



*Peter G. Kirchsclaeger*

---

# THE RELATION BETWEEN FREEDOM, LOVE, SPIRIT AND FLESH IN GALATIANS 5:13

## ABSTRACT

In the Letter of Paul to the Galatian churches the concepts “freedom,” “love,” “Spirit” and “flesh” are important: the semantic dimension of the letter and the theology of the letter strongly depend on these key concepts. Simultaneously, there is a complex relation and interaction between the four concepts. Hence an analysis of the above terms in Galatians 5:13 can contribute to the understanding of the letter. To achieve such understanding, the textual context and the structure of the text are discussed in order to establish a summarising exegesis of 5:1-24, with the focus on an analysis of these terms. This summarising exegesis then forms the basis for a reflection on the relation between “freedom,” “love,” “Spirit” and “flesh” in 5:13.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The terms “freedom,” “love,” “Spirit” and “flesh” in Galatians 5:13 are key concepts in the Paul’s letter to the Galatian churches.<sup>1</sup> They dominate partly the semantic dimension of the letter, and the theology of Galatians strongly depends on these key concepts. Hence an analysis of these terms in Galatians 5:13 can contribute to the understanding of the letter.

---

1 I am aware of the fact that “Spirit” is not explicitly used in 5:13, but in 5:16. “Spirit” has to be considered implicitly when “flesh” is used in 5:13 because both concepts depend in their meaning on each other as they build an antagonism elaborated in 5:16 and 5:17 and further developed in the two catalogues in 5:19-21 (flesh) and in 5:22-24 (spirit).

---

*Dr. Peter G. Kirchsclaeger, Lehrstuhlvertretung: New Testament Studies, Chur University of Theology, & Research Associate, Department of New Testament, Faculty of Theology, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa. E-mail: [peter\\_kirchsclaeger@thchur.ch](mailto:peter_kirchsclaeger@thchur.ch).*

An overview of both the textual context and the structure of the text will be followed by a summarising exegesis of 5:1-24, with the focus on an analysis of the terms “freedom,” “love,” “Spirit” and “flesh,” flowing into a discussion of the relation between these terms in 5:13.

## 2. CONTEXT AND STRUCTURE

Galatians 5:13 forms part of the corpus of the letter (1:11-6:10). Within the corpus, 5:13 belongs to the admonitory section on the life in the Spirit and the freedom from the law (5:13-6:10). This is preceded by a theological-argumentative section on justification by faith (3:1-5:12). Galatians 5:13-6:10 is then followed by a conclusion (6:11-18) (Frey 2006:192, 196).

As far as the structure of 5:13-6:10 is concerned, 5:13 contributes to the resumption of the topic “freedom in love” in 5:13-15, followed by a call to a life by the Spirit and a discussion of the opposition between “Spirit” and “flesh” in 5:16-18. This is illustrated with the catalogues of the works of the flesh in 5:19-21 and the fruit of the Spirit in 5:22-24. Galatians 5:25-26 opens the ensuing admonitory section, including several appeals to a life by the Spirit.

## 3. EXEGESIS<sup>2</sup>

The semantic leading term in 5:13, *ἐλευθερία*, is used in 5:1 to open the entire section, as part of the proclaimed message that Jesus Christ is *the* liberator and frees the Galatians (Borse 1984:178). An interpretation of *ἐλευθερία* should include the following:

- In line with its context, freedom from the law includes freedom from the obligation to be circumcised with all its consequences (see 5:3);
- Following from this, there is freedom from a mentality of fulfilling commandments and regulations and linking them to salvation;
- In analogy to the Exodus-episode, there is a liberation from the slavery of sin (see 1:4) through Christ;
- The fundamental empowerment of the baptised through Jesus Christ to a new lifestyle and a new way of thinking and living;

---

2 For the following, see Bachmann & Kollmann (2009); Baumert (2009); Kertelge (1991:184, 196-97, 208); Kilgallen (1999:113-14); Konradt (2010:60-81); Lambrecht (1998:515, 524); Rondez (2002:59, 79); Tolmie (2009:86-102); Weder (1998:129, 145); and Kirchschaeger (1996:52-66).

- The notion that the gift of freedom brings with it the burden of a responsibility to remain free (Egger 1985:35).

Obviously, Paul needed to remind the Galatians that they were liberated by Jesus Christ. He admonishes them to remain (στήκετε) in Jesus Christ and not to return to slavery, i.e., to the opposite of freedom (Borse 1984:179). This imperative is in line with Paul's opposition to those in Jerusalem who threatened the freedom received from Jesus Christ (see 2:4-5). One concrete aspect of the yoke of slavery is compulsory circumcision which Paul presents as an alternative to Christ; thus the Galatians have to choose between the two (Egger 1985:35). Paul argues that, if both were required, faith in Jesus Christ would be useless (5:2). Thus, the decision to be taken by the Galatians is fundamental since choosing circumcision would mean acceptance of the entire law and putting one's life under the regime of the law (see 3:10, referring to Deut. 27:26). With his personal engagement, Paul testifies this emotionally (5:3: μαρτύρομαι first person singular, only in this instance, and in 1 Thess. 2:12 in Paul). This would imply separation from Jesus Christ (5:4: κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ) – with all its consequences. The prefix *κατα-* emphasises the intensity of Paul's assertion. The quintessence of "falling from grace" is even more serious if one considers the importance of *χάρις* for Christian existence (see 1:3, 6; 6:18 concerning the believers, and 1:15; 2:9, 21 concerning Paul). It means that one is no longer connected to Christ (Borse 1984:181). The irony of *οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε* becomes obvious as justification by observing the law was actually excluded beforehand.

Regarding the churches of Galatia, Paul recognises by means of a positive statement in 5:7, that they have been following the right path of being Christian. (A change in the tone, language and semantics can be noticed in this instance, in order to transmit the strong personal engagement.) However, this has been interrupted as they no longer obeyed *ἀληθεία*, i.e., the *ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου* (Gal. 2:5). *πείθεσθαι* refers to existential trust in and engagement with the specific character of this "good message." Who are those opposing the *ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου*? (The spreading of their dangerous influence is illustrated in 5:9 by the image of yeast, also used in 1 Cor. 5:6). One thing is clear (5:8): Their efforts do not correspond with God's calling; therefore, by following them, the churches of Galatia are no longer following God's calling. Consequently they lack an essential characteristic of a baptised person (see 1 Cor. 1:2) – a very strong accusation.

A surprising turn – a change in tone, showing the personal engagement of the author – takes place in 5:10. Paul expresses his trust that they will stay on the right path (Borse 1984:186). At the same time, he takes a clear

stand against the opponents, expressing a threat of a condemnation to all of them, without exception.<sup>3</sup> In 5:11, Paul again takes up the discussion of the law, with the unclear, but probably ironic, statement that he is not in favour of circumcision, because, if he were, prosecution would not be an issue for him.<sup>4</sup> In this instance, *περιτομή* is a *pars pro toto* for the law and stands for a particular understanding of salvation (see 2:15-21). In 5:11, τὸ σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ reminds one of 1 Corinthians 1:23, and refers to the issue of the acceptance of this path; this is not meant in a historical way. *σταυρός* stands for the entire reality of Christ, leading to freedom from the law.

In 5:12, Paul attacks the opponents, who create trouble (*οἱ ἀναστατοῦντες*) among the Galatians, in a polemical manner and full of emotion, against the background of Deuteronomy 23:2, with the result that the equivalence to their practice is idolatry (*ἀποκόψονται*: “[I]t is clear from the context that Paul has in mind the removal of the private parts of his opponents” [Tolmie 2009:87.]). Paul uses rather negative words for his opponents. The polemic in and the entire verse must be understood in terms of its rhetorical function:

Paul is using a very negative description of his opponents – naturally so, because he is still continuing his vilification<sup>5</sup> of them; at the same time, he is portraying the Christians in Galatia as their victims. According to him, the opponents do not have any good motives; in fact, they are destabilising the situation in the Christian congregations in Galatia (Tolmie 2009:87).

With this sarcastic approach, Paul creates a distance between his addressees and the opponents, based on the horror of such practice and on his negative feelings about the opponents (Betz 1979:270).

In 5:13, *ἐλευθερία* builds on this thematic basis, recalling 5:1a. Verse 5:13 returns to some fundamental assertions, using a very engaged tone, and addressing Paul’s audience directly (second person plural). A variation can be detected between 5:13 and 5:1a:

5:1a:	Τῆ ἐλευθερία	ἡμᾶς Χριστὸς	ἠλευθέρωσεν
5:13a:	ὕμεῖς γὰρ ἐπ’	ἐλευθερία	ἐκλήθητε

3 The threatening condemnation is meant to scare the Galatians from joining the opponents; see Egger (1985:36).

4 Egger (1985:36) interprets this as an argument to follow Paul as he is suffering persecution because of his call.

5 On the understanding of vilification and the use of it in early epistolography, see Du Toit (1994:403-12).

In 5:13a, instead of an explicit subject, there is a theological passive, referring to the addressees as subjects. ἡλευθέρωσεν (in 5:1a) is thus interpreted by ἐκλήθητε, with God as the implicit subject of the theological passive (see also 1:15). It is difficult to identify the precise meaning of ἐπί with the dative exactly: in, to, or due to (Aland & Aland 1988:581-583). One must remain open for a variety of interpretations. γάρ is probably not meant as a stringent argument, but as perpetuating and leading over. (Were it to introduce a stringent argument, it would have referred to 5:7-8, but this does not seem to be the case).

The entire phrase possesses the character of an impressive repetition of the term “freedom.” Furthermore – and in addition to the meaning of 5:1 and the thematic foundation built in the ensuing verses – 5:13 links “freedom” to the theme of the vocation (ἐκλήθητε), picking up the basic theme of the letter (see 5:8) already mentioned at the beginning (see 1:6). This freedom is a gift from God and part of the call by God through Christ.

It appears that Paul is well aware of the fact that his addressees could misunderstand “freedom”. Therefore, in 5:13b, he explains precisely what he means by “freedom,” differentiating it from any possible misunderstanding of the term (Egger 1985:37). Paul describes such a misunderstanding in a typical Pauline way: εἰς ἀφορμὴν τῆ σαρκί. Freedom may not be used as a false pretence or as an opportunity for the fleshly human being to follow her or his instincts. To illustrate what he has in mind, Paul then cites a catalogue of a life in the flesh in 5:19-21. In Galatians 5:13, ἀλλά introduces the positive side, corresponding to freedom: διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις. Through the term ἀγάπη the assertion is thematically related to 5:6. One finds this term especially in the New Testament; outside the Bible it is hardly used.<sup>6</sup> Paul uses the term mostly for brotherly love which is linked with the love of God expressed in his revelation to humankind in Jesus Christ (see Rom. 8:32, 39; Gal. 1:4; 2:20; 5:22; Rom. 5:6, 8, 10; 15:30; 2 Cor. 5:14). Therefore, Paul does not use it only to refer to a purely ethical commandment of brotherly love, but also to refer to ἀγάπη as a gift from God; it is simultaneously a gift of God and a commandment (see 1 Cor. 14:1; 16:14; Rom. 13:8-9; 15:1).<sup>7</sup>

6 See Schneider (1992:28). On the term ἀγάπη in the New Testament, see also Strobel (1989:206-208).

7 Borse (1984:190) understands love as a limitation of freedom. I disagree with this position as love does not function as a boundary to freedom, but as a certain way of living freedom, based on and oriented towards the relationship with Christ and with each other. Such a relational understanding of freedom continues the process of liberation.

The term *ἀγάπη* links 5:13 to 5:6: *οὔτε ... ἰσχύει οὔτε* relativises the difference between Jews and Gentiles (see 2:6, 15) with the all decisive *πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη*: “Faith” has an impact and a force; it is not a mere theoretical issue. Paul uses *ἐνεργέω* in Galatians twice more (2:8 [twice]; 3:5) where God is the acting subject. This corresponds to a general Pauline usage (see 1 Cor. 12:6, 11; Phil. 2:13; 1 Thess. 2:13) and emphasises that God empowers one to act out of love. It should not be confined to brotherly love, but should be considered as a basic attitude of love, based on faith in Christ; thus love with its origin in a personal relationship with Christ. Love is thus to be understood basically as a relational category.

Verse 5:13 amplifies the message of 5:6 in two ways. Firstly, “love” is explicitly linked to one’s behaviour towards other believers. A life following the call by God and based on “freedom” should be oriented towards other believers in the churches of Galatia. Secondly, the interaction with each other is described as “slavery.” In the light of Galatians 4, the use of the term *δουλεύετε* here is extremely strong. Its point lies in the orientation of the slavery mentioned here: they should serve each other, not the law.

“Love” remains central in 5:14. It is the point of reference for the modal attitude of serving each other and for the correct perception of the law. The respect for, and the fulfilment of the law (*πᾶς νόμος ... πεπλήρωται*) does not imply the implementation of every single letter of the law, but the pervasion of one’s own attitude of serving and readiness to help with love (see also Rom. 13:8-9). Therefore, Paul gives a clear indication of the understanding of the relationship as one of Christians following the example of Jesus himself. Faith can be effective and have an impact (see 5:6) only in this way; not by observing regulations.

This fundamental message is ironically and sarcastically directed to the churches of Galatia in 5:15. The exaggerated imagery – found on many occasions in profane literature (e.g., Plutarch, Mor. 2234d-e; Epictet, Diss. II 22,27-28; Lucian, Pisc 36) – echoes the emotionally intense discussion, the origin of which probably lies in the Pauline mission.

The starting point of 5:16 is the concern that freedom could be understood in an arbitrary way and could form the basis of a life full of vices (as mentioned in 5:13). Therefore, Paul points out *πνεῦμα* as the point of reference for Christians, thereby embedding it in the reality of baptism. *πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε* can be paraphrased as “live your life based on the foundation of your baptism.” *καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκὸς οὐ μὴ τελέσητε* has a consecutive mode: A life based on the foundation of one’s baptism will not allow the “flesh” to gain control. “Spirit” and “flesh” have to be understood in terms of the two catalogues in 5:19-21 (flesh) and in 5:22-24 (Spirit). The opposition between the two, already mentioned in 5:16, is emphasised in

5:17, which provides a reason for the assertion in 5:16. The emphasis is formulated in a way (a double reciprocity) that gives the most weight to the irreconcilable opposition between “flesh” and “Spirit.” The relevance of this verse is enhanced rhetorically: the antithetic parallelism underlines the predicate positioned in the centre:

ἡ γὰρ σὰρξ	ἐπιθυμεῖ κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος
τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα	κατὰ τῆς σαρκός.

The rhetorical structure already points to the conclusion: ταῦτα γὰρ ἀλλήλοις ἀντίκειται.

The verse ends with the final sentence, ἵνα μὴ ἂ ἐὰν θέλητε ταῦτα ποιῆτε, which must be linked with the imperative in 5:16a. Between 5:16a and the end of 5:17 a Pauline understanding of life has been developed: There is a clear distinction between a baptised, πνεῦμα-oriented life and a non-baptised, flesh-oriented life. Baptism *per se* is not decisive; it is the concrete realisation and implementation of the reality of baptism in the life of an individual that matters (see 5:6).

Verse 5:18 sees a return to the basic reasoning and language-patterns of the letter as a whole: a contrast is created between life in the Spirit and life ὑπὸ νόμον. Being under the law is understood as part of an attitude ἐπιθυμία σαρκός (5:16). This understanding builds a context-related interpretation of the law.<sup>8</sup>

πνεῦμα is clearly the opposite of σὰρξ. In addition, in 5:5-6, being in Christ and the life of the baptised is characterised, with the Spirit playing an important role: ἡμεῖς γὰρ πνεύματι ἐκ πίστεως ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης ἀπεκδεχόμεθα. As from 5:2-4, the second person plural has now emphatically changed to ἡμεῖς, which includes Paul. In this sentence γὰρ is not to be understood in a causal, but in a continuative sense. Verse 5:5 leaves a substantially overloaded impression, as Paul includes all the important points he wishes to make. The hope that is referred to here, has already begun, and will be completed in the future (see Rom. 8:19, 23, 25; Phil. 3:20). One could even state that the pleonastic formulation of “hope” could be viewed as an expression of confidence. This hope is based on the δικαιοσύνη, in which

8 Paul seems to develop a stricter position regarding the law than in Romans. Betz (1988:430-431) points out that “im Galaterbrief (...) keine Möglichkeit für eine eschatologische Erlösung des Judentums offengelassen (ist) wie in Röm 11,25-32.” Mussner (1988:417) has a different view: “Weil Paulus im Gal den Weg des Gesetzes, den das Judentum noch geht, als überholt erklärt, empfiehlt er Israel dem ‘Erbarmen’ Gottes, der auch Israel ‘sola gratia’ zu retten vermag. So deutet der Apostel in Gal 6,16 schon an, was er dann in Röm 9-11 explizieren wird. Paulus hat sein Volk nie vergessen.”

case the genitive has to be identified as expegetical. *πνεύματι ἐκ πίστεως* renders this expectation more accurately. The basic attitude is described by *πίστις* – the readiness to engage with the message of Christ and with Christ-conformity (see 4:19). This happens with the power and through the gift of the Spirit, i.e., because of being baptised. Verse 5:6 adds to the distinction between indispensable priority and what is secondary with a summarising short formula *ἐν ... Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*.

Both *σάρξ* and *πνεῦμα* are concretely illustrated in the catalogues of a life in the flesh (5:19-21) and in the Spirit (5:22-24) respectively. The catalogue of a life in flesh in 5:19-21 starts with an introductory assertion *τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός* (and not of the Spirit). In the context of the letter the term *τὰ ἔργα* has a negative connotation (see 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10) and is associated with one's own efforts and acts. The catalogue follows antique examples (Vögtle 1936; 1995:589-91) and represents a typical form of admonitory instruction (see 1 Thess. 4:4-6; Rom. 1:29-31; 13:13; 1 Cor. 5:10, 11; 6:9-10; 2 Cor. 12:20-21 and later Col. 3:5, 8; Eph. 4:31; 1 Tim. 1:9-10; 2 Tim. 3:2-7, continued in Did. 1-6; PastHerm, Mand VIII 3-4).<sup>9</sup> Paul adds a comment at the end – referring to the future – that the reality of baptism has no effect without an affiliation with Christ (3:29) and childhood of God (4:7). Semantically, *οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν* expresses exclusion. An even stronger emphasis is achieved because of the use of *βασιλείαν θεοῦ*, which is a *hapax legomenon* in Galatians and indicates the dimensions and the importance of such a lifestyle.

Adhering to the contrast that is usual for such catalogues of virtues and vices (see, e.g., Col. 3:12-18), the catalogue of a life in the Spirit in 5:22-24 is characterised as *καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος*. A difference with 5:19 can be noticed, as the image that is now used indicates a living, dynamic, growth, and a positive development. *πνεῦμα* provides a positive and effective foundation for one's life – one on which virtues can grow. Paul makes it clear that there is no contrast between the virtues and the law (5:23), although a life full of virtues is not a life under the law (5:18).

Verse 5:24 connects the affiliation with Christ in the baptism-reality explicitly with the cross: Christians belonging to Jesus Christ have crucified their flesh (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:19) (Borse 1984:206). In order to indicate what the flesh entails, the contrast with the Spirit is emphasised by this link between the baptism-reality and the cross. The affiliation with Christ in the communion with the cross creates an opportunity for a concrete way of living. It is a chance – an ongoing task (Egger 1985:39). Verse 5:24 looks like a final remark on 5:13-15 and ends this section.

9 See also the position of the Stoa, focusing on Zenon, by Diogenes L., VII 110-114.



Verses 5:25 and 5:26 are strongly interconnected and form the beginning of the admonitory section up to 6:10, with several appeals for a life in the Spirit.<sup>10</sup> As a consequence of 5:24, 5:25 points out the accordance with the Spirit. The expression *πνεύματι καὶ στοιχώμεν* urges the reader to “walk the talk” and follows on *πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε* (5:16). The Spirit-orientation is the decisive point of reference for daily life. Verse 5:26 gives this admonition its “Sitz im Leben,” namely the life within the churches of Galatia. All the concrete admonitions in 5:1-26 – in particular in 5:14 and 5:15 – must be understood against this background as dealing with concrete interpersonal interaction. The latter is the focus of these admonitions in so far as it indicates a life not lived in accordance with the basic principle of “love” (see 5:5; 5:13). As such, the fundamental sense of *ἐλευθερία* is clarified, as well as what it entails in the concrete context of the churches of Galatia.

#### 4. THE RELATION BETWEEN FREEDOM, LOVE, SPIRIT AND FLESH IN GALATIANS 5:13

In Galatians, freedom is strongly directed by the Spirit. Through baptism, the Spirit gives Christians freedom in the sense of an empowerment for and a responsibility to live a life in the Spirit. Freedom does not mean that one may live and act in an arbitrary way. There is no alternative for Christians, as only in this way the cross and its significance for salvation remain valid. Anything else would mean a return to a life in the flesh and, therefore, a lifestyle without Christ which does not lead to the *βασιλεία θεοῦ*. Hence, in Galatians, in terms of the opposition between the Spirit and the flesh, freedom is positioned clearly on the side of the Spirit. It is a freedom made possible by Christ and gained in order to follow the Spirit and to distance oneself from the flesh.

Freedom is directed by the Spirit, moving one away from the flesh to an attitude and life in love. Freedom enables one to live and to act with an attitude of reciprocal service in love, in order to realise one’s common destiny with the crucified and resurrected Christ, initiated in baptism. The Spirit guarantees the necessary dynamic for this. In this sense, freedom is a precondition, in that one has the opportunity of choosing to enter in a relationship with Christ and God and with each other. Without this choice there would be no relationship; a relational reality exists only on the basis of freedom. Thanks to the gift of the Spirit by God, one is able to choose the right way of life built on, and saturated by love, instead of a lifestyle dominated by the flesh.

---

10 For this section, see Pigeon (2000:425-438); Lambrecht (1997:33-56); Schlier (1989:264-267); Stanton (2001:47-59); and Kwon (2004).

As far as the relation between the Spirit and love is concerned, the Spirit is the force guiding freedom in a relation of love. Love not only means brotherly love, but also refers to a basic attitude of love, based on one's faith in Christ. Hence, love has its origin in the personal relationship with Christ. Christians should open themselves to each other and live their life in love as a basic relational category rooted in Christ.

The relation between freedom and flesh is to be viewed in terms of the close relation between freedom and the Spirit. Freedom has a distinct position within the opposition between the Spirit and flesh, but on the side of the Spirit. This is not self-evident, as freedom implies that one may take the opposite position. This openness distinguishes freedom from power. Freedom implies that one could follow the flesh, and live an arbitrary life. (In 5:13, there is an indication in this direction.) This is not the case in Galatians, as, in this letter, freedom, is viewed as being directed by the Spirit. Accordingly, there is a relation between freedom and flesh, in that freedom could theoretically choose the flesh, but it intentionally decides against the flesh. Thus the relation between freedom and flesh is strongly influenced by the opposition between flesh and the Spirit. This opposition colours the relation between the Spirit and the flesh. Flesh and Spirit build the two extreme opposites in the Pauline understanding. By means of the two catalogues in 5:19-21 and in 5:22-24, Galatians offers concrete descriptions of both. These elements prove that the relation between the Spirit and flesh is dominated by insurmountable differences and that no compromise between the two can be found. One thus has to decide for the one or the other, a combination is not possible.

As far as the relation between freedom and love is concerned, freedom is dependent on the Spirit for the enjoyment of love, since the Spirit serves as the point of reference, guiding freedom towards a life of love. The Spirit is thus the directing and dynamic entity behind the relation between freedom and love. Similar to the relation between freedom and flesh, freedom could theoretically also take the decision for a lifestyle without love. In Galatians, however, it is argued that freedom should be expressed under the guidance of the Spirit, who calls one to live a life in love.

Regarding the relation between love and flesh, it emerges from the discussion of the relation between freedom and love, between freedom and the Spirit, and between love and the Spirit, that love has no place in a life oriented to the flesh. Love cannot grow in such an environment and under such an influence. Love depends on the power of the Spirit, and is incompatible with a flesh-oriented way of living.

When Paul ascribes an attitude which reckons the full observance of the law as relevant for salvation to an attitude belonging to the flesh, it

is hardly possible to underestimate the strong polemic inherent to this Pauline teaching. Though the analysis of the terms “freedom,” “love,” “Spirit,” and “flesh” in Galatians 5:13, and of the relation between them, contributes to the understanding of the law in Gal, another exegetical problem still remains. As J. Frey (2006:214) describes it:

[D]as Verhältnis der Gesetzeslehre des Gal zu der im Röm ausgeführten, nicht weniger grundsätzlicheren, aber doch in einzelnen Elementen wesentlich positiveren, unpolemischeren Sicht des Gesetzes. Hier stellt sich die Frage, ob Paulus das Judentum seiner Zeit missverstanden, ob er seine jüdische Identität gar preisgegeben hat oder ob er sich – bei aller Polemik – noch im Rahmen der innerjüdischen Diskussion bewegt.

This question, obviously nurtured by the relation between the terms “freedom,” “love,” “Spirit” and “flesh,” still needs to be clarified.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALAND, K. & ALAND, B.

1988. *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literatur* von Walter Bauer. Berlin: De Gruyter.

BACHMANN, M. & KOLLMANN B. (EDS.)

2009. *Umstrittener Galaterbrief. Studien zur Situierung und Theologie des Paulus-Schreibens*. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener. BThSt 106.

BAUMERT, N.

2009. *Der Weg des Trauens. Übersetzung und Auslegung des Briefes an die Galater und des Briefes an die Philipper*. Würzburg: Echter.

BETZ, H.D.

1979. *Galatians. A commentary on Paul's Letter to the Galatians*. Philadelphia: Fortress. Hermeneia.

1988. *Der Galaterbrief. Ein Kommentar zum Brief des Apostels Paulus an die Gemeinden in Galatien*. München: Kaiser.

BORSE, U.

1984. *Der Brief an die Galater*. Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet. RNB.

DU TOIT, A.B.

1994. Vilification as a pragmatic device in early Christian epistolography. *Bib* 75:403-412.

EGGER, W.

1985. *Galaterbrief – Philipperbrief – Philemonbrief*. Würzburg: Echter. NEB 9/11/15.

FREY, J.

2006. Galaterbrief. In: O. Wischmeyer (ed.), *Paulus. Leben – Umwelt – Werk – Briefe* (Tübingen: A. Francke), pp. 192-216.

KERTELGE, K.

1991. Gesetz und Freiheit im Galaterbrief. In: K. Kertelge, *Grundthemen paulinischer Theologie* (Freiburg: Herder), pp. 184-196.

1991. Freiheitsbotschaft und Liebesgebot im Galaterbrief. In: K. Kertelge, *Grundthemen paulinischer Theologie* (Freiburg: Herder), pp. 197-208.

KILGALLEN, J. J.

1999. The strivings of the flesh (Galatians 5,17). *Bib* 80:113-114.

KIRCHSCHLAEGER, W.

1996. Kirche ist Freiheit! *ThpQ* 144:52-66.

KONRADT, M.

2010. Die Christonomie der Freiheit. Zu Paulus' Entfaltung seines ethischen Ansatzes in Galatians 5,13-6,10. *Early Christianity* 1(1):60-81.

KWON, Y.-G.

2004. *Eschatology in Galatians*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck. WUNT II 183.

LAMBRECHT, J.

1998. The right things you want to do. A note on Galatians 5,17d. *Bib* 79:515-524.

MUSSNER, F.

1988. *Der Galaterbrief*. Freiburg i. B.: Herder. HThK 9.

RONDEZ, P.

2002. Ein Zentrum paulinischer Theologie? Eine pneumatologische Erschliessung des Zusammenhangs von Soteriologie und Christologie anhand von Galatians 5,25. In: A. Dettwyler (ed.), *Kreuzestheologie im Neuen Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, WUNT 151), pp. 59-79.

SCHLIER H.

1989. *Der Brief an die Galater*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht. KEK 7.

SCHNEIDER, G.

1992. Art. ἀγάπη. *EWNT* I:19-30.

STANTON, G.

2001. What is the law of Christ? *ExAu* 17:47-59.

STROBEL, A.

1989. *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*. Zürich: Theologischer Verlag. ZBK 6.1.

TOLMIE, D. F.

2009. The interpretation and translation of Galatians 5:12. *Acta Theologica* 29(2):86-102.

Kirchschlaeger            The relation between freedom, love, Spirit and flesh

VÖGTLE, A.

1936. Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im NT. Münster: Aschendorff. NTA XVI 4/5.

1995. Art. Laster, Lasterkatalog. *NBL* II:589-91.

WEDER H.

1998. Die Normativität der Freiheit. Eine Überlegung zu Galatians 5,1.13-25. In: M. Trowitzsch (ed.), *Paulus. Apostel Jesu Christi* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck), pp. 129-145.

*Keywords*

*Trefwoorde*

Pauline Literature

Pauliniese Literatuur

Galatians 5:13

Galasiërs 5:13

Spirit

Gees

Freedom

Vryheid

Love

Liefde

Flesh

Vlees