

more tempting.

Paul ends the list of the fruit of the Spirit with the curious statement: “against such there is no Torah” (κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος). Commentators have been baffled about what Paul meant by this. Dunn, while admitting that he is puzzled over the clause, suggests that in broad strokes Paul is simply saying that one is not required to put oneself under the Torah (=become a proselyte) in order to fulfill the urgings of the Spirit. Barrett suggests that Paul is using an *ad hominem* dig toward the Influencers: “You want to observe the law, don’t you? You will not find any law that forbids these things.”<sup>46</sup> But these explanations do not help explain the use of the preposition “against” (κατά, *kata*), “against these there is no Torah.” I would suggest that there is a loose reference to the rabbinic dictum that certain acts of charity, such as the leaving of the corner of the field for the poor, were not restrained by a fixed measure laid down in the Torah. Note m.*Peah* 1:1–

These are things which have no [specified] measure: אֵלּוּ דְּבָרִים שֶׁאֵין לָהֶן [לְהֵן] שִׁיעוּר (לְהֵן) (1) [the quantity of produce designated as] peah, (2) [the quantity of produce given as] firstfruits, (3) [the value of] the appearance offering, (4) [the performance of] righteous deeds, (5) and [time spent in] study of Torah.

The rabbinic term שִׁיעוּר, *she’ur* means “a fixed measure or limit,” but is also used in the sense of “legal standards” as in m.*Shabbat* 7:4, where the phrase “they are subject to equivalent measures” means “they are subject to equivalent legal standards.”<sup>47</sup> Thus, the rabbinic axiom that something is not limited by a fixed measure might easily translate into “against such there is no Torah.” Interestingly, the subject at hand in Mishnah Peah is generally “fruit” in the sense of produce of the field, first fruits, and appearance offerings. This is extended to the fruit of one’s life, righteous deeds and the study of Torah (which produces obedience in regard to the Torah).

I would then understand Paul’s use of the phrase here to simply be saying that the fruit of the Spirit is without end. That is, one can never find a legislated prescription by which one could “measure” love, joy, peace, patience, etc. The work of the Spirit is not fixed by a set measure, but is unending. Indeed, love (*agape*) by its very nature is without bounds, as is forgiveness (cf. Matt 18:21–22). While the Influencers may have held out a very clear and easily described legislation by which a Gentile could accredit himself as having fulfilled the Torah (after all, the Oral Torah was given to manage the Written Torah), in the work of the Spirit there is an open ended perspective. Love of God and love of one’s neighbor has no packaged formula.

[page 209]

## 24 Now those who belong to Messiah Yeshua have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Paul now rounds out his argument by essentially restating his opening premise (v. 16). There he wrote: “Walk by the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” Here, “those who belong to Messiah Yeshua” are equivalent to those who “walk by the Spirit.” For Paul, the two designations are equivalent. So walking by the Spirit is not some greater level of maturity among the disciples of Messiah, but is the normal life of those who belong to Him.

46 Quoted in Dunn, *Galatians*, p. 313.

47 See Jastrow, “שִׁיעוּר,” p. 1565.

There are several interesting issues in the Greek of this verse. First, some manuscripts have only Messiah without the addition of Yeshua (most notably D and  $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ ). Moreover, all the manuscripts have the article: “the Messiah [Yeshua],” meaning that Paul here emphasizes the office of Messiah which Yeshua fills. Also, the word order is interesting: (literally) “Now those of the Messiah [Yeshua] the flesh have crucified with the passions and lusts.” The reason that the word order may be significant is that Paul juxtaposes the two crucial elements: Messiah and flesh. The Influencers were emphasizing “flesh” (circumcision) while Paul’s gospel emphasized Yeshua as the means of circumcision of the “flesh,” that is, the putting to death of the flesh along with its passions and lusts. Once again, we should remember that Paul uses the term “flesh” to denote the sinful nature, not the material as over against the immaterial part of man.

It is striking that Paul uses crucifixion language with regard to the believer’s path of sanctification. Crucifixion was a most brutal death, and some might charge Paul with “gallows humor” by using this metaphor. But we must see in this the fact that for the early followers of Yeshua, crucifixion was understood and viewed in light of Yeshua’s own death. As hideous as the execution stake was, it had already become a rallying symbol for those who had placed their faith in the risen Messiah. Moreover, Paul’s insistence that the believer was so unified in his faith with the Messiah that he had likewise died with Him, made the crucifixion of the flesh a ready metaphor, describing the putting to death of the sinful passions, and living in the newness of resurrected life. Here, as in Romans 6, Paul makes explicit his view of union with the Messiah. Because the believer has died with Yeshua, this also means that the old self has been crucified, and in its place is a new self, intent upon pleasing the Master. The radical change that has occurred in the life of the believer is no less radical than death followed by resurrection. Thus, the believers at Galatia did not need to undergo a man-made ritual in order to attain to the sanctified life before the Almighty. This they had done through faith in the Messiah, having died with Him and now resurrected to walk in newness of life.

## 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

Dunn and others believe that this verse begins a new section in the epistle, and that the chapter break is unfortunate. It is Paul’s habit to begin a new section with a short, compacted statement, as he does in this verse. Dunn suggests that this section teaches “the thought that the order of the Spirit is marked both by sympathy towards others and readiness to criticize oneself—not the other way around.”<sup>48</sup>

What is the difference that Paul wishes to convey between “living by the Spirit” and “walking by the Spirit?” It would seem that in the first clause, living by the Spirit focuses upon the life-giving aspects of the Spirit in calling the sinner to salvation in the first place. It was the work of the Spirit by which the soul is quickened and brought to spiritual life. But the living out of the proper *halachah* (walking) must be an on-going endeavor of the redeemed soul. The word used here ( $\sigma\tau\omicron\iota\chi\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ , *stoicheō*) is not the common one for “walking,” but rather suggests “conforming to a standard,” “hold to,” “agree with.” Thus the NIV, “keep in step with.” It is possible that Paul

[page 210]

48 Dunn, *Galatians*, p. 317.

uses this Greek word to emphasize the issue of *halachah* as conformity to a set body of rules. Yet for Paul, this “set body of rules” for the believer is not the man-made or rabbinic dicta, but the eternal word of God as applied to the heart by the Spirit.

We may paraphrase it this way: “Since the Spirit is the One who gave you life in the first place, let the Spirit lead you in your daily decisions of *halachah*.” This leading of the Spirit is not some subjective “feeling,” so that each one would do what was right in his own eyes. Rather, the leading of the Spirit would be in accordance with the “fruit of the Spirit,” through the application of the inspired word. But this would mark a clear difference between the *halachic* perspective of the Influencers and that of Paul. For them, conformity to a standard of “righteousness” would be mandated by rabbinic rule. For Paul, the “walk” of the believer would be energized by the Giver of Torah Himself through the ministry of the Spirit. Here is the difference between “letter” and “Spirit” for Paul. The letter is the Torah apart from the Spirit; the Spirit denotes the letter of the Torah written on the heart. Thus, his primary point is that those who have been given life by the Spirit ought also to walk (=make life’s decisions) by the Spirit as He illumines the Scriptures and aids in their proper application.

## 26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

Following the leading of the Spirit is first described in negative terms, particularly in negating the attitude and actions of division. “Boastful” (κενοδόξος, *kenodoxos*) has the idea of being conceited, taken with one’s own accomplishments. It is thus the opposite of the former “gentleness,” which is akin to “humble.” Apparently within the Galatian communities there were those who were putting themselves forward as authorities—making sure everyone knew just how knowledgeable they were in *halachic* matters.

The second phrase, “challenging one another” (NASB) should most likely be understood in a negative sense, as “provoking one another.” The Greek word προκαλέω, *prokaleō*, may mean simply to “invite,” but it is often used in the Greek of Paul’s day in a hostile sense, as provoking a person to fight or to engage in heated verbal exchange. One can certainly imagine how this would have been the case in early synagogues of The Way, as they dealt with the myriad of issues that must have arisen. There is nothing wrong with lively exchange. But the purpose of such dialogs is the all important factor. In the Galatian community, there were apparently those who, because of their boastful or conceited attitudes, were engaging in argumentation for the purpose of “winning the argument,” not for the sake of finding the truth. The truth belongs to God, not to any man. Thus to engage in dialog in order to discover the truth, means that one will be more than happy to admit when he is wrong as the truth is made known. To argue, however, for the sole purpose of being right (regardless of the truth) results in division and strife, the inevitable fruit of pride.

This goes right along with the final phrase, “envying one another.” The confrontative dialog that was happening in the Galatian communities was apparently a vying for position with the congregation. To “envy someone” (φθονέω, *phthoneō*) may also mean to “begrudge someone.” This language suggests that there was a vying for positions of authority and influence within the community, the very thing that happens when schism is ripe.

Dunn writes:

Once again Paul exhibits a shrewd insight into human psychology, as confirmed repeatedly in spiritual awakenings in the history of Christianity: those who claim to have been specially graced by the Spirit often assume an importance and authority well beyond even their Spirit-enhanced abilities, encouraging a spirit of competitiveness in charismatic manifestations and provoking schism within the larger community.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Dunn, *Galatians*, p. 318.

# Chapter Six

## Commentary

**1 Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.**

The chapter division is unfortunate, because it tends to separate the context of exhortations that Paul has given in chapter five from the exhortation in this section of the epistle. The divisions that were occurring in the Galatian community, as noted in 5:26, find their remedy by the careful and diligent application of the spiritual values enumerated in the “fruit of the Spirit” (5:22f). Putting the ship back on an even keel becomes the duty of those who are “spiritual,” for by the exercise of spiritual wisdom, those who are causing the division may be brought into alignment with the leading of the Spirit.

Paul exhorts the “brethren” (ἀδελφοί, *adelphoi*). We should not presume that by this title Paul is talking only to believers in Yeshua, or even to the mature believers. His use of the same title in 1:2 would indicate that he uses the term to include all who are members of the community, as those who should be intent upon the unity of the congregation, and who are looking out for each other in a familial sense.

*even if anyone is caught in any trespass* – The language here is a bit ambiguous. The Greek term translated “caught” is προλαμβάνω, *prolambanō*, which literally means “taken beforehand,” though the emphasis of the prefix προ, *pro*, may actually be used in a perfective sense, giving the meaning “taken for sure.” Some have understood this to mean that if one “suspects” (i.e., before the transgression is actually committed, thus, “taken before the sin occurs”) a person of falling into transgression, then action to prevent the person from sinning should be taken. While surely it is the obligation of brothers and sisters within the community to warn one another of pending trouble, it is doubtful that the word here has that meaning. Rather, taking the prefix as perfective, the sense would be that when a person has shown himself or herself to have engaged in sin (and in the context, this would most likely be the sin of divisiveness, perpetrated by a boastful spirit of envy), it is the responsibility of those whose lives are characterized by the fruit of the Spirit to attempt to restore the erring member.

The term “trespass” (παράπτωμα, *paraptōma*) is a word used mostly by Paul in the Apostolic Scriptures. Of the 19 times it is found, 16 are by Paul (the exceptions are: Mk 16:14, 15; 11:25). In the Lxx, this word translates the Hebrew word group related to עָוַל, *aval* (verb) or עָוֵל, *avel* (noun), which means “to act unjustly,” “to act treacherously,” “to rebel.” Paul’s use of the word may favor the idea of “wrong doing,” which would include a broader circle than a strict disregard for the clear word of the Torah. That is, “wrong doing” may also include a stubborn unwillingness to conform to accepted *halachah* within the community. Obviously, community *halachah* should never be contrary to the Scriptures. But where the Scriptures are silent on a given issue, and the community righteously adopts a certain *halachah* as most beneficial for the proper maintenance of the community, members should seek to find it within themselves to conform for the betterment of the whole. On the other hand, community leaders will be wise to prioritize those matters which are clearly spelled out in the Scriptures, and not to major on minors.

[page 212]



*you who are spiritual* – (ὁμεῖς οἱ πνευματικοί). To whom does Paul address himself here? A number of possibilities may be listed:

- 1) Paul means the whole congregation, since he has previously (3:2; 5:25) suggested that the group to which he speaks had received the Spirit. But this hardly seems likely, that the whole congregation should “descend” upon one who is erring.
- 2) Paul means those who are aware of the person’s transgression. Since he refers to the erring one as having been “caught” or “taken” in a transgression, it seems likely that those who know of the situation are the ones he calls upon to come to the person’s aid. The test of their spiritual maturity would be how they handle the situation, that is, how the fruit of the Spirit is made manifest in the difficult situation of confronting and restoring the one who has sinned.
- 3) Paul is referring to a leadership group, i.e., those who have been recognized because of their spiritual strength. This may have some parallel to James 5:14-15 where the one who is sick (perhaps as a result of their sin) call for the elders to anoint with oil and pray for their healing. In John 20:23, Yeshua gives His disciples a role in the restoration of sinners as well. But it hardly seems likely that Paul would use the term spiritual (πνευματικοί, *pneumatikoi*) as the sole or even primary possession of leaders. Moreover, to lay the burden of restoring those who err entirely upon the shoulders of established leaders seems improbable. For Paul, the members of the body are to minister to each other, and it is in this type of one-to-another ministry that the body is matured so that every member grows to the full stature of Messiah (Eph 4:14ff). “Speaking the truth in love” would certainly include restoring one who had transgressed.
- 4) Paul is speaking to some who had been primarily gifted by the Spirit with insight and ability for this particular work, i.e., confronting and restoring those who had transgressed. But since such gifting is not ever mentioned by Paul in the lists of charismata (cf. Rom 12; 1Cor 12), this would not seem to be his meaning here.
- 5) Paul is speaking to genuine believers in Yeshua, and specifically those who were convinced of his arguments in the present epistle, as over against those who were using the rabbinic *halachah* as the means of forcing conformity upon the whole group. While there may be something worthwhile in this explanation, it also flies in the face of his former descriptions of the work of the Spirit generally upon the whole community. It does not seem likely that he, at this point, is saying that only those who agree with him are spiritual.

In all of these possibilities, it would seem best to understand that Paul addresses the whole congregation by the phrase “you who are spiritual,” expecting that as the congregation as a whole deals with the transgressor,

some will be prompted to deal directly with the erring one, and to engage in the process of repentance and restoration. Perhaps the most important point, however, is to realize that for the Apostle, the manifestation of the Spirit in the lives of the believers is not so much in the extra-special manifestations of the Spirit, but in the day-to-day matter of mutual relations between the community members. It is when the community is able to deal carefully and successfully with those who sin within its midst, that the Spirit's leadership is most clearly seen.

*restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness* – The purpose of confrontation is restoration. The word “restore” (καταρτίζω, *katartizō*) has the sense of “repair, mend, prepare, put in order.” Furthermore, the Greek term is in the present tense, and may be understood as something that is on-going: the restoration process may take some time.

It is interesting that Paul does not immediately go to the issues of discipline and punishment, but rather to restoration. In 2Cor 2:6-8, Paul makes it clear that the one caught in sexual sin was disciplined, and it was only after clear and marked repentance that he instructs the community to restore the one who had sinned. Here, however, the one erring is most likely not someone who has clearly transgressed a moral or ethical boundary, but whose stance in the current controversies are divisive and therefore dangerous. Rather than “throwing the book at him,” Paul encourages those who are spiritual to apply the fruit of the Spirit (of which gentleness is one) to the restoration of the individual who otherwise might progress in his rebellious spirit and become liable for more severe measures.

Whether the word “spirit” here refers to the general posture of those who approach the sinner, or to the Spirit of God Who brings the ability to be gentle toward one who has erred, may be ambiguous on purpose. Those who are spiritual will recognize that their ability to work patiently with the one who has erred is, in fact, the result of the Spirit's presence in their lives.

*each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted* – This admonition is cast in the singular: “so that you (singular) too will not be tempted.” The position of the one who has transgressed may seem legitimate to those who are attempting to show an over abundance of understanding and love. It may not be that the ones engaged in the restoration process will be tempted to sin in the same way as the one being restored. Rather, they may attempt to find “short cuts” to effect his restoration, short cuts that would themselves be wrong and a transgression of God's revealed will. While restoration is surely the goal, the method of restoration must be in complete conformity to what God has said. Trying to sidestep the hard issues of repentance will never result in a genuine restoration of the one who has sinned.

One must consider the very real possibility that what Paul is confronting here is the transgression or error of false teaching. Those who were attacking him, or at least attempting to influence the Galatians against him, may have been very persuasive. Those whose duty it was to confront and restore one who may have been influenced away from the truth, are to be certain of their own grounding in the truth. The enemy is very deceitful, and apart from a constant reliance upon the Spirit of truth, error may, at times, seem very acceptable.

[page 213]

## 2 Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the Torah of Messiah.

What does Paul envision by the use of the term "burdens" (βάρος, *baros*)? Some have suggested that this refers to the ongoing struggles of the one who is restored, and in part, this could be the case. But it would seem that Paul's admonition here is broader, encompassing the humdrum, day-to-day reality of community life. We know that in the time of Paul, the communities of The Way would have fallen under the general heading of "Jewish sects" as far as the Roman government was concerned, which meant that the burden of the *fiscus judaicus* (Jewish tax) would have been felt by all in the Galatian congregation. For some, particularly widows and slaves, this was no doubt a heavy burden, the liability of which could result in imprisonment if not for the help of the congregation. The term "burden" may likewise include other general troubles that befall the individual: sickness, suffering as a believer, poverty, and so on. The watchword for the congregations of Yeshua was that they were to extend to each other the helping hand needed to sustain such burdens. This may be all the more important in light of the fact that the Galatian community had come into conflict over the relationship of Jew to Gentile. If Gentiles were being pressured to become proselytes, one could imagine that those who refused may have been marginalized within the community. This would have made them very vulnerable to falling under the burdens of life which they could not sustain alone. Here, once again, the primary characteristic of Yeshua's people is that they display love for each other in tangible ways.

*fulfill the Torah (teaching) of Messiah* – The teachings of Yeshua were no doubt known among the congregations of The Way, even before the gospels as we know them were finalized in their canonical form. The Apostles were commissioned to "make disciples of the nations" and to "teach them to observe all that I commanded you" (Matt 28:18ff). Thus, the "Torah of Messiah" (νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ) should be understood as "the Torah as Messiah taught it and lived it." It is anachronistic to interpret the phrase as though the Torah of Messiah is different than the Torah of Moses. Surely it may have been at variance with some of the rabbinic interpretations of the Torah, but it was not in any manner contradictory to Moses. To postulate such a thing would be to call into question the very veracity of Yeshua Himself, for any one who comes teaching something contrary to what is found in the Torah is considered a false prophet. Rather, Yeshua, both in His words and in His actions, brought the divinely intended meaning of the Torah to the eyes and ears of those He taught. His emphasis was upon living in accordance to the Torah in a manner which displayed genuine love for God and for one's neighbor. Such was to be the driving factor in *halachic* decisions. While the Sages were expert at piling burdens upon men's shoulders without lifting a finger to help them bear the load (Matt 23:4), Yeshua sought to unwrap the Torah from the entanglements of men, and to show that living a life of Torah by faith is not a burden, but a delight.

Therefore, by bearing the burdens of one another, the followers of Yeshua fulfill the Torah as it was intended to be fulfilled, by living it out in the context of love for God, and love for one's neighbor. In this way, the Torah as taught and modeled by Yeshua would be fulfilled.

[page 214]