says, his use of rhetoric illustrates reflection, planning, and, by implication, greater emotional calmness than that of a devastated parent shooting emotional rhetoric.

Nanos' remark that even a soft rebuke by way of irony would have had a devastating effect on the Galatians, because of the heavy emphasis on shame in their culture,⁶ is useful. My contention is that Paul made use of rhetoric on all three rhetorical levels, namely *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*, in order to impress on his readers the absolute seriousness and precariousness of their situation, and the

¹ Nanos, 2002.

² Nanos, 2002, 60.

³ The family metaphor is prominent in Galatians. He refers to men of faith as "sons of Abraham" (Gl. 3:7). The Galatians are all "sons of God" (Gl. 3:26), "Abraham's offspring" and "heirs" (Gl. 3:29; 4:7). They had "received adoption as sons" (Gl. 4:5). Gl. 4:21-31 reiterates this notion and climaxes with "So, brethren, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman." In Gl. 6:10 the congregation is referred to as "the household of God." Most importantly, Paul refers to the Galatians as: "My little children" (Gl. 4:19).

⁴ Nanos, 2002, 60.

⁵ Olbricht, 1999, 124.

⁶ Nanos, 2002, 45-7.

need for them to not only reconsider their position, but realign with the true gospel urgently. They were not in a position in which they were honouring God's gracious work in them and had to realise that reversion to law in any form was tantamount to severance from Christ and apostasy.

2.2.2. *“Ὁ ἀνόητοι Γαλάτια, τίς ὑμᾶς ἐβάσκανεν (Gl. 3:1)*

The use of βασκαίνειν (Gl. 3:1) has drawn much attention. The present concern is not the detailed semantics, but the measure in which it reflects and enhances Paul's urgency. Neyrey has done well in presenting applied social-scientific information regarding Paul's question.¹ He finds, in terms of Douglas' *group-grid* model,² the Galatians had a *strong group – rising grid* view. What Paul identified as indispensable for the congregation's group definition, was faith in Jesus Christ and being filled with the Spirit through whom they pray: “Abba! Father!” In terms of Paul's new definition

[Christ's] death, moreover, marks the exact boundary line between the former covenant of Law and the new covenant of faith and grace (3:13-14).³

Law had lost its defining position since the advent of Christ. No longer was holiness or righteousness defined by law, but through the Spirit.

The holy state of those who are righteous by faith is further expressed by the possession of the “holy” Spirit, which the holy God pours into human hearts, confirming and empowering them as “holy” (3:2, 5; 4:6).⁴

Christ is now the new boundary line and the end of the law. To be in Christ was now determining.⁵ Returning to the matter of bewitchment, Neyrey suggests it should not be understood as a matter of sorcery, but rather as an accusation that the accused has come under the influence, or has been influenced, to accept the point of view of an enemy who is either the devil or someone acting under his power.⁶ A threat had come from the wrong side of the boundary and influenced those on the correct side. This is referred to as being bewitched. In terms of the current notion of urgency, one must acknowledge that by applying an apocalyptic shift from the present evil age to new creation, from being enslaved to the elements of the world and without Christ to being crucified with Christ (Gl. 2:20) and dead to the world (Gl. 6:14), Paul was implying a boundary that had to be crossed. By drawing the devil or his aides into the picture, he underlines the seriousness of the matter. It was about being either on the side of the devil, or of God - that serious! Their being foolish was not about being naïve or having made a slight mistake. It was about aligning with the devil and the present evil age instead of with Christ in whom they had been crucified to the world and the world to them (Gl. 6:14). It was about turning things around,

¹ Neyrey, 1988, 72-100.

² For further detailed reading, see Neyrey, 1988, 77-91.

³ Neyrey, 1988, 79.

⁴ Neyrey, 1988, 79.

⁵ Neyrey, 1988, 81.

⁶ Neyrey, 1988, 91.

beginning with the Spirit and reverting to the flesh (Gl. 3:3); being crucified with Christ (Gl. 2:20) and then seeking severance from Him (Gl. 5:4).

2.2.3. *Ἴδετε πηλίκους ὑμῖν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ (Gl. 6:11)*

In Gl. 6:11 Paul takes the pen from his amanuensis to close off with a brief summary and conclusion before greeting the Galatians. This in itself is indicative of his urgency.¹ There is no final consensus on why he refers to the large letters. Is it meant to be a slight touch of humour at his expense? Would he have done this to ease the tension slightly? It seems highly unlikely in view of the rhetorical elements already discussed. Would Paul, after such serious arguing of his case, at the point of wrapping up his argument, and immediately before vilifying his opponents once more (Gl. 6:12-13), consider being tongue in cheek in any way? It is doubtful. It seems more likely that Paul made this remark to stress his personal concern and the urgency of the matter by making use of larger letters.² This position is strengthened by his remark: Τοῦ λοιποῦ κόπους μοι μηδεὶς παρεχέτω (Gl. 6:17). He wished not to be bothered again. They were to do the right thing immediately, because there was no other acceptable position. He is saying that as far as he is concerned, the matter is settled. They knew what had to be done and they were to go out and do it!

2.2.4. *Conclusion*

Paul probably lost his cool when he received news from Galatia that they were considering the reversion to certain laws. However, we have no knowledge of such a reaction. We have to work with that which is available and which is our object of study, namely the letter itself. As indicated above, Paul made use of terminology and rhetorical effects to convey a profound sense of urgency. The presence of a great deal of *pathos* in the letter is not reflective of emotional and theological instability on Paul's part. Paul probably reacted very speedily. It most definitely sounds like that. However, that does not mean that he overreacted, or that he was emotionally unstable, or that he had generally lost the plot and was reacting in desperation. His theology had already been totally reformed since the Damascus Christophany and ripened during the following period of ±14 years. Paul's letter is well worked out in terms of structure and theological argument. One can therefore quite safely assume that his choice of words was equally well considered in order to enhance the letter's *ethos* and *pathos* as much as its *logos*. In view then of Paul being in full control of himself, a most probable reason for his use of these rhetorical effects is that he wanted to impress on the Galatians the profound seriousness of the matter and the urgency for them to reconsider their position. After all, they were amongst his first missionary fruits in Asia Minor. Other congregations had also been exposed to the problem (Antioch for one – Gl. 2:11-14). Decisive leadership at the breakwater between being in

¹ Stowers, 1986, 61, refers to this practice as the addition of a personal touch. Although this was a practice in ancient epistolography, I disagree that it is the case here. Paul is at the very critical stage of summarising and concluding. He would not have been frivolous at this point.

² Schlier, 1971, 279-80, stresses Paul's pegging down of the main themes in urgency.

Christ and being without Him – especially in Gentile territory – had become vitally important. Not being in Galatia in order to deal with the problem personally, as in the case of Antioch, he writes a letter in which he does his rhetorical best to convince them that there is only one position to take – his, which he considers the gospel truth. They had to tend to the matter with great urgency!

3. A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

3.1. The timing of the urgent letter

Much has been written on this subject. Dates vary from as early as 48 CE¹ to as late as 56 CE.² The main question and driving force behind the dating of Galatians for the purpose of this dissertation is whether it was written before or after the Jerusalem council (Acts 15). The answer has a bearing on Pauline theology in general; on the understanding of Galatians in relation to the rest of the extant Pauline correspondence;³ on the history of early Christianity; and on the authenticity of Luke with regard to Acts, as will be indicated below. Obviously, an early date enhances the letter's urgency. It cannot be dealt with in detail in the current study, but we have to orientate ourselves with regard to the date. It will be done by means of posing the main questions in this regard and finding an answer that best fits all the questions.

3.1.1. *With what Pauline visit to Jerusalem should we equate Gl. 2:1-10?*

3.1.1.1. *A most important matter*

This is probably the single most important question to resolve with regard to dating Galatians. Probably the majority of scholars accept that Gl. 2:1-10 is Paul's version of the Jerusalem council recorded by Luke in Acts 15.⁴ If this is the case, a date after the council in 49/50 CE is obvious.⁵ But if it can be proven that they relate to separate incidents, a date before the council is possible and even probable.

Galatians records 2 Pauline visits to Jerusalem. Gl. 1:18 refers to a visit to Peter 3 years after the Christophany. Gl. 2:1-10 refers to a visit 14 years later when he met privately with James, Peter and John explaining what he preached to the Gentiles. He makes no mention of disagreement or debate. At the end of the meeting they agreed on 2 matters. *Firstly*, Paul would focus his mission on the Gentiles and the others on the circumcised; and *secondly*, he would remember the poor of the Jerusalem church.

According to Acts Paul visited Jerusalem at least 5 times.

¹ Cartledge, 1957, 112; Krimmer, 1981, 10.

² Robinson, 1976, 55-57; Joubert, 2000, 77.

³ Jewett, 1971, 108-11, provides an example of the impact of dating on argumentation.

⁴ Witherington, 1998¹, 13.

⁵ Most scholars date the Jerusalem council between late 49 and early 50 CE. To prevent this issue from becoming a subject on its own and from distracting us from the real point of interest, I also accept this dating.

- a) Ac. 9:26-30 reports a visit after his Damascus experience, which is often referred to as his *conversion visit* and is equated with Gl. 1:18.
- b) In Ac. 11:27-30 Luke reports on the church in Antioch sending Saul and Barnabas to Jerusalem with famine relief. This is commonly referred to as the *famine visit*.
- c) Ac. 15:1-30 informs us of the Jerusalem council where the landmark decision was taken on the Gentile's position regarding law. This was the *council visit*.
- d) Ac. 18:22 makes mention of Paul's *hasty visit*. It is accepted that this refers to the Jerusalem Church, because of the absolute reference τὴν ἐκκλησίαν and the words ἀναβὰς ("went up") and κατέβη ("went down"). It is widely accepted that, although Jerusalem is not mentioned, it is implied.¹ The use of ἀναβὰς would not make sense if he were to refer to Caesarea,² since he was already there. On the other hand, the use of τὴν ἐκκλησίαν in the absolute would not make sense outside Caesarea unless it was 'n type of *terminus technicus* referring to the Jerusalem Church as the original congregation and origin of the rest of the church. "Going up" fits perfectly with OT (יָרַד) and other NT usage referring to "going up" to Jerusalem.³ It is strengthened by the use of "going down" to Antioch from Jerusalem, which is also used in Ac. 11:27.⁴
- e) Ac. 21:15-17 reports on Paul's so-called *collection visit*.

Why does Paul cite only 2 visits? Maybe he was dealing with a specific matter, referring only to that relevant to the situation.⁵ Luke, again, tried to reconstruct the early church's history and missionary endeavours, carefully describing the movements of the apostle to the Gentiles.⁶ More fundamentally, if Gl. 1:18 refers to the conversion visit (Ac. 9:26-30), to what visit does Gl. 2:1-10 refer?⁷ The following options exist:

- a) Gl. 2:1-10 relates to the Jerusalem council of Ac. 15:1-30. Ac. 11:27-30 is unrelated to the Galatian debate. This view held sway until early in the twentieth century⁸ and is still being defended today.
- b) Gl. 2:1-10 relates the famine visit of Ac. 11:27-30. Galatians was written before the Jerusalem council. Defenders of the South Galatian destination find this position popular, especially since Ramsay revised his hypothesis.⁹

¹ Bruce, 1979, 379; Marshall, 1980, 301; J.L. de Villiers, 1983, 86.

² J.L. de Villiers, 1983, 86. If Luke were to refer to the church in Caesarea, he would probably have referred to them as "the believers", as he also does in Acts 21:7.

³ Ps. 122:1; Jn. 7:8; 11:55; Acts 11:2; 15:2; 21:12, 15; 24:11 and Gl. 2:1.

⁴ Marshall, 1980, 379.

⁵ Rhode, 1989, 66-7.

⁶ Schille, 1983, 229-30; Pesch, 1986, 314-6.

⁷ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, lxxiv-lxxv, lists the most viable options.

⁸ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, lxxiv.

⁹ Duncan, 1934, xxii f., Guthrie, 1970, 461-5; Bruce, 1982¹, 43-56; Drane, 1975, 140-3. A very interesting, although not altogether compelling argument is that of Talbert, 1967, 26-40. He argues that Gl. 2:1-10 refers to Ac. 11:27-30, but that the letter as a whole was written after the events of Ac. 15.

- c) Gl. 2:1-10 relates to Ac. 15:1-30, but Luke received two reports that he mistook as two separate incidents, fabricating the visit of Ac. 11:27-30.¹
- d) Gl. 2:1-10 is Paul's version of Ac. 15:1-30, but the famine visit of Ac. 11:27-30 was originally part of the collection visit of Ac. 21:15-17. Luke moved it earlier to fit into his schematic portrayal of the expansion of Christianity.²
- e) Gl. 2:1-10 is equated with the Jerusalem council of Ac. 15:1-30. It should also be equated with the hasty visit of Ac. 18:22, with Ac. 11:27-30 being a Lucan fabrication motivated by the same reasons mentioned in c) and d).³

Scholars mostly accept a) or b). Because the others are speculative and unnecessary, if one of the former are accepted, we now briefly deal with a) and b).

3.1.1.2. *Galatians 2:1-10 and Acts 15:1-30 as fundamentally dissimilar*

The identification of Gl. 2:1-10 with Ac. 15:1-30 is usually held because of (seeming) *similarities*. In both there is a meeting in Jerusalem with Paul and Barnabas opposing Peter and James. Both debates deal with the question of observance of Jewish law by Gentile Christians. In both instances, Jewish Christian legalists prompted the debate.

There are, however, also *dissimilarities*.⁴ Paul states he went to Jerusalem because of a revelation (κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν - Gl. 2:2), while Luke states the Antiochian church sent him (Ac. 15: 2).⁵ Galatians states the meeting was in private (κατ' ἰδίαν - Gl. 2:2), but Acts insists it was a public meeting. One of the biggest differences, ironically, is that to which they agreed. According to Galatians they agreed on two above-mentioned matters: *firstly*, that Paul would go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised (Gl. 2:9); and *secondly*, that Paul and the Gentiles would remember the poor (Gl. 2:10). On the other hand, Ac. 15 not only reports four decisions, but at that, totally unrelated to Gl. 2:9-10, namely: abstinence from the pollution of idols, unchaste behaviour, what is strangled, and blood (Ac. 15:20). This is repeated in Ac. 15:29. If the incidents were at all related one would have expected an overlap of some kind with regard to these decisions.

True, these differences do not necessarily mean Paul and Luke refer to two different instances. It is also possible that Paul and Luke, within legitimate ancient historiographical practice, because of different approaches to the facts and different intentions, presented the facts surrounding the Jerusalem council from different perspectives. This would account for slight differences without having to call

¹ Haenchen, 1971, 400-4, 438-9.

² Beare, 1943, 298; Funk, 1956, 130-6.

³ Jewett, 1979, 63-104; Luedemann, 1984, 13f., 71f., 149f. Van Bruggen, 1973, 223-5, interestingly concludes that Galatians was written between Acts 15 and 18. He argues that both Paul and Luke had an agenda. Paul remains quiet about the council in order to serve the purpose of his letter, and Luke remains silent about the events of which Paul writes in Gl. 2:1-10 for the sake of reflecting unity in the church. His arguments are not convincing.

⁴ Refer to P.G.R. De Villiers, 1987, 35-6, for a more expanded list of differences.

⁵ Of course, it could be discounted if the revelation to Agabus is at the basis of the account. In that case, Paul would be referring to Agabus' revelation and Luke to the resulting decision by the Antiochian Church.

the integrity of either of the authors into question. However, accepting the integrity of both books,¹ it is difficult to explain why Paul – a first-hand witness to the Jerusalem council – would omit certain important facts mentioned by Luke. Why would he omit mentioning the famine visit of Acts 11:27-30? It would have added credibility to his case, reflecting his good intentions and positive attitude towards Jerusalem and added another instance where the Jerusalem church confirmed his ministry. It would have added value to his *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*.² Could his *silence* regarding the *famine visit* not be explained by accepting that Gl. 2:1-10 reflects exactly that visit, with the Jerusalem council still a future event?

In Galatians Paul is seen pulling out all the stops in arguing his case. Why did he not mention the decision taken at the Jerusalem council? It would have strengthened his case considerably, especially since Luke cites the reason for the council meeting as disagreement on circumcision: the very matter precipitating Paul's letter to the Galatians.³ If he could cite the council's decisions reflected in Ac. 15, the letter dispatched by the council regarding these decisions, as well as the delegation delivering the letter on behalf of the council, it would actually sound the death knell for the opposition.⁴ This is especially true in view of the final decisions being very much watered down from the initial points of departure in Ac. 15:1 & 5, and not making even the slightest mention of circumcision. The only logical reason seems to be the fact that Galatians was written prior to the council.⁵ Together with this point, one must also ask, if circumcision occasioned both the Jerusalem council and Paul's letter, why did Paul not mention circumcision as the reason for his Jerusalem visit in Gl. 2:1-10?

Identifying Gl. 2:1-10 with Ac. 15:1-30 seems difficult enough to warrant a search in another direction, i.e. *equating Gl. 2:1-10 with the famine visit of Ac. 11:27-30*. It seems very possible that they reflect different perspectives on the same visit.

3.1.1.3. *Can Gl. 2:1-10 be equated with the famine visit of Acts 11:27-30?*

Paul says he went to Jerusalem because of a revelation and met privately with the Jerusalem leaders, laying before them the gospel that he preached amongst the Gentiles (Gl. 2:2). One does not get the impression from Paul that his visit was intended solely to discuss the matter of how Gentile Christians should deal with the Jewish law. It seems more than probable that the revelation that drove him and Barnabas to Jerusalem was the prophecy by Agabus with regard to a coming famine (Ac. 11:27-28). Paul and Barnabas were then deputised by the church in Antioch to take the relief they were offering to Jerusalem (Acts 11:29-30). Paul, being in Jerusalem, seized the opportunity to meet with the leaders

¹ Barrett, 1999, 57.

² Remindful of Du Toit, 1992², 470-2.

³ Ac. 15:1 gives the reason as: "But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved;'" and Ac. 15:5: "But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up, and said, 'It is necessary to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses.'"

⁴ Especially if they were from Jerusalem or somewhere in Judea.

⁵ Morris, 1996, 21.

there. It could well be that through Barnabas, who had previously been sent by Jerusalem to Antioch and had brought Paul to Antioch and worked alongside him for a year (Ac. 11:22-26), he became aware of his approach being different from that of the Jerusalem church. He wished to confer with them privately so as not to create the impression that his apostleship was secondary to theirs. Because it was a private meeting, Luke possibly did not know about it, or felt it unnecessary to report on.

According to Luke Barnabas was not sent by Jerusalem because they had heard of problems at Antioch or because their approach differed. One gets the impression he was sent to assist the young church there. He himself was pleasantly surprised and encouraged them (Acts 11:22-23). There was no animosity and definitely no explosive situation leading up to this visit as is reported of the situation leading up to the Jerusalem council. According to Paul the private meeting took place in exactly such a friendly situation (Gl. 2:9-10) and “the pillars” even urged Paul to convey the request that they remember the poor. This request makes perfect sense within the context of relief having just been brought,¹ in other words, in the context of famine relief. It seems perfectly plausible that Paul wrote to the Galatians on the eve of the Jerusalem council.² In which case, the opponents most probably started preaching their requirements with regard to circumcision between the famine visit of Ac. 11:27-30 (also reported in Gl. 2:1-10) and the writing of the letter to the Galatians, prompting Paul to write his letter.

This leads to the question whether Paul’s movements reflected in Gl. 1:18 (going to Jerusalem 3 years after his conversion) and Gl. 2:1 (going to Jerusalem after 14 years) can be fitted into a time frame prior to the Jerusalem council. Two fixed dates in NT chronology are generally accepted. *Firstly*, it is accepted on the grounds of Acts 18:2,12 that Paul ministered in Corinth between two dates, i.e. from shortly after Claudius issued his edict against Jews in Rome in the ninth year of his rule (January 25, 49 CE to January 24, 50 CE), and into the reign of Gallio over Achaia (July 1, 51 CE till July 1, 52 CE).³ *Secondly*, it is accepted that Jesus was crucified in either 30 or 33 CE.⁴ With this in mind scholars generally date the famine visit at 46 or 47 CE and the Jerusalem council at late 49 CE or early 50 CE.⁵

¹ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, lxxxii. The use of the present subjunctive of *μνημονεύω* indicates a continuing action, meaning Paul and his co-workers were to continue remembering the poor (of Jerusalem) as they had been doing at that point. Joubert, 2000, 76-78, sees this as referring to an action that had been carrying on over an extended period before the writing of Galatians. According to him, the cursory reference to this remembering of the poor also means the Galatians were well aware of the collection and that they had already contributed. As a result he dates Galatians after I Corinthians (55/56 CE) and the collection visit at 57 CE. However, these conclusions are not compelling. The verb gives no clear indication of the length of the period of collection. If anything, it points to an ongoing process long after the meeting in Jerusalem. The cursory reference does not necessarily indicate prior knowledge on the part of the Galatians. The point merely being that, if the proposed time table below is accepted, the reference to the collection makes great sense, although it is not compelling.

² Bruce, 1982¹, 55.

³ Roloff, 1981, 270, 272; Pesch, 1986, 146-7, 150.

⁴ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, lxxxii.

⁵ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, lxxxii.

If Jesus' death is taken to have been in 30 or 33 CE and Paul's conversion is assumed to have taken place 2 or 3 years later (32 to 33 CE or 35 to 36 CE) then 17 years would fit in perfectly if Gl. 2:1-10 were to be identified with the Jerusalem council. But, since we are trying to establish whether Ac. 11:27-30 can be identified with Gl. 2:1-10, the question is whether Paul's itinerary can be fitted into the time between his conversion (32/33 CE or 35/36 CE) and the writing of the letter between the famine visit (46/47 CE) and the Jerusalem council (49/50 CE)? It is only possible if it is assumed on reasonable grounds that the time lapse was not 17 years, but 14 to 15 years. Longenecker correctly motivates that this is possible if two of three assumptions are made, namely:

- That the 3 and 14 years run concurrently, both starting with Paul's conversion. This adds up to, at the most, 14 years.¹
- That part of a year is counted as a full year,² decreasing the 3 years to as little as 1 year and a few months, and the 14 years to as little as 12 years and a few months.³ This adds up to between 13½ and 14½ years.
- That Jesus' crucifixion was in 30 CE and Paul's conversion in 32/33 CE.⁴

3.1.1.4. Conclusion

Equating Paul's visit to Jerusalem reflected in Gl. 2:1-10 with the *council visit* in Ac. 15:1-30 seems to raise more questions than solutions. After having weighed the evidence, we conclude that equating Gl. 2:1-10 with the *famine visit* reflected in Ac. 11:27-30 provides a better solution to the problem of dating Paul's itinerary and Galatian letter. This being done, there is no reason why Paul's letter should of necessity be dated after the Jerusalem council. In fact, a date before the Jerusalem council makes more sense.

3.1.2. When did the incident at Antioch take place?

If Gl. 2:1-10 were to be identified with Acts 15 one would have to accept that the Antiochian clash between Paul and Peter took place after the Jerusalem council. It then seems strange that Peter would violate such a firm decision as the one taken at the Jerusalem council after such an elaborate and high profiled discussion involving "the pillars" as well as Paul, Barnabas and Silas, and in which Peter, according to Luke, played such a pivotal role (Ac. 15:7-11). Of course, the decision at the Jerusalem council was probably a compromise,⁵ and just as Paul would, 5 to 7 years on⁶ in his advice to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 8), feel himself less committed to all its parts, so Peter could too. However, if Gl.

¹ Does Paul mean "after 14 years" or "after another 14 years"? Betz, 1979, 83-84, attests to the fact that it is not at all clear what the other point of reference for the 14 year period is, opening many possibilities and allowing for our stance of the two periods running concurrently.

² Léon-Defour, 1983, 438; Myers, Simpson, et al, 1987, 215. Also Jewett, 1979, 53, although he accepts a figure nearer to 17 years.

³ Witherington, 1998¹, 127.

⁴ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, lxxxiii; Witherington, 1998¹, 8-9.

⁵ Barrett, 1999, 44.

⁶ Grosheide, 1957, 25-6; Guthrie, 1970, 441-3.

2:1-10 were to be equated with Acts 15, it would imply that Peter went back on the agreement extremely soon after the council's decision. This is improbable. One would also have expected Paul to remind him of his very quick retraction.

It seems more plausible to place the Antiochian incident before the Jerusalem council (late 49 – early 50 CE). Then one could explain Peter's position at that stage as one of uncertainty. He had recently, during the famine visit, heard Paul's explanation of his approach to Gentiles and accepted the fact that Paul would be ministering to Gentiles and they to circumcised (Gl. 2:1-10). Peter probably called to mind his own revelatory experience when God sent him into the home of another Gentile, Cornelius, with whom he even had table fellowship (Ac. 10:1-33; 11:2-3). After preaching to these Gentiles they became Christian, receiving the Holy Spirit with signs (Ac. 10:44-48). He had even been in a position where he had to defend himself before the circumcision party for having gone to the uncircumcised (Ac. 11:2-3).¹ Peter's conduct could then be explained as typical of well meaning Jewish Christians who had not had enough exposure (on an ongoing basis) to the new realities facing the primitive church as it shed its Jewish mould and took on a new symbolic universe and ethos.²

Paul, on the other hand, had been thoroughly challenged by the new realities in dealing with Gentiles turned Christian.³ He was no neophyte,⁴ neither as a Christian nor as an apostle to the Gentiles. What had become commonplace for Paul in both theological reflection and daily ethical practice at the breakwater between

¹ In this respect it is interesting that Luke places this revelation to Peter and the following experiences between Paul's conversion and initial ministry (Acts 9:1-31) and Paul's famine visit to Jerusalem (Acts 11:27-30) where "the pillars" gave him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship. Obviously, this is assuming Luke knew what had been said privately during the famine visit. It is most likely that he did, since Paul himself spilt the beans in Gl. 2. He could possibly have structured Acts in this fashion to point out that Paul and Peter were actually not at loggerheads with regard to the Gentile mission.

² Dunn, 1990², 129-82 operates from the premise that the early church regarded itself as a movement within Judaism, describing it as "a development of and within the religion of the Jews (a form of eschatological, messianic Judaism) not yet a distinct faith or separate religion" (p.11). Against this background the main parties in the Antiochian incident would strongly associate with "the mounting groundswell of Jewish nationalistic and religious sentiment" (p.11). He states that there was a range of attachments to Judaism stretching from the faithful Jew to the God-fearing Gentile (θεοσεβόμενος). His argument obviously assumes that this range was reflected in the Jewish Christian movement, from Israel and beyond its borders into the Diaspora. Akin to this range of attachments was an accompanying range of strict to less strict observances to laws regarding table fellowship, diet and purity (p.23). He then tries to explain Peter's actions and fears within this framework. Cohn-Sherbok, 1983, 69, finds Dunn's observations "fascinating" and worthwhile, but underlines that Dunn does not provide documentation in support of applying this detailed scenario to the incident under discussion.

³ Berger and Luckmann, 1966, 107-8, conceptualising on challenges posed by an alternative symbolic universe, succinctly stress: "[I]t may also happen that the alternative universe has a missionary appeal" (108).

⁴ Witherington, 1990, 9. Houlden, 1983, 58-60, argues (contra Dunn) that Paul had not up to then felt that strongly about not observing law. He would probably have felt comfortable within the ranges mentioned above. This implies that Paul only now, after the Galatians had been considering circumcision, considered law in Christianity, and that the parallel subject with which it is entwined, namely justification, was up to then reflected upon as if law in no way affected it. Paul's language in Galatians boils down to a choice between Christ and law (Gl. 2:19-20; 3:2-5, 25; 5:4). It is at the root of his theology and Christian life. He could not possibly have held that law was to be observed within the known and accepted ranges up to the incident at Antioch, and then changed his theology. In any case, not given his pre-Christian position of which we know that he was zealous for the traditions of his fathers (Gl. 1:13-14).

Christianity and paganism, was not the case with Peter. This makes it likely that Peter was motivated by one of two factors, or both, when he withdrew from eating with Gentiles in Antioch.

- *Firstly*, he had never before been exposed to so much *un-Jewishness* and, although he knew it was right to have table fellowship with Gentiles, he still had difficulty in adjusting his mind so as to be at ease with this new reality that he had previously accepted (Ac. 10). The arrival of fellow Jewish Christians might have made him feel exposed and uncomfortable, causing him to withdraw. In which case, Peter would have reacted out of uncertainty, uneasiness and human frailty.
- *Secondly*, he was primarily an apostle to the Jews. If he followed the same principle as Paul (1 Cor. 9:19-23; Ac. 16:3) he would not want to risk offending Jewish Christians who had not yet accepted the new reality. If this were the case, his reaction could, at the most, be described as overly sensitive¹ and born from a sense of responsibility towards his primary task.² Back home Peter had to contend with staunch Christians from the circumcision party.

In neither of the cases would it have been because of the insincerity of which Paul accuses him. Paul's reaction, as seen against the backdrop of the pillars' right hand of fellowship and acknowledgement of his apostleship to the Gentiles, could have been an overreaction of indignation, because he would have expected the pillars to take a stronger lead in this matter, especially because of their agreement.³ This incident reflects the social, psychological and theological framework in the early church in its struggle to come to grips with the new dispensation following on the OT and Judaism.⁴ In this respect Gl. 2:1-10, as equated with Ac. 11:27-30, reveals some of this struggle as experienced at the "highest level." This incident probably took place on the eve of the Jerusalem council where Peter and Paul would have sorted out their differences springing from Antioch. Paul's letter is best understood as reflecting his feelings before that consultation. Galatians could well have been the raw material with which Paul approached the council, increasing its importance and relevance.

3.1.3. *How must "οὐτως ταχέως" in Gl. 1:6 be understood?*

The predominant belief amongst defenders of the North Galatian hypothesis is that the phrase "so quickly" refers to a time shortly after Paul's second or third missionary journeys, and somewhere between 50 to 57 CE. It would in any

¹ Maybe even a misplaced sensitivity.

² E.P. Sanders, 1990, 186, makes the point that James could very well have been concerned about Peter's reputation amongst Antiochian Jews who were his mission field.

³ Witherington, 1998¹, 9; Esler, 1995, 285-314.

⁴ E.P. Sanders, 1990, 170-188, reacts on the positions posed by Dunn, 1990², 129-82, and Esler, 1987. Sanders understands Dunn correctly that James' position regarding Antioch was that, although he did not expect stringent observance of dietary laws, he felt the practice in Antioch fell too short of Jewish custom. He largely agrees with Dunn. On the other hand, he rejects Esler's position. To his mind, Esler advocates that Jews had no table fellowship with Gentiles whatsoever and that Antioch was all about Gentile impurity, not the impurity of the food, as with Dunn. Esler reacted strongly to this in 1998, 98-102, refuting his ever having advocated such a strong position. Nevertheless, whether it was about the impurity of food or of Gentiles, the men from James were uncomfortable and Peter accommodating. This was unacceptable to Paul.

case imply a date after the Jerusalem council. If we accept the South Galatian hypothesis as the more likely option it makes a date shortly after the first missionary journey more likely and places the letter between 49 CE¹ and early 50 CE. In any event, it would then quite likely be before the council. “So quickly” is a relative and subjective phrase. Although a position on this phrase cannot remotely decide the matter of dating,² it definitely allows for both options.

3.1.4. *To what does “τὸ πρότερον” in Gl. 4:13 refer?*

This phrase is often understood comparatively, referring to the first of two or more visits, in which case the earliest date for the letter would be after Paul's second visit to Galatia (Ac. 18:23).³ However, grammarians indicate⁴ that in Koiné it should rather be translated as “originally”. In which case the necessity of two visits is dissolved and a date before the council remains probable.

3.1.5. *How are biographical indicators helpful?*

Witherington should be credited for reintroducing⁵ Campbell's⁶ article. He works on the premise that Paul's letters are inclined to refer to recent events. He arranges Paul's letters in terms of similarities, as well as the progression of events in Acts. This way, he notes that Barnabas and Paul are mentioned as immediate companions only in the time around Paul's first missionary journey.

A further autobiographical factor is that only in Galatians does Paul refer to his pre-Christian life and the time directly following his conversion in the way he does. True, he does refer to his pre-Christian life in Phlp. 3:5-11, but not in the same way. In Philippians his aim is to describe how his life and spirituality was defined in terms of the flesh, but that it had so changed that Christ was now the One in whom he was righteous. Previous orientations had passed. Paul's arguments are more in terms of principle.⁷ His conversion experience is implied, but very much in the background. In Galatians, on the other hand, the historical event of the epiphany is nearer to the surface. He relates the events following the epiphany. Could this, in light of Campbell's premise, mean that Galatians was written sooner after his Damascus epiphany and therefore before the Jerusalem council? Probably not! Paul's reference to this event is not unintentional, as if he could not refrain from referring to this majestic event in his life. He mentions it to underline his calling, and apostolic authority, as well as his capacity to understand the gospel.

Paul's references to Barnabas in Gl. 2:1, 9 and 13 are helpful in filling in the picture. He does not introduce Barnabas and quite clearly assumes the Galatians

¹ Guthrie, 1970, 458.

² Witherington, 1998¹, 45.

³ Guthrie, 1970, 457.

⁴ Moule, 1953, 98; Turner, 1965, 90-1.

⁵ Witherington, 1998², 327; 1998¹, 10.

⁶ Campbell, 1955, 80-7.

⁷ Matter, 1965, 76-81.

knew him.¹ Paul is known to be reserved with regard to mentioning names in his letters. In Galatians he only mentions names in the so-called autobiographical section², and, at that, only those of Peter (Gl. 1:18; 2:7, 8, 9, 11), James (Gl. 1:19; 2:9, 12), John (Gl. 2:9), Barnabas (Gl. 2:1, 9, 13) and Titus (Gl. 2:1, 3). Bearing in mind that in the narrative Peter was the central character at Antioch and therefore very prominent, and that James is only referred to in Gl.1:12 in an indirect way, it is significant in itself that Paul refers to Barnabas three times. Significant for our present concern, is the reference in Gl. 2:13. Paul uses the concessive *καὶ ὥστε* to express his total surprise at Barnabas being carried away and siding with Peter's stand, or shall I say, lack of making a stand for the gospel ("even Barnabas...").³ It is probable that the rift between Paul and Barnabas began here. However, one does get the impression that he regards Peter and James as the culprits and tries to soften the blow on Barnabas by implying that he was emotionally drawn along by the moment. In light of what they had experienced together he could not believe this development. His track record witnessed to the contrary (Ac. 13:2-14:26). The greater rift would follow shortly after the Jerusalem council (Ac. 15:39-41). Had that rift already taken place at the writing of Galatians Paul would probably not have been as defensive of Barnabas amid his surprise as pictured in Gl. 2:13.

True, one should be very cautious of reconstructing a situation on an *argumentum in silentio*. One is aware of other biographical indices, which are not important for our subject. However, the references to Barnabas, who had a special bond with Paul and his ministry, as well as with the Galatians, are important.

3.1.6. *Does the collection for Jerusalem indicate anything?*

The answer should be no. In any event, nothing conclusive can be deduced from the reference to the collection for the church in Jerusalem in Gl. 2:10. Despite some being of the opinion that Gl. 2:10 refers to Paul's having collected from the Galatians, or hinting at wanting to,⁴ others maintain Paul was not recommending the collection to the Galatians at all.⁵ Wedderburn correctly rejects attempts to include Gl. 6:6-10 as further motivation for Paul's collection to Jerusalem.⁶ As intriguing as the subject of collection is,⁷ whether Paul intended to include the Galatians in

¹ Bauckham, 1979, 61-3.

² Obviously, I am not including Abraham, Sarah and Hagar, referred to in a paradigmatic and narrative sense.

³ Witherington, 1998¹, 157. I am largely indebted to Prof. A.B. du Toit for directing my thoughts thus.

⁴ Hurtado, 1979, 46-62; Söding, 1997, 26.

⁵ Martyn, 1997, 225; Vouga, 1998, 3-5.

⁶ Wedderburn, 2002, 96.

⁷ See Esler, 1995, 285-314, and the thoroughly researched work in Joubert, 2000, especially 71-150. Since much of what they argue from the social sciences has a bearing on how they view Gl. 2:10, and, in Joubert's case, also on dating Galatians, a short remark is warranted. I accept the notion of the agonistic personality of Mediterranean antiquity and do not wish to superimpose modern Western paradigms on the NT. I also accept that not all in Jerusalem were as understanding as Peter and James and indeed continued to pressurise the Gentile believers and the mission to Gentiles. However, does Esler not take the issue a trifle too far when he writes of the Jerusalem believer advocating circumcision: "In Gl. 2:4-5 Paul denigrates these opponents and presents himself as having successfully resisted their attack. These verses offer a vignette of a Mediterranean man at his agonistic best. They had taken on Paul and lost and there is nothing to suggest that they had

his collection as a reciprocal gesture for the acceptance of the gospel to the Gentiles, or not, its bearing on dating Galatians is disputable and inconsequential.¹

It does, however, more than probably have a bearing on Paul's rhetoric. It would have enhanced his *ethos* with the Galatians that he was willing to practice what he preached, and that he was willing to be of service to Jerusalem whilst he actually owed them nothing, and that he stuck to this decision even when Jerusalem disappointed him.

3.1.7. *Are there theological indices of note?*

R.N. Longenecker appropriately warns against founding Pauline chronology solely on theological indicators, because of the subjectivity involved. One must be extremely cautious of constructing a chronology of the development of individual theological themes, as well as of development within the themes, and then superimposing it onto Paul and his correspondence. However, one need not discount theological indicators altogether.

Yet it must also be said that having dealt first with historical, exegetical, and critical issues concerning the addressees and date, it is necessary to ask as well how the theology of the letter correlates with what has been concluded as to provenance on other grounds. The evidence drawn from various theological indices, therefore, may not be foundational for the case, but it certainly ought to be supportive, at least in the main, if there is to be any confidence in conclusions drawn from historical, exegetical, and critical inquiries.²

One of the main theological arguments against dating Galatians as early as it is done here, is the acceptance by many that 1 Thessalonians was the earliest of Paul's extant letters. This is based largely on the imminence with which Paul refers to the *parousia*. It is argued that 1 Thessalonians reflects a more primitive eschatology and that Galatians largely lacks this, because it gives prominence to the advent of Christ as the real turning point in God's dealings with man. This is argued on the assumption that the expectation of an imminent *parousia* faded as time passed on.³ But then, did the situations not radically differ? In the Galatian letter Paul is focused on addressing the problem of reversion to law. He employs apocalyptic, as will be argued in Ch. 2 of this dissertation, and refers to the advent of Christ as eschatological turning point, but eschatology as a theme is not addressed. On the other hand, in the first letter to

secured some advantage to sweeten their defeat. In terms of the model, Paul had grievously dishonoured them. As I have already explained, persons in this social context who have been so seriously shamed do not forgive or forget the insult. Bitterness and hostility will characterize their attitude towards him who has shamed them and they will seek every opportunity to obtain revenge" (p.305). Although much of his (and Joubert's) evidence and reasoning fits the picture on a purely social-scientific level, the bigger picture calls to the difference that the truth of the gospel made to Paul and the Jerusalem church. Was the Spirit inoperative? Were "the pillars" ineffective in convincing believers to change their ways? Obviously, this is not meant in modern Western terms, but in terms of the "law of Christ" and the Spirit? Paul states the fruit of the Spirit in Gl. 5:22-23, not to mention Jesus' own ethic, which is diametrical to Esler's description? It also reflects negatively on Paul's remembrance of the poor as born from strategy and not from the ethic of loving-service that he advocates in Gl. 5:6, 13 and 6:1-10.

¹ In this regard, I can do no better than Wedderburn, 2002, 95-110.

² R.N. Longenecker, 1990, lxxxiv.

³ Guthrie, 1970, 464-5; R.N. Longenecker, 1990, lxxxvii-lxxxviii.

the Thessalonians eschatology is a theme, because of a magnitude of problems in this regard in that city. Some were concerned about loved ones who had passed away before the *parousia* and others became inactive in their daily lives, because they failed to see the need for working in the light of the expected imminent return.¹ In this regard Bruce correctly writes:

[I]t is hazardous to plot the development of Paul's thought on the basis of occasional letters each of which dealt with a situation as it arose, that the apocalyptic note of 1 and 2 Thessalonians represents Paul's reaction to the eschatological excitement in the church of Thessalonica, just as the quite different note of Galatians represents his reaction to the legalism which was infiltrating the churches of Galatia. If the main emphases of Galatians are given at best a secondary place in the Thessalonian correspondence, it might be asked, why should it be surprising that the main emphases of 1 and 2 Thessalonians receive barely secondary attention in Galatians?²

Theological indicators fitting an earlier date, though not foundational, are:

- Paul's heavy emphasis on revelation as opposed to tradition is more likely in the earlier setting. A movement from tradition to revelation is less likely.³
- If one, as many who date Galatians later do, regards Paul's positions on law in Galatians and Romans as conflicting or developed it would be even more likely that Paul would move from a morally freer situation (Galatians) to a morally more principled position (Romans).⁴
- There is also the movement from a functional (Galatians) to a developed christology (Romans), as well as the possibility of Galatians having a very basic ecclesiology as opposed to a more developed view in Romans and Philippians.⁵

3.1.8. Conclusion

It seems fair to conclude that Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians between late 48 and mid 49 CE on the eve of the Jerusalem council (probably taking place between late 49 CE and early 50 CE). We cannot be sure about the question whether the Jerusalem council had already been called for, or, if that were the case, whether Paul was already aware of it. There is a very real possibility that this letter precipitated the convening of the Jerusalem council by "the pillars".⁶ What is certain is that if this date is accepted, the letter to the Galatians provides us with insight into Paul's frame of mind when he went up to Jerusalem, as well as with the raw material with which he approached the council.⁷ What transpired after the Jerusalem council according to Acts 15 shows that Paul's opinion with

¹ Guthrie, 1970, 565-6; Best, 1977, 19-20.

² Bruce, 1990, 54.

³ Drane, 1975, 142.

⁴ Drane, 1975, 142-3. However, in this dissertation (Ch. 6) it will be argued that there is no fundamental difference on law between the two letters.

⁵ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, lxxxvii.

⁶ It remains but a possibility. If the agitators were as serious about their message as Paul was about his, they possibly returned to Jerusalem and reported their shock and dismay at Paul's gospel to "the pillars". This also means that "the pillars" had not necessarily taken a position with the agitators, but that they could quite objectively have decided to settle the matter once and for all and on the basis of consultation. Who knows?

⁷ This was also put forward by Ralph Martin in a discussion with Barrett as reflected in Hagner (ed.), 1999, 85.

regard to circumcision and the Law of Moses was largely accepted.¹ Seen in this light one could argue that the letter to the Galatians could be seen as the early Church's view – albeit disputed – of freedom in Christ, whilst wrestling to put it into practice. Bruce's words regarding this position are very apt:

It must be conceded that, if this is so, Galatians is the earliest among the extant letters of Paul. I know of no evidence to make this conclusion impossible, or even improbable. Even on this early dating, Paul had been a Christian for at least fifteen years, and the main outlines of his understanding of the gospel, which took shape from his Damascus-road experience, would have been as well defined by then as they were ever likely to be. Galatians, whatever its date, is a most important document of primitive Christianity, but if it is the earliest extant Christian document, its importance is enhanced.²

3.2. The opponents and why they agitated Paul

Paul did not write for the sake of keeping in touch. Clearly, something serious had transpired since his departure from the Galatian churches. Something drastically disturbing must have happened to prompt Paul to abandon the conventional stylistic approach, which is also his approach in his other letters, of conveying thanks after his initial greeting. In fact, he replaces it with a rebuke (Gl. 1:6-10). He accuses them of turning to a different gospel (Gl. 1:6) that had been perverted by others (Gl. 1:7). Such people are even accursed (Gl. 1:9). He even calls the Galatians foolish and asks who had bewitched them (Gl. 3:1). He says that he is in travail with them (Gl. 4:19) and perplexed about them (Gl. 4:20). He even wishes those who mislead the Galatians would mutilate themselves (Gl. 5:11). He wanted to defend the truth of the gospel (Gl. 1:8, 9; 2:4-5), which he believed to be under threat in Galatia. Who were the people who had disturbed the Galatians in their understanding of the gospel since Paul left?

Against whom did Paul have to defend the truth of the gospel and his apostolic authority? This is not easy to determine. There is no clear-cut evidence as to who these agitators could have been. The only available primary source is the letter itself. Paul does not identify his agitators in the letter.³ He does not address them at all. He only takes up the issues they introduced to the Galatians. He does not list the issues either and we are left to deduce as intelligently and re-

¹ Not in any way implying that Paul was solely responsible for convincing the council. It must also be mentioned that there is a very real possibility of the decision being a compromise between the freedom promoted at the council by both Paul and Peter and the rightist position requiring circumcision and the observance of Mosaic law. If this is the case, it probably illustrates the church's struggle to come to grips with life on the cutting edge of the new aeon that had arrived in the advent of Christ. If, after the declaration of his position in the letter to the Galatians, Paul was willing to make a compromise, it also illustrates his sincerity with regard to unity in the church's ranks. The question can be posed as to why Paul would retract on this decision in his first letter to the Corinthians in which he advises them that food offered to idols could be eaten as long as it does not cause the stumbling of a fellow believer (1 Cor. 8:1-13). Not that this is really our concern in this treatise, but in a certain sense it could enhance the notion of the letter's early dating. The longer the time span between Galatians and 1 Corinthians, the easier for Paul to have decided that the matter of believers eating food offered to idols by pagans should be separated from the issue of idolatry amongst believers (1 Cor. 10:1-22). As time moved on, Paul would feel himself freer to ignore the compromise and interpret the situation amongst pagans according to his acknowledged position as apostle to the Gentiles.

² Bruce, 1982¹, 55-56. Refer also to Marshall, 1997, 44.

³ Du Toit, 1994¹, 406-7, observes that merely by withholding the opposition's names Paul denigrated them.

sponsibly as possible what they could be. A further problem is that of rhetoric. The situation disturbed Paul deeply. He pulls out all stops to try to rectify a situation with the second-best means available after a personal visit, i.e. by correspondence. For this reason we must take Betz' remarks seriously.

Not everything that Paul denies is necessarily an accusation by his opposition, and not everything that he accuses his opponents of doing or thinking represents their actual goals and intentions. Paul's references must be interpreted in terms of their rhetorical origin and function before they can be used as the basis for conclusions about the opponents.¹

3.2.1. *The danger of mirror-reading*

Although it has much to offer in setting the scenario, one should be wary of a too meticulous use of this method, easily involving dangerous subjectivity and imaginative exposition.² In his widely acclaimed article, Barclay convincingly exposes dangers and difficulties involved in mirror-reading a text like Galatians. He points to the same difficulties as Betz above, saying that Paul was not reacting directly to the opponent's message, "but responding to its effects on the confused Christians in Galatia."³ Referring to "the distorting effects of polemic," he remarks:

this is no calm and rational conversation that we are overhearing, but a fierce piece of polemic in which Paul feels his whole identity and mission are threatened and therefore responds with all the rhetorical and theological powers at his command. We hear him not just 'talking', but 'shouting', letting fly with abusive remarks about the Galatians (as credulous fools, 3.1-3) and the opponents (as cowards, fit only for castration, 6.12; 5.12).⁴

He stresses the problem of reconstructing the context on an assumed understanding of the text and then interpreting it in terms of the wrongly reconstructed context. This "circularity" stresses the hermeneutical problems involving mirror-reading.⁵ One should be careful and suspicious of such attempts.

One needs to spell out exactly what assumptions are involved here. Such an exercise depends on: (a) Paul's knowledge of the exact vocabulary used by his opponents; (b) Paul's willingness to re-use this vocabulary either ironically or in some attempt to redefine it; (c) our ability to discern where Paul is echoing his opponents' language; and (d) our ability to reconstruct the meaning that they originally gave to it. Such is our uncertainty surrounding each of these assumptions that I regard the results of any such exercise as of very limited value. They should certainly not be used as the cornerstone of any theory, as has all too often been done in recent scholarship on Galatians.⁶

¹ Betz, 1979, 6.

² Brinsmead, 1982, is exemplary of irresponsible mirror-reading. Aune, 1984, 147, finds it "justified by faith alone!"

³ Barclay, 1987, 75.

⁴ Barclay, 1987, 75. He gives credit to Eckert, 1971, and Mußner, 1974, for having highlighted this aspect.

⁵ Barclay, 1987, 77.

⁶ Barclay, 1987, 82. On p. 84-5 he reflects on criteria to take into account when trying to mirror-read legitimately. They are: (a) *Type of utterance*. Is Paul asserting, denying, commanding or prohibiting? Whatever the case, one could assume that there were those in complete agreement with him and others in complete disagreement, also allowing for various positions between these poles; (b) *Tone*. A casual remark would probably be less crucial than one made with emphasis. (c) *Frequency*. A repeated return to a matter would enhance its importance. (d) *Clarity*. Only statements of which the meaning is reasonably clear can be used in reconstructing the context. Ambiguity and polemical distortion obstruct the reconstruction. (e) *Unfamiliarity*. If Paul uses terminology or makes a statement unfamiliar to him in other letters, it is possibly akin to the situation at hand. (f) *Consistency*. Unless it is perfectly clear that Paul is responding to more than one type of op-

Whilst saying this, one should also be attentive to hearing Paul's allusions to and reflection on that which his opponents quite obviously stood for.¹ Following E.P. Sanders' lead with regard to the historical Jesus,² Barclay suggests that one's findings be classified in categories varying "from 'Certain or Virtually Certain' through 'Highly Probable', 'Probable', 'Possible' and 'Conceivable' to 'Incredible'." These nuances could be helpful in determining the context as soberly as possible. He concludes that Paul's opponents were certainly Christians and most probably of Jewish origin.³ They were probably from the Jerusalem Church, because of the prominence of Jerusalem in the letter. They wanted, and most probably expected, the Galatians to be circumcised⁴ and to observe at least some of the laws, including calendar requirements (Gl. 4:10). The reason being, that they most probably understood the law as remaining the hallmark of God's people and the only way to live righteously.⁵ They argued from Scripture, most probably making particular use of the Abrahamic traditions.⁶ They brought Paul's gospel and authority as apostle into question,⁷ and many Galatian Christians found their arguments persuasive.⁸ This brings Barclay in line with most conservative scholars.

3.2.2. *Diversity of opinion with regard to agitators*

Detail on the diversity of opinion is unnecessary. The following points of view have crystallised as the main positions regarding Paul's agitators.⁹

- a) They were Jewish Christians from Jerusalem. Some argue they claimed James' support,¹⁰ representing a circumcision party within the church, ad-

ponent or argument, it must be accepted that he is addressing a single situation. (g) *Historical plausibility*. Whatever the combined results of these criteria, it must fit that which we know is historically true.

¹ Dunn, 1994¹, 407-32.

² E.P. Sanders, 1985, 326-7.

³ Barclay, 1987, 86. His reference to "another gospel" (Gl. 1:6-9) indicates they were Christian even though he regards their message as a non-gospel. Gl. 4:30 most probably refers to the opponents who were thus probably Jewish.

⁴ Barclay, 1987, 86-7. It is unnecessary to motivate their obvious position on circumcision. Amongst other texts, Paul refers to it explicitly in Gl. 6:12-13 and implicitly in Gl. 5:2-4, 11-12. It is not beyond question that they had insisted that the Galatians be circumcised, but they did take circumcision as central to their gospel.

⁵ Barclay, 1987, 86-7. The weight of evidence suggests Torah observance was prominent in their gospel. Circumcision was obviously central; Gl. 4:10 suggests they observed a specific calendar; Paul was concerned about "works of law" (Gl. 3:1-10) and tried to prove its temporary nature (Gl. 3:6-4:11); and Gl. 4:21 refers to the desire to be under law. Add the parenetical section (Gl. 5:13-6:10) indicating how life in the Spirit truly helps one live according to God's will.

⁶ Barclay, 1987, 87. Paul's elaborate references to the Abrahamic traditions make it probable that he was reacting to their use of these Scriptures. His complicated and even obscure interpretation of the texts indicates that he was trying to counter their persuasive interpretation of Abraham.

⁷ Whether they did it purposefully is uncertain. From Paul's heated reaction and references to them, the fact that he emphasises his apostleship even in his *praescriptio*, and continues to do so with regard to Jerusalem and the "pillars", one can deduce that they probably questioned his authority. At the least, one senses that their (insensitive) actions and deliberations caused uncertainty amongst the Galatians. Subsequently the latter doubted Paul's interpretation.

⁸ Barclay, 1987, 87. Gl. 1-2 testifies to this position.

⁹ Cousar, 1982, 3-5 has been helpful in summarising these positions, considering the second as most plausible.

¹⁰ F. Watson, 1986, 54, 59-60. Betz, 1979, 7, rightly points to the fact that the "men from James" (Gl. 2:12) did not criticise Paul, but Cephas. On the other hand, Paul accused Cephas, not 'the men from James,' of com-

vocating the retaining of ceremonial laws, as opposed to Paul's message of radical freedom.¹ The idea would have been to complement Paul's message with a specific Christian lifestyle based on the Abrahamic Covenant, as they understood it.²

- b) They were Jewish Christians without specific support from the Jerusalem church and its pillars.³ Paul's preaching had to be supplemented by circumcision,⁴ which also safeguarded them against zealous Jewish harassment. Although, on this point many commentators warn against taking Paul's words in Gl. 6:12 at face value, arguing that it could just as well be Pauline rhetoric.⁵
- c) Gnostic Jewish Christians independent of the Jerusalem church and not particularly bothered about the law; their interest in circumcision and calendar observance stemming from syncretistic inclinations.⁶
- d) Gentile Christians who felt that Paul initially also practised circumcision, but abandoned it because of Gentile pressure. Out of loyalty to the Jerusalem leaders, they took up the cause of Judaism.⁷
- e) There were two opposition groups. In Gl. 1-5:12 Paul addresses a group of Judaizers wanting Christians to submit to the law. From Gl. 5:13-6:10 he addresses another group, i.e. spiritualists who felt they were above moral issues.⁸

In an interesting article Martyn probably takes it too far when he categorises the agitators as a law-observant mission of such a kind that one wonders how the Galatians could possibly have regarded their message as a gospel. He writes:

pulsive 'Judaizing' of the Gentiles." Logically, this takes the pressure off having to accept the agitators in Galatia as necessarily from James.

¹ Not all necessarily include James. So Guthrie, 1970, 466-8; Dunn, 1993¹, 11; Witherington, 1998¹, 25. Gager, 2000, 69 & 79, insists the opposition was not necessarily unified, describing it as a "broad stream within the Jesus movement as a whole." He is incautious, though, when he adds the names of James, Peter and Barnabas and maintains that they "not: only insisted on circumcision for Gentile believers but actively and persistently combated Paul and his Gospel."

² R.N. Longenecker, 1990, xcvi. He adds (xcviii) that their view that full acceptance by God included circumcision and law-observance as Jewish lifestyle, boiled down to: "both legalism for full salvation and nomism for Christian living."

³ Martyn, 1985¹, 307-13, illustrates the very real possibility that the Gentile mission was not as monolithic as was assumed in the day of Adolf Harnack. There is clear evidence of a law-observant mission to the Gentiles in the second century. If it had its roots already in Paul's time, it is easier to assume that James probably had nothing to do with the mission of the agitators to Galatia.

⁴ Cousar, 1982, 6. Duncan, 1934, xxxiii, is of the opinion that the activities of the Judean Jewish Christian movement mentioned in Acts 15 and spreading as far a field as Antioch could have influenced the Galatian churches. They would most probably have had the support of local Jews.

⁵ Betz, 1979, 6-7. Jewett, 1970/1, 204-206 argues that this text reflects a renewed action by Zealots and that Jewish Christians could have tried avoiding persecution by circumcising Gentile Christians. Suffice it to say that without mention of Zealots in Galatians the evidence does not necessitate a connection between the agitators and the Zealot campaign. However, it could have been an aggravating circumstance.

⁶ In this regard Schmithals, 1956, 25-67, is rather alone in his view. Gnosticism would probably have a problem with close observance of the law.

⁷ It is not supported well. A Jewish background would fit better. This view is held by J. Munck, 1959, 87-134.

⁸ Ropes, 1929, 25-7.

They necessarily view God's Christ in the light of God's Law, rather than the Law in the light of Christ, and this means that Christ is secondary to the Law. Paul thus seems to have no fear of being contradicted when he repeatedly says they avoid taking their theological bearings from the cross.¹

It is highly unlikely that this assessment of the Jewish Christian mission into Galatia is correct. The Galatians experienced the Holy Spirit (Gl. 3:3, 5) and miracles (Gl. 3:5) when Paul brought the gospel to them. They had seen Christ portrayed as crucified (Gl. 3:1). They had changed from not believing in Christ to believing in Him. They had done this after clearly hearing from Paul that the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ makes all the difference. If they had known the Jewish religion and the importance of law in Judaism, and despite this, still chose to become Christians, why would they now revert to something, not only very Jewish, but equally unchristian. In fact, if this were the case it could just as well be described as a specifically Jesus-oriented Messianic school of thought within Judaism! It seems much more plausible that the agitators were genuinely proclaiming Christ as saviour, but that they had given circumcision and law a prominent position of some kind in their gospel. This position might have had a noble origin – e.g., a morally correct life for followers of Christ – but the prominence given to law by the agitators left Paul more than uncomfortable. In fact, he frowned upon it in disgust!

3.2.3. *A call to caution*

In a fine and clear-headed contribution, Sumney calls for greater caution.² *Firstly*, he investigates Paul's very specific and explicit remarks regarding his agitators and concludes that they were from outside the Galatian congregations. They clearly required circumcision of the Galatians. Whether they regarded Paul as an opponent is unclear. What is clear is that Paul regarded them as dangerous.³ *Secondly*, he investigates Paul's allusions and concludes that they urged the observance of holy days, but that it is not sure whether they demanded it. They argued that the Galatians did not understand Paul properly on circumcision. Therefore, Paul had to clarify his position. What would probably have surprised them was Paul's insistence that if they followed the opponents' position on circumcision they would also have to observe the rest of the law.⁴ *Thirdly*, he investigates so-called affirmations that were directly aimed at the opponents, but warns that they are not reliable and should not be taken into account, "because identifying elements of the opponents' teachings from these verses requires unwarranted and uncontrolled mirror reading."⁵ He concludes that irrefutable evidence that the opponents held a different view from Paul on eschatology or pneumatology, or that they questioned his apostleship, is lacking.⁶ What they definitely advocated was

¹ Martyn, 1985¹, 316.

² Sumney, 1999.

³ Sumney, 1999, 140-1. Nanos, 2000, 151, chooses to refer to them as "influencers." He argues along the same lines as Sumney, stating: "[I]t is likely that [Paul's] defensive posture is rather in anticipation of the response to his message should the addressees heed his instruction," and: "Calling these people 'agitators' and 'troublemakers' merely mimics Paul's value judgements; it does not advance interpretation of the situation."

⁴ Sumney, 1999, 152-3.

⁵ Sumney, 1999, 156.

⁶ Sumney, 1999, 157-8.

circumcision and the observance of certain holy days. He finds no clear evidence that they wanted more at that stage.

By calling for circumcision and the observance of certain holy days, they clearly call for a different kind of relationship with the Jewish law than Paul is willing to allow. But it remains unclear exactly what that relationship is.¹

He asks why Paul reacted as he did if they did not differ from him that much and if they did not necessarily see themselves as his opponents? Whatever their intentions, Paul regarded them as opponents. His previous experiences, especially at Antioch, had probably made him very aware of the consequences of a stance on law somewhere to his right.² He thus actually took the position of opposing the introduction of law in whatever limited form to Christian faith and living, to its final consequence. The latter motivated him to argue so strongly, and not necessarily the opponents themselves.

Although Sumney might be a trifle too cautious, I can identify with his plea for an approach working largely with certainties. There is no compelling reason why more information is needed to understand the Galatian letter. I must add, though, that there is enough evidence to conclude that Paul definitely saw his agitators as opponents. He was not merely quixotically advancing onto an imaginary opposition in Galatia, because he had had similar experiences in Antioch, and possibly elsewhere.³ His use of the first person singular in opposition to the third person plural in Gl. 6:11-18, as indicated below, is telling. The same holds for Gl. 3:1 where Paul refers to their having been bewitched and thus fallen victim to someone, as well as his remark that he wishes those of the opposite persuasion would mutilate themselves (Gl. 5:12). Add to this his defence of his apostleship for the sake of the truth of the gospel, which makes more sense in a situation of opposition; as well as the strong possibility that the letter was written just before the Jerusalem council, then a concrete opposition is highly probable. That their intentions were not necessarily malicious is quite possible. Paul's reaction, though, unless it is heavily laden rhetorically, is too hefty simply to accept their credentials.

3.2.4. *What was their perverted message?*

From the above position it is difficult, if not impossible, to know exactly what their message was. It seems best rather to focus on what Paul says the gospel is and is not. Paul was, whether their intentions were malicious or even well meant, concerned that, whatever their stance on law was, it would bring the cross of Jesus Christ into jeopardy in some way or another. It seems a safer route to assume that Paul was not necessarily arguing his case in terms of their presentation of the matter, but that he was opposing ascribing a primary position to law in

¹ Sumney, 1999, 157.

² Sumney, 1999, 159.

³ Kruse, 1992, 262-4, motivates that Paul experienced persecution for not preaching circumcision. We must add though, this persecution was not necessarily from the Galatian opposition. However, it at least tells us something of the backdrop against which Paul wrote and why he was so heavy handed.

whatever form, in Christianity. In the process, he argued the matter to its logical conclusion and implied consequences.

3.2.4.1. *Paul's own story as hermeneutical key to the opposing message*

Paul's so-called autobiographical section (*narratio* - Gl. 1:11-2:21) is mostly interpreted as a defence of his apostleship, the latter having been challenged, either intentionally¹ or unintentionally.² We have seen that the juridical rhetorical approach by distinction, introduced into Pauline scholarship by Betz, was introduced largely on the assumption that Paul wished to repair his embattled authority. Even before Betz' impetus it was largely accepted that at least Gl. 1-2 was written in defence of Paul's authority.³ Chrysostom (345-407) is noted as the oldest known source in this tradition.⁴ Obviously, Paul defends his authority. There was no question about it being part and parcel of his defence of the true gospel. However, to regard the *narratio* as largely concerned with apostolic authority is an exaggeration robbing the letter of one of its arguments in defence of the gospel, which was his main concern.⁵

[I]n 1.1-12, ἀπόστολος occurs only in 1.1, while all attention is focused on εὐαγγέλιον as the main topic (1.6; 1.7 [2x]; 1.9; 1.11 [2x]). In the letter as a whole, ἀπόστολος and derivatives occur four times, εὐαγγέλιον and derivatives fourteen times. This is reason enough to try a different approach and to analyse the argument from a reader's point of view – that is, to look at the direct and indirect instructions for the reader incorporated in the text.⁶

Lategan suggests that the *narratio* be considered as one of Paul's arguments supporting the true gospel against the other gospel. He applies and expands on a notion introduced earlier, mainly by Lyons,⁷ that Paul uses his self-account to emphasise the God – man antithesis. The entire *narratio*, from Gl. 1:11-12, is crucial for the rest of the letter.⁸ He states the εὐαγγέλιον he preaches is not κατὰ ἄνθρωπον (11), neither did he receive it παρὰ ἄνθρώπου, but δι' ἄποκαλύψεως (12) – a notion already present in Gl. 1:1, 6-10 and referring to the nature of the gospel.⁹ Although the origin of the gospel is obviously implied,

¹ The opponents could have questioned Paul's authority, because "the pillars" did not commission him. They could have perceived "the pillars" to be the only legitimate interpreters of the Christian belief system and Scriptures. It would suit their case if they could silence Paul this way.

² By bringing another interpretation to the Galatians' attention and convincing them to whatever degree, it would inadvertently bring up the question of Paul's authority to interpret Scripture correctly.

³ Lightfoot, 1890, 92-101.

⁴ Gaventa, 1986², 310.

⁵ Lategan, 1988, 416-7; Witherington, 1998¹, 89.

⁶ Lategan, 1988, 417-8. According to Moule, 1953, 59, κατὰ followed by an accusative could mean "in accordance with" or "in terms of" a certain standard. Bauer, 1979, 407, elaborates on this notion of norm, standard or comparison. In Gl. 3:15, e.g. Paul uses κατὰ ἄνθρωπον to introduce a human example, something from the human world that humans will understand, giving it a less judgemental connotation. However, for the rest one already senses the introduction of the negatively loaded term κατὰ σάρκα, which is the antithesis of κατὰ πνεῦμα to which we turn in Ch. 3.

⁷ Lyons, 1986, 146-64. Also Cosgrove, 1988, 119-46; and Gaventa, 1986², 326, who accept Paul features prominently in the *narratio*, not for apologetic reasons, but because his experience was typically Gospel like.

⁸ Lategan, 1988, 418-9. The *narratio* proper beginning at Gl.1:13-2:14. Lyons, 1986, 171, also supports the notion that Gl. 1:11-12 introduces Gl. 1:13-2:21 in which he substantiates his claim made in Gl. 1:11-12.

⁹ Lategan, 1988, 420. He elaborates on 421-3.

one should not read it exclusively as such, as if Paul was against tradition and human transmission in principle, but rather as a reference to norm.¹

The gospel does not conform to human criteria, does not take human considerations into account. It does not function in a human way, does not honour human preferences. This is what distinguishes it from the 'other gospel'. Paul is making a profound theological statement which is of decisive importance for the rest of his argument.²

Paul reflects on his own pre-Christian life according to the tradition of his fathers as in opposition to God's grace in Christ (Gl. 1:13-14). He refers to his own experience of coming to faith and receiving his vocation to be an apostle to the Gentiles, and his visit to Jerusalem and "those who were apostles before me" (Gl. 1:15-2:10), including the negative remark on those brought in "to spy out our freedom" (Gl. 2:4) and the positive one on their agreement (Gl. 2:9-10). He follows with Peter's subsequent inappropriate behaviour at Antioch (Gl. 2:11-14) based on fear of the circumcision party (Gl. 2:12), and includes his rebuke of Peter (Gl. 2:14). Having done this he has illustrated the difference between the true gospel and the "gospel" *κατὰ ἄνθρωπον*.

This is followed by theological reflection (Gl. 2:15-21) on the biographical accounts of Gl. 1:13-2:14, introduced in Gl. 1:11-12 as examples of how the "gospel" *κατὰ ἄνθρωπον* operates. Despite Betz' defence of an apologetic approach, one can agree that "Gl. 2:15-21 should be seen as Paul's *propositio* that "sums up the *narratio*'s material content" and "sets up the arguments to be discussed later in the *probatio*."³ Longenecker is probably correct that the *propositio firstly*, reflects the points of agreement between the adherents of the two gospels, i.e. that no one is justified on the basis of works of law, but by faith in Christ (Gl. 2:15-16). *Secondly*, it states the point of difference negatively, on the notion that Christian freedom inevitably leads to libertinism (Gl. 2:17) and that prevention of this tendency calls for the implementation of a legal basis (Gl. 2:18). *Thirdly*, it states the difference positively, i.e. being dead to law and living to God (Gl. 2:19); and being crucified with Christ, so that Christ lives in him (Gl. 2:20). He wraps up the *propositio* (and the *narratio*) by once again contrasting justification through law and God's grace in Christ's atoning death (Gl. 2:21),⁴ and so returns to his point of departure in Gl. 1:11-12, giving content to the difference between his gospel and the "gospel" *κατὰ ἄνθρωπον*. In short, Paul introduces the *narratio* by contrasting the true and the *κατὰ ἄνθρωπον* "gospel" (Gl. 1:11-12). He follows with autobiographical information to illustrate the different effects of the two gospels (Gl. 1:13-2:14).⁵ He moves on to reflect theologically on the contrast between the two (Gl. 2:15-21), and the difference Christ makes in the believer (Gl. 2:20). This results in a chiasmus (*fig. 1.1*).

¹ Lategan, 1988, 420-1.

² Lategan, 1988, 420.

³ Betz, 1979, 114. Du Toit, 1991, 225, suggests that it is not a true summary. However, it does reflect the context broadly.

⁴ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 82.

⁵ Koptak, 1990, 263, emphasises that where the other gospel operates it brings division where there once was unity. "There is only unity in the gospel, which is both revealed and circumcision-free."

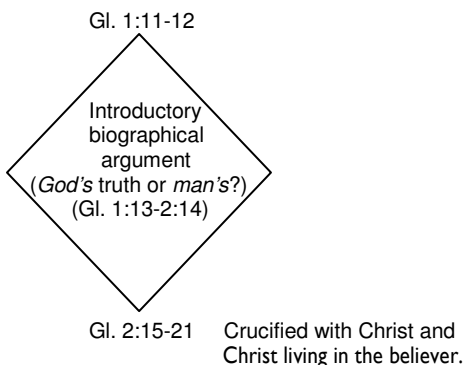


fig. 1.1.

Importantly, Paul moves from the personal to the so-called paradigmatic “I”.¹

In terms of the theory of argumentation, Paul is addressing a universal audience. At the same time, his argument is not wholly metaphoric or a-historical, it is related to his experience – and even more importantly - it has its basis in the death of Christ on the cross.²

It should be clear that the so-called autobiographical section is about much more than Paul’s defence of his apostleship. It is about the fundamental contrast between God and man’s notions of justification. It is fundamentally about being crucified with Christ and His living in the believer, or being without Him, seeking justification through works of law. It is about an existential association with Christ, his cross and his resurrection; it being so dear to one that it is as though one were actually crucified and continues to live as though Christ lives through one. What was at stake for Paul was no small issue. It was not about himself or another.³ Neither was it about different and acceptable variations on the theme of Christian living. Whatever the opponents’ arguments were and to what extent they actually wanted to see law reintroduced to the Galatian community, for Paul it was as serious as choosing between God and man! The tone that he sets in his introductory argument is the tone with which he persists throughout the letter. For him there was no middle position!

3.2.4.2. Paul’s own hand as hermeneutical key to the opposing message

In a stimulating article in search of a hermeneutical key to Galatians Weima explores the Paul’s words in his own hand (Gl. 6:11-18). He indicates a few contrasts between himself and his agitators.⁴ The reason for seeking the hermeneutical key in the *conclusio* (Gl. 6:11-18), more specifically in Gl. 6:12-17, is well founded. Witherington, though taking Galatians as deliberative, agrees with Betz that the essence of the *conclusio* (Gl. 6:11-18), namely the so-called *peroratio* (Gl. 6:12-17),

¹ Betz, 1979, 122.

² Lategan, 1988, 427.

³ Barclay, 2002, 146. Hays, 1983, 29-30, remarks that one should not regard Paul’s story (*narratio*) as the centre of the gospel. He uses the story in service of the gospel, which is found in Gl. 3-4. Paul’s own story is not at the centre of his letter. At the centre is the Christological story.

⁴ Weima, 1993, 90-107. In seeking a hermeneutical key in this section he has the support of scholars of the calibre of Betz, 1979, 313; R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 288-9; Morris, 1996, 185; Witherington, 1998, 444.

fulfils the function, as Betz would have it, of the summation of the main arguments and the stirring up of emotions in support of the authors view. In this regard he finds enough correspondence between the *peroratio* (Gl. 6:12-17) on the one hand, and both the *exordium* (Gl. 1:6-11)¹ and *propositio* (2 Gl.:15-21)² on the other.

The conclusion makes clear what the other Gospel being advocated was, and how the Gospel of circumcision was not to be followed, as it was not the true Gospel. Instead the Galatians must stay faithful to the Gospel Paul had preached when he was there, a Gospel summed up in the *propositio* in 2:15-21.³

Weima draws attention to Paul's concentrated use of the first person singular in a very short space, deducing that Paul wanted to confront his opponents and their claims head-on in the strategic letter closing.⁴ Add to this the equally heavy emphasis on the third person plural consistently referring to the agitators' conduct and motives (five times in verses 12-13). There are also three references to the Galatians in the very same verses (12-13), in each case showing the Galatians as the agitators' victims. Thus, the *conclusio* was probably nothing less than a final showdown between Paul and his agitators. Weima also identifies a chiasmus in Gl. 6:12-16, heavily emphasising Gl. 6:14 in which the cross is stressed as the dividing line between Paul and the agitators.⁵

C	(v.12)	ὄσοι - negative judgement on opponents of Paul.
B	(v.13)	οὐδὲ γάρ ἀλλὰ (circumcision versus non-circumcision)
A	(v.14)	ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο καυχᾶσθαι εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
B'	(v.15)	οὐδὲ γάρ ἀλλὰ (circumcision versus non-circumcision)
C'	(v.16)	ὄσοι - positive judgement on supporters of Paul.

fig.1.2.

He identifies four contrasts between Paul and his agitators in this chiasmus.

- a) *Contrast 1* deals with their *motive of boasting* (Gl. 6:13). Whether one understands the want of boasting in the flesh of the Galatians literally as an endeavour to increase their social standing amongst nationalistic Jews,⁶ or whether one understands it as a Pauline caricature of the agitators,⁷ is irrelevant. It is about their self-interest – about being successful in gathering

¹ Introducing the subject, stating perplexity, cursing opponents and stating the integrity of the author's view.

² Summarising the outline of the problem at hand as communicated in the *narratio* (1:12-2:14) and providing a transition to the *probatio* (3:1-4:31) where the different proofs are set out.

³ Witherington, 1998¹, 444. Du Toit, 1991, 225, rejects Betz' position of a summary, but accepts that the *peroratio* reflects the main thrust of the rest of the letter.

⁴ Weima, 1993, 94. Besides referring to his taking up the pen (Gl. 6:11), Paul refers to himself thrice in each of verses 14 and 17.

⁵ Weima, 1993, 94.

⁶ Bligh, 1969, 490-1; Bruce, 1982¹, 270.

⁷ Betz, 1979, 314; R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 290-1.

circumcised Gentiles, as opposed to Paul's noble motive of *boasting only in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ* (Gl. 6:14).¹

- b) *Contrast 2* deals with the *motive of avoiding persecution* (Gl. 6:12). What persecution this could be is unclear. Weima follows Jewett's lead² with regard to a surge in Zealot activity in Judea between 46 and 52 CE, leading up to the Jewish War in 66 CE. This is possible, but there is no textual evidence of this persecution going as far as Galatia, or of this alleged threat of persecution by the agitators being connected with the Zealot one.³ Witherington's solution that the feared persecution was about honour rating is enlightening, but not his view that the agitators were seeking to increase their honour rating with local Galatian Jews.⁴ There is no evidence that there was a threat from that source so far removed from Jerusalem. Betz is probably correct in stating that we cannot be sure of any form or source of persecution. However, his reason for saying this is slightly too cynical. He maintains that Paul's rhetoric at this point is too subjective to accept any historical or concrete basis for a fear of persecution.⁵ All this being said, I maintain Paul must have had some basis for making this accusation. It could have been as serious as Jewett's scenario. It could well have been in line with a concern about an honour rating with regard to different groups. We cannot be sure, but Paul would not very likely have made the observation in this critical section without some form of concrete persecution.⁶ What is of utmost importance is that in this contrast it is once again the agitators' self-interest that motivates them to avoid *persecution for the cross of Christ* (Gl. 6:12). Paul, on the other hand, bore "the marks of Jesus" (τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ - Gl. 6:17), probably referring to his past sufferings for the sake of the Gospel.⁷ This obviously enhances Paul's integrity and honour, founded on the cross and not on self-interest.
- c) *Contrast 3* deals with the *external motive of circumcision versus non-circumcision*. The specific issue that brought their internal motivation to the fore was the pressure they exerted on the Galatians to circumcise (Gl. 6:12, 13). Paul argued that this distinction was no longer important (Gl. 6:14). What was important was being part of the new creation (Gl. 6:15). Circumcision is, of course, a theme running through the whole letter and it is specifically connected with the *cross* in Gl. 2:21 ("For if justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose")⁸ and Gl. 5:2 ("If you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you").⁹

¹ Paul echoes his earlier remark (Gl. 1:10) that he does not seek the favour of men, whilst his opponents are self-serving. See also Du Toit, 1994², 157-61.

² Jewett, 1970/1, 204-6.

³ Witherington, 1998¹, 447-8.

⁴ Witherington, 1998¹, 448.

⁵ Betz, 315-6.

⁶ One wonders whether his reference to persecution could make any sense in the concrete, historical setting in Galatia if there were no persecution in any form at all. The absence of any threat would make Paul's remark as puzzling then as it is for us now, and would probably not have enhanced Paul's integrity.

⁷ 2 Cor. 11:23-27. He refers in Gl. 5:11 to still being persecuted and in Gl. 4:29 alludes to it. Dunn, 1993², 347.

⁸ Obviously, the cross is implied. "Law" being the wider concept, but precipitating in the matter of circumcision.

⁹ Once again the cross as symbol of Christ's salvific work is implied.

To maintain the necessity of circumcision...is to deny the completeness of Christ's salvific work on the cross (see 1:4) and the new age that that event has brought about.¹

- d) *Contrast 4* deals with the *theological contrast of world versus new creation*. The words κόσμος (Gl. 6:14, twice) and καινή κτίσις (Gl. 6:15) are contrasted. That to which Gl. 1:4 already attested (*deliverance from the present evil age* through Christ's giving up of Himself)² is now described from the flip-side of the coin, i.e. that *new creation* has dawned through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Fundamentally significant, this contrast is at the fulcrum of the chiasmus. One's position with regard to the cross of Christ not only determines whether one is self-serving and finds continued significance in circumcision, or whether one is at the opposite end. One's position with regard to Christ determines whether one is still part of the world without Christ and his deliverance, or part of the new aeon in Christ.

It is clear from this analysis of Gl. 6:11-18 that the contrasting elements Paul identifies have one common denominator – the cross of Christ.³ The cross of Christ is the dividing line between the age of the flesh, self-interest, perverted intentions and law, on the one hand, and the new creation in which these phenomena are absent. For Paul there is nothing less at stake in this controversy than the heart of the gospel – the truth of the gospel, as he calls it - the cross of Christ! By being in step with the cross of Christ he was part of the new creation, whilst those advocating such matters as the Law of Moses and circumcision were still part of the present evil age and not willing to take up the stumbling block of the cross (Gl. 5:11 - τὸ σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ).

In the passionate polemical statement in Gl. 5:11 a different aspect of the σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ is to the forefront, namely, repudiation of the message of grace and of freedom from the Law. The short saying ἄρα κατήργηται τὸ σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ tacitly presupposes the idea that offence is of the very essence of the Gospel. This is not to be abandoned at any cost, nor is it to be softened by treating the cross and circumcision as equally good alternatives. To do this is to weaken the uncompromising demand for faith and to render nugatory the offensive character of the cross, but in so doing to make equally ineffective the saving power of the cross and faith.⁴

His agitators might not have realised the implications of their stance, especially if they were from Jerusalem and its Jewish mission. They might have thought they were carrying on where Paul left off, illustrating the need for a council of missionaries to meet in order to reach agreement on the matter.⁵ However, taking Paul's rhetoric to have some historical basis, it seems they disagreed with Paul, rather than merely regarding his gospel as insufficient. Their intentions might have been noble, but according to Paul they were misguided and their effects were detrimental to the gospel and to the Galatians.

¹ Weima, 1993, 100.

² Strongly present in Gl. 2:20, 21. Crucifixion well represented in Gl. 3:1, 13; 4:5; 5:11, 24.

³ Dunn, 1993², 337.

⁴ Stählin, 1971, 354. Guhr, 1976, 708-9. Also H.W. Kuhn, 1975, 36-7.

⁵ In which case the incident could have led to the Jerusalem council, probably following within months of the letter.

Looking at the discussed chiasmus from another angle, Paul is saying that in the midst of, and covered under the over-inflated debate on whether Gentile believers should be circumcised or not, lies the real issue. This issue is the real determining factor for measuring the truth of the gospel and deciding on what side of the divide one finds oneself. There is only one factor deciding whether one is an insider or an outsider; whether one is part of the Israel of God (Gl. 6:16) or not; whether one has peace and mercy (Gl. 6:16) or not; in fact, whether one is a new creation (Gl. 6:15). This factor is faith in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ: the only entity in which Paul wished to glory!

3.2.4.3. *The truth of the gospel: freedom through the cross!*

Paul uses the phrase “the truth of the gospel” (ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου) twice (Gl. 2:5, 14). Scholars differ on the meaning of the phrase. It could mean the “true gospel” as opposed to the perverted one,¹ “the real consequences of the gospel,”² or “the integrity of the gospel.”³ The context of Gl. 2:5 is that Paul, Barnabas and Titus went to Jerusalem to share with those of repute (Gl. 2:2) the gospel that he preached amongst the Gentiles. He specifically mentions Titus’ not being compelled to be circumcised (Gl. 2:3). In the next verse he contrasts this position with that of so-called false brethren who had been brought in to spy on their freedom and to bring them into bondage again (Gl. 2:4). To this Paul, Barnabas and Titus would not submit for a moment, so “that the truth of the gospel might be preserved.” Clearly, whatever “the truth of the gospel” is, it is contrasted with a position in Christianity (he calls them “brethren”) that places a high premium on circumcision, and which is, to Paul’s mind, false and a new form of bondage. On the other hand, he aligns himself and his understanding of the gospel, not only with the truth, but also with freedom. This he says after dealing extensively (Gl. 1:4, 6, 7) with the gospel as God’s gracious deliverance in Christ; and stressing that the gospel came to him by revelation of Christ, and not through teaching or tradition (Gl. 1:12). He returns to this subject in Gl. 2:20, which we determined is the theological culmination of his introductory argument in which he contrasts the true gospel and the “gospel” κατὰ ἄνθρωπον. This recurs in Gl. 6:14 where the cross of Christ is once again central to his gospel.

The context of “truth of the gospel” in Gl. 2:14 is slightly different. Its immediate context is table fellowship.⁴ Cephas had been eating with Gentile Christians in Antioch (Gl. 2:12), obviously at ease. He had had the experience of which we read in Acts 10. In addition to that, Paul had met with him, James and John and they had agreed on Paul’s gospel to the Gentiles being correct (Gl. 2:1-10). The protasis of Gl. 2:14 probably suggests that Peter had already abandoned Jewish dietary laws when eating amongst Gentiles.⁵ But when Jewish Christians came

¹ Bultmann, 1967, 139.

² Schlier, 1971, 73; Mußner, 1974, 111.

³ Lightfoot, 1890; 107; Betz, 1979, 92.

⁴ Nanos, 2000, 153, makes it quite clear that we should not include Peter and those from the Antioch situation amongst the Galatian “influencers”. Paul merely draws from experience.

⁵ Jewett, 1971, 108, 248.

to Antioch he withdrew from eating with Gentiles and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. The detail of the matter does not concern us now. Suffice it to say that although those from the circumcision party were the ones to stir up the situation, Paul's argument was not with them, but with Peter and Barnabas who had been carried away by the situation. He accuses them of insincerity (Gl. 2:13) and condemns them (Gl. 2:11) for not being "straightforward (ὀρθοποδέω) about the truth of the gospel" (Gl. 2:14). They were not consistent to the point where they had to abandon old traditions for the sake of the truth. The effect of their insincerity was the breaking up of table fellowship between people who had been freed from old labels and taken up in a new group, namely that of faith.¹

It seems Paul meant this phrase ("truth of the gospel") to be multi-dimensional. In Gl. 2:5 the phrase clearly contrasts the true gospel – Paul's gospel of freedom – with the gospel of bondage of the false brethren. At least circumcision is implied as part of the bondage, but then as the epitome of Jewish law observance. In Gl. 2:14 this meaning would be implied, but the integrity of the gospel in the concrete daily living of the congregation is in the foreground. It was the gospel without prejudice towards certain people. The truth of the gospel is related to the equality and unity of Jewish and Gentile Christians. Fellowship between the two authenticated the truth of the gospel.² It will be argued that this gospel did not demand legal requirements of believers. In fact, it was law-free and had to remain so. He would not allow the law in whatever form to be imposed upon the believers, because it would tarnish the integrity and life-changing ability of the gospel.³ Titus was therefore not compelled to be circumcised. This does not necessarily mean that he was not circumcised. He could have been, but then as an exercise of his freedom.⁴

As far as Paul was concerned, Cephas had jeopardised the integrity of the gospel in Gl. 2:11-14. There were Jewish Christians who were more concerned about their Jewishness than pronouncing the freedom Christ obtained for them (Gl. 1:4; 5:1). In the process, Cephas inadvertently questioned the integrity of the faith of Gentile Christians, as if they lacked the fullness of faith that some form of law observance could have provided. To Paul's mind, this point of view compromised the doctrine of justification by faith, even bringing it into jeopardy.

He [Paul] is most likely saying that he stood on principle about a Law-free Gospel so that his Gentile converts wherever they were or would be could be benefited. Paul sees as at the core of the truth of the Gospel a fundamental commitment to the freedom we have in Christ.⁵

¹ Esler, 1998, 119.

² Witherington, 1998¹, 158-9.

³ Van Aarde, 2002, 517, equates *truth* in Gl. 2:5 and 2:14 with the Afrikaans word *krag*, which could, as he seems to imply, mean *strength, authority or influence*. He argues ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου is contrasted with ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. The former is from God in his faithfulness, bringing with it a radical change of life – freedom. The latter, being from men, changes nothing and emphasises man's bondage to human conventions.

⁴ Bruce, 1982¹, 115.

⁵ Witherington, 1998¹, 138.

In particular, it [“the truth of the gospel”] has in mind the true gospel proclaimed by Paul as opposed to the false gospel advocated by the Judaizers (cf. 1:6-9) – i.e., the gospel that has as its consequence Gentile freedom.¹

Had it been about Jewish Christians merely eating according to the habits with which they grew up, as was probably the case in Jerusalem, Paul would probably not be bothered. However, this was about Gentile Christians never having been subjected to these laws. To expect them to eat according to Jewish habits would be nothing short of imposing such laws as part of the gospel.² This would also be the case for Jewish Christians were they to understand the law as part of the gospel. The gospel was law-free. To maintain its integrity, law could not be allowed to cast a shadow on the gospel.

3.2.5. *The gospel truth as only choice*

It is clear from above that there is a very real danger of reading more into the background of Paul's letter to the Galatians than the letter itself unreservedly allows for. For this reason, one should be cautious of assuming as fact that which is based on probability while determining the scenario in which Paul felt prompted to write his letter. He played a pioneering and fundamental role during his and Barnabas' first missionary journey into Asia Minor (47-48 CE)³ as recorded in Ac. 13:14f. They founded churches in the southern part of Galatia, mainly amongst believers of Gentile ancestry. It seems wondrous workings of the Spirit accompanied their conversion (Gl. 3:2-5). After Paul left Galatia controversy arose as to the relationship of Gentile Christians to Judaism, the latter being the religion from which Christianity stems. Were Gentile converts to be circumcised? Whether Jewish Christians from Jerusalem prompted the issue, or only gave advice in an already developed or developing debate is uncertain. Whether they actively denigrated Paul and/or his position is equally unclear. Within the boundaries of a cautious approach we can accept that they probably advocated circumcision and at least parts of the law (dietary and calendar laws) to supplement Paul's gospel with, to their mind, a substantial ethic. Judging from Paul's reaction, it seems this ethical supplement was so emphasised in Galatia that it reeked of salvation by human merit, if only with a whiff.

Coming from a Gentile background and entering a new religion, most of them would probably have experienced an ethical void. Because of the presence of Christian Jews amongst them and the visit of itinerant missionaries, they probably felt inclined to follow the rules of the religion from which Christianity originated. It came to Paul's attention that there was a debate over the need for Gentile Christians to be circumcised. Paul's concern was for the truth of the gospel. He stressed his apostolic authority, not in defence of himself, but in as much as the discrediting of his authority could have led to the falsification of the gospel. The circumcision theme runs through the letter, because Paul used it to point to the

¹ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 53.

² Morris, 1996, 81.

³ Bruce, 1977, 475; Witherington, 1998², 44.

implications of demanding any law observance from Gentile Christians. He does not differentiate between laws. He mentions circumcision, calendars and diet, not because he narrowed law down to these, but because he was presented with them. It was the point of entrance into a larger subject, Christian freedom. It seems that he wanted to gather them at the point where they found themselves, i.e. circumcision and law, and guide them to that ultimate point of freedom. He tried to precipitate the debate by indicating that law as a whole, and its individual applications, had no place in new creation characterised by freedom through Christ's cross and resurrection.

In Christ God freed man to be a new creation. To subject believers in Christ to law in any form would jeopardise their freedom. It would be a return to their pre-Christian slavery. He wanted them to understand the full implications of what God did in Christ. He delivered them from the present evil age into a new creation. They were now free from anything characteristic of the previous aeon. If anyone were to deviate from this position, his motives had to be questioned. Only self-interest could make one continue on a course that places the cross in the shadows. If any form of law were advocated as necessary for salvation or ethics, it would jeopardise the truth of the gospel, that through "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ...the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gl. 6:14). Nothing was now as important as being part of new creation (Gl. 6:15).

4. CONCLUSION

On the eve of the Jerusalem council and at the watershed between faith in Jesus Christ on the one side, and paganism and Judaism on the other, a fundamentally un-gospel like element presented itself from within the faith community. Law observance in some form (circumcision, dietary, and calendar laws) was presented as necessary for believers in the gospel – either as identity markers of the faith community, or for salvation in some supplementary way, or as a necessary aid for Christian ethical behaviour. It had all the markings of dividing the community of faith and jeopardising the integrity of the gospel itself. In the latter case it cast doubt on the integrity of the cross of Jesus Christ, seemingly helping people of faith to deal with an ethical void.¹

Being aware through divine revelation of the radical difference brought about by the advent of Christ (Gl. 1:12); being overwhelmingly certain that salvation was only through the cross and resurrection of our Lord Jesus (Gl. 1:1,4; 2:20); and being convinced that through the Spirit Christ was now living in the believer (Gl. 3:2-3; 4:6; 5:25) who had been crucified to the world and the world to him (Gl. 6:14), Paul was heavily burdened by the Galatians' misunderstanding of the times (Gl. 1:4; 3:1). They had begun with the eschatological Spirit and were now reverting to practices characteristic of the present evil age existing before Christ's ad-

¹ Hay, 2000, 294, makes a very valid point, suggesting that the Galatians were not thinking of abandoning faith in Christ. They were seeking a little more security than they felt Christ could provide. This would probably be true especially of the ethical guidance in Christianity.

vent. Consequently, he wrote a letter from the heart to the Galatians. He made use of a vast array of rhetorical mechanisms and effects (apologetic and deliberative elements, rebuke and irony, as well as elements of the ancient rhetorical effects of *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*) in order to defend the true gospel of freedom in Christ (Gl. 1:6-12; 5:1).

He wrote the letter with the greatest sense of *urgency*. There could be no doubt in the mind of the readers concerning the seriousness with which Paul viewed the matter of reversion to circumcision and other elements of law.¹ The gospel itself was at stake. Paul would leave no stone unturned and do nothing in half-measure in his efforts to convince the Galatians of the foolishness of the so-called other gospel, which was actually a non-gospel. It seems likely that the letter was written shortly before the Jerusalem council and that its content most probably reflects the thrust of Paul's position at that council. This enhances the letter as a landmark in the development of Christianity, as well as its relevance for modern believers in their efforts to stand firm in the freedom for which Christ set us free!

¹ Krimmer, 1981, 11.

CHAPTER 2

APOCALYPTIC – PAUL’S PARADIGM SWITCH TOWARD THE FREEDOM MOTIF

In the previous chapter it was emphasised that Paul considered the situation in Galatians to be extremely serious. The truth of the gospel was at stake. By means of the letter and the eclectic implementation of available rhetorical mechanisms, he wished to address the situation as a matter of extreme urgency. In this chapter Paul’s apocalyptic use of language¹ and allusion to apocalyptic in Galatians will be considered. It is necessary to illustrate how he uses it to emphasise the arrival and revelation of a totally new and radically different situation since Christ’s advent, cross and resurrection. Since the object of this thesis is to determine as clearly as possible what freedom entails in Galatians, it is fundamentally important to get a firm grip on the context within which Paul operated, as well as the medium he employed to reframe the Galatians’ mindset. It will be argued that, although the subject is contentious, one should not ignore apocalyptic as if it had no role in Judaism and early Christianity. It was a reality. Being confronted with an opposing theological, soteriological and ethical stance in Christianity, Paul applied apocalyptic to reframe his readers’ thought world. He did not use an apocalyptic style; nor did he refer to future apocalyptic events. He made use of apocalyptic allusion, using certain terms with a profound apocalyptic connotation, as well as disclosure language.

He wanted the Galatians to grasp the radically new dispensation that had arrived with the advent of Christ, and in which they shared through faith in Christ. This had implications for their way of life or *ethos*. With the advent of Christ, they had moved from the old dispensation to new creation. They could not think of their position, status and way of life as merely a continuation of the present evil age – not even as it presented itself in Judaism. By using apocalyptic allusion Paul emphasised *discontinuity* with Judaism and the consequent soteriological and ethical reorientation needed since Christ’s advent, death and resurrection. Apocalyptic² was not only a fine tool to use with regard to changing the Galatians’ symbolic universe, but also to impress on them the urgency of the situation. They had to realise what time it was. Since Christ’s advent they were living in the hoped for eschatological time. They could not retrace the track back into the time before Christ. Believers were urgently to align themselves with the cross through which they were crucified with Christ and through which they were now dead to the old world. Christ was now living in them and they could not live with one foot in the old and the other in the new aeon.

I will take the approach that it is not at all necessary to make a choice between a salvation-historical and an apocalyptic approach. The theology of Galatians is best understood in terms of a combination.³ They need not be exclusive of each other.¹

¹ Or is it “Paul’s use of apocalyptic language?” Whichever way, the intention should become clearer.

² The term will be defined more closely in §3 of this chapter.

³ Barclay, 1988, 99.

1. THE POSSIBILITY OF AN APOCALYPTIC RHETORICAL ANGLE

R.G. Hall², in an article that has sadly not received due attention, investigated the interesting possibility of Paul's having made use of *Jewish apocalyptic rhetoric*, which he describes as “a revelatory *topos*.”³ He contends that, although Greco-Roman rhetorical handbooks were formative for rhetorical activity throughout the Mediterranean world, they would not simply replace native rhetoric.⁴ According to Hall the fact that most rhetorical interpreters struggle to fit the logic of Paul's arguments into the Greco-Roman rhetorical models, probably means that they have “largely neglected forms of argumentation developed by apocalyptists and other ancient Jewish and Christian writers.”⁵ Hall investigates the juridical arguments of three Jewish apocalyptic writings, namely “The Astronomical Book” (1 *Enoch* 72-82), “The Animal Apocalypse” (1 *Enoch* 85-90) and “The Argument for Circumcision” (*Jubilees* 15). He then applies them to Galatians. He identifies four elements common to these apocalyptic writings, and evident in Galatians. *Firstly*, there is a claim to *inspiration* (also in Gl. 1:10-2:21). *Secondly*, there is a revelation of *divine judgement* ordering the world into righteous and wicked camps (also in Gl. 3:1-5, 7-29; 4:1-11; 4:21-5:1; 5:16-6:10). *Thirdly*, there is a call to *join the righteous camp ruled by God* and to repudiate the wicked realm ruled by other forces (also in Gl. 4:8-11, 12-20; 5:1, 5:16-6:10). *Fourthly*, it is implied that the author's *course of action* is the correct one (also found in Gl. 4:12-20; 5:2-15; 6:11-12).⁶

Are these common features sufficient to actually speak of an apocalyptic rhetorical style? It seems to be not the style, but the content, that suggests Paul had an apocalyptic motif. It would be safer to speak of *an apocalyptic frame of mind* in Paul's presentation of his gospel in Galatians. Once again it must be stressed that Paul had a characteristic way of writing letters based on that of his *Umwelt* (both Hellenistic and Judaic). There is no reason to seek a rhetorical model according to which Paul would slavishly mould his arguments. However, Hall's position is valuable. It does not suggest that Paul moulded Galatians into an apocalyptic style or used only one rhetorical mechanism. In fact, he writes:

This paper assumes that analysis of the deliberative rhetoric of Galatians requires recourse to native rhetoric as well as to the Greco-Roman handbook tradition.⁷

He demonstrates how both the juridical and deliberative Greco-Roman rhetorical models fit the picture and that they need not exclude each other. He help-

¹ Marshall, 1988, 612-3, confirms that Oscar Cullmann, after World War II, became the main protagonist of *Heilsgeschichte*, denouncing Bultmann's demythologising of the gospel's kerygma, and, in effect, his dehistoricising of it. Thus it was not developed to counter apocalyptic. It was done to place salvation firmly in history.

² Hall, 1996, 434-53.

³ Hall, 1996, 436.

⁴ Hall, 1996, 435.

⁵ Hall, 1996, 435, cites Classen, 1991, 31, and argues that one should take other than the usual forms of argumentation into account, such as those of philosophers, apocalyptists and other Jewish and Christian writers.

⁶ Hall, 1996, 439.

⁷ Hall, 1996, 436.

fully stresses that certain elements seem to dominate Jewish apocalyptic literature and that these are found in Galatians. In this respect his title is very apt, stating that Paul is (merely) “arguing *like* an apocalypse” (my accentuation). He does *not contend* that Galatians *is* an apocalypse or that Paul slavishly followed the rules of apocalyptic writing.¹ This fits in well with the previously stated position that Paul made full use of what he had at his disposal to advise the congregation pastorally on the truth of the gospel, and to influence their future thinking and decisions on matters theological and ethical. What he stresses is that Galatians should be understood as revelatory in nature. Paul wanted to reveal to them the truth that had previously been revealed to him. He wanted to stress that it was without human pollution, authentic gospel to the core!

Considering the earlier motivated point that Paul wrote a letter from the heart, it is more than likely that Paul’s Jewish roots played a dominant role in his letter. In this respect Jewish apocalyptic rhetoric should be investigated, while steering clear of any notion of Paul using a fixed apocalyptic style. Galatians is a letter and was intended to be exactly that. It should not be regarded as an apocalypse. It does, however, contain and employ profound apocalyptic elements.

2. APOCALYPTIC AS A CONTENTIOUS TERM

What makes an apocalyptic view on Paul attractive is the realisation that Jewish apocalyptic had a great influence on the symbolic universe of Early Christianity. Research into apocalyptic and eschatology in the NT has come a long way since Albert Schweitzer² extensively tabled the subject of interpreting the Christ event eschatologically. Much has also been done since Käsemann³ raised the eyebrows with his powerful and, for many, enigmatic statement – albeit contentious – that “apocalyptic was the mother of all Christian theology.”⁴

Marshall reflects on this statement in a very concise and helpful article.⁵ He points to the fact that Käsemann’s definition of apocalyptic was nothing more than the expectation of the imminent return of Christ.⁶ It was therefore more in line with eschatology than with apocalyptic. From this angle, and with evidence provided by numerous scholars,⁷ he argues that, although the imminent *parousia* was a very central motif in early Christian theology, it was not as central as Käsemann would have

¹ Collins, 1979, 9, defines the genre: “Apocalypse is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.” Dunn, 1990¹, describes its literary characteristics as pseudonymity, visionary and symbolic, esoteric, surveying history from an earlier perspective, reflecting the response of faith in crisis, and containing exhortation.

² Schweitzer, 1910; 1912; 1931.

³ Käsemann, 1965; 1969; 1971.

⁴ Käsemann, 1969, 102.

⁵ Marshall, 1987, 33 - 41.

⁶ Marshall, 1987, 36. Bultmann, 1967, 476-82, reflecting on his student’s view, states that not apocalyptic, but eschatology, is the mother of early Christian theology (482).

⁷ Amongst others, authors to whom reference will be made later in the chapter, like: Dunn, 1990¹; Rowland, 1982; Bornkamm, 1967, 815f.; Lohse, 1971, 48 – 67.

us believe.¹ This being said, the importance of apocalyptic should not be played down and will be given due attention. However, it does not fall within the scope of this study to pay detailed attention to the debate on exactly what apocalyptic is² and how it differs from eschatology,³ or to what extent it should be used as an hermeneutical key to Paul in general. However, the matter will not be sidestepped. Reference will be made to scholars holding varying interpretations and opinions on apocalyptic and eschatology, both terminologically and phenomenologically. We will be making use of authors who reject, ignore, or uphold the notion that apocalyptic was the mother of all Christian theology. The term features prominently in Paul's Galatian letter. The fact that ἀποκαλύπτω/ἀποκαλύψις occurs (only) four times in Galatians (Gl. 1:12, 16; 2:2; 3:23)⁴ should not deceive us. It will be illustrated that Paul enhances its prominence by setting it in a certain context.

One would have to decide on a position in this regard in order to maintain academic integrity and refrain from subjective choices bent on proving a certain point rather than seeking the truth – the truth of the gospel about which Paul wanted to be straightforward (Gl. 2:14). Failing to take a position could lead to dogmatological opportunism and inconsistency, making scientific research difficult and the understanding of Pauline theology inaccurate, if not impossible. If we accept the scientific premise that a text set in a specific context has a limited range of meanings;⁵ and if Galatians is as context-related as accepted, it is imperative to narrow down the context as accurately as possible, and with that, the range of possible interpretations.⁶

¹ Marshall, 1987, 38.

² The debate is covered in detail by amongst others scholars like Matlock, 1996 and Johnson, 1989.

³ Keck, 1984, 230. He writes that 'apocalyptic' may be the most misused word in the scholar's vocabulary because it resists definition. The mere use of the word as a noun (an Anglicised form of the German noun 'Apokalyptik') calls for confusion. Furthermore, 'apocalyptic' and 'eschatological' are often regarded and used as synonyms. Glasson, 1981, 105, describes it as "a useless word which no one can define and which produces nothing but confusion and acres of verbiage." A sobering remark in this regard comes from the very renowned scholar of apocalyptic, Collins, 1991, 24: "Apocalyptic" is an ambivalent term, insofar as it refers to different kinds of material, but it is not significantly more ambivalent than other terms such as 'prophecy' or 'wisdom' that we freely use to characterise the ancient literature. The way to overcome the ambiguity is not by rhetorical flourishes banning all use of the term...but by qualifying it and making distinctions where necessary.... and not allowed to float freely as an intuitive 'theological concept.'"

⁴ Schmoller, 1989, 55.

⁵ Barr, 1961, 218. He coined the expression illegitimate totality transfer. This occurs when the semantic value of a word in a specific context is added to its semantic value in another and the sum of these values is then read into a specific word. Nida & Louw I, 1988, viii-ix, xv-xvii, observe: "The first principle of semantic analyses of lexical items is that there are 'no synonyms' in the sense that no two lexical items ever have completely the same meanings in all of the contexts in which they might occur." This does not rule out "variation for the sake of rhetorical purposes." Secondly, differences in meaning are marked by textual or extra-textual context. Thirdly, "meaning is defined by a set of distinctive features that define the limits of the range of referents which may be designated by a particular verbal form." "...The ultimate objective is to obtain a statement of meanings which reflects the greatest overall coherence within the system." The fourth principle "states that figurative meanings differ from their bases with respect to three fundamental factors: diversity in domains, differences in the degree of awareness of the relationship between literal and figurative meanings, and the extent of conventional usage." Fifthly, "the different meanings of the same word and the related meanings of different words tend to be multidimensional and are only rarely orthogonal in structure."

⁶ Barton, 1995, 73; Thiselton, 1979, 75-79.

2.1. Apocalyptic under attack

It is a pity that scholars have used both the word and the phenomenon of apocalyptic indiscriminately,¹ resulting in many being overly suspicious of its use and interpretation. Glasson scathingly attacks apocalyptic as a tool to understand NT theology.² Although he does not reject the existence of the apocalypse as genre, he rejects apocalyptic as an encompassing worldview and hermeneutical tool with which the NT is to be unlocked. He quite rightly remarks there was not one single worldview that could be characterised as absolutely apocalyptic. He finds it difficult to accept that the multitudes to which Jesus spoke were predominantly apocalyptic in worldview. What they listened to every Sabbath was the reading from the Law and the Prophets.³ He finds it strange, if the NT writers were so strongly influenced by apocalyptic, that save for the one clear reference in Jude 14-15 to Enoch 1:9, the extra-canonical apocalypses are not quoted, but rather the OT. He remarks:

There is nothing in the vital pre-Christian period to justify the confident statements which have been made for 70 years, and which are still being made today. The result is that a good deal of New Testament discussion has been based on a colossal blunder.⁴

These are harsh words with an undertone of irritation. On the other hand, they sound a clear warning that one-sided hermeneutics could lead to skewed interpretation. His criticism that the artificial dissection of the Early Christian world view into separate, and almost unrelated parts, and then over-emphasising one element at the cost of others, should be taken seriously.⁵ But it is equally true that the apocalyptic view of life was operative at the time of Jesus' advent. There might have been sections of the Jewish population who were more aware of it than others, but it was there in varying degrees. It would be irresponsible to think rabbis would reflect on the Law and Prophets without conveying teaching influenced by apocalyptic. To deduce from the use of quotations from primarily the OT and not as much from extra-canonical apocalyptic literature, that apocalyptic was not active in Paul's time, is wrong.⁶ One would have

¹ Vawter, 1960, 33, remarks: "Hermann Gunkel protested that 'apocalyptic' was a word too readily used by authors who did not have an agreed definition of what it meant." To this Youngblood, 1988, 213, adds: "Definitions of apocalyptic tend to be either so general as to be vacuous or so specific as to eliminate from consideration a substantial number of erstwhile apocalypses."

² Glasson, 1980/1, 99-105.

³ Glasson, 1980/1, 104-5.

⁴ Glasson, 1980/1, 102.

⁵ Glasson, 1980/1, 100.

⁶ W.D. Davies, 1999, 684, writes: "First-century Judaism was often moved by intense eschatological expectations. Sporadically these instigated activist messianic contenders, but more often, precisely because these expectations were so fantastically glorious that they could only be realized by God himself, they induced political quietism. Apocalypists confined bloody armeddons to their dreams, their wars to their writings: it was for God not man to bring in the End. Although not exactly popular, their visions were not confined to esoteric circles and schools, but were in the first-century Jewish air and often shared by Pharisees. Paul's designation of himself as a Pharisee by no means implies distance from eschatological speculation: his use of such terms as 'the fullness of time' (Gl. 4:4), 'the resurrection of the dead' (Rom. 11:15), 'the mystery' (1 Cor. 2:7; 15:5; Rom.11: 25; 16:25) or 'the mysteries of God,' the trumpet announcing the end (1 Tim. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:5), in-

to ignore Early Christianity's tireless, and even at times (too)¹ innovative, efforts to illustrate its Jewish roots and that it was founded on Yahweh's OT promises.² It could be argued that the studying of the OT as a whole was the foundation or seedbed of early Christian theology.³ The resurrection of Christ, rather than his return, was fundamental to early Christian theology. To come to grips with the post-resurrection situation, meant they had to delve into the OT.

2.2. In defence of apocalyptic

Fortunately the study of apocalyptic has come a long way since Glasson's criticism. Many have taken up the challenge of redefining apocalyptic in the NT and refining its application in exegesis and hermeneutics. Elizabeth Johnson⁴ investigates the influence of both apocalyptic and wisdom literature in Romans 9-11 on the suspicion that a choice between the two with regard to influence in the NT is a false dichotomy and that the answer lies in their confluence.⁵ She investigates early Jewish documents usually associated with apocalyptic and finds that each of them at some point made use of both apocalyptic and wisdom, leaning to one or the other.⁶ Going a step further to Rm. 9-11 she finds:

The line of thought is profoundly structured by the apocalyptic categories of eschatological salvation, God's wrath and wealth of mercy, and the destiny of the people of God. But Paul's argument also uses sapiential traditions to describe God's freedom to elect impartially (9:20-23), to show how the gospel is the near word of God's wisdom (10:6-8), and to reveal a heavenly mystery about God's saving intentions (11:25-27). Because this mystery and the discussion which it brings to a close provide a glimpse into God's wise ordering of history and redemption, Paul concludes his argument – and the argument of the letter to this point – with a hymn in praise of God's wisdom (11:33-36). The apostle's ascription of praise for the marvel of salvation is a traditional Jewish hymn to God's wisdom, because, inscrutable as they are from a human perspective, God's judgements and ways have indeed been proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ. In sum, the inter-sections of apocalyptic and wisdom traditions in Romans 9-11 afford Paul the means of maintaining a theological tension between God's faithfulness and God's impartiality, a tension he never resolves because it is constitutive of the character of God.⁷

deed the whole structure of his thinking, bears witness to this. His interpretation of Christ can only be understood against a background of Jewish Apocalyptic, which has been called the mother of his theology."

¹ In terms of modern exegesis and hermeneutics.

² Ellis, 1979², 199-219.

³ Marshall, 1987, 39. Youngblood, 1988, 215, also calling on support from Ladd, 1957, 192-200, and Vawter, 1960, 38-9, states there seems to be reason enough to accept at least 'an embryonic form of apocalyptic' around the time of Amos and Hosea. P.D. Hanson, 1971, 464, 468, attaches it to the exilic period around Ezekiel. Christensen, 1984, 682, traces it to late 7th century BCE during the time of Josiah's reform before Judah's exile.

⁴ Johnson, 1989, is one of the most responsible studies on the subject. She stresses the importance of not compartmentalising the worldview or theology of Early Christianity and Second Temple Judaism. Aune, 1993, 27, specifically stresses the role of mantic wisdom as a source of apocalyptic, as well as a profound sense of divine revelation. P.D. Hanson, 1979, 1-8, 402-8, stresses Jewish apocalyptic was fully home-grown. The need to explain calamitous events and cultivate hope in a righteous God, called for a new way of speaking about history and the future. These social factors were the stimuli in the movement from prophetic to apocalyptic eschatology.

⁵ Johnson, 1989, 78-80.

⁶ Johnson, 1989, 153-58.

⁷ Johnson, 1989, 255-56. In a slightly different vein Rowland, 1999, 787, also stresses the importance of wisdom literature in the development of Jewish apocalyptic. He adds: "The questioning spirit of biblical wisdom tradition and the interpretation of dreams and visions are antecedents which should not be ignored in our at-

2.3. Apocalyptic as emphasising disjunction

Dunn has been helpful in providing a more nuanced approach to diversity of theological thought in Early Christianity, distinguishing between four strands of thought that do not exclude one another, namely Jewish, Hellenistic and Apocalyptic Christianity, and Early Catholicism.¹ He explains how Christianity began as an apocalyptic sect in Judaism and how its apocalyptic was aligned with that of John the Baptist and Jesus.² They assigned a fundamental position to Jesus' resurrection as the initialisation of the general resurrection of the dead in their theology. Together with this dawning of the age of resurrection, they expected the imminent return of Christ. In this sense one could describe apocalyptic as the mother of Christian theology.³ But how should apocalyptic theology be defined? Dunn helpfully supplies major characteristics of apocalyptic theology.

- The belief in two aeons in total disjunction to each other;
- The present age is regarded with pessimism and the age to come with hope;
- The expectation of an eschatological climax in which God's enemies are judged and his people saved;
- The belief that it would be a time of resurrection;
- The end of all things is imminent;
- Reality is regarded in its cosmic dimensions;
- In the end God is seen to reign sovereign over the cosmos fulfilling the hope of his people. It is only He who can bring the new age about.⁴

The significant point is the radical difference between the two ages so that they have very little in common, also regarding their respective modes of living. This is fundamentally important for understanding Christian freedom. Of course, this disjunction raises the question whether the salvation-historical approach to Paul can still be functional in such a scenario. Oscar Cullmann himself writes:

Finally, we note that in the genesis of New Testament salvation history, all events, the past, the present, and the ones expected in the future, are summed up in one event as their high-point and mid-point: the crucifixion of Christ and the subsequent resurrection.⁵

Constitutive of all salvation history is the fact that the disclosure of it is attributed to its authors both in Old and New Testaments to a spiritually comprehended revelation about particular events.... Salvation history does not come by way of reflection about history.... Rather, it comes primarily because of a consciousness of having received a special prophetic revelation through the Holy Spirit.⁶

tempt to elucidate apocalyptic origins. Thus it would be wrong to assert that apocalyptic has its origin either in prophecy or in wisdom; both have contributed much to apocalyptic" (788).

¹ Dunn, 1990¹, 235-37. He refers to these strands of thought as "dimensions and emphases within first-century Christianity which all overlap and interact to some degree" (236).

² Dunn, 1990¹, 309-10.

³ Dunn, 1990¹, 316-25.

⁴ Dunn, 1990¹, 312-7; Vielhauer & Strecker, 1992, 549-51.

⁵ Cullmann, 1967, 86.

⁶ Cullmann, 1967, 98.

It will become clear that my take on the matter of apocalyptic allusion in Galatians does not contradict salvation history.¹ It will be argued that Paul implemented apocalyptic allusion in order to stress very profoundly that the Christ event was not merely another point in salvation history, or merely the fulfilment of another promise in a series still to follow. By way of apocalyptic allusion Paul stressed that everything held together in the Christ event. His advent and resurrection was and remains the pivotal event, irrevocably and radically changing the salvational paradigm. The Galatians had to realise that in Christ they were now in the new aeon and had to live accordingly. In a very concise article Dunn combines Paul's salvation-historical and apocalyptic features, concluding:

In short, we may say that it was the continuity in the discontinuity, the apocalyptic climax of the salvation-history that constituted the heart of his gospel.²

2.4. Apocalyptic as emphasising disclosure

Bornkamm's view on apocalyptic is significant. He maintains that disclosure of divine secrets was the main theme of later Jewish apocalyptic.³ Rowland convincingly illustrates that eschatology, often found in apocalyptic, is not always present and there is no specific apocalyptic eschatology. If apocalyptic and eschatology are to be separated apocalyptic must find its definition in something other than eschatology and *parousia*. *Disclosure* fills the gap well.⁴ He states:

Apocalyptic, therefore, is a type of religion whose distinguishing feature is a belief in a direct revelation of the things of God which was mediated through dream, vision or divine intermediary.⁵

Barry Matlock, although not suggesting answers to the problem of what apocalyptic is, is very critical of the use of the term.⁶ What concerns him is the overrating of the influence of apocalyptic and the lack of a clear definition in terms of which it can be applied.⁷ He is especially critical of J.C. Beker's new impetus⁸ to apocalyptic as an hermeneutical tool to Paul.⁹ He underlines that the vagueness surrounding the topic too easily leads to "*illegitimate totality transfer*"¹⁰ of, well, apocalyptic proportions."¹¹ He suggests that the direction in which to look for a solution to the meaning of apocalyptic could well be the notion of *revelation*, as pointed

¹ N.T. Wright, 1994, 237.

² Dunn, 1994², 388.

³ Bornkamm, 1967, 815.

⁴ Marshall, 1987, 37. The question as to how apocalyptic and prophecy differ and whether the former is not merely a form of the latter, presents itself. We will not delve into this matter. Suffice it to cite a remark by Rowley, 1963, 38: "Speaking generally, the prophets foretold the future that should arise out of the present, while the apocalypists foretold the future that should break into the present."

⁵ Rowland, 1982, 21.

⁶ Matlock, 1996.

⁷ Matlock, 1996, 310.

⁸ Beker, 1970, 303-20; 1980; 1982; 1988, 364-77; 1990. We turn to Beker at 4.1 below.

⁹ Matlock, 1996, 247-50, 299-305.

¹⁰ Referring to Barr, 1961, 218.

¹¹ Matlock, 1996, 282. This is also the conviction of Rowland, 1982, 355.

out above. According to Matlock, Sturm¹ has been helpful in this respect, although he finds the use of the term unnecessary, seeing that its wide variety of definitions clouds the term and usually calls for explanation.²

2.5. Apocalyptic as emphasising the advent of the Spirit

The Spirit as subject in Galatians will receive more attention in Ch. 4 of this dissertation as illustrative of the plight-solution paradigm in Judaism, and in Ch. 6 in terms of Christian living. In the current chapter the point is merely made that the Spirit was a very important element in both Jewish and Early Christian apocalyptic. Already in the OT reference is made to a future in which God's Spirit would work wondrously and endow man with a new sense of service to the Lord.³ It is also found in extra-canonical literature.⁴

Their experience of the wondrous works of the Spirit signified the arrival of the last aeon for the early Christians in the same way the resurrection of Christ did. The early Christians had experiences that were too difficult to explain in terms of this world order. They had to believe they were in the last days in which the Spirit would be operative. Ac. 2:17-18 reflects this as according to prophecy.⁵

One can certainly conclude that the early Christians were apocalyptically minded in that they believed that they were living in the last days, but their horizon was not formed exclusively by the hope of the imminent *parousia*. The resurrection of ^{Jesus} and the gift of the Spirit as immediate experiences must have been of basic importance, and it was out of their present experience of Jesus that they were led to cry "Maranatha".⁶

2.6. A preliminary conclusion on apocalyptic

Against this backdrop of, on the one hand a renewed interest in apocalyptic and understanding Paul in apocalyptic fashion, and on the other hand, critical questioning of one-sided apocalyptic interpretation, a position with regard to the present study has to be taken. As in the case of rhetoric, it is equally important not to superimpose a specific theological approach to matters on Paul. To consider everything he writes unreservedly from an apocalyptic angle would be irresponsible. But, all things being equal, sticking with Galatians, in terms of the above characteristics of Jewish and early Christian apocalyptic, one senses that Paul's theology has an apocalyptic angle to it featuring at a much deeper level than meets the eye. Galatians is not overtly apocalyptic as in the genre of the apocalypse, it is not written in an esoteric style, and it does not make use of visions and symbolism. On the face of things there are no dramatics. It is not aimed at giving information with regard to the *parousia* or about revealing details about life hereafter. However, Galatians

¹ Sturm, 1989,17-48. Sturm emphasises the term as a theological concept rather than a literary form. It is about God revealing himself to the world in Christ.

² Matlock, 1996, 312-3.

³ Ezk. 36:24-32; Jl. 2:28-29. See my Ch. 4 where more attention is paid to the matter.

⁴ Tengström & Fabry, 1993, 419-24.

⁵ Marshall, 1987, 39.

⁶ Marshall, 1987, 39.

features a substantial number of, what would traditionally be called, apocalyptic traits. We will be turning to these features in the following pages.

The letter is concerned with the Galatians' understanding of and aligning with the gospel in this life. It is about choices for daily living; about understanding the time they live in – knowing what time it is – and living by the good news that set them free, and not in terms of previous orientations – Jewish or otherwise.¹

What time is it? One hardly needs to point out that the matter of discerning the time lies at the very heart of apocalyptic; and as the preceding motifs show, in none of his letters does Paul address that issue in terms more clearly apocalyptic than in Galatians. What time is it? It is the time after the apocalypse of the faith of Christ, the time therefore of rectification by that faith, the time of the presence of the Spirit, and thus the time of the war of liberation commenced by the Spirit.²

It was about a radically new situation and, consequently a new orientation towards living life after the advent of Christ, his cross and his resurrection. We now turn to a closer investigation into the anticipated fundamental role of apocalyptic in Galatians.

3. IS PAUL'S THEOLOGY IN GALATIANS ALL THAT APOCALYPTIC?

3.1. J.C. Beker's dilemma with apocalyptic coherency in Galatians

J.C. Beker must be credited for coining the terms *coherency* and *contingency* in Pauline theology.³ He argues that beneath the surface of Paul's theology lies a "deep structure" of perfectly coherent thought from which Paul draws when he addresses contingent situations on "surface level."⁴ The seeming anomalies in his letters must be seen as contingencies reflecting how his coherent theology operates in his letters.⁵ His thesis is that Paul's coherent theology can be described as thoroughly apocalyptic.⁶ According to Beker Paul sees the coming *parousia* as the eschatological turning point in history. He does, however understand the resurrection of Christ as an apocalyptic event that cannot be separated from the *parousia* and the general resurrection to take place at that time.

¹ Gager, 2000, 62, remarks: "Paul's preoccupation with the Gentiles remains incomprehensible apart from his eschatological framework. For it had long been a central belief in many streams of Judaism that in the final stage of history God would incorporate or redeem righteous Gentiles into the people of God. Leo Baeck put it succinctly: 'The coming of the Messiah and the coming of the Gentiles are interconnected.' This is Jewish faith and such was Paul's faith." Dunn, 1998, 318, also mentions the movement from one epoch to another, adding that it is not merely a change from BC to AC, but a transition capable of affecting every age and transforming each individual.

² Martyn, 1985², 418. One is also reminded of Jeremias, 1971, 139-40, who stresses that apocalyptic underscores both the urgency of the time of grace and the opportunity to re-align.

³ Beker, 1980, 11-15.

⁴ Donaldson, 1997¹, 35-8, calls to caution regarding Beker's model. His concern is not with the basic concept or with Beker's conception of the central and coherent core. His concern is that the two-level structure might be too sharply divided. His question is whether there should not be a level in between "for a body of theological explication, in which the theological implications of Paul's core convictions for significant topics...were developed for their own sake rather than for their usefulness in a particular situation" (36). "He has perhaps made too sharp a differentiation between the two levels, over emphasising the contingency of the surface and the coherence of the core in the process" (37). Donaldson's suggestion is helpful. However, with a view to our subject we will not elaborate, since he is not in disagreement with Beker's principle or the scope of the coherent core.

⁵ Beker, 1980, 17.

⁶ Beker, 1980, 135, 143.

It is a proleptic event that foreshadows the apocalyptic general resurrection of the dead and thus the transformation of our created world and the gift of new corporeal life to dead bodies. Resurrection is a historical-ontological category, manifesting in this world the dawning of the new age of transformation.¹

Jewish apocalyptic was a mechanism by which God's people were given hope and called upon to look further than what meets the eye to an apocalyptic point of divine incision into time, when unrighteousness would meet its match and God's people would be restored. Paul's theology was a re-orientation of apocalyptic thought in order to make his readers and congregations understand present suffering and unrighteousness as part and parcel of the interim between Christ's resurrection and *parousia*. Paul's re-orientation amounts to this point as about to be reached in Christ's imminent return. The resurrection of Christ heightens that expectation.²

However, this being said of Pauline theology as a whole, Beker encountered a problem with Paul's apparent³ non-use of apocalyptic in his letter to the Galatians, and an equally puzzling silence about the expected *parousia*. This made Galatians the maverick of Paul's undisputed letters.⁴ He tried to explain it in terms of his distinction between coherency and contingency, arguing that Galatians was written to address a specific situation with regard to the position of the law in Christian life. Because of this heightened contingency Paul was forced to put his coherent apocalyptic theology on hold.⁵ However, if one takes Beker's arguments concerning a coherent theology at the heart of Pauline thought seriously, this position of his with regard to Galatians seems precarious. Granted, Paul would not easily be prescribed to by a specific style – not even his own characteristic way of writing – and that he could have diverted from his usual train of thought because of the contingency of a specific situation. However, it is most unlikely in this case. Would Paul be so easily deterred? This is not about superficial matters or mere rhetoric. It is about theology operating at a deep level. This letter of grave concern with all its rhetoric, urgency and emotive input – a letter in which Paul expresses that the truth of the gospel is at stake (Gl. 1:6-12; 2:2,5) – should certainly be seen as written from the heart of the apostle's theology.

Whether law and its function or malfunction in the Christian community is merely a matter of contingency, is highly questionable. The mere fact that "the pillars" in Jerusalem deemed it necessary to call a council on the matter raises the suspicion that the problem was probably more widespread. The fact that Paul had previously encountered a problem in Antioch and felt it necessary to discuss the matter of law and gospel with "the pillars" earlier on during a visit to Jerusalem, enhances the idea that as Jewish Christians moved out into Gentile territory, law surfaced as a fundamental issue. Be that as it may, in Ch. 3 it will be argued that

¹ Beker, 1980, 153.

² Beker, 1980, 152.

³ That is according to the features usually associated with apocalyptic.

⁴ B.W. Longenecker, 1998, 6.

⁵ Beker, 1980, 58.

Paul's handling of the matter in his Galatian letter is on a much more fundamental level. The point will be argued that Paul takes the matter of law right back to the reason for its having been given, namely to deal with flesh and sin until the advent of Christ. This is taking the matter to the heart of the truth of the gospel!

Add to this that at the time of writing to the Galatians Paul was no theological novice. He had been a Christian and apostle to the Gentiles for at least 14 years. His theological reflection had been done quite thoroughly at that stage.¹ Obviously, although it is not recalled in his correspondence, Paul, as heavy calibre former Pharisee, would by then have discounted the contingency of the Galatian context against his internalised coherent theology. His clear theological reasoning; the ease with which he incorporates scripture into his arguments; his recalling of discussions with Peter and the other "pillars"; and his disturbance with the Galatian problem, creates the impression that he had cleared his mind on this issue quite a while before writing, or even well ahead of the emergence of the problem. Having had his Damascus Road experience, and going into Gentile territory and mission fields immediately thereafter, it was imperative to consider this matter thoroughly. If the letter is dated on the eve of the Jerusalem council,² it provides us both with insight into Paul's frame of mind going up to Jerusalem, as well as with the raw material with which he approached the council. One wonders whether Paul could have approached the council with anything less than his coherent thoughts.

Galatians is probably the earliest surviving letter of Paul. If this view is incorrect, then the palm must be awarded to 1 Thessalonians. On either assumption, however, not only is there a maturity of understanding in Paul's earliest letter, but also we gain the firm impression that much of what he is saying was not thought up freshly for the occasion but represents his settled views. Likewise, the fact that he can assume so much common understanding on the part of his recipients confirms that he was not suddenly producing new ideas that nobody had ever heard of previously.³

Beker acknowledges Paul's apparent non-use of apocalyptic in Galatians.

Galatians threatens to undo what I have posited as the coherent core of Pauline thought, the apocalyptic co-ordinates of the Christ-event that focus on the imminent, cosmic triumph of God.⁴

3.2. J.L. Martyn's revisitation of apocalyptic in Galatians

Martyn comes to Beker's rescue regarding Paul's apparent non-use of apocalyptic in his highly acclaimed and much quoted article.⁵ He convincingly argues that Paul's extensive use of antinomies in Galatians enhances its theological "deep structure" as thoroughly and coherently apocalyptic.⁶ He argues Paul has a different orientation point for the inception of the eschatological time than in his other un-

¹ Witherington, 1998¹, 9.

² Accepted in Chapter 1 as the current position.

³ Marshall, 1997, 44.

⁴ Beker, 1980, 58.

⁵ Martyn, 1985², 410-24.

⁶ Beker, 1980, 16-9.

disputed correspondence.¹ He argues Galatians does not take Christ's *parousia*, but his *advent* as eschatological turning point.² Of course, there are references like Gl. 5:5, 24; 6:8 where Paul implies the *parousia*³ and hints towards future fulfilment. The facts are, however, that Paul does not expound the matter of future fulfilment in Galatians and he does not introduce it as the eschatological turning point as he does with the advent of Christ. This is the position of most modern scholars, amongst them Wayne Meeks who writes:

In Gal 1:4 is a clause that sounds very much like the one with which we began in 1 Thess 1:10: "...Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, in order to rescue us from the present evil age." But in 1 Thessalonians the emphasis was on waiting for the Jesus "who saves us from the coming wrath." Here Jesus has already done something to pluck us out of "this present evil age". The emphasis throughout Galatians is on present fulfillment of eschatological hopes.⁴

This emphasises the importance of John Gager's article⁵ on the use of "end-time language" in the Pauline letters. He argues one should not approach Pauline letters with an overall hermeneutical key without considering that Paul might have different intentions and nuances in different situations. In this regard Meeks' above-mentioned extract is exemplary. Martyn argues that Paul is saying in Galatians that since the cross of Jesus Christ there are now two worlds. There is the old world dominated by flesh (σάρξ) and new creation (καινή κτίσις-Gl. 6:15) dominated by the Spirit (πνεῦμα - Gl. 5:22-25). In the old world of flesh life is characterised by pairs of opposites like law-observance and non-law observance or those of the baptismal formula (Gl. 3:27-28), i.e. Jew and Greek, slave and freeman, and male and female, to which Paul adds circumcision and non-circumcision. The opposites belong to a world that does not have real existence anymore. In Christ people who would normally be opposed to each other in the old world, are now one. New creation does not have pairs of opposites in itself, but is known for its anthropological unity in Christ.⁶ What is true of new creation is that it is characterised by being in total opposition to flesh, which is now aligned with law (Gl. 5:16-18; 6:13). The tradition of Abraham is also involved, accentuating this new opposition with the use of two sons, two mothers, two covenants and two Jerusalems diametrical to each other; stressing the difference between the two positions as being aligned either with Spirit, faith, freedom and the fruit of the Spirit, or with flesh, law, bondage and works of the flesh (Gl. 4:21-31). The new position since Christ's advent is that Spirit and flesh are totally dislocated; exclusive of each other;⁷ in battle with each other.

And the Spirit, sent by God into the realm of the Flesh, has started this warfare. Thus the warfare of the Spirit versus the Flesh is a major characteristic of the scene in which the Galatians – together with all other human beings – now find themselves.⁸

¹ This is of course also the position in 2 Corinthians.

² Martyn, 1985², 420. Also Marshall, 1997, 49.

³ Marshall, 1992, 201.

⁴ Meeks, 1983¹, 695.

⁵ Gager, 1970, 325-37.

⁶ Martyn, 1985², 414-5.

⁷ Malan, 1992, 431.

⁸ Martyn, 1985², 416.

This was brought about by the triple crucifixion of Christ, cosmos and Paul (Gl. 6:14). The consequence of the apocalyptic advent of Christ and his Spirit is that

the space in which human beings now live is a newly invaded space, and that means that its structures cannot remain unchanged.¹

There seems to be enough evidence that Paul's theology had more than just an apocalyptic ring to it and that the letter to the Galatians was no exception.² It does, however necessitate that one shifts the traditional focus on the *parousia* to the advent and resurrection of Christ and its implication for Christian living in the interim – exactly that with which Paul is concerned in the letter to the Galatians. Keeping all the criticism of the apocalyptic approaches in mind, one would do well not to superimpose apocalyptic on Paul as if that were his starting point, but rather to remember that Paul employed apocalyptic to serve a specific function, i.e. to proclaim the truth of the gospel. Longenecker reminds us:

Paul's basic Christian conviction and the starting point of all his Christian theology was not apocalypticism, but functional Christology – that his commitment was not first of all to a programme or some timetable of events but to a person: Jesus the Messiah.³

In this regard a very important qualification is called for. By describing Paul's theology as apocalyptic, the intention is not to promote apocalyptic as the hermeneutical key *par excellence* to Pauline theology. It is rather to point to the fact that apocalyptic is part of the coherent centre of Pauline theology and has to be thoroughly taken into account when explicating a Pauline passage.⁴ In a very illuminating article Achtemeier suggests that one moves from a *coherent centre* to a *generative centre*. With that he means to find a core conviction from which other convictions – central or to the contingent periphery – would be generated in order to illuminate different situations.⁵ He suggests Paul's *generative core* is his conviction that God had raised Jesus from the dead.⁶ This is enough to call attention to the Jewish view that the resurrection of the dead would inaugurate the new aeon, alluding to apocalyptic.

¹ Martyn, 1985², 417.

² One must acknowledge to scholars like R.N. Longenecker, 1985, 87, that eschatology is not presented as a subject in Galatians, but the phenomenon of apocalyptic is certainly operative. Aune, 1993, 27, summarises the main aspects of apocalypticism. It is not coincidental that these aspects are traceable in Galatians. He emphasises the temporal dualism of apocalyptic and the radical disjunction between the two ages, with an overriding pessimism concerning the first and a sense of hope regarding the latter. This theme is overt in Gl. 1:1-5. The immanent arrival of God's reign is not overtly present, but could well be alluded to in Gl. 2:20 where Paul refers to his having been crucified with Christ; the curse on Christ for hanging on a tree (Gl. 3:13); the stumbling block of the cross (τὸ σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ – Gl. 5:11); and in Gl. 6:7-8 where those who sow to the flesh reap corruption as opposed to those of the Spirit who reap eternal life. Equally, he strongly alludes to the cosmic perspective (Gl. 6:15), although the cataclysmic final event is still to come (p.31), as well as a reidentification of the Israel of God being broader based than the physical entity (Gl. 6:16).

³ R.N. Longenecker, 1985, 93.

⁴ Loubser, 2001, 344-78, provides us with an illuminating article regarding Beker's one-dimensionality. However, with the necessary qualifications, one is still indebted to Beker for drawing apocalyptic back into the core of Pauline convictions.

⁵ Achtemeier, 1996, 138.

⁶ Achtemeier, 1996, 138-9. See also Lohse, 1996, 157.

4. APOCALYPTIC ALLUSION IN GALATIANS' VOCABULARY

Paul's terminology includes terms that allude to the expectancy among many Jews of an apocalyptic event that would see the demise of the present age that was seen to be evil, and the rise of the age to come in which God would rule supreme and exclusively.¹ All these terms are not equally obvious to modern day readers, but do become better discernible when the text is read more closely and in the context of its *Umwelt*. A few terms and phrases are very prominent.²

- Words and phrases associated with disclosure and revelation: ἀποκαλύψις in its varied forms (Gl. 1:12, 16; 2:2; 3:23); τοῦναντίον ἰδόντες (“when they saw” - Gl. 2:7); and γνόντες (“they perceived” - Gl. 2:9).
- Words regarding the eschatological fulfilment of the promise (ἐπαγγελία) to Abraham in the lives of those who believe in Jesus (Gl. 3:14, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 29; 4:23, 28).
- Gl 1:4 in its entirety is apocalyptically loaded with Jesus' giving of himself (τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτὸν) in order “to deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father” (ὅπως ἐξέλθῃται ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστώτος πονηροῦ κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν)
- Paul refers to the advent of Christ in Gl. 4: 4-5 as: “When the time had fully come (ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου), God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem (ἐξαγοράσῃ) those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons” (Gl. 4:4-5).
- Gl. 1:1 refers to “God the Father, who raised him (Jesus) from the dead” (θεοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν).
- He explains the covenant in terms of two sons: one according to flesh, the other according to promise (Gl. 4:21-31). He refers to two women representative of those under law and in slavery and travail, and those of the promise who are free. He also explains it in terms of the Jerusalem above and below.
- The Spirit (πνεῦμα - Gl. 3:2, 3, 5, 14; 4:6; 5:5) fulfills an important role in the letter. The apocalyptic notion is enhanced by opposing Spirit and flesh (Gl. 4:29; 5:16-18, 22, 25; 6:8).
- In Gl. 6 Paul uses a variety of eschatological terms that enhance the apocalyptic angle to the letter. In Gl. 6:2, 5 Paul refers to the bearing (βαστάζειν) of burdens, one another's (2) and one's own (5). In Gl. 6:7-9 the metaphor of sowing (σπείρειν) and reaping (θερίζειν) is very prominent, together with the encouragement not to grow weary (ἐγκακεῖν) or to lose heart (ἐκλύεσθαι - Gl. 6:9). He adds that the world has been crucified to him (ἐμοὶ κόσμος ἐσταύρωται - Gl. 6:14), it has reached its end for him; and he is now focused on the new creation (καινὴ κτίσις - Gl. 6:15). Israel of God (Gl. 6:16) could have an eschatological bearing. In Gl. 6:12 Paul makes mention of his agitators being fearful of persecution (διώκειν), whereas he himself has followed the different route and bears the marks of

¹ Dumbrell, 1997, 395-7.

² For the time being these terms and phrases are merely mentioned and will be discussed below.

Jesus on his body (Τοῦ λοιποῦ κόπους μοι μηδεὶς παρεχέτω, ἐγὼ γὰρ τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματί - Gl. 6:17)

Paul's approach, although not esoteric and not overtly apocalyptic, is one that I would, for lack of a better term, refer to as an *allusional apocalyptic approach*.¹ Throughout the letter Paul alludes to that which is hidden from those without faith, but which is recognised by those of faith.² Within the Judeo-Christian tradition of which the Galatians were a part and in which apocalyptic featured, probably in varying degrees, allusions to apocalyptic subjects and terminology would have been powerful rhetorical mechanisms by which the readers would themselves come to discover that which Paul had wanted them to discover. The readers would have experienced this exercise as revelatory.

In addition to Martyn's motivation of apocalyptic features in Galatians we tend to other terminology enhancing the letter's apocalyptic tone, beginning with the word group related to *revelation* or *disclosure*, and moving on to the vast array of terms and phrases associated with the division between the two aeons, and the Spirit's presence.

4.1. The motif of disclosure in Galatians

A cursory survey of the matter illustrates that Paul places a heavy emphasis on this aspect. Meeks refers to it as a form of appeal by Paul.³ In other words, it is part of Paul's rhetorical strategy. The gospel and Jesus Christ, its content, as well as faith, was revealed (δι' ἀποκαλύψεως) to him (Gl. 1:12) and the Galatians (Gl. 3:23;⁴ 4:9). Although he does not use ἀποκαλύψις in Gl. 4:9 the notion of revelation is strongly represented in "you (who) have come to know" (γινόντες - aor. part. act.)⁵. It was something God revealed into their symbolic universe.⁶ It was not from man,

¹ Although he does not use this terminology, one is reminded of an article by Dunn, 1994¹, 407-32, strikingly pointing to Paul's use of allusions to shared backgrounds, shared kerugma and the shared Jesus tradition as a mechanism to enhance his gospel. Hall, 1996, 436, makes the observation that the argumentative force of this type of approach does not depend primarily on logical reasoning, but on the explanatory power of world view being disclosed. Hays, 1989¹, has done extremely well in providing scholarship with a better understanding of Paul's hermeneutic. He finds that Paul would, for instance, thoroughly revise the view on Torah, stripping it of its normative significance. On the other hand, he would insist that he upholds law. He does this by using Scripture's narrative of God's election of and promise to Abraham, and then reshaping it to a narrative of God's righteousness as ground for the unity between law and gospel. At this deeper level he sticks to the earlier tradition, although his own selection of themes is not traditionally rabbinic. He then contends that the divine act of God in Christ illuminates these narratives, revealing hidden meanings. In this regard Hays (157-8) states: "Within this narrative framework for interpretation, Paul's fragmentary references to and echoes of Scripture derive coherence from their common relation to the scriptural story of God's righteousness. Though the quotations seem eclectic and scattered, they usually must be understood as allusive recollections of a wider narrative setting from which they are taken." Hays, 1996, 30-47, is equally enlightening.

² Gl. 3:1-9; 3:22; 4:21-31; 6:7.

³ Meeks, 1983², 115-6.

⁴ Obviously this reference reaches wider and includes Christians in general.

⁵ Although an active participle, it is in the nature of the word's meaning and context to refer to something having happened to them. Particularly the use of the aorist makes it clear Paul is referring to their having come to faith by God's gracious initiative at a given point. Thus, their "coming to know" is the flipside of his "having revealed".

⁶ Berger and Luckmann, 1966, 92-128. We will return to this subject in §5 (ii) of this chapter. Berger and Luckmann refer to symbolic universe as "an all-embracing frame of reference, which now constitutes a universe in

but of divine origin (Gl. 1:1, 11), implying revelation from God. Although Paul was zealous for the traditions of the fathers, it pleased God to reveal his Son to Paul (Gl. 1:16). After fourteen years he went up to Jerusalem by revelation (Gl. 2:2). There is also a hint or allusion to this being revealed to “the pillars”, when “they perceived (γινόντες) the grace that was given to me” (Gl. 2:9).

4.1.1. *Disclosure in the salutatio*

It is striking that as early as in his *salutatio* (Gl. 1:1-5) Paul gives a distinctly apocalyptic ring to his letter. He speaks as an apostle whose authority was “not from men or through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father” (Gl. 1:1). His apostleship is not our concern at this point, but the means by which it was conveyed to him is. If God did not mediate it to him through man, He must have given it to him directly or via a heavenly being. Whichever, Paul’s apostleship was divinely authorised. This is revelation in any language and in Paul’s time apocalyptic talk. According to Wilhelm Egger semantic analysis of the *salutatio* reveals a concentration of actors and associated actions involving God the Father, Jesus Christ, Paul and his co-workers, and the churches of Galatia as the recipients, creating “a eulogy of God’s saving action”.¹ He adds:

The readers are to accept the letter as an apostolic communiqué (hence the emphasis on authority), and they are to find in the letter an answer to the question of salvation (Law or Grace) that moves them.²

Referring to both Jesus Christ and God the Father Paul confirms there is no higher authority by which to speak than that given directly by God.³ Further, by placing Christ chronologically before the Father in his prepositional clause, usually using the reverse order in references to both Jesus and the Father,⁴ he creates the impression that he is referring to the Christophany (Ac. 9) as the actual point of reception of this authority.⁵ He received it from Christ in that revelation, but Christ as one with God the Father. If Gl. 1:12 (“through a revelation of Christ”) refers to the same issue it is even clearer.⁶ Right from the outset he hints at the revelation of Christ to him on his road to Damascus. It was awesome for a human being to have had the privilege of God revealing something to him. It placed him in the league of Abraham, Moses, Elijah, the other prophets and Daniel. In this regard reference is often made to the possibility that Paul’s double assertion to his authority not being from man, but from God, alludes to the same type of situation found in Am. 7:14-15. In the latter case, as probably also with Paul, his prophetic authority⁷ is called into

the literal sense of the word, because all human experience can now be conceived of as taking place within it. The symbolic universe is conceived of all socially objectivated and subjectively real meanings; the entire historic society and the entire biography of the individual are seen as events taking place within this universe.”

¹ Egger, 1996, 98.

² Egger, 1996, 98.

³ Dunn, 1993², 26-7; Bruce, 1982¹, 72-3.

⁴ E.g. Rm. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:2; Phlp. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; Phlm. 3.

⁵ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 5; Witherington, 1998¹, 73.

⁶ Betz, 1979, 39.

⁷ In Paul’s case it is his apostolic authority, which could be equated with the prophetic in the O.T.

question. Amos is referred to as a “seer” and he refers to himself as a “prophet”, but not from human lineage. God called him. Amos states this in the context of five visions given to him (Am. 7:1–9:4). This background, together with visionary callings of many other prophets, certainly hints to revelation of some kind in Galatians.¹ Paul follows up the hint with more explicit references in Gl. 1:11- 2:21.

4.1.2. Disclosure in Gl. 1:11 – 2:21

In Gl. 1:11-2:21, that has come to be known as Paul’s autobiographical section, he subtly emphasises this apocalyptic talk, saying that he did not receive the gospel from man (ἄνθρωπος), nor was he taught it, “but it came through a revelation (ἀποκαλύψεως) of Jesus Christ” (Gl. 1:12). He accentuates this notion by introducing the matter with the words: “For I would have you know” (Ἦνθαρίζω γὰρ ὑμῖν - Gl. 1:11). This could be seen as a disclosure formula² introducing the more apocalyptic terminology to follow. Once again he reiterates the “not.... nor, but” construction (Gl. 1:11-12) that he used in Gl. 1:1. In the first case he used it to authenticate his apostleship as being not of human, but of divine origin. In the second case he did it to authenticate his gospel as coming not from human sources, but, once again, by divine revelation.³ He continues by saying that God, who “set me apart” and “called me,” “was pleased to reveal (ἀποκαλύψαι) his Son to me” (Gl. 1:15-16). In this regard one is reminded of the descriptions of the callings of Jeremiah (Jr.1: 5) and the Servant of Yahweh (Is.49: 1-6). This suggests that Paul regarded himself as not just a messenger, but truly in line with the Israelite prophets.⁴ He adds that he did not confer with flesh and blood including those who were apostles before him. When Gl. 1:10 is read within its immediate context of Paul referring to his former life and vocation in contrast to his new life and vocation (Gl. 1:13-14), it seems he wanted to break away from any notion of his gospel as pleasing people. He also had no need for authentication from human sources. His gospel was totally removed from any human origin. It came to him by revelation from Christ.⁵ No higher authority could be called upon,⁶ therefore he needed no authentication from Jerusalem (Gl. 1:16-2:2).⁷

If one were to follow Stendahl’s cue that this section has precious little to do with conversion from one religion to another, but only with Paul’s call to apostleship to the Gentiles,⁸ one could argue Paul was merely defending his apostleship and apostolic authority as equal to that of the Twelve, having also received it from Jesus

¹ Dunn, 1994¹, 407-32.

² Witherington, 1998¹, 91. Hansen, 1994, 207, most definitely regards it as such.

³ Hansen, 1994, 207.

⁴ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 30. Newman, 1992, 196-207, explains the Christophany as the defining moment of God’s glorification in Paul’s life. Paul experienced this as his being written into God’s story (207).

⁵ Koptak, 1990, 103-4.

⁶ Kertelge, 1992, 340.

⁷ Lategan, 1988, 425-6, emphasises that Paul’s apostleship should actually not be brought into the equation. It was not about Paul’s apostleship, but about the contrast between divine revelation and human involvement. Paul’s message was a divine revelation free from human defilement or even just involvement.

⁸ Stendahl, 1976, 7-23.

Christ. Stendahl's position must be refuted in being "right in what he affirms,¹ but wrong in what he denies."² Paul is not explicitly recounting the total meaning of the Damascus experience. He most definitely implies his call to apostleship, but, strikingly, he antithetically compares his present life after the revelation with his former life in Judaism. He places the gospel divinely revealed to him in stark contrast to the tradition handed down to him, and for which he was zealous. What he does not do is to mention zeal for God in tradition. It is merely human. Divine revelation is emphasised in Gl. 1:16 as opposed to tradition in Gl. 1:14.³

He does, however, have the problem that he had only himself to authenticate his revelation. To get past this problem he stresses the radical change in his life since the event.⁴ In this respect there was nothing to quibble about.⁵ The life in which he persecuted the church violently (Gl. 1:13) and advanced beyond many others in his zeal for the traditions of his fathers (Gl. 1:14) had been turned around diametrically by God's gracious revelation to him. This antithesis between the former and present Paul is an existential one. In this regard it is striking that the reaction of the churches in Judea was: "He who *once* (ποτέ) persecuted us is *now* (νῦν) preaching the faith he *once* (ποτέ) tried to destroy" (Gl. 1:23). A temporal switch had taken place. Not only had his vocation changed, but also his life. In other words, the contrast between his life before the revelation and afterwards is in itself telling or revealing. Others saw it and witnessed to it. In this regard Barrett's view is that Paul primarily recalls his conversion and "[E]very true conversion carries with it a call."⁶ Segal, who did a thorough study on Paul as apostle and apostate, probed the question as to what constituted conversion in Pharisaic terms. He remarks:

The cost of leaving Pharisaic Judaism was also not a small one. The special laws of Judaism were a source of solace and pride to all who observed them. The commitment Paul made in giving them up should not be undervalued. As he himself says, he gave up everything of significance to follow the consequences of his vision.⁷

To this Witherington adds:

In sociological terms, one would have to say that Paul underwent a thorough resocialization. His symbolic universe was not merely altered, in some respects it was turned upside down, for example in regard to his view of the Mosaic Law before and after conversion.⁸

¹ Stendahl reacted against the so-called distortions caused to the term "conversion" by involving psychological elements such as the guilt of individuals driving them to seek forgiveness in "conversion", as well as the baggage associated with changing of religions. In this regard Hurtado, 1993, 276, is correct in stating: "Paul continued to think of himself as a member of his ancestral people. He had undergone a profound change in his understanding of what his God demanded of him, but thereafter considered himself to be serving the God of the Old Testament for whom the Jewish people were specially elect (eg., Rom.11: 28-29). So, if conversion involves renunciation of one religion for another, in this sense too Paul was not a convert." Moule, 1987, 43, along with most scholars, shares this point of view.

² Witherington, 1998¹, 112.

³ Winger, 1994, 72.

⁴ Betz, 1979, 66-7. Kertelge, 1992, 340 also emphasises the autobiographical section as evidence authenticating his revelation and enhancing the importance of the revelation.

⁵ Winger, 1994, 80; Meeks, 1983², 176-7.

⁶ Barrett, 1985, 110.

⁷ Segal, 1990, 114.

⁸ Witherington, 1998¹, 111.

Paul seems to be stating that the Christophany had changed his vocation as well as life style and orientation. Even Beverly Gaventa, who is very wary of taking Paul's Damascus experience at face-value, at least acknowledges that whatever the details and actual nature of the experience, Paul underwent an "abrupt, unexplained change." She explains it as a "cognitive shift" in which Jesus is recognised as the Messiah. What is important is the radical change accompanying the experience, which Paul interprets christologically.¹ It was clear to all that Paul had changed. That in itself was indicative of his having had some divine experience.

Du Toit is probably correct in suggesting that ἀποκαλύπτω in Gl. 1:16 indicates that Paul is referring to a divine revelation, resulting in an inner enlightenment.² He argues, together with other scholars,³ that ἐν in ἐν ἐμοί should not be understood as an ordinary dative meaning "to me",⁴ but as a local dative ("in me") referring to the revelation as having taken place in him. However, he urges that this inner transformation brought about by the revelation, was not merely an inner experience. It included an audition through which vital information with regard to his commission to the Gentiles was revealed to him.⁵

Where one positions oneself regarding the facts of the Christophany, be it Seyoon Kim's⁶ maximalist,⁷ or Paula Fredriksen's minimalist position, or somewhere in-between, one must accept that Paul regarded the gospel as he proclaimed it as divine revelation. For him the Christophany, however it is explained, placed him and his message in line with the prophets. Hansen states:

As a prophet spoke with revelational immediacy when he said, 'the Lord says', so Paul spoke out of his personal encounter with the risen Lord.⁸

¹ Gaventa, 1986¹, 22-28, 37-8. Hurtado, 1993, 278, remarks that Gaventa is "unconvincingly sceptical." This being said, the fact remains that even though she rejects the actual occurrence of the Christophany, she has to acknowledge the radical nature of its effect. Further up this alley are the arguments of Paula Fredriksen, 1986, 3-34, in which she argues that Paul's recollection of his conversion or calling on the road to Damascus was merely a rhetorical mechanism to legitimise his present position. She bases this supposition on sociological studies that show that "converts" to a new religious orientation are inclined to use the language of the new religion to describe the conversion event, so that it does not really reflect the actual happening. She also found Augustine's conversion accounts to have changed over a period of ten years as he himself changed his religious views.

² Du Toit, 1996, 81.

³ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 32; Dunn, 1993², 64; and also Witherington, 1998¹, 106.

⁴ In an earlier article: Du Toit, 1989, 321, in which he likewise advocated against the revelation being merely an inner enlightenment, he also accepted the ordinary dative use.

⁵ Du Toit, 1996, 81-2.

⁶ Kim, 1981, 102-4, regards the Christophany as a historical event, fundamentally influencing Paul's theology. In fact, his position is that Paul developed his theology very soon after his Christophany – at the latest just before the Jerusalem council, but probably earlier. Although it was not developed singularly from the revelation on the road to Damascus, but involved the reflection on and conceptual apparatus of the tradition from which he stemmed, the latter could only be functional via the revelation. He describes the revelation as an "objective, external event" that "had a soul-stirring effect on the very centre of Paul's being"(56). It was also "an experience of inner illumination (2 Cor.4.6)."

⁷ Using the description of Hurtado, 1993, 279, in reference to the position of Seyoon Kim.

⁸ Hansen, 1994, 208. In this regard Kertelge, 1991, 46-61, argues that Paul's reference to revelation does not necessarily or exclusively refer to the Christophany. He compares Galatians' and Corinthians' revelations to Matthew 11:25-27 & 16:17. In the former Jesus thanks God for revealing "these things" to babies and hiding it from the

This prophetic stance is enhanced when Paul states: “Now before faith came, we were confined under the law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed; thus the law was our custodian until Christ came.” “Until faith should be revealed” (εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι – Gl. 3:23) is paralleled with “until Christ” (εἰς Χριστόν – Gl. 3:24), referring to the same event. Dunn refers to this as:

technical apocalyptic terminology...having the sense both of heavenly unveiling, and climactic turning point in the divine purpose.¹

To this Hansen adds:

Paul’s participation in that apocalyptic event occurred when ‘God was pleased to reveal (ἀποκαλύψαι) his son’ in him (1.16). The revelation Paul received was more than the revelation received by the prophets of old. They were given the promise; Paul was given the revelation of the Son ‘in the fullness of time’ (4.4). They looked forward to the end of the world and the new creation – the eschatological climax of God’s purpose in history. He became a paradigm of the apocalypse for the church to follow.²

Paul states that he went up to Jerusalem fourteen years after God’s revelation to him for no reason save, once again, a revelation (κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν) urging him (Gl. 2:2). At the time he also met with the Jerusalem leaders, laying before them his understanding of the gospel. It is not clear what this revelation was. Whether it was directly aimed at Paul or given to another is equally uncertain. It could have been a vision or a strong inner awareness of God’s calling. He could have received it in a trance, in a state of ecstasy, or in a fully conscious state. The fact is, Paul presents the decision to go to Jerusalem as divinely ordained. It was by God’s initiative and guidance that Paul went to Jerusalem. There is a real possibility that this revelation could be connected to the revelation to Agabus of a coming famine (Acts 11:27-30). He was amongst the Jerusalem prophets who visited Antioch at the time of Paul’s ministry there. The Antiochian reaction to the prophecy was to send Barnabas and Saul to Jerusalem with their collection. It is very likely, as argued in the previous chapter, that this visit, and not the council visit (Ac. 15), presented Paul with the opportunity to share his understanding of the gospel with the Jerusalem leaders. It could well be that Paul retrospectively interpreted this revelation to Agabus as having a twofold purpose: famine relief and the opportunity to speak to “the pillars”. For the sake of his argument, he stresses the latter purpose, rhetorically creating the impression that the revelation was actually primarily aimed at the discussions. By not expressly stating that it was via the prophecy to

wise. In the latter Peter confesses Jesus as “the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus responds by stating: “Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.” In both instances revelation is not ecstatic or visionary. The essence is God’s initiative and authentication – even though it is not seemingly spectacular. In the latter the revelation is also Peter’s authentication as leader. This was also Paul’s experience.

¹ Dunn, 1993¹, 48. Oepke, 1965¹, 578 and Kim, 1981, 71, underwrite the opinion that ἀποκαλύπτειν and ἀποκαλύψις are apocalyptic technical terms. Kim finds confirmation for this in Eph. 3:3 where the author, in describing the Christophany, joins ἀποκαλύψις with μυστήριον “which is its complementary word in the apocalyptic language.” This is in keeping with the view of Bornkamm, 1967, 815-7. Kim also finds the term joined with the δόξα of God in 2 Corinthians 4:6., “which was part of the eschatological expectation in the prophetic, apocalyptic and Rabbinic writings.” This, again, is confirmed by Von Rad & Kittel, 1964, 245-7.

² Hansen, 1994, 208-9.

Agabus that he went to Jerusalem, but implying this “common knowledge” event, he actually stressed the divine intervention by means of allusion.

Paul's elaborate use of εὐαγγέλιον (7 times) and εὐαγγελίζεσθαι (5 times) in Gl. 1 & 2, and then an almost total silence regarding these words in the rest of Galatians, should count for something.¹ Amidst the heavy emphasis on revelation in this section, he emphasises that the gospel he had been preaching and which had always involved freedom from law and circumcision, was not based on anything less than divine revelation. It was absolutely not based on the traditions in which he grew up and which the Jerusalem Church was still practising in some form. His gospel was the divine and true one, unblemished by man and his traditions. The latter is also emphasised in this section as that from which he was independent.² In fact, they were now themselves seemingly a threat to the truth of the gospel.³ The reaction of “the pillars” was that “*they saw* that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised” (Gl. 2:7 - ἀλλὰ τοῦναντίον ἰδόντες ὅτι πεπίστευμαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας), and that “*they perceived* the grace that was given to me” (Gl. 2:9 - καὶ γνόντες τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι). Without pushing the point, one wonders whether Paul was not hinting at the possibility that the conveying of his understanding of the gospel and missions amongst the uncircumcised was a revelation to them, and that they accepted it as divine authorisation for Paul's comprehension of the gospel. They could have received testimony of the fruit of Paul's mission prior to the meeting (Gl. 1:23). At the meeting Paul would probably have informed them, not only of the content of his gospel (Gl. 2:2), but also of the reaction of the Gentiles. This would have included signs of the Spirit's presence amongst (Gl. 3:2, 5) them. The presence of Titus amongst the Antiochian delegation was testimony to the success of Paul's mission and gospel.⁴ One should read ἀλλὰ τοῦναντίον ἰδόντες (Gl. 2:7) together with καὶ γνόντες τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι (Gl. 2:9) – everything in between being an elaboration of what they saw. In that case the two aorist participles ἰδόντες (Gl. 2:7) and γνόντες (Gl. 2:9) become parallels, with ἰδόντες referring to the evidence of Paul's success and γνόντες to the resulting insight on the part of “the pillars”.⁵ This implies Paul's being entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised (Gl. 2:7) is again paralleled with the grace given to him (Gl. 2:9). “The pillars” considered the evidence and recognised God's authority and activity in it. It dawned on them that Paul's comprehension of the gospel and ministering of it was by divine authority.⁶ This is not dramatically apocalyptic, but apocalyptic in the sense of being revelatory in nature, or at least disclosing of divine grace at work not only in Paul, but also in “the pillars”. In any event, although Paul attached great value to the ecclesiastical discussions in

¹ Schmoller, 1989, 200-1 cites εὐαγγέλιον in Gl. 1:6, 7,11; 2:2, 5, 7, 14 and εὐαγγελίζεσθαι in Gl. 1:8 (2 times), 9, 16, 23; 4:13. The latter merely refers back to the time when he initially brought the gospel to them.

² Kertelge, 1992, 342-7.

³ Kertelge, 1992, 346.

⁴ Dunn, 1993¹, 105.

⁵ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 55.

⁶ Ridderbos, 1976¹, 88.

Jerusalem, and even needed them as they needed him, this was secondary to real authentication of the truth of the gospel. The truth of the gospel could “only be maintained if its foundation in Christ, and the divine revelation” were safeguarded.¹

4.1.3. Disclosure in Gl. 3:1 - 5

In this pericope Paul expresses dismay with the Galatians for considering another gospel than the one he brought (Gl. 3:1). He describes their initial hearing and acceptance of the gospel through faith as the receiving of the Spirit (Gl. 3:2, 5). Apparently this experience was of a profound nature and accompanied by miracles (Gl. 3:5).² In other words, it was experiential or existential and a vivid landmark in their spiritual beginnings as Christians.³ Paul refers to this hearing of and coming to faith very vividly when he refers to the Galatians as: “You, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified” (Gl. 3:1). “Publicly portrayed” (προεγράφη) can be explained differently.⁴ However, it seems clear Paul wanted to stress the clarity with which the gospel was presented to them: as if Christ was crucified right in front of them; as if seeing Him with their own eyes (οἷς κατ’ ὀφθαλμοῦς). He definitely stresses the vividness of the disclosure of Christ by the Spirit so profoundly that it enhances the revelatory character of the event. As certainly as Jesus was revealed as the Christ and miracles attested to his divine origin, and in as much as Jesus was revealed to Paul as the Christ, amongst others on the road to Damascus, he was revealed as such to the Galatians via Paul’s ministry (ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις - Gl. 3:5 and ἐνεργέω - Gl. 2:8⁵). With regard to δυνάμεις being used in the plural form together with the participle ἐνεργέω, the meaning is literally “wondrous works/miracles”.⁶

The miracles add a strong apocalyptic element. Although the NT mostly reflects Jesus’ miracles and, in comparison, not many of the early church’s, one can assume that in both Jesus’ and the early church’s cases they had the same function. They were not performed for their own sake, but to serve God’s purpose in a specific situation.⁷ In Christ’s case it was to serve as evidence of his power as the One

¹ Kertelge, 1992, 349. Dunn, 1990², 108-128, provides a well-reasoned argument for Paul’s need to emphasise his independence from Jerusalem with regard to the authenticity of his message, but also his acknowledgement of his authority in making fundamental decisions affecting the whole church. However, when he wrote Galatians his acceptance of that authority had already been tarnished.

² Dunn, 1993¹, 157-8; R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 105-6.

³ Bruce, 1990, 122, adds the important insight with regard to the receiving of the Spirit, that it “was no mere matter of logical conviction or of an inner glow: it was accompanied by more substantial evidences. Not only were there the tokens of divine power which attended their response to the preaching... but there were the more durable tokens of changed lives, lives in which the fruit of the Spirit, a harvest of ethical graces, had begun to manifest itself.”

⁴ Betz, 1979, 131, provides information with regard to the techniques used by ancient orators to create the effect of something having happened right before the listeners, e.g. drawings and impersonations. It is doubtful that Paul had this in mind. He is probably right when he relates it to the miracle stories of the gospels. They most definitely had the function of emphasising a specific matter communicated by the orator. Witherington, 1998¹, 205, remarks that impersonation is an option in the sense of “bearing the marks of Christ” (Gl. 6:17). Dunn, 1993¹, 152, stresses the importance of both Paul’s preaching and life as manifesting the effect of the gospel.

⁵ Dunn, 1993¹, 106.

⁶ Bauer, 1979, 207-8; Dunn, 1993¹, 158.

⁷ Schweizer, 1971, 43-5; Ridderbos, 1976², 115.

in whom the Kingdom had come. In other words, the miracles signified the eschatological salvation promised by God and recognised only by faith.¹ It is also the case with the signs and miracles accompanying the testimonies of the apostles. The miracles would therefore not only authenticate the witness or apostle as operating on God's behalf, but also attest to the work of the Spirit amongst them,² and, in fact, of God's presence manifested.³ In other words, the miraculous powers revealed God's presence through his Spirit, and also the arrival of the new aeon.

They indicate the coming of the kingdom and point to the cosmic palingenesis mentioned in Matthew 19:28. But they are not the beginning of this palingenesis, as if the latter were the completion of the miracles. For this palingenesis is something of the future world aeon; because it embodies the resurrection of the dead and the renewal of the world, it does not belong to the present dispensation.⁴

Apocalyptic in the coming to faith event in Galatia is enhanced by the intimate relation with the reception of the Spirit, promised to appear in the last days.⁵

It is also enhanced by the use of the formula: "Who has bewitched you?" It should be remembered that in first century Mediterranean society there was a very strong belief in the so-called evil eye.⁶ One person could attain power over another by casting his eyes upon that person and imparting the evil from within, believing that the eyes were the windows to the spirit of man.⁷ The implication is most probably that Christ portrayed before their eyes, had the positive effect on them of faith and the reception of the Spirit with accompanying miracles. Subsequent to that they had begun to reason differently from what was expected and consequently Paul reasons that someone had bewitched them or cast an evil eye upon them.⁸ In Gl. 4:12-17 Paul recalls how he met them whilst he had a bodily ailment of some kind. People with such ailments were usually considered to possess an evil eye.⁹ Yet Paul, the carrier of the true gospel, did not have an evil effect on them. In fact, they would have been willing to pluck their own eyes out for him (Gl. 4:15). This stresses another point of apocalyptic times, namely, when God is at work, forces of evil are also revealed as operative. Paul and the Galatians were living in the apocalyptic time in which his agitators were demonstrating action against the gospel.

So, in conclusion, this pericope has a profound revealing and apocalyptic character. By stressing their experience of the Spirit and accompanying miracles at their coming to faith, and with the use of vivid language, Paul enhances the idea that not only did the believers expect the new aeon to come, but it had been revealed to them

¹ Goppelt, 1978, 196-198, underlines the important point that Jesus' miracles were all about a new dispensation of life with no room for the demonic. He hardly ever did signs with the intention to judge. The only one being the withering of the fig tree, but then it was more like a visual parable.

² Hofius, 1976, 626-33.

³ Dunn, 1993¹, 158.

⁴ Ridderbos, 1976², 119-20.

⁵ Refer to §4.2.2. below.

⁶ Witherington, 1998¹, 202; Derrett, 1995, 65-8.

⁷ Derrett, 1995, 66-8; Elliot, 1991, 148.

⁸ Witherington, 1998¹, 203.

⁹ Elliot, 1991, 149.

and they had experienced it. In contrast to this, others had partaken in the opposite work, casting an evil eye upon them and hindering God's actions through his Spirit.

4.1.4. Disclosure in Gl. 3:23 – 29

Paul clearly states to the Galatians (Gl. 3:23) that their faith in Christ had radically changed their status from being under the custodianship of the law to being sons of God. In fact, it changed life so radically that even social fundamentals such as distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and freeman and male and female had been repealed (Gl. 3:28). This radical change had, once again, come about by revelation (ἀποκαλυφθῆναι). It was not a human discovery by way of, for instance, study, but the revelation by divine initiative of a way previously unknown.¹ Martyn emphasises the combined effect of ἀποκαλυφθῆναι and the instances of ἔρχομαι (Gl. 3:23 as an aorist and Gl. 3:26 as a perfect participle) as focussing on an "invasive movement from beyond." Whereas the opponents were concerned with the conditions by which Gentiles could partake in the people of God, Paul emphasised that the gospel was not about how man could change his position. He could not, because the present evil age and its enslavement engulfed him. The gospel was about God's movement – apocalypse – into the present evil age from which He would deliver or free man.² His varied use of the verb ἔρχομαι with regard to Jesus Christ as content of faith³ is, according to Dunn, a deliberate use of the apocalyptic notion of two ages. He understands this revelation as immediate and an eschatological finality.⁴

The advent of the Son and of his Spirit is also the coming of faith, an event that Paul explicitly calls an apocalypse (note the parallel expressions 'to come' and 'to be apocalypsed' in 3:23).⁵

Eschatological revelation is enhanced by the preceeding abundant use of ἐπαγγελία ("promise")⁶ as both a noun and a verb.⁷ It is revisited at the end of our pericope (Gl. 3:29). Add to this the use of διαθήκη ("will" – Gl. 3:15; "covenant" – Gl. 3:17). Clearly, this promise had been fulfilled in the advent of Christ and his Spirit, and the eschatological time "had fully come" (Gl. 4:4).

4.2. A further array of apocalyptically loaded terminology in Galatians

In this section the aim is not a detailed discussion of the terminology. These will be dealt with in time. Our aim is to highlight the terminology and illustrate how it enhances the apocalyptic climate of the letter.

¹ Morris, 1996, 118.

² Martyn, 2000, 254-5. De Boer, 2002, 21-33, writes very much in the same vein as Martyn. It was about God revealing Christ into this world and believing this gospel on the grounds of the christological revelation.

³ Ridderbos, 1976¹, 143. Witherington, 1998¹, 268 and R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 145-6 agree with Ridderbos arguing that the use of the article qualifies faith, referring to its content (*fides quae creditur*) and not to the human response (*fides qua creditur*), since the latter had been on earth from at least the time of Abraham.

⁴ Dunn, 1993², 198.

⁵ Martyn, 1985², 417.

⁶ Gl. 3:16, 17, 18 (twice), 19, 21, 22.

⁷ "Promise" as subject will not be dealt with here. What is of concern here is its apocalyptic overtones.

4.2.1. *Apocalyptic vocabulary concentrated in the salutatio*

Apocalyptic terminology in the *salutatio* is discussed under one heading, as will be done with the conclusion, because of the heavy concentration of these terms in the two sections, and in preparation of the proposed notion of Paul's letter being apocalyptically enveloped to enhance the reframing of the Galatians' symbolic universe.

4.2.1.1. *Present evil age* (τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστώτος πονηροῦ)

In Jewish apocalyptic a distinction was made between the so-called *present age* and *the age to come*.¹ They are described in many symbolic ways. The end of the *present age* is often depicted in vivid metaphors of cosmological catastrophe. This has been misinterpreted by many as literal predictions and resulted in understanding apocalyptic literature as negative and pessimistic about life in present form. This is not without reason, because the present evil age was thought of as a time in which Satan ruled. We shall see in the next chapter that it underlined Israel's plight and enhanced their hope for the new age to come. Bruce describes the present evil age as:

an age dominated by an ethically evil power – one which, far from being 'according to the will of our God and Father,' is totally opposed to it.²

N.T. Wright remarks that the temporal distinction in Jewish apocalyptic was primarily to enhance Israel's hope and expectation in troubled times. The focus was on the future, the time of salvation, meaning: "liberation from Rome, restoration of the Temple and the free enjoyment of their own land."³ He describes the Jewish apocalyptic view of the time of salvation much in *Pauline* fashion.

It would be the real forgiveness of sins; Israel's God would pour out his holy spirit, so that she would be able to keep the Torah properly, from the heart. It would be the 'circumcision of the heart' of which Deuteronomy and Jeremiah had spoken. And, in a phrase pregnant with meaning for both Jews and Christians, it would above all be the 'kingdom of God'. Israel's God would become in reality what he was already believed to be. He would be King of the whole world.⁴

4.2.1.2. *Raised from the dead*

Returning to Gl. 1:1, it must be noted, given early Christianity's symbolic universe, that Paul's reference to Christ raised from the dead by God (τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν) would have set all ears on edge. In Jewish apocalyptic it was accepted that the "time to come" would be inaugurated by the resurrection of the dead.⁵ This is attested to by passages such as Dn. 12:2; 1

¹ Dunn, 1993², 36; Schürer, 1979, 495. Sasse, 1964, 206, states that First Century Christianity borrowed this distinction from Jewish apocalyptic. H.C. Hahn, 1978, 831, confirms that Paul himself followed this tradition in his theology.

² Bruce, 1982¹, 76.

³ N.T. Wright, 1992, 299-300.

⁴ N.T. Wright, 1992, 301.

⁵ B.W. Longenecker, 1998, 45; Dumbrell, 1997, 399; Witherington, 1998¹, 74; Bruce, 1982¹, 73; Dunn, 1993², 29. I am quite aware of the debate as to whether this notion developed from the OT or via Hellenism. Bauckham, 1998¹, 277, argues that the Jewish Apocalyptic literature on resurrection developed from the OT. He

Enoch 51:1-2; Apoc. Mos. 13:3; 28:4; 41:3; 63:2; 2 Bar. 1:2; and Mt. 27:52-53. At that stage the first Christian communities had already accepted this as their most fundamental belief. The formulaic language (also found in Ac. 3:15; 4:10; Rm. 8:11; 10:9; 1 Th 1:10; 1 Pt. 1:10) reflects this.¹ Dunn draws attention to the important fact that Paul implies a disjunction between the present age ending in death and the new age inaugurating new life.² It was not simply a chronologically smooth move from one age to another at a given point in time, so that the old disappeared and the new reigned supreme. Something very decisive happened. God raised Jesus from the dead. The new creation had been inaugurated for all to whom He had revealed Himself, in order for them to partake in it. Alongside this new creation the old would still persist, but had been defeated.³

Paul reinterprets the apocalyptic thought world of his day. *Firstly*, he links the advent of the eschatological age to the person of Christ. The eschatological age dawned in Him. He was raised from the dead (Gl. 1:1). The believer had been crucified with Christ and Christ now lived in him, so that he lived by faith in the Son of God (Gl. 2:20). The Galatians had received the Spirit (Gl. 3:2),⁴ also described as the Spirit of the Son (Gl. 4:6), which was notably expected within Judaism as a gift of the eschatological time (Ezk. 37:14; Jl. 2:28-30).

The most fundamentally new thing in Paul's eschatology is his insight that the sending, death upon the cross, and resurrection of Jesus constitute the turning point in the ages.⁵

Secondly, in Galatians the eschatological turning point is not Christ's *parousia*, but rather his death and resurrection⁶. Although the *present evil age* had not vanished and believers still lived in it, they had been delivered from it: rescued, not removed, from the present dispensation. It had no more power over them. They had been freed.⁷ The *parousia* would bring about the consummation of the eschatological age, but the latter had been inaugurated irreversibly in the Christ event.⁸ One should not think in terms of dying and merely rising again into life as

makes special mention of Is. 26:19 that refers to the earth as the place where the dead find themselves and from where they will resurrect. It puts the matter in terms of the earth giving birth to the dead. This notion has been challenged by Porter, 1999^f, 58. He argues that it is not altogether clear whether Is. 26:19 refers to bodily resurrection or to national restoration. He also regards the Qumran reference to resurrection as spiritual restoration rather than bodily resurrection (67). To his mind much more should be made of bodily resurrection entering Judaism via Greek and Roman religion (68-80). As intriguing as the debate might be, it does not currently concern us. Fact is, Jewish Apocalyptic of Paul's time accepted the new aeon would be inaugurated by bodily resurrection. If it truly is so that Greek and Roman religions supported the notion of resurrection, it does enhance the appeal of the metaphor with the Galatian audience.

¹ Dunn, 1993^d, 28.

² Dunn, 1993^d, 29.

³ Koperski, 2002, 269, includes reference to eternal life from the Spirit (Gl. 6:8), and, possibly, new creation (Gl. 6:15) and the reference to Christ's living in Paul (Gl. 2:19-20) as resurrection terminology in Galatians.

⁴ Branick, 1985, 666, states: "Existence according to the Spirit takes place fully only at the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:42-44), yet the resurrection of Christ has already taken place." Brown & Coenen, 1978, 277.

⁵ Bornkamm, 1969, 199.

⁶ Marshall, 1997, 49; Den Heyer, 1998, 121; Aune, 1993, 31; Hays, 1989^g, 192.

⁷ Betz, 1979, 42; Witherington, 1998^h, 76.

⁸ Kümmel, 1973, 146. Sampley, 1996, 114-31, draws an interesting comparison between Galatians and Philipians. He tries to indicate that the Galatians were spiritually still immature and Paul orientated them to the

usual. In this regard scholars distinguish between resuscitation (e.g., Lazarus who was brought back to life by Jesus), and Jesus' resurrection. In the case of resuscitation people were brought back to the same old pitiful age and life in which they "passed away". However, in Jesus' case it was new age breaking into man's plight.¹ Although resuscitation anticipated resurrection, Jesus' resurrection was the life-changing event, inaugurating the eschatological new order into the present evil age in anticipation of the general resurrection that had now become irrevocably certain. Hagner refers to it as "the cornerstone of the gospel".² Christ's resurrection is not merely another milestone on the redemptive-historical road. It inaugurates the restoration of all creation.³

The whole issue of eschatological life is enhanced when one considers that both in the OT and the NT *physical* and *spiritual* death were "inextricably bound up with each other".⁴ Schmithals states that by dying with Christ (Gl. 6:14) one dies to this world in which one has to seek life while enslaved to law, sin and worldly powers. This mode of existence harbours death in its midst. The endeavour to justify oneself continually in the ever-presence of death actually makes one partake in death, in this life. Importantly, moving to the section below on deliverance, he writes:

Freedom from death, in the sense of a death-bringing obligation continually to justify oneself, gives to the man who knows that he has been accepted by God the freedom to give himself without reserve to his neighbour.⁵

God gives life. To be near Him meant to live, even amongst life's trials.⁶ It was about more than physical life. They had to live according to Yahweh's words. The struggle to do this emphasised that it was always a life under threat, ultimately of death as removal from God's sight.⁷ In Christ all this changed.

4.2.1.3. *To deliver*

Christ "gave himself" (τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτὸν) "to deliver (ἐξέλθαι) us from the present evil age" (Gl. 1:4). In Gl. 4:4-5 Paul states: "When the time had fully come (ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου), God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem (ἐξαγοράσῃ) those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons". And all of this was "according to the will of our God and Father" (κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ

beginning of their path of faith. His terminology, according to Sampley, reflects this position. The Philippians, on the other hand, were spiritually more mature, and oriented to the *parousia*, which is envisioned as the end of their path of faith. I do not believe the terminology in Galatians makes such a strict division possible. In Galatians Paul, e.g. refers to sowing and reaping (6:8-9) and accountability (6:4-5). These notions are closely associated with the *parousia*. However, what he inadvertently illustrates is that in Galatians the advent, death and resurrection of Christ is a more prominent eschatological orientation point than the *parousia*.

¹ Hagner, 1998, 101, 118-20; Brown & Coenen, 1978, 277.

² Hagner, 1998, 120.

³ Hansen, 1999, 222.

⁴ Schmithals, 1975, 436. See also Bauckham, 1998², 88-9, who holds that Second Temple Judaism made a connection between individual resurrection and corporate restoration of Israel.

⁵ Schmithals, 1975, 439.

⁶ Link, 1976, 478, 481.

⁷ Link, 1976, 479.

πατρός ἡμῶν - Gl. 1:4). Paul was sure that there was an ordained time¹ for Christ to come into the world. Clearly the act of deliverance (ἐξέλιπται) in Gl. 1:4 and the act of redemption in Gl. 4:5 refer to the same act. Consequently the “time to come” is the time that had arrived in the advent of Jesus Christ, the solution to Israel’s plight. When that time had come the new creation in Jesus Christ had decidedly arrived.² This is most decidedly eschatological terminology common to the early faith.³ Ridderbos stresses, what makes this time extremely eschatological is that there is no earthly reason according to which one would be able to calculate or decide why it was the best time or in terms of what that time had “run full.” It was something God alone decided on.⁴ Obviously, but not contrary to Ridderbos, this remark is retrospective from the point of faith, but then, faith given by God in the fullness of time.

We conclude from the prescript that a new eschatological situation had arisen in the Christ event. The *present evil age* lost its power to the *age to come*. Although its consummation still lay ahead, the present evil age still being around, the *parousia* would see the fulfilment of the new and removal of the old age. The time of deliverance and redemption had arrived. It should be clear that the letter’s prescript abounds with apocalyptic allusion. Its function will be dealt with later.

4.2.2. Πνεῦμα

This is probably one of the most prominent terms in Galatians, occurring 17 times in various forms.⁵ It has already been determined that Israel understood the advent of God’s Spirit as a profound constitutive element and role player in the solution God would provide to their plight. Our interest in this section is merely in the occurrence of apocalyptic terminology in Galatians. In this regard πνεῦμα has a very defining role, especially enhanced by its interplay with its antithetical partner, σάρξ. The abundant use of σάρξ and its alignment with the promise (Gl. 3:14), faith (Gl. 3:2, 5, 14; 5:5) and especially with Christ and his advent (Gl. 4:6), and portraying Him as the One through whom the faith community came to life (Gl. 3:3; 3:5; 4:29) and became sons of God (Gl. 4:6-7), and according to whom it should live (Gl. 5:16-19; 22-23, 6:8), emphasise the presence of the new aeon.⁶

Of special importance is the fact that He is referred to as the Spirit of the (God’s) Son (Gl. 4:6-7) and that through Him the believers call to God: “Abba! Father!” Paul is also very pronounced in referring to the Galatians’ coming of faith in Christ as their “[h]aving begun in the Spirit” (Gl. 3:3). There is a very strong allusion to the idea of adoption as regeneration in Gl. 4:28-29. Paul refers to the two sons being

¹ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 170, says: “That the coming of Christ was fixed in the purpose of God,” and that the formula was common in early Christianity.

² Witherington, 1998¹, 288.

³ Betz, 1979, 206; Dunn, 1993², 213-4.

⁴ Ridderbos, 1976¹, 154-5; Morris, 1996, 129.

⁵ Schmoller, 1989, 419. Probably only σάρξ (18) and νόμος (32) occur more often and εὐαγγέλιον (15) shortly behind it. Of course Χριστός in its different combinations (34) has the highest occurrence. Morgenthaler, 1958, cites 18 occurrences of Πνεῦμα (133) and 14 of εὐαγγέλιον and εὐαγγελίσειν (101).

⁶ Hays, 1989², 210.

born to Abraham, one according to the flesh and the other according to the Spirit. He says the one born according to the flesh persecuted the one born according to the Spirit, and then meaningfully adds: "So it is now." In other words, all the other implications of ridicule set aside for the moment, Paul aligns those who are of faith today, and therefore sons of Abraham (Gl. 3:29), with him who was born according to the Spirit (Gl. 4:29) in Abraham's day. Staying out of the regeneration debate, one must surely see Paul's insistence that Christian life begins with the Spirit.¹

Now, it has already been determined that within Jewish apocalyptic there was an expectation that the new aeon would arrive with the resurrection of the dead. This was realised with Christ's resurrection to which Paul refers very expressly in Gl. 1:1. However, he now adds that the Spirit is part and parcel of the realisation of Christ's advent in the life of the believer. As certainly as the new aeon had arrived in the advent, death and resurrection of Christ, it was to be recognised in the working of the Spirit of God's Son.² It rings even clearer when the reference to the Spirit in Gl. 4:6 is read against the background of Gl. 4:4 ("when the time had fully come"), which we determined refers to Jewish apocalyptic's expected eschatological time.

4.2.3. *Slave to son*

The issue of the believer's transformation from slave to son and heir is closely connected to the above notion of the Spirit as apocalyptic allusion in Galatians. It should not be read apart from "heirship" (Gl. 3:29; 4:1, 6) and the notion of "inheritance" (Gl. 3:15-18; 4:30) and "promise" (Gl. 3:18, 29; 4:23, 28) deriving from the Abrahamic covenant (Gl. 3:15-18; 4:21-31). This terminology is eschatologically laden. Paul speaks of divine promises to Abraham and his offspring, of which Paul states it refers to Christ (Gl. 3:16). He adds: "if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise" (Gl. 3:29). So, Christ having come when God's time had fully come (Gl. 4:4), inaugurated the promised fulfilment for those under slavery to become sons of God.

It must be added that a fuller inheritance still awaits the offspring. Paul refers to those doing works of law as people who will not inherit the kingdom of God (Gl. 5:21). It is probably formulaic and endemic to the early church, with heavy overtones of Christ's own teaching concerning the kingdom of God.³ Ridderbos proclaims the eschatological significance of this inheritance.⁴ Although it does not match Paul's references in Gl. 3-4 to the tee, there probably is a significant overlap. I suggest that the references in Gl. 3-4 are to the already realised inheritance of the promise, and the reference in Gl. 5:21 to that which will be realised at the *parousia*.

¹ Hull, 1978, 109.

² Dunn, 1993², 221, emphasises the experiential and existential element associated with the Spirit. Witherington, 1998¹, 290-1; R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 173-4, with others, stress that one should not seek a soteriological or chronological order with regard to the one work of Christ and his Spirit. Also Lightfoot, 1890, 169; Mußner, 1974, 274-5; Schweizer, Kleinknecht, Baumgärtel, Bieder & Sjöberg, 1968, 420-8.

³ Dunn, 1993², 306-7

⁴ N.H. Ridderbos, 1962, 206; Witherington, 1998¹, 406-7.

4.2.4. *Two Jerusalems*

There is no question about Jewish apocalyptic having held the notion of two Jerusalems. Obviously, the earthly city was in the forefront and was regarded as the venue for Yahweh's eschatological victory. However, there was a development of the notion of a heavenly, pre-existent city that would descend to earth at the end of the age.¹ Alternatively another line of thought sees this Jerusalem remaining in its heavenly sphere and the righteous ascending to live in it. Whichever way it was looked at, it was there that God reigned supreme and his will was flawlessly done.² Paul adds to this by associating Hagar, the slave, and Sarah, the free woman, with the two Jerusalems (Gl. 4:24-26). Paul associates faith and freedom with the Jerusalem above in contrast to the earthly Jerusalem, irking him at the time. Paul definitely built on and alluded to Jewish apocalyptic thought.

For Paul it was also the place of freedom from the law. This "Jerusalem above" forms a sharp contrast to "present Jerusalem", the earthly city which, equally on the basis of an allegory, is called the mother of unbelievers (vs. 25).³

Since, therefore, "the Jerusalem that is above" is an eschatological term expressing a reality that will exist in the future, Paul's use of it here for the experience of the Galatian believers implies that, as Paul understood matters, the Galatian believers had come into the eschatological situation of already participating in that future reality, in that the promise that was made to Abraham was fulfilled in Christ (cf. 3:16; 5:1).⁴

4.2.5. *Apocalyptic vocabulary in the ethical section (Gl. 5:25-6:10)*

Although *Spirit* functions very strongly in the ethical section it has already been pointed out that it has strong Jewish apocalyptic overtones. It will therefore not be pursued again. The same applies to the reference to the inheritance of the kingdom of God. Therefore the references that will be dealt with here are restricted to Gl. 6:1-10. It is not necessary to explicate all the references that are to follow. Besides paying more attention to them in the last chapter of this thesis, the strong apocalyptic emphasis, which is what concerns us at this point, lies more in the combined effect than in the constitutive parts. Undoubtedly, these admonitions remind one of Jesus' eschatological sayings.

Firstly, there are references to the *bearing of burdens*, those of others (Gl. 6:2) and one's own (Gl. 6:5).⁵ Already in Jesus' eschatological sayings we read of trials and tribulations associated with the new eschatological era. We read of a wide range of woes. Mt. 24:3-31 mentions woes associated with faith in Christ (Mt. 24:9-13), but adds a much wider range, including wars, famines, earthquakes, betrayal, false prophets and wickedness (Mt. 24:6-8, 12). Jesus' prophecy that the untruthful would

¹ Fohrer & Lohse, 1971, 312-9, 326-7, provide sturdy information substantiating the restoration of Jerusalem as a radically new and God-sent entity that would be realised in the eschatological time. The notion of the perfect heavenly Jerusalem descending to earth was well-known in NT times (326-7).

² Schultz, 1976, 326, provides literary evidence to the effect. Also Witherington, 1998¹, 334-5.

³ Schultz, 1976, 329.

⁴ R.N. Longenecker, 1990, 216.

⁵ Kuck, 1994, 296, stresses the very heavy emphasis that the bearing of the individual's burden in Gl. 6:5 has on God's judgement, and man's ultimate accountability to Him.

fall away and that there would be betrayal of one another (Mt. 24:10) is in stark contrast to Gl. 6 where Paul insists that the Galatians were to support one another, even to restore sinners in their relationship with God and the community. In fact, this reminds one of Jesus' reference to the eschatological judgement where the ones to inherit the kingdom would be those who bore the burdens of others (Mt. 25:31-40). Equally, it would be about taking responsibility for one's own life (Gl. 6:3-5) just like the ten maidens in Jesus' eschatological parable in Mt. 25:1-13.¹ This is also reflected by Paul in Gl. 6:9 when he uses the subjunctive mood of ἐγκακέω ("grow weary") and the passive participle of ἐκλύω ("dishearten"), admonishing them not to grow weary in doing good, because they would reap eternal life if they did not loose heart or faith.

Secondly, the metaphor of *sowing and reaping* has a profound apocalyptic tone. Noteworthy is Jesus' very central parable of the sower (Mt. 13:1-9, 18-23), and his appeal to the listeners to react to Him in faith (Mt 13:9). Mt. 13:24-30, 36-43 relates the parable of the weeds sown amongst the wheat by an enemy, and the very strong emphasis on reaping when the householder's reapers would distinguish between the weeds and the harvest – those intended for *corruption*, and those for *eternal life*. This task, Jesus says, will take place "at the close of the age"² (Mt. 13:40). Paul clearly alludes to this occasion in his metaphor in Gl. 6:7-9. In fact, by using the word καιρός (Gl. 6:9, 10) he actually enhances the notion. Although it probably also has a more general meaning, such as *appropriate time* (Gl. 6:9) or merely *opportunity* (Gl. 6:10), contextually it has an eschatological bearing.

Thirdly, the call *not to be deceived* introduces the warning that *God is not mocked* (Gl. 6:7). It is noteworthy that the NT uses the active form of the verb (ἀπο)πλαναῶ almost exclusively in an apocalyptic sense.³ It is not surprising, given the rest of the context, that the very same is the case here, although the passive is used.⁴

Clearly, the ethically orientated Gl. 6:1-10 is laden with apocalyptic allusion.

4.2.6. Apocalyptic vocabulary concentrated in the postscript (Gl. 6:11-17)

4.2.6.1. End of the world and new creation.⁵

Once again, Paul does not harbour the notion of piecemeal change in the advent of Christ. He and the κόσμος had been crucified to each other (Gl. 6:14). There was no other way. Separation from this world or present evil age, did not involve gradual denunciation of different worldly assets. It could only be attained by death, and at that, the deaths of Jesus, the world, and Paul. This took place in the so-called triple cruci-

¹ Jeremias, 1972, 51, 171, stresses one should be careful of assuming that the parable is about the maidens. It is rather about the wedding and its suddenness. Aware of this debate and finding it unnecessary to enter into it, I do, however, accept that the parable is not only about the suddenness and unexpectedness of the parousia. The foregoing and following parables are heavily laden with the responsibility of believers to act according to the time they live in, i.e. pre-parousia. Schweizer, 1976, 303-6, emphasises the call to faithfulness.

² Jeremias, 1972, 226.

³ Günther, 1976, 459; Betz, 1979, 306.

⁴ See my Ch. 7.

⁵ New creation (καινή κτίσις) will be discussed in Ch. 5. Here we tend only to its enhancing of apocalyptic.

fixion. In Christ's death Paul died, and also the world and its enslaving power.¹ In the same vein, Paul's apocalyptic approach makes no provision for a piecemeal revivification of human life to come in step with God's will. A new creation – radically new – had to take place. God had to do it.² Only He is the Creator.

With his reference to there no longer being circumcision or non-circumcision, but a new creation, one is reminded of Martyn's earlier article³ in which he argues that antinomies or opposites were regarded as the building-blocks of the present world. Paul's negation of these opposites, especially those concerning circumcision and those of the baptismal formula in Gl. 3:28, in favour of a *new creation*, is a very profound statement that the old world has fallen to pieces. The old view that law was the antidote or remedial opposite of sin had also come to an end.⁴ The new creation in which God recreates through the faithfulness of Christ that led Him to the cross, and by the presence of the Spirit, provides man with freedom from the present evil age. The advent of Christ and his Spirit became the potent opposite of the present evil age, because it was from outside this realm, truly of divine origin.⁵

In both Jewish apocalyptic and OT prophecy there was a great expectation of a new creation. Sea and wilderness, as symbolic of the threat of chaos and the desolation that had been part and parcel of the present age, would be transformed.⁶ This would be accompanied by God's personal and immediate appearance to Israel.⁷ According to Is. 65-66 the wilderness would be transformed and Zion glorified by the triumphant return of the exiles; also Is. 35, 40-42.⁸ Ezk. 47 stresses Zion would give life and prosperity even to the Dead Sea. God would give life and life-giving power to Zion,⁹ so also Zch. 8, 9, 13 and Jl. 3:16-21. Enough! New creation was a typically Jewish idea.¹⁰ Paul reinterpreted it in terms of Jesus's cross and the advent of his Spirit inaugurating the new aeon.

4.2.6.2. *Israel of God*

Then, of course, the reference to the *Israel of God* is clearly apocalyptic. We cannot go into great detail here and will return to the subject later.¹¹ What most commentators accept is that it does not refer to Israel as historical people, because they do not feature as a group in the rest of the letter. The letter is also

¹ Martyn, 2000, 255. Although on a different subject, Kovacs, 1989, 222, attests to the same matter.

² Martyn, 2000, 255.

³ Martyn, 1985², 410-24.

⁴ Martyn, 2000, 256-7.

⁵ Martyn, 2000, 258-9.

⁶ Gowan, 1986, 109.

⁷ Gowan, 1986, 111.

⁸ Gowan, 1986, 113-4.

⁹ Gowan, 1986, 114-6. Refer to §4.2.2. of this chapter.

¹⁰ Hubbard, 2002, emphasises the need to interpret *καὶνὴ κτίσις* in terms of Paul's death – life symbolism to which we return in my Ch. 5. Importantly, he observes that in both the OT prophetic and the apocalyptic tradition of Second Temple Judaism the new creation motif is applied in the plight – solution dichotomy, which we will be discussing in Ch. 4. The prophets envisioned a new creation as God's answer to its pitiful plight.

¹¹ See my Ch. 5.

clearly not a nationalistic revivification. It also seems unlikely that Paul would be referring to either Jewish-Christians or non-Jewish Christians, because he had been refuting such distinctions all along in his letter. Therefore it seems to refer to all believers who align themselves with the gospel as understood by Paul.¹ Seen this way, they are at least the people of the new creation in Christ: those who have faith in the promise given to Abraham and fulfilled in the Christ event and the advent of his Spirit – a promise specifically including the Gentiles.² One is reminded of one of Moltmann's distinctions between eschatology and apocalyptic.³ In terms of Israel his argument runs as follows. The prophets were concerned with God's people. Eschatologically speaking, they largely limited themselves to prophesying with regard to God's promises and hope for Israel itself and its need for repentance and the changing of its ways. However, when it comes to apocalyptic, the scope broadens to include the cosmos. The focus moved from God and the nations being in opposition to Him, to God and the world under the power of sin. The prophet operated amidst the people of Israel and its history, but the apocalypticist amidst "the post-exilic congregation of the righteous of Yahweh."⁴

The prophetic revolution amongst the nations expands to become the cosmic revolution of all things. Not only the martyrs are included in the eschatological suffering of the Servant of God, but the whole creation is included in the suffering of the last days. The suffering becomes universal and includes the all-sufficiency of the cosmos, just as the eschatological joy will then resound in a 'new heaven and a new earth'.... Without apocalyptic a theological eschatology remains bogged down in the ethnic history of men or the existential history of the individual.⁵

In light of Paul's emphasis on apocalyptic in Galatians, and Moltmann's remarks with regard to the universalisation usually accompanying apocalyptic, as well as Paul's opponents' over-emphasising ethnicity, Paul probably alluded to apocalyptic in his use of "Israel of God".

5. CONCLUSION

i) *Pre- and postscript enveloping Galatians in apocalyptic frame*

The conventions of ancient letter writing ascribed specific purposes to the different subdivisions of letters. Although Paul had his own style, he followed the ancient conventions to the extent that they served his purpose.⁶ This implies that Paul, having a pre- and a postscript, would have had more or less the same purpose with them as accepted by conventional epistolography. It was the function of the *prescript* to introduce the author, identify the addressees and convey greetings. These elements could be expanded upon freely. The initial greeting would usually be followed by a word of thanksgiving as part of the prescript. The function of the

¹ Betz, 1979, 322-3; Witherington, 1998¹, 452-3.

² Dunn, 1993², 345.

³ Moltmann, 1967, 124-38. He offers fascinating reading on the broader subject, but which is not relevant to the current point. This distinction of Moltmann's is remarkably similar to that of P.D. Hanson, 1979, 11-2.

⁴ Moltmann, 1967, 134. Westermann, 1969, 423-9, also emphasises the universalism by which Yahweh includes the nations into his people in, amongst other references, Is. 66:18-24.

⁵ Moltmann, 1967, 137-8.

⁶ Du Toit, 1992¹, 280.

thanksgiving was to introduce the theme of the letter,¹ or at least to allude to the letter's purpose – a keynote, as it were, on the address which was to follow.

Writers of letters often deviated from convention. This must be accounted for. In this respect the letter to the Galatians makes for interesting reading. As we have already indicated,² Paul introduces his letter with a very apocalyptic keynote in Gl. 1:1-5. He uses terminology such as “present evil age,” “raised from the dead,” and “deliver.” He links it with God's action in Jesus Christ according to God's will and to his glory. What would have been expected to follow on the greeting was a thanksgiving (εὐχαριστῶ) of some kind. Paul deviates from convention and instead follows with a rebuke (θαυμάζω). It basically fulfils the same function as the thanksgiving in setting the tone of the letter.³ He has no word of thanks. He is astonished that they had deserted God and were turning to another gospel. He adds that there is no other gospel than (by implication) the gospel of his introduction: the gospel of God who delivers from the present evil age by raising Jesus Christ from the dead. This is none other than an apocalyptic gospel. Because of Paul's emphasis on revelation, apostleship and the resurrection of Christ in the prescript, Cook remarks:

Paul, the apostle, is an 'eschatological person', and the world in which he lives is an eschatological world. It is a world in which God has already raised Jesus Christ from the dead, in which the end of time (Gl. 4:4) has already come.⁴

In ancient epistolography the *postscript* (Gl. 6:11-18) had the function of summarising what had been said and once again appealing to the readers to heed what had been written.⁵ Russell calls attention to how pre- and postscript reflect the same topics, i.e. Paul's apostolic authority in the service of God and his Son (Gl. 1:1 and 6:17); the Fatherhood of God (Gl. 1:1, 3, 4; 6:16); and deliverance from the present evil age into the new creation (Gl. 1:4; 6:15).⁶ Weima rightfully adds Paul's profound emphasis on the cross⁷ – explicitly in the postscript (Gl. 6:12, 14) and implicitly in the prescript, the latter referring to Christ being raised from the dead (Gl. 1:1) after giving himself up (Gl. 1:4). Once again there is an apocalyptic emphasis. He refers to the triple crucifixion (Gl. 6:14). The cross of Christ not only resulted in the world being dead to him and he to the world, but especially in a new creation (καινὴ κτίσις - Gl. 6:15) having come about: one in which, once again, the opposites of the old world no longer count. Once again the eschatological theme of opposition between flesh and Spirit is alluded to when he makes mention of persecution for those who share in the cross of Christ in opposition to those who make a showing in the flesh.

From what has been said concerning the pre- and postscript of Galatians it is clear that together they envelope the whole content of the letter in apocalyptic terminol-

¹ D. Cook, 1992, 511.

² See above at §4.1.1. and, especially §4.2.1.

³ Hansen, 1989, 33.

⁴ D. Cook, 1992, 513-4.

⁵ Hansen, 1989, 52; Klauck, 1998, 237.

⁶ W.B. Russell, 1997, 20-1.

⁷ Weima, 1993, 90-107; Hansen, 1998, 213-4.

ogy. This “envelope” stresses that by God’s action in the advent of Christ and his Spirit, the eschatological new age had arrived. It stresses that what is written between pre- and postscript – both gospel and ethics, both indicative and imperative – involves a radically new situation in life. Life had to be reframed with a new symbolic universe.

ii) *The apocalyptic reframing of a symbolic universe*

The critical question with regard to the issue of reframing a symbolic universe is why Paul would have chosen to use apocalyptic to do the trick? He could have made use of a salvation-historical approach and stressed the continuity between the OT and the NT, especially since he makes abundant use of Abraham and the covenant and takes that approach in other instances (Rm. 11). My contention is that with regard to Galatians it was precisely the discontinuity between the old and the new situations Paul wished to stress.

This chapter emphasises the apocalyptic substructure of Galatians. Paul’s theology was undoubtedly motivated by the revealed knowledge that God, in the advent of Christ and his Spirit, had decisively brought about the advent of the eschatological time to which Judaism looked forward and in which all who believe in Him would share, former Jew and Gentile alike. It is probably safe to assume there were former Gentiles who were well read in the OT and Judaism amongst the believers in Galatia, or at least knowledgeable of the OT and Judaism. This is reflected in Paul’s use, and probably also his opponent’s use,¹ of the Abraham and Sinai traditions. There is also the possibility of a substantial group of *Theosebomenoi* (“God fearers”).²

The fact that they were “so quickly” (Gl. 1:6) misled to desert the gospel implies that they had previously accepted the gospel preached to them by Paul. Unfortunately, the Jewish symbolic universe that they had previously come to know was still lying beneath the surface and had not yet been effectively reinterpreted. The Judaizers could therefore easily make them believe that the law dominated symbolic universe of Judaism had not fundamentally changed. Christ had been added and it had been re-oriented towards Him, but, for instance, Jewish ethics remained intact. Or else, if they had not accepted Judaism’s symbolic universe, the Judaizers were intent on luring them to their symbolic universe.

In this regard Donaldson³ is very helpful in introducing Thomas Kuhn’s insight from the natural sciences.⁴ Kuhn’s thesis is that progress in the field of science is seldom a matter of “development-by-accumulation”. In other words, it does not necessarily build onto previously discovered premises. He is of the opinion that it is much

¹ Being reminded of the danger of mirror-reading. See Barclay, 1987, 73-93.

² They were Gentiles who largely accepted Judaism with its monotheistic belief in the God of Israel and even the Torah, but who were not keen to be circumcised. Christianity is known to have had a receptive audience amongst them. Obviously they were very knowledgeable of the OT and Judaism.

³ Donaldson, 1997¹, 43-7; 1989, 655-82.

⁴ T.S. Kuhn, 1962.

more revolutionary.¹ One set of premises by which the world is ordered and made sense of is, given the right impetus, replaced by another. It's about paradigm shifts from one worldview to another.² As soon as the existing paradigm cannot explain anomalies that arise and challenge the paradigm beyond its limits, a new set of tools is needed. Kuhn states:

The decision to reject one paradigm is always simultaneously the decision to accept another, and the judgement leading to that decision involves the comparison of both paradigms with nature and with each other.³

Hans Küng, on reflecting on Kuhn's theory and its application to theology, writes that such a paradigm shift is usually preceded by anomalies arising from the reigning paradigm, as well as a period of pronounced insecurity,

[w]hich in the end leads to the destruction of the paradigm. In a word, *crisis* is the usual condition for the rejection of the hitherto accepted paradigm.⁴

He reflects on the theory in terms of theology and remarks that the term "revolutionary" is not very popular in this field of science, where emphasis is more often on continuity and identity.⁵ This would probably have been the same for the first Christians. Seen in this light, when Paul experienced the risen Christ on the road to Damascus, he became aware that something radically different had come over his Jewish path. He could no longer explain everything in terms of his old paradigm and had to rethink his entire theology. Although the detailed implications were probably filled in on a continual basis, in the long run it would prove to be a radical switch. Although the switch took place with his Christophany, the articulation of the new paradigm took shape amidst the Gentiles he was serving. By the time of writing his letter to the Galatians he had already thought things through very well and was convinced that a new creation had come about. He wanted to convey this radical change.

If we accept that Paul wrote the letter on the eve of the Jerusalem council, his memory of the incident at Antioch still vivid, this was probably what he would have shared with the council. In that difficult time for Paul, a time of emotional, pastoral and theological turmoil and crisis, nothing less could solve the issue than a total re-framing of their symbolic universe. For this Paul employed the available and effective metaphor of apocalyptic to convince his peers of the radical change that had come about. That he was not altogether successful in his lifetime is understandable from Kuhn's perspective that attempts to falsification will always follow. In this regard Hans Küng aptly quotes Max Planck.

¹ T.S. Kuhn, 1962, 2-7.

² T.S. Kuhn, 1962, 150.

³ T.S. Kuhn, 1962, 77. Vorster, 1988, 31-48, although not directly applicable, is illuminating on NT scholarship's possible shift from the historical-critical to the post-critical paradigm. The point being, he does this in terms of Kuhn. Joubert, 1994, 23-40, applies Kuhn's approach in evaluating "the present state of affairs" with regard to study of the NT Umwelt.

⁴ Küng, 1980, 108.

⁵ Küng, 1980, 111.

A new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it.¹

Paul would not take such a resigned approach. This letter was his opportunity to re-frame their symbolic universe to realise that they were not a mere continuance of Israel. God had changed everything fundamentally through Jesus Christ, the seed of Abraham. A new creation was brought about. This changed everything, even their ethical orientation.

iii) *Stressing a radically new era*

Martyn observes that the apocalyptically loaded *present evil age* is at the opening of the letter, while the equally apocalyptic opposite, *new creation* has a central function at the closing, illustrating the motif of “apocalyptic discontinuity” “central to Paul’s view of the gospel...”²

Paul probably wanted to emphasise that the advent of Christ and his Spirit had radically changed life itself and that a radically new approach would have to be taken with regard to viewing the time in which they lived, the community of faith, as well as their ethic. The change brought about by this revelation of God in the advent of Christ transformed everything irrevocably. It changed the position of the believer in terms of his allegiances,³ status,⁴ being⁵ and ethics.⁶ It was not a piecemeal change, but a radical and encompassing one in which the way things were perceived earlier was no longer valid – let alone the idea that it could merely be adapted.⁷ This is probably the most important function of Paul’s apocalyptic tone in the letter.

iv) *Stressing a radically new ethical stance*

Paul feared the Galatians would, under influence of the Judaisers, think of their new status after faith in Christ as merely being adopted into Judaism with its ethic of law-observance and exclusivism. Using apocalyptic metaphors and language he stresses that those in Christ have died to the world in all its forms and have been resurrected into a new creation inconceivably different from anything they knew formerly in or outside Judaism.

Although there is continuity between God’s dealings with the world through Israel, there is also radical discontinuity. This new creation is a deliverance from the “present evil age”. It is the time of God’s fulfilling of his promise to Abraham. Life itself

¹ Küng, 1980, 113.

² Martyn, 2000, 253.

³ No longer seeking the favour of men, but being a servant of Christ (Gl. 1:10).

⁴ From slavery in the present evil age (Gl. 1:4) to son of God (Gl. 4:7).

⁵ “Crucified with Christ” (Gl. 2:20).

⁶ “Walk by the Spirit” (Gl. 5:25).

⁷ “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female” (Gl. 3:28). Malan, 1992, 425-40, on reflecting on the allegory of the two women (Gl. 4:21-31), stresses that these women represent two contrasting symbolic universes mutually exclusive of each other (431). The one symbolic universe is about bondage and the other about freedom (435).

had changed from multi-faceted and overall bondage to radical freedom in Jesus Christ; from an ethic externally dominated by and under constant threat of law, to an ethic motivated from the heart newly created; from death to life; from being part and parcel of the evil age, to being part and parcel of the new creation. Galatians emphasises the discontinuity between the age from where believers (Gentile and Jew) come and the new creation of which they are now a part. This implies that what was certain and acceptable in the previous dispensation could no longer be taken for granted,¹ to put it extremely euphemistically.

According to Paul, the death and resurrection of Jesus was an apocalyptic event that signalled the end of the old age and portended the beginning of the new. Paul's moral vision is intelligible only when his apocalyptic perspective is kept clearly in mind: the church is to find its identity and vocation by recognizing its role within the cosmic drama of God's reconciliation of the world to himself.²

Paul's introduction of the Spirit, not only soteriologically (the Galatians' coming of faith in Christ), but also ethically, is profoundly important for our subject. The Spirit, the long awaited solution to the Jewish ethical plight, had arrived. The new ethic would be born from a life and walk in Him. No longer would ethics be determined by an exterior, enslaving law, and its quality by a human endeavour to hold true to law. The new ethical freedom would be determined from the heart set free and guided by the Spirit living in man.³

v) *Stressing a radically new community*

In the old dispensation membership of God's people was determined by the law's requirements. Those outside Israel could become part of it by allegiance to the law. Now, in the new dispensation it is determined by allegiance to Christ alone and no other requirements of whatever kind. Paul could not, in terms of this paradigm switch, tolerate anything in between. To expect someone to become Jewish in order to be fully Christian would be tantamount to severance from Christ (Gl. 5:4).

Not only had the constitution of God's new people changed. Allegiance to Christ was now the defining criterion, and not law, and there could no longer be any comparing of and boasting in observance of the law between fellow believers. All believers would have Christ in them and would be led by the Spirit endowed in equal measure. In fact, boasting would make way for supporting, serving and loving one another in exemplifying Christ crucified (Gl. 6:12-14).

vi) *Apocalyptic and freedom*

The change Christ brings in the status of God's children is neither a natural process, nor a piecemeal development through human insight – not even religious insight. It is a radically new situation brought about by God revealing Himself in Jesus Christ in the lives of people believing his revelation. It is something from out-

¹ Witherington, 1998¹, 74.

² Hays, 1997, 19.

³ Hays, 1997, 24.

side man's symbolic universe that God reveals in it. Faith in Christ obviously makes a fundamental reinterpretation of man's symbolic universe absolutely necessary.

Paul's audience was familiar with such a rhetorical approach. The symbolic universe of the early Christians, having stemmed from Second Temple Judaism, had been strongly influenced by Jewish apocalyptic. They, whether Jews, Gentiles or *Theosebomanoi*, had to come to terms with this Jewish past and how it related to the Son of God.¹ An extremely effective vehicle for this paradigm switch was the re-interpretation of Jewish apocalyptic language and thought in terms of Christ's cross, resurrection and expected *parousia*. This seedbed of apocalyptic theological thought was the common ground from which Paul would operate in his proclamation and defence of the gospel in the Galatian crisis.

As we ponder upon the subject of freedom in Galatians, we must widen our scope to include much more than just freedom from law. We must think of freedom as something given to man encapsulated in a total symbolic universe holding him in bondage, slavery, tutelage and immaturity. We must think of freedom in terms of freedom from a previous age which was without Christ and his Spirit – so radically different and bent into itself that a new life and way of living had to be revealed into it by God's Son. It was something so impacting that the result was not a mutation of the old, but its replacement by a new creation. We must understand Paul's view of freedom as eschatological freedom – the freedom of the time inaugurated by the advent of Christ and his Spirit!

It is this apocalyptic vision, then, that has given Paul his perception of the nature of the human plight. God has invaded the world in order to bring it under his liberating control. From that deed of God a conclusion is to be drawn, and the conclusion is decidedly apocalyptic: God would not have to carry out an invasion in order merely to forgive erring human beings. The root trouble lies deeper than human guilt, and it is more sinister. The whole of humanity – indeed the whole of creation (3:22) – is, in fact, trapped, enslaved under the power of the present evil age. That is the background of God's invasive action in his sending of Christ, in his declaration of war, and in his striking the decisive and liberating blow against the power of the present evil age.²

The Galatians' mindsets had to be reframed to realise that their freedom was the result of God's gracious dealing through his Son when he replaced the old aeon with the new.³ They had to understand that they were living as eschatological people in eschatological times, and that they had to live equally eschatologically.

¹ Witherington, 1994, 88-9.

² Martyn, 1997, 105.

³ Malan, 1992, 436, is correct in stating that by using the allegory of the two women Paul wished to lead the Galatians from one covenant with its symbolic universe of bondage to the new covenant of freedom obtained by Christ for the children of the promise.