

A Comparison and Evaluation of Parallel Sections in Romans and Galatians

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From Marcion to Martin Luther, Ferdinand Baur to Karl Barth, Romans and Galatians have played a key role in the study of Scripture and its profound influence in the church and world. Misunderstanding of the Gospel and Scripture has caused immense problems, yet a good understanding and dynamic preaching of Romans and Galatians have brought titanic changes and innumerable blessings to millions. Indeed, nowhere else in the Bible is the heart of the Gospel revealed with such crystal clarity.

What is God saying to us through these letters of Paul? Is He communicating something through the medium itself, including style? The aim of this paper is to contribute something toward the answer to this question.

In 1831 Ferdinand Christian Baur published his famous article, *Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde*. This revolutionized thinking about the letters of Paul and gave tremendous impetus to the intensive academic study of Paul's letters that followed. Baur's idea was that "the Apostle had developed his doctrine in complete opposition to that of the primitive Christian community, and that only when this is recognized can we expect to grasp the peculiar character of the Pauline ideas."<sup>1</sup> While Baur opened the door to a vast array of intense study of the New Testament, some big problems were also created. Much of the study became destructive to faith and was the opposite of an edifying study of God's Word. Moises Silva offers a good overall evaluation of Baur:

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<sup>1</sup>Albert Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters: A Critical History* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1912), 12.

There is intense irony in the possibility that Baur was led astray because he treated the Pauline letters as a history textbook. Though he was perfectly aware that they were written for quite a different purpose--to meet specific problems--Baur's broader concern to preserve Paul's personal integrity kept him from perceiving the fragmented and slanted character of the historical picture provided by those letters.<sup>2</sup>

One of the major streams of study sparked by the initial influence of Baur is the study of the diversity of style in Paul's letters. Authorship became the focus: "The Epistles which bear the name of St. Paul present a considerable diversity of style. To such an extent is this the case that the question is seriously raised whether they can have had the same author. Of all the arguments urged on the negative side this from style is the most substantial . . ."<sup>3</sup> Now, however, it appears very likely that in the long run Paul's name will stick to the thirteen letters as author. How, then, does one account for the differences in style among them? Sanday and Headlam give four very plausible causes for the differing styles: 1. Different subject matter, 2. Differing circumstances surrounding each letter, 3. Paul's temperament when the letter was written, and 4. The use by Paul

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<sup>2</sup>Moises Silva, "The Place of Historical Reconstruction in New Testament Criticism," In *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon*, eds. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1995), 128.

<sup>3</sup>J. A. Emerton and C. E. B. Cranfield, eds., *The International Critical Commentary on The Holy Scriptures of The Old and New Testaments, The Epistle to The Romans*, by William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Limited, 1975), liv.

of different scribes to write the letters.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., lvii.

Apart from the investigation of authorship, of what use is the study of Paul's differing styles? We must ask: what is God saying to us? Why does the Bible contain two letters which resemble each other in a way that can be called "striking and definite"<sup>5</sup> yet also contain some important differences in style? Jesus rebuked people for not having deeper understanding, especially concerning what is in the Scriptures. God gave four different gospels. He also gave us Romans and Galatians, letters differing in style but containing the same basic clear Gospel message. Does the different packaging have something to say to us? Is God saying something even through this to us? This paper will attempt an answer, first by a comparison of differences in style between Romans and Galatians in twelve parallel sections. Secondly, an evaluation will provide an interpretation of the data discovered in the comparison.

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<sup>5</sup>J. B. Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to The Galatians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1900), 45.

## I. Comparison

Twelve Romans and Galatians parallel sections have been identified with simple, one word titles: Greeting, Credentials, Circumcision, Faith, Abraham, Transformation, Law, Battle, Spirit, Love, Bear and Ending. A comparison of the differences in style now follows.

### GREETING

The first parallel between Romans and Galatians is the greeting (Rom. 1:1-7, Gal. 1:1-5). The greeting in Romans is written in a careful, systematic style. Very carefully Paul lays the foundation both of Christ and Paul's own authority to preach Christ. The greeting in Galatians is less systematic and seems hastily written in order to press forward to the main point of the letter.

In Romans Paul calls himself a *δοῦλος* first, then an *ἀπόστολος*. Galatians doesn't mention *δοῦλος*, but lays emphasis upon Paul's authority as an *ἀπόστολος* with the words: *οὐκ ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ δι' ἀνθρώπου ἀλλὰ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν, καὶ οἱ σὺν ἐμοὶ πάντες ἀδελφοί. ἀλλὰ* gives strong emphasis to the contrasting sources of authority in these words. *ἀδελφοί* adds to this authority. There is a blessing in the Galatians greeting: *χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*. This is the only sentence in both greetings which corresponds exactly. Other than this standard blessing, there are no kind words toward the Galatians as there are toward the Romans in the Romans' greeting: *ἀγαπητοῖς θεοῦ καὶ κλητοῖς ἁγίοις*.

The emphasis of the Romans greeting is upon Christ, and it patiently sets up the reader in

a kind atmosphere for a carefully written message. The Galatians greeting emphasizes Paul's authority and quickly pushes forward toward rebuke which starts in the very next verse (v. 6). This then feeds into the next parallel section: Credentials.

## **CREDENTIALS**

This parallel is one of stark contrast between Romans and Galatians. Of all the parallels in Romans and Galatians, they differ most from each other in this one. Romans has the credential section at the end of the letter (Rom. 15:15-20). Galatians has it at the beginning (Gal. 1:11-2:21). In Romans it is 6 verses out of the total of 434 (less than 2% of Romans). In Galatians it is 35 out of 149 verses (almost 25% of Galatians).

The emphasis in the Romans credential section is placed upon God's work through Paul among the Gentiles after his conversion. It mentions *δυνάμει σημείων καὶ τεράτων* and *πεπληρωκέναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ*. The Romans credential section is written in broad brush stroke style, conveying success and no sense of opposition. Galatians is quite different in this section. The Galatians style here is one of detailed explanation, going back to *κοιλίας μητρός μου*. Like Romans, Galatians emphasizes God's work through Paul, but Galatians goes to great lengths to show that Paul's message did not come from man, but God. Carefully laid out in Galatians is the assertion that the gospel Paul was preaching to the Gentiles was received independently from the other apostles, yet in agreement with them (Gal. 1:15-2:9). He says that he received the gospel by revelation from God, it agreed with the leading apostles, Paul even

rebuked Peter when Peter strayed from the gospel in playing the hypocrite and Paul himself fully receives and lives in that gospel. Galatians is not so cheerful as Romans since it conveys a sense that there was a strong sense of opposition in Galatia to the believer's liberty in Christ Jesus:

διὰ δὲ τοὺς παρεισάκτους ψευδαδέλφους, οἵτινες παρεισήλθον κατασκοπεῖσαι τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἡμῶν ἣν ἔχομεν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα ἡμᾶς καταδουλώσουσιν, οἷς οὐδὲ πρὸς ὥραν εἴξαμεν τῇ ὑποταγῇ, ἵνα ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου διαμείνη πρὸς ὑμᾶς. (Gal. 2:4-5)

Ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν Κηφᾶς εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτῷ ἀντέστην, ὅτι κατεγνωσμένος ἦν. (Gal. 2:11)

καὶ συνυπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ [καὶ] οἱ λοιποὶ Ἰουδαῖοι, ὥστε καὶ Βαρναβᾶς συναπήχθη αὐτῶν τῇ ὑποκρίσει. (Gal. 2:13)

εἰ γὰρ ἂν κατέλυσα ταῦτα πάλιν οἰκοδομῶ, παραβάτην ἑμαυτὸν συνιστάνω. (Gal. 2:18)

In contrast, the Romans' credential section conveys no sense of opposition to which Paul must go to great lengths to defend his authority.

## CIRCUMCISION

Paul deals with circumcision in Romans 2:25-29 and Galatians 5:2-6 and 6:12-15. In each case he starts the discussion of circumcision with *ὠφελω* which can be translated: *gain, profit, achieve* (something); *help, benefit, aid* or *be useful (to)*. Paul's attitude toward circumcision in both letters is that the outward bodily action is not what profits (*ὠφελει*), but the change that happens in the heart is what counts.

In Romans the tone is that of careful and logical reasoning, step by step. Questions are used to help the reader think through the issue. Paul says that circumcision is profitable if one keeps the law. And the uncircumcized one who keeps the law will be counted as circumcized. The conclusion is that the true Jew (the one truly circumcized) is the one circumcized in the heart (v. 29). In Galatians the tone is that of rebuke. Paul rebukes directly, using words like **μαρτύρομαι**, **ὀφειλέτης**, **κατηργήθητε**, and **ἔξεπέσατε**. He also uses some strong words against the ones leading the Galatians astray:

ὅσοι θέλουσιν εὐπροσωπῆσαι ἐν σαρκί, οὗτοι ἀναγκάζουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμνεσθαι, μόνον ἵνα τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Χριστοῦ μὴ διώκωνται. οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι αὐτοὶ νόμον φυλάσσουσιν ἀλλὰ θέλουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμνεσθαι, ἵνα ἐν τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ σαρκὶ καυχῶνται. (Gal. 6:12-13)

In Galatians Paul criticizes the act of circumcision, rebukes, and says that circumcision nor uncircumcision avail anything, but **πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη** (5:6) and a **καινὴ κτίσις** (6:15).

## FAITH

This important section is almost the same length in Romans (3:21-26) and Galatians (2:15-21). Consistent with the rest of Romans, Paul's style in the faith section is calm, systematic, objective, balanced and unemotional. In Galatians it is exclamatory, choppy, subjective, polemical and emotional.

In Romans this section begins with **Νυνὶ**, originally an emphatic form of **νυν**. This signals a change in Paul's presentation which corresponds to a change in history, an unfolding of God's

saving work. This simple word itself reveals a careful, systematic style as Paul now proceeds to express the significance of faith. He has been talking about the law of God, written and in nature, how it applies to everyone, Jew and Gentile, and how it reveals that no one can be righteous by doing the works of the law. Then in Romans 3:21 he makes a direct statement, carefully and deliberately stepping into the **Νυνὶ** revelation concerning righteousness **χωρὶς νόμου** through faith in Christ Jesus. On the other hand, in Galatians Paul's first words about righteousness through faith are a parenthetical statement within the defense of his authority. In a way it almost seems as if it is thrown in there in Galatians compared to the careful and systematic leading up to the topic in Romans, then the marking of the revelation with **Νυνὶ**.

The second word in this section of Romans is the conjunctive particle, **δέ**. Romans has about six particles, and Galatians has about sixteen in this section. In Romans the sparing use of particles is confined to the first half (verses 21-23) of the faith discussion. They are used in a well balanced manner. In Galatians, the use of particles does not seem well balanced here: verses 17 and 20 each have four particles squeezed into one verse, the first eleven words of verse 20 include three uses of **δέ**, and both **καὶ** and **δέ** (each used five times) seem over used in this section. When people say or write something more carefully they tend not to overuse conjunctive particles, but when they are filled with emotion at the moment (like a leader defending against an accusation) they tend to overuse conjunctive particles in the midst of their emotion (e.g. 'and' in English).

The third Romans word is also significant in regard to style: **χωρὶς**. In Galatians Paul's style feels hasty, like something hastily put together. Not only is the key statement about faith (v. 16) parenthetical, but the separation or vast distance away from righteousness by deeds of the law

is not as carefully worded in Galatians. In Galatians Paul says: εἰδότες [δὲ] ὅτι οὐ δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. In Romans he explains: Νυνὶ δὲ χωρὶς νόμου δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ πεφανέρωται μαρτυρουμένη ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν, δικαιοσύνη δὲ θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς πάντα τοὺς πιστεύοντας. By using χωρὶς (cf. οὐ...ἐξ... in Gal. 2:16) and by putting it up front, Paul is very carefully making a strong point systematically: first of all, without/apart from/separate from/etc. the law the righteousness of God has been revealed; secondly, this has been witnessed by (the bedrock foundation of) the law and prophets; thirdly, it is the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

In Romans Paul uses δικαιοσύνη four times and the verb δικαιοῶ two times, and they are well balanced throughout the section. In Galatians Paul uses δικαιοσύνη once as the fifth to last word, and the verb δικαιοῶ four times. Their use is not balanced throughout the section: δικαιοῶ appears three times in verse 16, once as the fourth word of verse 17, and δικαιοσύνη is at the end.

The one phrase of more than three words that is exactly the same in both occurs in the second verse of each: διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. In each, this is the only time he refers to Jesus as Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. It is also the first time that he refers to Christ. The second time Paul refers to Him in each section, he reverses the word order, putting Χριστὸς first and Ἰησοῦ second (Rom. 3:24, Gal. 2:16). Thereafter, Romans uses Ἰησοῦ once (v. 26) and Galatians uses Χριστὸς six times (verses 16, 17, 19, 20, 21). This strong use of Χριστὸς in Galatians here adds density to Paul's style in terms of emphasizing the Messiah to the Galatian audience.

In this section Romans is more general or objective and Galatians more personal or

subjective. In Romans the first person is not indicated even once. Paul simply uses the very general words, *πάντας* (v. 22), *πάντες* (v. 23) and *τὸν* (v. 26). In Galatians Paul makes a first person reference twenty times: the first person plural shows up five times in verses 15-17 (twice in the form of the pronoun) and the first person singular occurs fifteen times in verses 18-21 (five times as the pronoun). This definite contrast (especially the density of the first person singular references) highlights the subjective and emotional style of Galatians in contrast to the general and systematic style of Romans.

In Romans the style feels calm and steady. There are no exclamations in this section of Romans. On the other hand, Galatians has the exclamation, *μὴ γένοιτο*, in verse 17. He also conveys strong thoughts in Galatians with the words *κατέλυσα* (v. 18), *ἀπέθανον* (v. 19), *συνεσταύρωμαι* (v. 19), *ἀθετω* (v. 21), and *δωρεάν* (v. 21). Besides this strong language that has a negative connotation, Paul conveys strong feeling in the positive sense with the word *ἀγαπήσαντός* (v. 20). In contrast, the style of Romans concentrates on the content of the revelation without expressing positive or negative emotion.

Finally, this section of Romans maintains a careful stream of thought, but Galatians is a little choppy, as if Paul is expressing thoughts as they pop into his mind. This probably helps explain his dense use of conjunctive particles in the Galatians faith section.

In summary, the faith section in Romans is systematic, objective, general, carefully thought out, calm, well balanced and maintains a careful stream of thought. In contrast, the faith section in Galatians is subjective, personal, emotional, choppy, exclamatory, defensive or polemical, and unbalanced in some features.

## ABRAHAM

This is the longest parallel section: Romans 4:1-25 and Galatians 3:6-29 & 4:21-31. In Romans Paul uses the Stoic teaching style of diatribe, asking questions and answering them to maintain attention and a stream of logic. He also maintains a positive attitude and a singular focus upon Abraham and his faith in Romans. These twenty five verses make up 6% of the book of Romans. On the other hand, the thirty five verses of this section in Galatians make up 25% of the book of Galatians. In Galatians the Abraham section follows one of the strongest rebukes (3:1-5) and evidences some residue of that rebuke. It is more personal. It is also more diverse in focus than Romans which gives this section a choppy flavor in Galatians. The emphatic tone along with the choppy flavor make Galatians seem more emotional here when it is compared with the focused, careful stream of thought set in diatribe style in Romans.

In Romans 4:1-25 Paul proceeds through a careful thought pattern while maintaining a focus upon Abraham: in verses 1, 2, 3, 9, 12, 13, and 16 Ἀβραάμ occurs; with a few exceptions, the other verses indicate by pronoun, verb ending or the word πατήρ that he is talking about Abraham. The exceptions are five short verses (4-8) in which he refers to David's words, two short verses (14-15) in which he makes statements about the νόμος, and the last two verses (24-25) in which he applies the whole thing to ἡμᾶς. In contrast, although the overall topic is Abraham's faith, Galatians jumps around: Abraham (3:6-9), law (3:10-13), Abraham (3:14-18), law (3:19-24), sonship (3:25-28), Abraham's seed (3:29), bondwoman and freewoman (4:21-31).

Romans is less emphatic throughout this section than Galatians. For example, Galatians 3:21 has the exclamatory *μὴ γένοιτο*. It also has imperatives and stronger words than Romans: *γινώσκετε* (3:7), *κατάραν* (3:10), *ἀκυροῖ...καταργῆσαι* (3:17), and *Λέγετέ μοι, οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι, τὸν νόμον οὐκ ἀκούετε;* (4:21). A point might also be made about emphasis in regard to use of the perfect tense. Thomas Hatina writes that “The perfect has been described by several scholars as the tense-form which conveys the appearance of emphasis in relation to other tense-forms.”<sup>6</sup> Paul uses almost twice the number of perfects in Galatians, and they are scattered throughout the whole section: *γέγραπται* (3:10, 3:13, 4:22, 4:27), *κεκυρωμένην* (3:15), *προκεκυρωμένην* and *γεγονώς* (3:17), *κεχάρισται* (3:18), *ἐπήγγελται* (3:19), and *γέγονεν* (3:24). In Romans the perfects are grouped together in one part of the section: *κεκέυωται* and *κατήργηται* (v. 14), *γέγραπται* and *τέθεικα* (v. 17), *νεκρωμένον* (v. 19), and *ἐπήγγελται* (v. 21).

Finally, the Abraham section of Galatians is more personal than the same section of Romans. The first person references are sparing in Romans: verses 1, 9, 12, 16, 24, and 25. Otherwise, Paul speaks in the third person. On the other hand, in Galatians Paul speaks throughout the section in the first and second persons: verses 3:7, 13, 14, 15, 17, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 4:21, 26, 28, 31.

## TRANSFORMATION

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<sup>6</sup>Thomas R. Hatina, “The Perfect Tense-Form in Recent Debate: Galatians as a Case Study,” *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 8 (1995): 11.

The transformation section includes Romans 6:1-23 and Galatians 3:26-4:7. The emphasis in Romans is being dead to sin and alive to God, transforming from being slaves to sin to being slaves to righteousness. Galatians emphasizes transforming from slavery to sonship, becoming an heir. This section is interesting since it seems that Paul reverses his style: Galatians is not emphatic or emotional, it's more positive, and imperatives are not used; but Romans is emphatic, very personal, uses at least five imperatives and has a hint of rebuke.

This section of Romans is much more emphatic than any other parallel with Galatians: Paul uses *μὴ γένοιτο* twice (verses 2 and 15), he makes reference to ignorance by the use of *ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε* (v. 3) and *οὐκ οἴδατε* (v. 16), verse 21 says *τίνα οὖν καρπὸν εἶχετε τότε; ἐφ' οἷς νῦν ἐπαισχύνεσθε*, and *ἀλλὰ* is used for emphasis in verses 5 and 13. The personal nature of this section in Romans really stands out: 27 second person plural references in verb endings, 8 uses of the second person plural pronoun, 15 first person plural references in verb endings, and 3 uses of the first person plural pronoun.

In Galatians the tone is more positive than the other Galatians parallels. In fact, there doesn't seem to be any hint of rebuke. This section of Galatians does not appear to be emotional or emphatic. In these respects it uncharacteristically differs from its Romans parallel. However, like Romans here, it is personal: 6 second person plural references in verb endings, 2 uses of the second person plural pronoun, 2 appearances of the first person plural in verb endings, and 3 uses of the first person plural pronoun.

## LAW

The law parallel is composed of Romans 7:1-8:4 and Galatians 3:19-25. The Romans emphasis is that the law reveals sin and the weakness of the flesh. The Galatians emphasis is that they are no longer under a tutor.

Romans is personal with a first person (plural and singular) reference. It is emphatic in some places: Ἡ ἀγνοεῖτε (7:1), νυνι (7:6, 17), μὴ γένοιτα (7:7,13), ἀλλὰ (7:7, 13, 15, 17, 19, 20 and 8:4), and the words, ταλαίπωρος ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος·τίς με ῥύσεται ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου; (7:24).

Galatians is also personal, including a few first person plural references. It has moderately emphatic tone: μὴ γένοιτα (v. 21) and possibly the two perfects, ἐπήγγελται (v. 19) and γέγονεν (v. 24).

## BATTLE

Romans 7:14-25 and Galatians 5:16-24 make up the parallel that deals with the inner battle. This parallel is interesting since the style is very similar in each even though each has a different approach to the inner spiritual battle. The Romans approach is a statement of the sinful nature of Paul, including a grievous, wretched outcry: ταλαίπωρος ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος·τίς με ῥύσεται ἐκ τοῦ

σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου; (v. 24). The Galatians approach is to contrast the works of the flesh and the fruit of the spirit with a bidding (imperative) to walk in the spirit: πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκὸς οὐ μὴ τελέσητε (v. 16). Yet the styles are similar to each other in that they are both personal (first and second person), an unemotional record of facts (except for Romans 7:24), and systematic. They both maintain a careful stream of thought and use particles and verbs in a similar manner.

## **SPIRIT**

After the interesting change in Paul's style in Romans 7 and 8, this section (Romans 8:1-16 and Galatians 5:16-25) is more like previous parallels. Romans begins to refer back to the third person more, thus becoming more general. Romans is once again much more positive and complementary and it continues to maintain a careful stream of thought. In this section of Galatians an imperative starts the section (περιπατεῖτε in v. 16) and a hortatory subjunctive ends the section (στοιχῶμεν in v. 25). This exhorting flavor in Galatians contrasts with the positive statements of Romans here. In addition, verses 24 and 25 of Galatians seem to break the stream of thought a little, once again giving a choppy feel to the section.

## **LOVE**

The love section is the shortest (Romans 13:8-10 and Galatians 5:13-15). Paul says almost exactly the same thing, yet with a different tone and style in each. Romans is again a positive statement and Galatians a rebuke. Both are similar in that they each have a personal tone (geared toward the second person plural), both refer to Leviticus 19:18 as a λόγῳ, and both use identical words in quoting Leviticus from the Septuagint: Ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν.

Romans begins with an imperative (ὀφείλετε v. 8) and ends with a positive statement about ἡ ἀγάπη (v. 10). The tone is kind and respectful. Paul shows careful thought with a list of a few commandments and the choice of a rare word (ἀνακεφαλαιούται v. 9). On the other hand, Galatians has a tone of rebuke and seems almost condescending: μόνον μὴ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν εἰς ἀφορμὴν τῆ σαρκι (v. 13) and εἰ δὲ ἀλλήλους δάκνετε καὶ κατεσθίετε, βλέπετε μὴ ὑπ' ἀλλήλων ἀναλωθῆτε (v. 15).

## BEAR

Paul bids the Christians to bear with one another in Romans 15:1-6 and Galatians 6:1-10. The emphasis of the Romans section is upon edifying one's neighbor, and the style is positive and complementary. He even ends the section with a blessing (verses 5 and 6). The emphasis of the Galatians section is upon restoring a person overtaken in sin and doing good to the household of faith. The tone of Galatians here is mostly that of warning: σκοπῶν σεαυτόν (v. 1), φρεναπατῶ

ἐαυτόν (v. 3), and Μὴ πλανᾶσθε (v. 7).

## ENDING

This final parallel section contains the greatest contrast in length: Romans 16:1-27 and Galatians 6:18. The Romans ending is detailed, long, friendly, very personal and contains a doxology. Many names are mentioned and only positive, complementary things are said. Paul even tells them to greet each other with a kiss. The only negative thought in the Romans ending is the verses 17 and 18 warning to avoid the ones who cause divisions contrary to the doctrine they received. In great contrast, the Galatians ending is a terse, one verse ending. It mentions no names, but simply has the standard words, Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί· ἀμήν.

## II. Evaluation

Galatians is usually dated in the vicinity of 50 AD, Romans about 60 AD. Some have observed: “A careful study of these [parallels between Galatians and Romans], and of the two Epistles generally, will make plain the peculiar connexion of the two, and the remarkable upgrowth, so to speak, of the longer and more deliberate out of the shorter, more personal, and

more urgent.”<sup>7</sup> Lightfoot writes, “The Epistle to the Galatians stands in relation to the Roman letter, as the rough model to the finished statute . . . .”<sup>8</sup> Many feel that the Romans letter was to pave the way for a mission base to the western part of the Roman empire. Franzmann notes, “What a year’s ministry had accomplished in the East, a single letter had to accomplish in the West.”<sup>9</sup> There is wisdom in these observations, and there are also deeper insights to be gained from the comparison between Galatians and Romans.

The greeting section comparison has a few noteworthy characteristics: Paul’s kindness and initial emphasis on being a *δοῦλος* in Romans versus the beginning of his defense in Galatians, and the identical words in the blessing. The kind and serving attitude in Romans sets the atmosphere for the whole letter (with the exception of chapter 6). The defensive beginning in Galatians also

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<sup>7</sup>H. C. G. Moule, *Studies in Romans* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1977), 29.

<sup>8</sup>Lightfoot, 49.

<sup>9</sup>Martin Franzmann, *The Word of The Lord Grows* (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), 113.

sets the pace for most of that letter. Identical words (as in a few other sections) probably indicate a faith statement or common phrase that Paul (and possibly others) were in the habit of using often.

The credentials section is significant in Galatians since it is 25% of the whole letter. The Abraham section is also 25% of Galatians. So Paul uses half of the letter to defend himself and talk about Abraham. The Romans parallel (credentials), tucked away at the end of Romans, being brief and conveying a positive and kind tone, says something about the trust that Paul had regarding the Roman reception of his message. The Galatians extended defense, including rebuke and a polemical tone, is a good part of what has lead the church into its mirror reading of Galatians. The mirror reading reconstructs the situation at Galatia (without a direct historical statement anywhere about the Judaizers in Galatia). Luther conveys this articulately: “St. Paul wrote this epistle because, after his departure from the Galatian churches, Jewish-Christian fanatics moved in, who perverted Paul’s Gospel of man’s free justification by faith in Christ Jesus.”<sup>10</sup>

The circumcision section has a sharp tone of rebuke in Galatians. Paul conveys the attitude of criticism towards circumcision in Galatians. In Romans, this sharp tone is not present in the circumcision section. In fact, Paul even says it is profitable (if one keeps the law). But one must remember that he is still in the pre-Romans 3:21 stage when he discusses circumcision in Romans. In other words, he is still building up the judgment of God, which will climax in the summary revelation statement of Romans 3:21-26 (the faith section).

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<sup>10</sup>Martin Luther, *A Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to The Galatians*, a new abridged translation by Theodore Graebner (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1939),



The faith section is the most important section in each letter, especially Romans 3:21-22 and Galatians 2:16 within the faith section. These really get to the heart of God's all important work in Christ Jesus. They each convey the same crystal clear message of justification through faith, yet they do so with vastly different styles. Romans, here, is like a calm academitian who carefully, calmly, objectively, unemotionally, and systematically prepares his dissertation in a well balanced manner. Galatians is like an emotional leader who has flown off the handle with its exclamatory, choppy, subjective, and polemical tone.

The Abraham section continues in the same trend. Galatians is emotional and choppy. Romans is calm and systematic. But an interesting change happens in the next two sections.

The transformation and law sections evidence a notable change in Paul's style in Romans. This is especially true with the transformation section (Romans 6) in which he becomes subjective, emotional, emphatic and rebukes a little. But Galatians seems to do the opposite. In the law section the style of each letter is very similar. This emphatic tone in Romans 6 is revealing since that is the *justus* part of the *simil justus et peccator* theology. Galatians is about freedom in Christ and Romans is about righteousness through faith in Christ. Paul seems to get angry in both (revealed in his style) when he is emphasizing the greatest things that God gives us through Christ: freedom and righteousness. Any challenge to our standing of freedom and righteousness in Christ makes Paul get angry and emotional.

In the battle, spirit, love and bear sections the style is similar in each letter with the exception of more rebuke and warning in Galatians contrasted with a more complementary and blessing tone in Romans. Then, the ending demonstrates a big contrast: personal kindness in

Romans versus the short, standard statement in Galatians.

Based on these individual evaluations, some general things can be said about each letter and what can be learned from this comparison. Overall, Galatians is emotional, subjective, choppy, defensive and rebuking. Barclay writes that “Someone has likened the letter to the Galatians to a sword flashing in a great swordsman’s hand.”<sup>11</sup> Romans is systematic, calm, and friendly. Guthrie says of Paul’s diverse styles: “In a sense the style is as adaptable as the man.”<sup>12</sup> This goes along with Paul’s statement that he had become all things to all so that he could by all means save some (I Corinthians 9:22). There is great flexibility in the manner, style, tone in which the Gospel can be presented, but the same, crystal clear, immensely comforting message of justification through faith in Christ Jesus shines through. Paul presents the Gospel in a very personal and emotional way in Galatians, giving a personal testimony and using rebuke. In Romans he presents the Gospel in a very objective and systematic manner. The same Gospel is presented in various styles appropriate to a particular situation.

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<sup>11</sup>William Barclay, *The Letters to The Galatians and Ephesians*, revised ed. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1976), 3.

<sup>12</sup>Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 3d ed. (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1970), 389.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be observed that the letters of Paul to the Romans and Galatians evidence a definite difference in styles. The former is more systematic and objective and the latter more emotional and subjective. A lot of interesting lessons can be learned from a study of all the particular contrasts. Some general, overall lessons can also be learned. One of the most important is that God uses a variety of styles and states of mind and emotion to present the Gospel, geared appropriately to each particular situation, but the basic message of justification through faith remains crystal clear.

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