

SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

NTS535
STUDIES IN THE
PAULINE WRITINGS -
GALATIANS

P. Richard Choi

InMinistry Center Intensive
MA in Pastoral Ministry





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STUDIES IN THE PAULINE WRITINGS -
GALATIANS

March 18-22, 2018
InMinistry Center Intensive
MA in Pastoral Ministry

GENERAL CLASS INFORMATION

Class acronym: NTST535
Class name: Studies in the Pauline Writings - Galatians
Semester & year: Spring 2018
Class location: Union College – Ortner Center
Class time/day: Sunday, March 18, 7:00pm – 9:00pm
Monday – Thursday, March 19-22, 8:00am – 5:00pm
Credits offered: 3

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT DETAILS

Instructor: P. Richard Choi, PhD
Telephone: W – (269) 471-6573
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Email: choir@andrews.edu
Office location: Seminary Building - N128
Office hours: By Appointment

BULLETIN CLASS DISCRIPTION

Study of the selected letters of Paul. Greek not required. Not applicable to MDiv credit.

CLASS OBJECTIVES

MAPMin MA in Pastoral Ministry (MAPMin) English & Spanish Program Outcomes

1. Delivers effective biblically based sermons.
2. Demonstrates proper biblical interpretation skills.
3. Understands the historical–theological and missional development of the Adventist Church.
4. Trains church members for evangelism.
5. Empowers church members for leadership
6. Capable of reaching specific social groups

Course Learning Outcomes

- (1) Analyze the entire book of Galatians in English through a verse-by-verse exegetical study
- (2) Compare different versions and commentaries to exegete Paul's letters in English
- (3) Explain the doctrines of justification and sanctification in Galatians from an Adventist perspective.
- (4) Describe key theological concepts of Paul relating to salvation.

Justification

As one of the earliest written documents of the NT, Galatians offers an unparalleled eye-witness account of the key events that shaped the church's distinctive identity in relation to early Judaism. For example, Gal 1:15-2:15 offers a very detailed autobiographical account of Paul's travels and encounters with key apostolic figures in the early church. It also chronologically recounts his experiences in the church from his conversion to his induction into the apostolic community. Similarly, Galatians 2:16-4:31 provides the earliest record of Paul's careful exegesis of the Pentateuch that laid the foundation for the early church's understanding of the Mosaic Law. Anyone trying to understand the Christian message in its earliest stages will find Galatians a treasure trove of unique and valuable information.

Methodology

(1) Lectures and Dialogue. The instructor will attempt to lecture through the entire Letter to the Galatians, verse by verse, while engaging the students in dialogue. Students are expected to thoroughly familiarize themselves with the entire Epistle and Richard Longenecker's commentary before coming to the intensive.

(2) Exams. Students will take four exams during the course to show that they have gained a thorough grasp of the material.

(3) Written assignments. Before the intensive, student will prepare 3 exegetical journals. And after the intensive, students will submit an exegesis paper to demonstrate that they have learned to properly exegete Galatians.

HOW MUCH TOTAL TIME INVESTMENT FOR THIS CLASS?

Advanced theological education is no ‘cake-walk’, nor is it intended to ‘wear out the saints’. Designed to immerse the learner in deep theological study and introspective reflection, seminary course expectations are to challenge the student by examining his/her own premises against the study, research and inspiration of biblical scholarship.

This will take intentionality and time on your part. Course loads are guided by the expectation that students will spend a total of 45 hours of course exposure to earn 1 hour of academic credit. That translates into 90 hours invested for a 2-credit class, and 135 hours for a 3-credit course. Students are advised to spend their time accordingly to meet course requirements and deadlines.

The following is a rule of thumb to help guide your reading, research, and writing for Seminary courses:

- Average reading speed 15-20 pages/hr.
- Average writing speed 3 hr./page
- Exam preparation 4-8 hours

Based on these averages, requirements for this class will take the average student the following amount of time:

- Required reading (1 book)
 plus the report 24 hrs.
- 3 Pre-Intensive Videos 9 hrs.
- 3 Pre-Intensive Journals 27 hrs.
- 4 exam preparation 9 hrs.
- 15-page exegesis paper 45 hrs.
- Hours in class 30 hrs.

Total Hours for class 135

TEXTBOOKS, RECOMMENDED READINGS AND CLASS BIBLIOGRAPHY

Required Reading:

Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (Word Biblical Commentary 41; Dallas, TX, 1990).
ISBN 0-8499-0240-1. (\$31.00 on amazon.com)

Selected Bibliography

Grammars, Lexicons, Linguistic Key and Theological Lexicons

Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, & Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd Edition. (Consult Fee, 87-89; a very valuable source of information for word study)

Balz, Horst & G. Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*. 3 Volumes. (Full of insights for pastors and scholars alike)

Moule, Charles C. F. *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*. 2nd Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959. (Extremely helpful for understanding the way Greek was actually used by the NT writers, but hard to follow; makes a lot more sense if you look up the references)

Rogers, C. L. and C. L. Rogers, III. *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998. (Very nice to use for syntax, but be careful of its one-sided reading).

Spicq, C. *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*. 3 Volumes. 1982. (Good for doing a word study, especially for looking up Hellenistic Parallels)

Wallace. D. B. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*. (Sometimes convoluted, but an excellent reference for looking up Greek grammar).

Other Exegetical Tools

Danker W. Fredrick. *Multipurpose Tools for Bible Study*. Revised and Expanded Edition. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993. (Somewhat outdated but still very useful)

Fee, Gordon. *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 2002). (Nice as a reference; a very tedious reading if you want to read it through; best if you use it for the tools that you actually intend to use in your paper)

Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *An Introductory Bibliography for the Study of Scripture*. 3rd Edition. Rome: Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1990. (All you ever wanted to know about the secondary NT literature)

Porter, Stanley E., ed. *A Handbook of the Exegesis of the New Testament*. Leiden/New York: Brill, 2002.
(A good reference to look up the various tools)

Commentaries and Studies on Galatians

Burton, Ernest de Witt. *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1920.

Betz, Hans Dieter. *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979.

Hays, Richard B. *The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 56. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983.

Lightfoot, Joseph B. *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians* (1868). London: Macmillan, 1879. Reprint of 1879 edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1955. (This old commentary is timeless.)

Longenecker, Richard N. *Galatians*. Word Biblical Commentary 41. Dallas: Word, 1990.

Siva, Moisés. *Interpreting Galatians: Explorations in Exegetical Method*. 2nd Edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2001.

Wright, N. T. *The Climax of the Covenant. Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991. (A work on Galatians but relevant even to Romans)

General Works on Paul Relevant to This Course

Dunn, James D. G. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. Grand Rapids, MI., Eerdmans, 1998. (Written on the template of Romans)

Dunn, James D. G., ed. *Paul and the Mosaic Law*. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1996. Grand Rapids, MI., Eerdmans/ London: SCM Press, 2001. (An exhaustive and noteworthy collection of essays on the law from the standpoint of modern debate)

Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome. *Paul: A Critical Life*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1996 (A very nice survey of Pauline scholarship on the question of the person and the thoughts of Paul)

Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul's Doctrine of Justification: A Challenge to the New Perspective*. Downers Grove, Ill.K InterVarsity, 2001. (A Lutheran perspective on Paul that speaks to the modern issues, though not always successfully)

Ridderbos, Herman N. *Paul: And Outline of His Theology*. Translated by John R. DeWitt. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975. (Rather a general and encyclopedic work, but relevant to the study of Galatians because of its eschatological redemptive perspective)

Examinations

Four exams will be given during the intensive, one each morning, Tuesday through Thursday from 8-9 a.m., over the lectures of the previous day, and one on Thursday at 7 p.m. and cover the material given up to Thursday afternoon. Each exam will consist of two questions from which you will be allowed to choose one. Each exam will be worth a hundred points. Students will be expected to show evidence of having read and thought about the corresponding portions of Galatians beyond what was taught in the lectures. It is *required* that students read through the *English* portions of the assigned commentary before arriving on site to start the class. **YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO REGISTER FOR THE COURSE** if you have not read the commentary and do not have the journals and the book review ready to hand in on the first night of the intensive. See below for more information on the journals.

Expectations. You may use an unmarked Bible for the exam. (1) Be able to exegete the problem phrases and words in all the verses covered in class; (2) succinctly summarize the points covered in class; (3) bring in materials from Longenecker that were not covered in class to supplement your essays; (4) thoughtfully reflect on the key ideas.

Assessment Rubrics for the Exams

	A Range	B Range	C Range	D Range	F Range	Total
Accuracy with which the lectures are reproduced	All the main points of the lectures are covered and explanations are accurate with the scriptural examples used in class.	Most of the points presented in the lectures are covered and some concrete examples used in class appear	About 2/3rds of the points presented in the lectures are covered. Some inaccuracy in the examples provided.	Less than ½ of the points covered in lectures are covered. Has many errors.	The essay consists of mostly irrelevant information and is of poor quality.	70%
Interactions with Longenecker's Commentary	Refers to the commentary in a meaningful way throughout the essay. Makes at least 3 meaningful references.	Refers to the commentary. Makes less than 3 references.	Makes only one reference to the commentary	Makes no references to the commentary	Makes false references to the commentary	20%

Personal Reflections	Gives clear evidence of having thoughtfully reflected on the lectures and the reading. The reflections are deep and creative.	Offers personal reflections of some originality	Some good ideas here and there	Some personal reflections but mostly unrelated to the material	No personal reflections at all	10%
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GRADING CRITERIA AND COURSE ASSESSMENT ITEMS

Total Points Possible

You may earn up to 500 points with your journals, book review, exams, and paper: 50 points each for the three pre-intensive journals (150 points total); 50 points for the book review; 100 points for each exam (200 total), and 100 points for the paper. You may earn up to 25 extra points if you submit the lecture notes you have taken in class by email. The notes are due at the time you submit your final paper.

Grading Scale

95-100	A
90-94	A-
85-89	B+
80-84	B
75-79	B-
70-74	C+
65-69	C
60-64	C-
55-59	D
0-54	F

BEFORE CLASS REQUIREMENTS

Pre-Intensive.

1. *Pre-course Videos*

Students are required to view the three videos on the LearningHub website before the class begins: “Pauline Scholarship,” “Sketch of Paul’s Life” and “Paul’s Letter Writing.” This should take a total of about 9 hours. Students need to submit a statement that they have watched the 3 videos prior to the beginning of class.

2. *Three Exegetical Journals* (LO 2). Please see below for a sample journal. The journals may be written on any of the passages in Galatians except for the one on which you plan to write your final exegesis paper. The journal is divided into three sections: (1) Personal reflection; (2) dialogue with Longenecker; and (3) revised reflection. In ‘*the personal reflection*’ section, write down what comes to your mind as you read the text, comparing at least five different versions (include KJV). Don’t be afraid of making mistakes. Simply write down your thoughts and observations as you would for the rough draft of a sermon. DO NOT consult any commentaries for this section of the journal, but it is acceptable to look up information in theological dictionaries and standard reference works on Greek grammar or NT backgrounds. As much as you can, focus on individual words or phrases that the translators have problems with (those on which different versions differ among themselves). In the ‘*dialogue with scholars*’ section, enter into dialogue with Longenecker on at least three points from your ‘personal reflection’ section. Try to engage Longenecker on a particular word, phrase, or background information like rhetoric. Each dialogue should be a unit, separated into paragraphs. It is, however, possible, that Longenecker does not discuss the points you raise. In such a case, either read his comments on related passages in Galatians or read other commentaries that do address your issues, and discuss those instead. Finally, in your ‘*revised reflection*’ section, begin your paragraph with a clear, one-sentence thesis statement that sums up a concept that you found especially interesting in your discussions in the first two sections. (Please write your thesis statement in bold letters, so it can be easily seen.) And then follow the thesis statement up with a revised discussion on the passage – revised, corrected, and enriched in light of what you have discovered in your dialogue with Longenecker. In this section, it is permissible to copy and paste materials from your first two sections. DO NOT WRITE MORE THAN 3 PAGES FOR EACH JOURNAL. Please note that it should be single spaced (see the sample journal below.) Each journal is worth 50 points.

3. Assessment Rubrics

	A Range	B Range	C Range	D Range	F Range	Total
Personal Reflection	Contains deep and original thoughts. Carefully compares and notes the differences between versions. Does independent work, looking up reference tools.	Contains some deep and original thoughts. Occasionally compares and notes the differences between versions. Occasionally does independent work, looking up reference tools.	Contains mostly clichéd and expected thoughts. Does not compare or note the differences between versions. Does not look up reference tools. Offers mostly general and vague information.	Relates to the text in some ways, but is written poorly and in an incoherent manner with little that is worthy of note. Makes no effort to compare versions or look up reference tools.	Bad writing. Incoherent thoughts. Nothing worth reading. Consists mostly of quotes from other writings.	40%
Dialogue with Longenecker	Significant points are discussed, presenting evidence when disagreeing, and advancing new thoughts and understanding about the text when agreeing.	Minor points are engaged. Disagrees or agrees by stating, “I disagree” or “I agree,” but offers mostly shallow and clichéd reasoning.	Discusses Longenecker but not on the basis of what was written in the first section of the journal. Or discusses Longenecker in a way that does not advance one’s own understanding of the text.	Poorly reasoned and opinionated dismissal or acceptance of Longenecker’s views. Also incoherent discussion that is hard to follow.	Shallow and unrelated discussion of Longenecker in a language that is confusing. Or just some random quotations followed by mostly empty words.	20%
Revised Reflection	A thoughtful and significant revision of the first section, using fresh facts and concepts from the first two sections.	Mostly a straight restatement of the first section with some sentences from the section	There are thoughtful and thorough-going revisions of the first section here and there. But marked by random, thoughtless	Poorly written, incoherent restatement of the first section with some random cutting and pasting done from the second section.	A straight reproduction of the discussion from first section with no significant revision. Even typos	30%

		inserted here and there. But the revisions do show that some reflection has taken place.	selections of passages from the first two sections.	Shows little sign of having processed the information.	are reproduced. Nothing has been learned from the dialogues.	
Style	See B for guidelines; plus it is a polished paper with refined style.	Follows a Standard Style (SBL or Turabian preferred); No more than two errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar; neatly laid out; has a cover page.	See B for guidelines except with many errors.	Lots of errors – too many to count; does not consistently follow a style.	Reads like it was typed the night before; full of errors; poor grammar; difficult to follow.	10%

4. *Book Review.* Please read the commentary after you have done the three journals. Remember that you have only read the commentary in small sections for your journals. This review will give you a better idea of what to look for in the commentary. In your review, answer the following three questions.

- What information stood out for you as you read Longenecker’s introduction and why?
- What do you think about his views on “the faith of Christ”?
- Which aspects of the commentary did you find helpful (and why?) and which did you find unhelpful?

The report is to be no more than 3 pages in length. The report is worth 50 points.

AFTER CLASS REQUIREMENTS

(1) **Paper (LO 2-3).** Students need to submit an exegesis paper on Gal 4:13-16 or 5:13-16. The paper must be typed, double-spaced, and 15 pages long (no more). A hard copy and an electronic copy of the paper is **due in the instructor’s office by May 3, 2018**

(2) Expectations.

You are expected to write the paper using the exegetical tools learned in class. You are encouraged to write your paper using the technique you practiced in your pre-session journals. Except, in this final paper, include only the materials from the final section of your personal journals, (if you plan to use journals as ‘worksheets’ for your papers). The paper must reflect the learning that took place during and after the intensive. In particular, your exegesis paper must be developed around the various definitions presented in class. You don’t have to always agree with the instructor, but you must show evidence of having struggled with the definitions and approaches given in class. Also, be sure that your argument is

well supported by evidence gleaned from the text. The paper must discuss the assigned verses in a verse-by-verse fashion, using the following exegetical tools: (1) personal reflections on the actual text, (2) historical backgrounds, (3) word study, (4) a comparison of different versions (5) dialogue with scholars, and (6) an Adventist perspective. Each of these sections will be explained in class. The criteria for grading will be the depth and quality of reflection *and* the level of mastery involved in the way the student uses these exegetical tools. This essay should be viewed as a culmination of your knowledge and understanding on the Letter to the Galatians. The paper is 100 points. See rubric below.

	Descriptions	A	B	C	D	F	Grade
Analysis of Text	Analysis of Text (Comparisons of versions and commentaries)	Exceeds the basic standards (9-10)	Meets basic standards: knows how to identify difficulties in the translation of the text; no more than 3 errors in each type of analysis used. (8)	Does not meet the basic standards in some areas (7)	Does not meet the basic standards in many areas (6)	Does not meet the basic standards at all. (0-5)	10 (sample) Score: __
	Analysis of Literary Structure and Context (pericope, narrative, rhetorical, structural, intertextual, etc.)	Exceeds the basic standards ()	Meets basic standards: the suggested structures correspond to the intent of the text; no more than 3 errors in each type of analysis used. ()	Does not meet the basic standards in some areas ()	Does not meet the basic standards in many areas ()	Does not meet the basic standards at all. ()	____ Score: __
	Analysis of Backgrounds (history, primary literature: Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Patristic, etc.)	Exceeds the basic standards ()	Meets basic standards: Knows how to apply the information in primary and secondary historical sources to the text; no more than 3 errors in each type of analysis used. ()	Does not meet the basic standards in some areas ()	Does not meet the basic standards in many areas ()	Does not meet the basic standards at all. ()	____ Score: __
Expertise in Field	Interaction with secondary literature (journals, books, dissertations, Internet, etc.)	Exceeds the basic standards ()	Meets basic standards: cites at least 5 source in discussion; engages in argumentation with authors at least 3 times, examining the evidence presented in the literature. ()	Does not meet the basic standards in some areas ()	Does not meet the basic standards in many areas ()	Does not meet the basic standards at all. ()	____ Score: __
Coherence of the Paper	Construction of Argument (identification of exegetical problems, goals, and thesis, flow, conclusion, etc.)	Exceeds the basic standards ()	Meets basic standards: has a thesis statement; evidence is presented to support the thesis; appropriate conclusions are drawn from the evidence ()	Does not meet the basic standards in some areas ()	Does not meet the basic standards in many areas ()	Does not meet the basic standards at all. ()	____ Score: __
	Style (clarity & style of writing, spelling, correct style for notes, etc.)	Exceeds the basic standards ()	Meets basic standards: no more than 3 spelling or grammatical errors; no more than 3 errors in the footnote and bibliographical entries; correctly follows the Andrews Style ()	Does not meet the basic standards in some areas ()	Does not meet the basic standards in many areas ()	Does not meet the basic standards at all. ()	____ Score: __
Relevance	Implications (personal, relating to church, further research, sermons, etc.)	Exceeds the basic standards ()	Meets basic standards: Inferences are drawn from the study; the ideas are coherent ()	Does not meet the basic standards in some areas ()	Does not meet the basic standards in many areas ()	Does not meet the basic standards at all. ()	____ Score: __
Overall Quality	Creativity, originality, sincerity, and quality of reflection	Very Satisfactory ()	Satisfactory ()	Somewhat Satisfactory ()	Barely Satisfactory ()	Not Satisfactory ()	____ Score: __

a. **The Lecture Notes.** Students can earn up to 25 points for submitting their lecture notes by email attachment after the intensive is over. The notes will be graded based on how useful they will be in your future ministry. **The cutoff date for submitting the lecture notes is May 3, 2018.** No notes will be accepted after this date.

b. **Late policy on the final paper and lecture notes.**

The following penalties will be applied for late submission of the final paper:

Assessments received by due date:	(possible A grade)
Delay up to 60 days:	(no better than an A- grade)
Delay up to 90 days:	(no better than a B+ grade)
Delay up to 120 days:	(no better than a B grade)
Delay up to 150 days:	(no better than a C grade)

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance

Attendance constitutes approximately one third of the total number of hours required in the course. For this course, students will be allowed to miss two class periods. Absences beyond these, even when excused, will bring down the grade by half a letter per period missed. If you have to miss a whole day of classes, you are advised to drop the class. If you are tardy on a consistent basis so that your tardiness becomes conspicuous, your grade will come down.

Disability Accommodations

If you qualify for accommodations under the American Disabilities Act, please see the instructor as soon as possible for assistance in arranging for such accommodations.

Audit

No one may audit this class without written permission from the Associate Dean and the Director of the MAPMin program. Regular attendance is required of those who are taking the course for an audit.

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, is a serious offense, and will result in an automatic F for the compromised portion of the course requirement, and the Associate Dean's office will be notified of the violation. No second chance will be given.

Questions and Discussions

Questions calling for clarification may be asked at any time during the lecture. All other questions or comments requiring discussion will be taken up 10 minutes before the end of each 50-minute class period. If there are no questions at that time, the instructor will decide whether to dismiss the class early or to continue with the lecture.

Conditions

Laptop Computer and Lecture Notes

Laptop computers may be used to take notes. No hard copies or electronic copies of files containing the lectures may be produced with the intention of circulating or selling them. The notes taken with a computer are for the sole use of the student taking the course. If the student wishes to sell or publish all or part of the lectures, he or she must obtain the instructor's prior and written approval. The decision to remain in the class is your consent to this condition.

Recording

The student may not use any other form of electronic recording device to record the lectures.

Changes in the Terms of this Syllabus

The terms of this syllabus may be changed during the semester at the discretion of the teacher, with the consent of the class.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Meeting times

Sunday (18th) 7-9pm

Monday (19th) 8a.m.-12 noon; 2-5p.m.

Tuesday (20th) 8a.m.-12 noon; 2-5p.m.

Wednesday (21st) 8a.m.-12 noon; 2-5p.m.

Thursday (22nd) 8a.m.-12 noon; 2-5p.m.

**The Schedule of the Lectures and Reading (Each lecture requires approximately 2 class periods)
(LO 1 and 4)**

		Contents
	1	Syllabus and Introduction to Galatians
	2	Paul's Proclamation (1:1-14)
	3	Paul's Conversion and Trip to Jerusalem (1:15-24)
	4	Paul's Second Trip to Jerusalem (2:1-10)
	5	Antioch Incident (2:11-15)
	7	Synopsis of Paul's Argument (2:16-21)
	8	Promise to Abraham (3:1-9)
	9	Law of Moses (3:10-14)
	10	Purpose of the Law (3:15-29)
	11	Not a Slave but a Child of God (4:1-20)
	12	Sarah and Hagar (4:21-31)
	13	Circumcision, the Ceremonial Laws, and Christ (5:1-21)
	14	Flesh and Spirit (5:13-26)
	15	Holiness and Community (6:1-10)
	16	New Creation and New Israel (6:11-18)
	17	Conclusion

INSTRUCTOR PROFILE

P. Richard Choi, PhD, is a professor of New Testament Studies and chair of the New Testament Department at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. His doctorate is from Fuller Theological Seminary. He has been teaching at the Seminary since 1991. He is a former president of the Adventist Society for Religious Studies, and currently serves as Executive Secretary of the Chicago Society of Biblical Research and Chair Designate of Regional Coordinators for the Society of Biblical Literature. He contributed the notes for Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and Philippians in the Andrews Study Bible. He is currently writing the commentary on Galatians for the Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary series. He is married to Louise and has two grown children.



A Sample Exegetical Journal

ESV **Galatians 5:1** For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Personal Reflection:

“For freedom Christ has set us free,” according to ESV. But the KJV and NKJV have it as “Stand fast therefore **in the liberty**.” Whereas the KJV and NKJV have the term “liberty” only once, the ESV, NIV, and the NRSV mention it twice, once as “freedom” and once as part of the phrase “set free.” This means that the key concept of this passage is “freedom.” The noun *freedom* is known in the Greek world as a political concept. Freedom is considered found when someone is to be at “one’s own disposal”.¹ This is shown in parallel to slavery. This word is also essential to a state of being.² There is also the philosophical sentiment in the time of Hellenism that referred to freedom as freedom from man, and subject only to God. Sometimes in this vein of thought, the focus is shifted to a radical approach of freedom, which focused on the freedom from human nature or one’s own nature, a search for peace within the soul.³

In the NT realization, freedom is not merely control over peripheral life through control over one’s own conscious or soul. Therefore, if an individual truly wants to come to grips with themselves they must surrender their will to something outside of themselves. For example, one could be free from the slavery of sin or the law (the Mosaic Law),⁴ as opposed to physical slavery.

In Galatians 5:1, freedom refers primarily to the law, freedom from the obligation to observe the Mosaic Law. First, Galatians 5:1 seems to wrap up the discussion in chapter 4. In Galatians 4:21 Paul asks if they desire to be subject to the law, and 4:29 states that time has relapsed and once more the “child who was born according to the flesh persecutes the child who was born according to the Spirit.” It is in this context that freedom is hoped for. This is a freedom from a life that leads to death and condemnation through the Law. The mention of circumcision in v. 2 also makes clear that Paul’s immediate concern here is the Mosaic Law. Therefore, the only conclusion I can come to is that one can be freed through Christ because he is, in the Greco-Roman parlance, the Patron who has the power to set us free from the burden of the Mosaic Law! But I wonder why Paul thinks of the law in such negative term.

The phrase “Christ has set (made) us free” is in the past tense, which means it is referring to a past time with implications to the time of speaking. In other words, it has implications for people today. Perhaps this means that we are all on the edge of reverting back to slavery, therefore we need to keep our focus on what Christ did for us if we do not want to revert back to

¹ Schlier, *evleu,qero,j, evleuqerio,w, ktl, TDNT, 2:487.*

² *Ibid., 2:488-492.*

³ *Ibid., 2:493-96.*

⁴ *Ibid., 2:496.*

slavery. It is ever a temptation for humans to jump back into the tangible. So, the tangible laws often seem to be the easiest thing to do. As Adventists, I think that we get so caught up in the law of the church or in fighting against the law of the country, that we lose focus on Christ and fall back into the slavery of legalism and the tangible. The past tense (aorist) also places the focus on the end of the act.⁵ Thus the verse stresses not only that “they” have been freed, but that the freedom has been achieved. The act of freeing was done by Christ, and we are lucky recipients of this gift.

“Stand firm therefore, and do not **submit** again to a yoke of slavery” (ESV). The KJV and NKJV have “be not entangled again” and the NIV “do not be ... burdened again.” I find this difference between “submit” and “entangle” interesting. But my question is why does it say *again*? It seems to imply that Galatians have submitted in the past to a yoke of slavery. The previous reference to freedom is on the law (perhaps not Mosaic) and on the will of mankind (their world), therefore it is logical to deduce that this freedom is from the slavery that is possibly being relapsed into. Yet I find this challenging because the Galatians, being Gentiles, were not under the Law of Moses before. Could Paul be placing the Law of Moses on the same level as the slavery under pagan religion? “Yoke” can either be a frame that is created to control animals or in this case have a “more general” meaning.⁶ This could mean that submitting again would be to come under a “yoke” of slavery of one kind or another. In other words, Paul is referring to the universal human penchant for slavery. Without Christ, we are slaves of sin whether we are under the Mosaic Law or not.

There are two commands in this verse: “stand firm” and “do not submit.” The context makes clear that these commands are to be an ongoing process:⁷ Continue to stand strong and never submit. They have been doing well thus far. It’s a matter of continuing the process of success to avoid picking up the yoke of slavery that they once had that was taken away by Jesus Christ, who alone has the power to give them freedom.

Dialogue with Longnecker:

Longnecker agrees that the concept of freedom is the point of this verse. I guess I never fully processed that this is an issue before God as well as in this world. But of course, freedom is because of God, so...I suppose it makes sense that it involves him too. Now that I think of it, this notion of being free before God seems to be the underlying theme throughout the book of Galatians and most of the New Testament. For guilt makes us feel condemned and afraid before God, making us feel like a slave before an angry master. This means that for Paul, the Law of Moses is problematic because its chief function is to point out our sin and condemn us before

⁵ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 559.

⁶ zeu/goj, *BDAG*, 337.

⁷ Wallace, 485.

God. Freedom from the Mosaic Law, then, has to refer to freedom from fear, the terror of guilt and the remembrance of our sin before God.

I didn't realize that there was so much debate on whether or not this verse stands on its own, concludes the previous thought, or starts a new thought. I suppose that doesn't matter to me, what matters is the thought of freedom here. However, if I had to pick a view, I suppose I would pick the one that connects chapter 4 to chapter 5, but I realize that there is no connector/transitional phrase. But, why can't it be based on context rather than grammatical nuances?

I found it interesting that Adolf Deissmann found that "for freedom" at the beginning of the verse referred a "sacral manumission procedures," indicating destiny or purpose.⁸ I find it fascinating that Christ did not simply set us free but set us free with a purpose or destiny, and that that destiny is freedom.

I didn't know that the word *yoke* was an "honorable use" for studying the Torah or governmental/social/family things. This is interesting to me because it is similarly thought of that way today. Our society bases success off of work. And it is an honor to be CEO but it also means that you lost a lot along the way, having to bear a "yoke." Fascinating. All in all, Paul states this verse in terms of both the reality (indicative) and possibility (imperative) of Salvation.

Revised Reflection:

In Galatians 5:1, Paul tries to shake the Galatians out of the relapse of slavery and into the arms of freedom. Yet this was not anything new to them, for he had presented it to them in clarity. So the question is why the relapse? It is because they failed to see the law in its negative function, namely, that of condemning sin. They embraced the law as something that would give them status, as a bona fide Jew. Instead, Paul points out the dark side of the law, its fear factor. Certainly, the law is "just, holy, and good" (Rom. 7:12), but it also brings the terror of condemnation and guilt to the sinner. And we are all sinners. The reason the Galatians did not see this aspect of the law is that they understood the law largely in relation to other humans, as something that gave them status. But as Longenecker points out, Christian freedom has to do more with God than with others.⁹ For example, legalistic observance of the law may commend us to others but not before God. We are not truly free until we are free before God.

⁸ Richard Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC 41; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990), 225.

⁹Longenecker, 225.