

PAUL'S VICE LIST IN GALATIANS 5:19–21*

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THIS ARTICLE INVESTIGATES FOUR INTERPRETIVE QUESTIONS regarding Paul's vice list and the words "inherit the kingdom of God" in Galatians 5:19–21. (1) Did Paul address Christians in this passage? (2) What is the significance of the contrasts between "the works of the flesh" and "the fruit of the Spirit" in verses 19–23? (3) What do the contrasting elements indicate? (4) In verses 19–21 did Paul warn or exhort?

DID PAUL ADDRESS CHRISTIANS IN GALATIANS 5:19–21?

Nine times in Galatians Paul addressed the recipients of this epistle as ἀδελφοί ("brothers"; 1:11; 3:15; 4:12, 28, 31; 5:11, 13; 6:1, 18).¹ He also called them "children of the promise . . . not children of the bondwoman but of the free woman" (4:28, 31),² and in 3:14, 17–19, 22, and 4:23 the "children of the promise" are believers.

In Galatians Paul sought to correct the false teaching (which he called "another gospel," 1:6) of the Judaizers, who taught that obedience to the Mosaic law was necessary to achieve both final justification (2:16–20; 3:6–18, 21–22, 24, 26–29; 4:22–31; 5:4) and present sanctification (2:20–3:5, 19–21, 23, 25–26; 4:21; 5:1–12).

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¹ The term ἀδελφοὶ in the plural represents "brothers and sisters" in the church of Galatia and indicates "spiritual kinship."

² Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture quotations are the author's translations.

Thus identifying Paul's Judaizing opponents is important in order to determine the identity of those who practiced the vices listed in 5:19–21 and would not inherit the kingdom. The traditional view maintains that "Judaizers" were pressuring Gentiles to live as if they were Jews. A second position is the "two-opponents view," which says that some of the apostle's opponents were Judaizers and others were antinomian Gentiles. A third view is the "Jewish-Christian view," the view that there was *one* group of opponents that had both Judaistic and libertine traits.³

The traditional view holds that zealous Jewish believers from Jerusalem insisted that believing Gentiles become part of ethnic Israel by keeping the Mosaic law.⁴ These men, who are said to "pervert the gospel" (1:7), may have come from another region, perhaps Jerusalem or the Judean region, and were confusing the churches (1:7; 5:10, 12). Paul's heavy emphasis on Jerusalem and Judea in Galatians 1–2 and 4:21–31 potentially points to this area. Their zeal to convince the Galatians to keep the Mosaic law also argues for their Jewish origins (3:2–29; 4:1–31; 5:2, 4; 6:12–13). They seem to have been believers, since they preached "another gospel" (thus by implication subscribing to some form of it), did not deny Christ, and desired to avoid Jewish persecution (1:7; 6:12). Thus instead of arguing against Christianity, they were persuading believers to add the keeping of the Law to their faith.

A major weakness with this view is that Paul called them ψευδαδέλφους (2:4), a term defined as "one who pretends to be a fellow believer."⁵ Paul used this word in 2 Corinthians 11:26 in a list of things and people who were hostile to his God-given mission

³ Walter Bo Russell III, *The Flesh/Spirit Conflict in Galatians* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997), 12.

⁴ Ibid. Later F. C. Baur of the Tübingen School strengthened this view and made these opponents of Paul the "interpretive key" to understanding all the Pauline epistles (*Paul: The Apostle of Jesus Christ: His Life and Works, His Epistles and Teachings*, 2nd ed., trans. Allan Menzies [London: Williams and Norgate, 1875], 1:113, 129–30; and idem, *Ausgewählte Werke in Einzelausgaben*, ed. K. Scholder [Stuttgart: Frommann, 1963], 1:49).

⁵ Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed., rev. and ed. Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1096.

to preach the gospel.⁶ Another problem with this view is that these Judaizers did not subscribe to faith alone in Christ for justification, which led to their having an incorrect Law-based sanctification.⁷

The two-opponents view identifies Paul's opponents as Judaizers and antinomian Gentiles. Reacting to strong emphasis on a single opponent view, Wilhelm Lütgert believed that Paul also addressed another group of antinomian Gentiles in Galatia (cf. 5:16–26).⁸ Lütgert said they were those who “use the impulse of the flesh as license” to sin.⁹ He defended this view by showing that the subject matter of Law and grace in Galatians 3:1–5:6 was directed at the Judaizers; and in 5:7–6:17 Paul seems to have addressed issues of antinomian libertinism.¹⁰

The main problem with this view is that it assumes a sharp distinction on the simple basis of differing subject matter, which can be answered in other ways. For example incorporating the Mosaic law into Christian practice can actually lead one to sin and to

⁶ Elsewhere the evidence demonstrates that Paul's major opponents were Jews (Acts 13:45; 18:6; 26:4–7; 2 Cor. 11:24).

⁷ F. F. Bruce acknowledges that some expositors believe these were genuine Jewish believers, but he concludes, “Paul, however, does not acknowledge them as genuine believers; in his eyes they are counterfeits, for whom true gospel liberty means nothing. Their purpose is to bring believers—more particularly, preachers and converts of the Gentile mission—‘into bondage,’ and in the context of this letter ‘into bondage’ means ‘under law.’ Whoever they were, their outlook and aims were the same as those people who were now trying to impose a legal yoke on the churches of Galatia” (*The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982], 112). Betz, on the other hand, believes Paul had no doubts of their position as Jewish Christians, although they were his opponents. To Betz “pseudo-Christians” refers rhetorically to them, since “they cannot accept Gentile Christians as ‘brothers’ unless they become Jews; as Gentile Christians they are not ‘brothers.’” This, however, seems to conflict with Betz's own admission that they were believers who were teaching another way to be saved (*Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Church in Galatia*, Hermeneia [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979], 90; see also 91 and n 302).

⁸ Russell, *The Flesh/Spirit Conflict in Galatians*, 14. See also James Hardy Ropes, *The Singular Problem of the Epistle to the Galatians* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929).

⁹ Wilhelm Lütgert, *Gesetz und Geist: Eine Untersuchung zur Vorgeschichte des Galaterbriefes*, Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie (Gütersloh: C. Bertemann, 1919), 16.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 14–19, 27–28.

practice the opposite of the command (Rom. 7:9–25).¹¹ Another possibility may be that Paul addressed the notion that Christians can freely sin, since they are not bound to the Law for sanctification. Paul immediately refuted such an idea. Christians have simply exchanged masters. By being under “the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2), they have not dispelled morality.¹²

The gnostic Jewish-Christians view, argued by Walter Schmithals, was also held by Bernard H. Brinsmead.¹³ To defend this view one must postulate that Galatians 5–6 represents the typical conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, specifically in 5:3, 13, 16; 6:13.¹⁴ However, the major problem with this view is the lack of incorporating chapters 3–4 and explaining how it coheres with a gnostic-Galatian view.¹⁵ Betz also observes various weaknesses in Schmithal's view:

The problem is that we have no evidence that there ever were Jewish-Christian Gnostics who practiced circumcision alone, without subscription to the Jewish law. The texts which Schmithals uses as evidence do not in fact support his thesis. There is in the texts no indication that the opponents kept circumcision only as a “special” law. 2 Cor 6:14 presupposes observation of the Torah, although there is no

¹¹ In Romans 7:12–25 Paul may have been referring to his enjoying a vibrant Christian experience until he tried to incorporate the Law, and that caused him to sin. For discussion of this interpretation see René A. López, *Romans Unlocked: Power to Deliver*, rev. ed. (Springfield, MO: 21st Century, 2009), 149–57.

¹² For further discussion see *ibid.*, 135–36, 146–47.

¹³ Walter Schmithals, *Paul and James*, trans. Dorothea M. Barton (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1965), 103–17; *idem*, *Paul and the Gnostics*, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), 13–64; *idem*, “Judaisten in Galatien,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 74 (January 1983): 27–58; and Bernard Hungerford Brinsmead, *Galatians: Dialogical Response to Opponents*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1982), 10.

¹⁴ Russell discusses this at length in *The Flesh/Spirit Conflict in Galatians*, 15–26. Scholars who subscribe to some form of gnostic presence in Galatia are Heinrich Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater*, 5th ed., *Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 7:20–24; and Frederick R. Crownfield, “The Singular Problem of the Dual Galatians,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 64 (December 1945): 491–500. While Russell claims that “Betz essentially subscribes to the third view” (*The Flesh/Spirit Conflict in Galatians*, 18), Betz himself says otherwise (*Galatians*, 260–61).

¹⁵ Russell, *The Flesh/Spirit Conflict in Galatians*, 16.

emphasis on the “whole Torah”; in fact, neither circumcision nor Law are specifically mentioned.¹⁶

This writer agrees with Betz’s conclusion that “the participants in the debate include primarily the senders [Gal. 1:2a] and the addressees [Gal. 1:2b, 11; 3:15; 4:12, 28, 31; 5:11, 13; 6:1, 18], and secondarily the opponents [Gal. 1:6–9; 2:4; 3:1; 4:7; 5:10; 6:12–13], who have contributed to the cause of the original writing of the letter.”¹⁷

This writer proposes yet another view, which may be called “the unsaved Jewish pseudo-brothers view.” Paul’s Judaizing opponents were not believers, since they were described as $\psi\epsilon\upsilon\delta\acute{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\lambda\text{-}\phi\omicron\varsigma$, a fitting term for unbelievers.

The situation recorded in 2:11, when Paul confronted Peter and Barnabas at Antioch, was caused by men who came from James and taught that believing Jews must keep dietary and purity laws and be separate from Gentiles. In a sense this parallels the legalism of Paul’s Judaizing opponents (1:6–7; 2:4). Nevertheless it was not identical to the error taught by the Judaizers that Gentiles were saved and sanctified by keeping the Mosaic law. Betz also interprets it this way and writes,

Their actions are indeed parallel, but they must not be identical. Paul no doubt sets them up as people continuing the old opposition of the “false brothers” [of 2:4]. It should be remembered that the “false brothers” at the Jerusalem conference did not approve of the agreement made there. But the “men from James” do approve and in fact insist on the carrying out of the agreements.

There is little reason to doubt that James himself was behind “men from James.” It is only because of Acts 15 that scholars have doubted this. In the apostolic letter of Acts 15:24 there is a denial which must be regarded as “apologetic.” . . . Why then would the historical James object to Cephas’ eating with Christian Gentiles? Paul reports that, when the “men from James” came, Cephas broke off table fellowship with Gentile-Christian brothers. This abrupt change must have been his reaction to demands made by the “men from James” [but not that it came from James].¹⁸

¹⁶ Betz, *Galatians*, 260–61.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 261.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 108. Hans Joachim Schoeps identifies the “men come from James” as the “false brothers” in Galatians 2:4 and as the same men zealous to enforce the keeping of the Law by all and as predecessors of the Ebionites (*Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History*, trans. Harold Knight [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961], 67–74).

Thus “certain men [who] came from James” (Gal. 2:12) were not the same as the “certain men [who] came down from Judea” (Acts 15:1), whom James seems to have discredited and disowned in verse 24. Hence Bruce concludes, “It would be unwise to identify the ‘certain people’ who came from James [Gal. 2:12] with the ‘certain people’ (τινες) of Acts 15:1 who came down to Antioch from Judea and insisted that circumcision was necessary for salvation. These men are disowned by the authors of the apostolic letter (Acts 15:24); it is more likely that they were connected with the ‘false brethren’ [Gal. 2:4]. The τινες mentioned here [v. 12] are simply messengers from James.”¹⁹

That the Galatian problems discussed in Acts 15 resonate with later problems recorded in Acts 21 does not prove that the Galatian Judaizers were believers.²⁰ More likely is the view that these unbelievers planted theological tares that created confusion among believers. These Judaizers were unbelievers, since they taught that believers must keep the Law in order to be justified²¹ and sanctified. They were then promoting this doctrine among the believers of Galatia (cf. 1:6–9; 2:4; 3:1–6:18).

¹⁹ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 130. The identity of the “men [who] came from James” (Gal. 2:12) has been argued among scholars for years. See Robert Jewett, “Agitators and the Galatian Congregation,” *New Testament Studies* 17 (January 1971): 198–212; Albrecht Oepke and Joachim Rohde, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater* (Berlin: Evangelische, 1984); Schmithals, *Paul and James*, 66–68; Friedrich Sieffert, *Der Brief an die Galater*, 9th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1899), 127–30; Franz Mußner, *Der Galaterbrief: Auslegung* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1974), 139–45; and Betz, *Galatians*, 107–9.

²⁰ As recorded in Acts 15, the early church settled once and for all the point that Gentiles need not become proselytes in order to be saved and sanctified. Paul’s circumcision of Timothy (Acts 16:3) and his own compliance with the Law (Acts 21:20–26) constitute cultural, not theological issues. That is, Paul culturally became all things to all people in order to win some to Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 9:19–23). The Galatians’ problem was a theological issue that demanded that Paul hold firm to faith as the only means to justification and sanctification. Since Judaism was a mixture of culture and religion, it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate the two issues. Nevertheless, when addressing God’s change of a dispensation, theological and cultural issues must be distinguished, as Paul showed in Romans 2:26–29; 7:1–8:39; and 2 Corinthians 3:1–18.

²¹ “Paul argues against the Judaizers who taught that adherence to the Law was necessary for complete justification before God” (William E. Brown, “The New Testament Concept of the Believer’s Inheritance” [ThD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1984], 103).

Both groups—unsaved Judaizers and saved Galatians—must be distinguished in order to help determine whom Paul addressed in the vice list in 5:19–21 and whom he exhorted. The Galatian believers needed to have a correct understanding of sanctification (as operative through faith and the power of the Spirit in following the law of Christ), which is based on having a correct understanding of justification (through faith alone in God’s promise to justify those who believe in Christ).

In Galatians Paul used the noun *εὐαγγέλιον* six times (1:6–7; 2:2, 5, 7, 14), the verb *εὐαγγελίζω* eight times (1:8 [twice], 9, 11 [twice], 16, 23; 4:13), and a compound form of the verb *προεὐαγγελίζομαι* one time (3:8) to indicate that Jews and Gentiles were justified by faith and were also sanctified by faith as they obeyed the law of Christ through the Spirit (6:2; cf. 5:16–18, 22, 25; 6:8).

Understanding the context of the epistle helps shed light on how Paul used the vice list in 5:19–21 and the words “will not inherit the kingdom of God” in verse 21. Since Paul focused on justification by faith as the basis of sanctification by faith through the Spirit of God (2:16–17, 20–21; 3:3, 5, 14, 25; 4:6, 29; 5:1–8, 16–18, 22, 25; 6:8), one would expect to discover this concept again. Paul’s statement in 5:24 that “believers have crucified the sinful nature [σάρξ]” contrasts with the list of vices unbelievers were involved in (vv. 19–21). His statement in verse 24 (to be discussed later) was the basis for exhorting Christians to avoid sins that conflict with their new identity in Christ.

CONTRASTS BETWEEN “THE WORKS OF THE FLESH” AND “THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT”

In Galatians 5:13–26, of which the vice list in verses 19–21 is a part, Paul contrasted two communities whose behavior was antithetical. Russell captures the essence of this section and how Paul structured the opposing positions of both groups: “While 5:13–15 and 5:25–26 act as brackets to the central section of 5:16–24, verses 16–18 function as the main statements of Paul’s antithetical contrast of his and the Judaizers’ communities. After the two elements of the antithesis (each representing a community) are clearly identified in 5:16–18, the resulting ‘ways of life’ that flow out of each element/community are then set forth in the antithesis in

5:19–21 (the σάρξ way of life) and 5:22–23 (the πνεῦμα way of life).”²²

What are the “deeds of the flesh [σάρξ]”? These are the actions that result from the fallen human nature of the unsaved, elsewhere termed ἐν τῇ σαρκί (Rom. 7:5, 9; 8:3, 8–9).²³ Hence the vice list manifests the natural outcome of mankind’s corrupt nature, the σάρξ.

Paul used the term σάρξ in Galatians 1:16 in a reference to “people,” and in 2:20 and 4:14 he used σάρξ of “human life.”²⁴ He also used σάρξ in 4:23 for the sinful source behind the birth of the bondwoman’s child and juxtaposed it to the faith-based ἐπαγγελία (“promise”) as the source behind the birth of the freewoman’s child. Paul then contrasted those who live by faith (illustrated by the promised child of the freewoman) with those who are intent on living by the Law (illustrated by the child of the bondwoman). The latter were Judaizers who were confusing the Galatian Gentile believers (cf. 3:23–4:20). This was Paul’s point begun in 4:21, which is then explained in verses 22–30 (beginning with an explanatory γάρ in v. 22), and concluded in verse 31.

The Judaizers wanted the Galatians to add the observance of the Law to their faith. However, such a practice would incite the σάρξ still resident in believers. Although Christ overthrew (by His life, death, and resurrection) the reign of the σάρξ in believers, they can still fall prey to it unless they choose to live in the power of the resurrection and follow the leading of the Spirit (cf. Rom. 5:12–8:39).²⁵ This is the point reflected in Galatians 5:16–18.

Paul mentioned the Judaizers indirectly in 5:7–9, 11 and directly in verses 10 and 12, but not in verses 16–18. In fact in chap-

²² Russell, *The Flesh/Spirit Conflict in Galatians*, 159.

²³ For further discussion of Romans 8:1–9 see López, *Romans Unlocked: Power to Deliver*, 160–65.

²⁴ Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich, *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 915.

²⁵ For a discussion of these verses see López, *Romans Unlocked: Power to Deliver*, 112–85. In Romans 7:14–24 Paul said he practiced what he did not wish to do. In Galatians 5:17 he made the same point to the Galatian believers if they chose to live by the Law. “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. And these are contrary to each other, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”

ter 5 Paul addressed believers. In verse 1 he commanded them to “stand firm” (στήκετε) on the basis of their freedom in Christ. Only believers can carry this out. If believers try to be justified by the Law, they will abandon the grace system in which they presently reside. It is “through the Spirit, by faith” that Paul and the Galatians “wait expectantly for the hope of righteousness” (v. 5). In verse 7 the imperfect ἐτρέχετε (“running”) demonstrates they were saved, which explains why they were doing well. But someone ἐνέκοψεν (“restrained or hindered”) them from continuing to follow the truth.²⁶ Paul, however, had confidence in these believers (since they were ἐν κυρίῳ, v. 10) that they would not ultimately accept the view of the Judaizers. He then called his readers ἀδελφοί (5:11, 13), a term used of spiritual kinship among believers.

Paul reminded them that though they were called to liberty (rather than bound to live by the Mosaic law), they were not called to libertinism (v. 13). Instead they should fulfill the Law by loving their neighbors as themselves (v. 14). By obeying the law of Christ (6:2) they could manifest the virtues that characterize God’s kingdom (5:21b–23; cf. Matt. 5:1–12; Rom. 14:16–19; 1 Cor. 4:3, 7–8, 19–21).

When Paul commanded the Galatian Christians to “walk in the Spirit” (πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε, Gal. 5:16), he was not referring to unbelieving Judaizers for two reasons. First, as already noted, the readers were called ἀδελφοί (v. 11), a term Paul reserved for the Galatian believers who were troubled by the Judaizers. Second, Paul would not command unbelievers to “walk in the Spirit,” since they do not possess Him (cf. Rom. 8:9). Since Paul’s readers chose to follow the σάρξ (by improperly returning to the old system of the Law; Gal. 3:23–4:31; cf. Rom. 7:13–25), rather than letting the Spirit lead them (Gal. 5:18), this could refer to believers only.

Could 5:19–21 describe believers who commingled Law with faith, thus inciting the adamic inclinations of the σάρξ? Or does the vice list describe unbelievers?

The phrase “the works of the flesh” (τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός) de-

²⁶ The idea of continuing to obey is found not only in the use of the present tense of πεῖθεσθαι but also in the term ἐτρέχετε (“run”) that Paul used as “an athletic metaphor for their spiritual progress.” The Judaizers now interrupted this progress. Paul typically used the metaphor of running for a believer’s spiritual progress in sanctification (e.g., Acts 20:24; 1 Cor. 9:26; 2 Tim. 4:7) (Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 234).

scribes the “source” within mankind that produces the evil deeds described in verses 19–21, which is what characterizes unbelievers. Could believers, however, act like unbelievers? Williams concludes:

The Epistles contain frequent imperatives, that imply freedom of choice on the part of the Christian and appeal to him or her to choose (1) in general, “not to conform to this age but to be transformed in attitude” and thereby in action (Rom 12:2), “to walk in the ways of the Spirit” (Gal 5:16, 25; cf. v. 18), “to have the outlook of Christ” (Phil 2:5), to “seek” and to “set the mind” on the things of God, namely, “the things that are above, not . . . things that are on earth” (Col 3:1, 2; cf. Phil 3:19), and (2) in particular, to avoid any hint of sexual impurity or, indeed, of any kind of impurity, greed, obscenity, and the like (see, e.g., Eph 5:3ff.). A full list of directions, if drawn up, would be very long indeed, but they are gathered up in the one comprehensive command to love (see, e.g., Rom 13:9–10; Eph 5:1).²⁷

Although believers can act κατὰ σάρκα instead of κατὰ πνεῦμα as indicated in Romans 8:4, this is different from being ἐν τῇ σαρκί as stated in Romans 8:3, 9. Unfortunately Christians can choose to submit to the “flesh” still resident in them. Unless believers obey Paul’s mandate to walk according to the Spirit, they will resemble their preconversion condition. To be “in the flesh,” which is indicative of unbelievers, however, is different from living “according to the flesh” (cf. 8:1, 4–5), which can apply only to believers. Paul indicated in Romans 7:5, 9 that being “in the flesh” refers to the unregenerate state. Thus the unsaved will never be able to carry out the “righteous requirement of the Law” defined in other places as “loving your neighbor as yourself” (Gal. 5:14; cf. vv. 6–7, 13; Rom. 8:4; 13:8–10; Matt. 19:19; 22:39; Lev. 19:18).²⁸ Betz links the vice list to the source found in “the works of the flesh, which dominates man and dictates his activities.”²⁹

Russell summarizes prominent views on Paul’s use of σάρξ.³⁰

²⁷ David J. Williams, *Paul’s Metaphors: Their Context and Character* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 47 n. 55.

²⁸ See López, *Romans Unlocked: Power to Deliver*, 165.

²⁹ Betz, *Galatians*, 283.

³⁰ View one (Hellenistic dualism) says σάρξ refers to only the physical part of humans (distinct from mankind’s spirit), which, while not sinful constitutes the place where sin resides and becomes the source of evil that wages war against the immaterial part of man (Otto Pfeleiderer, *Paulinism: A Contribution to the History of Primitive Christian Theology*, trans. Edward Peters [London: Williams and Norgate, 1877], 1:47–67). View two is similar, but it stresses not the material or immaterial

Interestingly, Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich define the phrase τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός as that “which is dominated by sin to such a degree that wherever flesh is, all forms of sin [appear].”³¹ They also note that θελήματα τῆς σαρκός in Ephesians 2:3 and τοῦ νοῦς τῆς σαρκός αὐτοῦ in Colossians 2:18 are synonymous and are parallel to the phrase τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός in Galatians 5:19.³² In Ephesians 2:3 and Colossians 2:18 these phrases clearly describe the source of sin resident in unbelievers. Dunn notes that “the works of the flesh, the outworking of the flesh, [are] those things which express the character of the flesh and its desire.”³³ The “works of the flesh” could be understood as synonymous with the phrase “the works of darkness” that Paul mentioned in Ephesians 5:11.

On the other hand “the fruit of the Spirit” (ὁ δὲ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος) indicates what resides in believers (Gal. 5:22–23). These are nine “virtues” that constitute the single “fruit of the Spirit”: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. As Betz suggests, perhaps this list should be viewed not as describing “virtues” (in the Greek sense) or “good works” (in the Jewish sense), or even the “law of Christ” (as in Gal. 6:2), but rather “concepts.” This list can thus be seen as character-

aspect of humans but rather two opposed immaterial aspects of man (σάρξ and πνεῦμα) that reside in him and can control him (George B. Stevens, *The Pauline Theology*, rev. ed. [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1897], 139–50).

View three sees the σάρξ as denoting the human existence as weak, since mankind is earthly, but which can be overcome if believers live “in the Spirit” (Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1951], 1:233–38). View four says the struggle between the flesh and the spirit is a struggle between two forces: the evil impulse and the good impulse (W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 4th ed. [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980], 17–35). View five interprets σάρξ not as a part of the human nature but as a reference to unbelievers as a whole, with the focus on their unregenerate fallen nature characterized by ethical weakness (George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, ed. Donald A. Hagner [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974], 472). The realm of σάρξ is an inherent capacity of man, an inherited impulse to evil (Ernest DeWitt Burton, *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of the Pneuma, Psyche, and Sarx in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD; and of Their Equivalents [ruah, nefesh, and basar] in the Hebrew Old Testament* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1918], 197).

³¹ Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich, *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 916.

³² Ibid.

³³ Dunn, *Galatians*, 301.

izing the benefits of the singular fruit of the Spirit (in contrast to the plural “works of the flesh,” v. 19) granted to believers at the moment of regeneration. Betz explains this as follows:

Paul does not call it “works of the Spirit,” in analogy to v 19, nor does he attribute to it the quality of “evidentness.” . . .

It is certainly with intention that the open-ended and unstructured list of vices is contrasted by a *unity* called “the fruit of the Spirit.” . . . The expression “fruit of the Spirit” means that the nine concepts should be taken as “benefits” which were given as or together with the Spirit. In other words, when the Galatians received the Spirit, they were also given the foundation out of which the “fruit” was supposed to grow. At this point the question arises whether Paul thinks that the “fruit” was simply given, so that the concepts of the list became the possession of the Galatians, or whether by receiving the Spirit they were enabled and motivated to bear that fruit themselves. In the present context of ethical exhortation we can conclude that simple possession of the “fruit of the Spirit” cannot be what Paul means. [Rather] . . . the “fruit of the Spirit” presupposes man’s active involvement (cf. 5:25).³⁴

As Schweizer wrote, “What the apostle opposes to their discord with all its vices is therefore not a list of virtues, although scholars usually call it this, but ‘the fruit of the Spirit.’ It is fruit, not work, something which is ‘performed,’ but growing.”³⁵ Brown also says, “Paul’s emphasis is upon the fruit that should flourish in the believer’s life. . . . The point of Paul’s exhortation is that the believers now live in a new sphere of existence; therefore, they need to put the sins of the flesh behind them and live consistent with their position in Christ.”³⁶

WHAT DO THE CONTRASTING ELEMENTS INDICATE?

When believers receive the singular “fruit of the Spirit” at regeneration, they are empowered to act in ways delineated by these nine characteristics. Galatians 5:24 describes an event in the Christians’ past that serves to motivate them to act in the present. “Those who

³⁴ Betz, *Galatians*, 286–87.

³⁵ Eduard Schweizer, “Traditional Ethical Patterns in the Pauline and Post-Pauline Letters and Their Development (List of Vices and House-tables),” in *Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament Presented to Matthew Black*, ed. Ernst Best and R. McL. Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 198.

³⁶ Brown, “The New Testament Concept of the Believer’s Inheritance,” 126.

belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature [σάρξ] with its passions and desires.”

This verse has been interpreted in three ways. One view is literal crucifixion. However, this is not a feasible view because Christ already died for sinners (Rom. 5:8; 6:1–11; 1 Cor. 2:8; 2 Cor. 5:19–21; Phil. 2:8; Col. 1:20; 2:14), and the Bible never instructs anyone to crucify himself or herself in order to pay for his or her or anyone’s sins.

A second view is that “crucifying the flesh” refers figuratively to the believer’s practical walk. In the Gospels Christ spoke of following Him (i.e., being His disciple) in terms of taking up one’s cross (Matt. 10:38; 16:24; Mark 8:34; 10:38–39; Luke 9:23; 12:50; cf. John 12:23–26). However, if Paul wanted to stress ongoing sanctification in Galatians 5:24, he would have written the verb σταυρόω in the present tense to imply continual crucifixion of the flesh, or he would have qualified the noun σταῦρος with ἡμέρα as in Luke 9:23 (“take up his cross *daily*”).³⁷

A third view is that the aorist verb ἐσταύρωσαν describes the one-time act at conversion by which the readers were made saints. Although the aorist active indicative verb ἐσταύρωσαν may indicate a past event in verse 24, verses 25–26 indicate that Paul intended to emphasize how the believers’ position should motivate and influence them to practice righteousness, as characterized by the fruit of the Spirit.³⁸

³⁷ Various commentators have interpreted Galatians 5:24 this way. See Gerhard Ebeling, *The Truth of the Gospel: An Exposition of Galatians*, trans. David Green (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 240; Egon Brandenburger, “Cross,” in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967), 1:401; and Johannes Schneider, “σταυρόω,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 582–83.

³⁸ “Gl. 5:24 is simply emphasizing that the παθήματα, with their basis on the σάρξ, are crucified and overcome in Christians; this has taken place in baptism, cf. R. 6:6. But in the light of 5:25 and the hortatory context this carries with it the admonition that the παθήματα are still to be put to death, cf. Col. 3:5; R. 8:13. Similarly, in R. 7:5 the παθήματα are a feature of the ἐν τῆς σαρκί εἶναι of the pre-Christian period” (Wilhelm Michaelis, “πάθημα,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 5 [1964], 931). Similarly Eduard Schweizer says, “According to R. 7:5; 8:8 f.; Gl. 5:24 the believer no longer lives in the σάρξ; he has crucified it. This message is new and typical of Paul. It stands behind all the formulations in which there is reference to the victory of God and of His promise and Spirit. Paul certainly does not mean that by ascetic or mystical practices man can escape his corporeality. 2 C. 10:3 and Gl.

In Galatians 5:25 the protasis has a first-class condition particle εἴ with the indicative mood, εἴ ζῶμεν πνεύματι (“we live by the Spirit”). This assumes that the statement is true for the sake of argument.³⁹ Sometimes this particle εἴ can be translated “since” (as in the NIV, in v. 25). Therefore on the assumption that at the point of becoming a saint (v. 24), believers “live [positionally] in the Spirit,” Paul employed the apodasis with the subjunctive verb to exhort believers to behave in light of their position: πνεύματι καὶ στοιζῶμεν (“let us behave/follow/walk in the Spirit”). Thus Paul never assumed that believers cannot behave like unbelievers, which is why in verse 26 he began to exhort them not to provoke or envy each other.

Galatians 5:19–21 records a list of sins Paul called “the works of the flesh.” Such catalogs were commonly used to describe pagan vices.⁴⁰ Paul then reminded the Galatians that he previously affirmed that such people would not inherit the kingdom of God (similar to 1 Cor. 6:9–10). Then he listed the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23 and in verse 24 he appealed to them on the basis of their position in Christ as those who had “crucified the flesh with its passion and desires.” Brown makes a similar observation.⁴¹

2:19 f. state expressly that the believer always lives physically ἐν σαρκί. . . . In the latter passages Paul says at the same time that he is crucified with Christ. The σὰρξ of Gl. 5:24 is not, then, a part of man which he may put off or overcome. It is the man himself. Where σὰρξ is understood in a full theological sense as in Gl. 5:24, it denotes the being of man which is determined, not by his physical substance, but by his relation to God. . . . The opposing concept in Gl. 2:20 makes this plain: the life of the Christian is life in faith in Christ. The sayings R. 7:5; 8:8 f.; Gl. 5:24 certainly do not mean that, although a man does works of the flesh listed in Gl. 5:19–21, he knows that they are no longer imputed to him by God. Paul indisputably says that the believer no longer does these works. Yet at the same time he can speak of hatred and contention and the like in the community and issue a constant summons to put off these deeds of the flesh” (“σὰρξ,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* vol. 7 [1964], 134–35).

³⁹ For a discussion of this conditional particle see Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 690.

⁴⁰ Peder Borgen, *Paul Preaches Circumcision and Pleases Men: And Other Essays on Christian Origins* (Trondheim: Rapir, 1983), 24. A. T. Robertson notes that these characteristics of unbelievers can be seen in 5:21 by the articular present participle οἱ . . . πρᾶσσοντες. This may denote habitual not occasional sin like the term ποιέω (*Word Pictures in the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1931], 4:313).

⁴¹ “The deeds of the flesh have nothing to do with the believer’s *position* in Christ . . . (5:24). Those who will not inherit (‘those who practice such things,’ 5:21) are set in contrast to those who belong to Christ (5:24)” (Brown, “The New Testament Con-

In other places Paul used the verb “crucified” in the perfect passive voice, *συνεσταύρωμαι* (Gal. 2:19 [Eng. v. 20]; 3:1; 6:14; cf. 1 Cor. 2:2), to indicate what was done to someone. But here the aorist active voice (*ἔσταύρωσαν*) points to the believers’ past participation in their crucifixion with Christ which should continue to affect their lives in the present.⁴² Schweizer concludes similarly that believers are called on to recall the fact of their co-crucifixion with Christ (v. 24) in order to live presently in the light of that truth.⁴³

Similar appeals based on one’s identity in Christ “occur quite overtly in other of the Pauline epistles (e.g., Rom 6:1–11; 1 Cor 6; Eph 4:1–3). The entire passage of Gal 5:13–26 fits this type of appeal.”⁴⁴ Thus Paul appealed to the believers’ identity with Christ in Galatians 5:24 to promote the behavior indicated in verses 25–26. This contrasts with the behavior of those who are characterized by the vice list in verses 19–21. Russell recognizes the difficulty in identifying those of the vice list in verses 19–21 as Christians.

If Paul is referring only to the Judaizers in Gal 5:19–21, then he is implicitly saying that *Christians* are capable of doing the deeds of the flesh. The exegetical difficulty with this is that Paul culminates his description of the behavior of the community of the flesh in 5:21b with the ringing statement “that those who practice such things will not inherit (οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν) the kingdom of God.” This statement also occurs in almost identical form in 1 Cor 6:9–10 and Eph 5:5. Both of the broader contexts of these passages (1 Cor 6:1–11 and Eph 5:3–

cept of the Believer’s Inheritance,” 124–25).

⁴² “For Paul, it is therefore the cross (not the law, as for the Jews) that establishes and nourishes the identity of this believing community” (Victor P. Furnish, *The Theology of the First Letter to the Corinthians*, New Testament Theology [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999], 44). Furnish sees a similar concept emphasized in 1 Corinthians (ibid., 50–52, 92–93, 106–7). Richard B. Hays also sees a change in a believer’s position in view of terminology reflective of Jesus’ death and resurrection (“Crucified with Christ: A Synthesis of the Theology of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, Philippians, and Galatians,” in *Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon*, vol. 1 of *Pauline Theology*, ed. Jouette M. Bassler [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991], 233). In fact Hays says, “Gal 2:20–21, with its emphasis on the union with Christ’s grace-giving death, looks more and more like the hermeneutical center of the letter” (ibid., 242).

⁴³ Eduard Schweizer, “Gottesgerechtigkeit und Lasterkataloge bei Paulus,” in *Rechtfertigung: Festschrift für Ernst Käsemann zum 70 Geburtstag*, ed. Johannes Friedrich, Wolfgang Pöhlmann, and Peter Stuhlmacher (Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck, 1976], 267).

⁴⁴ Russell, *The Flesh/Spirit Conflict in Galatians*, 159.

14) clearly describe the conduct of non-Christians or pagans *in contrast to Christians* (cf. Rom 8:1–11). Therefore, one must conclude that Paul's straightforward statement in 5:21b means what it appears to say: the description of those who do the deeds of the flesh in 5:19–21 is a description of pagans or non-Christians.⁴⁵

This contrast is strengthened by noting the meaning of verse 24. Russell notes how the conjunction δέ gives a sense of flow (cf. vv. 16, 18, 19, 22, 24) in Galatians 5:16–24. However, “in spite of this flow, it is probable that the sense of linking the fruit of the Spirit in 5:22–23 to the deeds of the flesh in 5:19–21 is adversative and intended as an obvious contrast.^[46] This contrast is heightened by the use of the singular καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος in v. 22 versus the plural ἔργα τῆς σαρκός in v. 19.”⁴⁷

Furthermore from Galatians 5:13–6:14, a “tandem” relationship exists between σάρξ and the Mosaic νόμος and between πνεῦμα and τὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ that shows the decisive break from the era of the Law to that of the Spirit made by the cross of Christ (cf. 2:19–21).⁴⁸ Hence Russell concludes as follows:

In Gal 5:24 Paul asserts his crowning piece of evidence to the superiority of life “in Christ” versus life “in Israel.” His evidence is that life ἐν σαρκί has ended for those “of Christ Jesus” because of the aeon-changing effects of Christ's crucifixion. In this context the death of the Christians' σάρξ is the ending of their bodily frailty under the dominion of sin and the στοιχεῖα (4:3) when they were without the indwelling enablement of God's Spirit. . . . Paul's point in Gal 5:24 is that all of this Gentile/Jewish bondage to the σάρξ and all of the Jewish emphasis on the σάρξ is now ended at the cross of Jesus Christ!⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Russell, “Paul's Redemptive-Historical Argumentation,” 351.

⁴⁶ Borgen says, “The proselyte becomes at once temperate, continent, modest, gentle, kind, humane, serious, just, high-minded, truth-lovers, superior to the desire for money and pleasure In the same way Paul uses a catalogue of virtues to picture the Christian life in connection with the Galatians' conversion from pagan life” (*Paul Preaches Circumcision and Pleases Men*, 82).

⁴⁷ Russell, *The Flesh/Spirit Conflict in Galatians*, 162; see also 163–65. “Paul's point then is that the nature of God's Spirit . . . is demonstrated in the quality of character exemplified in the following list” (*The Epistle to the Galatians*, Black's New Testament Commentary [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993], 308).

⁴⁸ Betz and Russell have also noticed these tandems (Betz, *Galatians*, 289–90; and Russell, *The Flesh/Spirit Conflict in Galatians*, 164–65).

⁴⁹ Russell, *Flesh/Spirit Conflict in Galatians*, 166. Spirit baptism occurs when believers partake of Christ's death and resurrection by faith in Him. At that mo-

To revert to the principles of the Law will produce a life characterized by the *σάρξ* as seen in the vice list that describes those who are still *ἐν σαρκί*. This is retrogressive for Christians. “Christ’s death ended the normativeness of the *ἔργα τῆς σαρκός* (5:19–21) and replaced these with the *καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος* (5:22–23). Because of the Christian’s corporate identity in Christ. . . . Paul can say in 5:24 that they crucified their *σάρξ* (*ἐσταύρωσαν* is an aorist active).”⁵⁰ This break occurred decisively at the moment they placed their faith in Christ (3:26). Thus Paul meant that, according to Galatians 5:24, the believer’s position *ἐν σαρκί* has ended. Believers therefore must not be characterized by *τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός* but by *ὁ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος*, as they practice living in dependence on the Spirit according to the commands in verses 25–26.⁵¹

IS GALATIANS 5:19–21 AN EXHORTATION OR A WARNING?

To help identify whether those of the vice list are believers or unbelievers one must determine whether in verse 21 Paul warned or exhorted the recipients of the letter. Many Bible translations and commentators interpret the phrase *προλέγω ὑμῖν, καθὼς προεἶπον* as “I am warning you, as I previously warned you” (e.g., ASV, ESV, HCSB, ISV, LB, NASB, NCV, NET, NIV, and RSV). This would mean that Paul warned the Galatians to cease from practicing the sins of the vice list in verses 19–21 or else they would not inherit

ment believers positionally break sin’s dominion.

⁵⁰ “Therefore, the crucifixion of the *σάρξ* in Gal 5:24 is a real death that *definitively* ended forever the real life of the *σάρξ* and its mode of existence for the people of God. The crucifixion of Christ ended the age of bodily frailty for the people of God because it broke sin’s power over their bodies (3:19–4:11) and led to enabling indwelling of God’s Spirit (3:1–5)” (Russell, *The Flesh/Spirit Conflict in Galatians* 166). Frank J. Matera also sees the *σάρξ* as “used figuratively for unredeemed humanity” (*Galatians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, Sacra Pagina [Collegetown, MN: Liturgical, 1992], 204).

⁵¹ Bruce writes, “It is the cross of Christ that makes this clean break. . . . Alongside such a historical statement as this, in the indicative, stands the hortatory counterpart, in the imperative, as in Rom. 6:11 (‘reckon yourselves to be dead to sin but alive to God in Christ’); Col. 3:5 (‘put to death therefore your members that are on earth . . .’). What has been effected once and for all by the cross of Christ must be worked out in practice” (*The Epistle to the Galatians*, 256). See also John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 106; and Dunn, *Galatians*, 314–15.

the kingdom. To “inherit the kingdom of God” means to enter with an expectation of receiving rewards in the millennial kingdom.

One axiom almost everyone seems to accept is that Paul addressed his Galatian recipients by using the phrase *προλέγω ὑμῖν, καθὼς προεῖπον*. If his recipients (excluding the Judaizers) were believers, as argued above, this raises an interpretive question. Was Paul saying that one must avoid these sins as a condition for entering the kingdom? If so, this contradicts the truth of salvation by faith alone in Christ, and it is contrary to the logic, theology, and flow of the letter (see 2:16, 20; 3:2, 5, 7–9, 11–12, 14, 22–26; 5:5–6; 6:10).

Other interpreters teach that believers cannot continue behaving like unbelievers for a prolonged period of time.⁵² However, this requires linguistic and grammatical support not found in this passage and seems to be read into the passage. Other views like breaking fellowship with God, missing the kingdom but remaining saved, or forfeiting ruling with Christ in the kingdom as a reward do not account for evidence discussed earlier in this article series regarding the meaning of “inheriting the kingdom of God.”

If Paul used the verbs *προλέγω* and *προεῖπον* as warnings, then these various views pose a problem contextually and theologically. However, the problem disappears when the linguistic meaning of both of these terms is noted. Nothing inherent in these words suggests interpreting them as warnings. Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich note that *προλέγω* means “to say something in advance.”⁵³ Also Moulton and Milligan note that in the New Testament and extrabiblical literature *προλέγω* and *προεῖπον* do not mean “to warn.”⁵⁴ *Προλέγω* means “to state beforehand/earlier” or “to tell

⁵² Ronald Y. K. Fung asserts that “the participle *prassontes* denotes not an occasional lapse but habitual behavior.” Therefore Paul warned that those living as such will not inherit the kingdom of God (*The Epistle to the Galatians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988], 261; see also n 106). Although Fung’s interpretation of the participle may be correct, the sole meaning of a participle cannot determine the meaning of a passage.

⁵³ Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich, *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 873.

⁵⁴ James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1930; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 539–40, 542–43.

beforehand, foretell, tell/proclaim beforehand, warn.”⁵⁵ A similar expression is used in 2 Corinthians 13:2, προείρηκα καὶ προλέγω, which the New International Version translates, “I already gave you a warning . . . I now repeat it.” However, Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich say those terms do not *necessarily* mean “warn.”⁵⁶ So they place these terms in Galatians 5:21 and 2 Corinthians 13:2 under both categories of meaning: “to have already stated” and “to warn.”⁵⁷ This does not prove the phrase προλέγω ὑμῖν, καθὼς προεἶπον cannot be understood as a warning, but it does demonstrate two things. The sense of warning is not an essential part of the lexical meaning of the words, and so other elements not inherent in the words themselves must determine the meaning. Thus one should not automatically assume that the words in Galatians 5:21 connote a warning. Hence the New King James Version translates the words as, “I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past” (cf. AV [1873]; CEV; Darby, KJV, YNG). Also many Bible translations render the phrase in 2 Corinthians 13:2 as “I was proclaiming beforehand,” not “I already gave you a warning” (ASV, KJV, NASB, NET, NKJV; exceptions include the NIV and the RSV).

A similar formula appears in Galatians 1:9: ὡς προειρήκαμεν καὶ ἄρτι πάλιν λέγω (“as we have already said, so now I say again”). This refers to something Paul communicated previously to the Galatians and then stated again. In this case anyone who preaches something contrary to what the Galatians had received from Paul deserves judgment: “let him be accursed.” Again the condemnation is not inherent in the words προειράκαμεν and λέγω. Therefore almost all English Bible versions render the phrase in 1:9 not as a warning but rather as something previously stated that merited repetition.

Thus in Galatians 5:21 Paul exhorted, not warned, the Gala-

⁵⁵ Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich, *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 869.

⁵⁶ Ibid. In fact the definition “warn” was added in the new edition, perhaps from a theological bias, since it is not found in the older 1979 edition. Michael D. Makidon notes how the new edition of the lexicon has shifted various soteriological definitions (“Soteriological Concerns with Bauer’s Greek Lexicon,” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 17 [Autumn 2004]: 11–18).

⁵⁷ Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich, *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 868–69.

tian believers (a good number of whom were Gentiles) to depart from “the works of the flesh” and to let their position as believers in Christ enable them to live by the Spirit (2:16–5:26; cf. Rom. 6:1–23). Borgen explains it this way: “From Gal 5:19–21 and 1 Cor 6:9–11 it is evident that Paul in his preaching to the Gentiles made use of the catalogues of vices to characterize the life from which they ought to depart, and which they as converts already left behind. . . . His preaching included catalogues of vices which served to illustrate the pagan way of life and catalogues of virtues which exemplified the new life in the Spirit.”⁵⁸ Brown also concludes,

Thus, Paul is not warning the believers of the future loss of reward in the Kingdom, but rather appealing to them on the basis of their new life. The term προλέγω does not imply “warning,” and in fact is never employed in the New Testament in that sense. Paul uses the word to mean “say in advance, tell before” (2 Cor. 7:3; 13:2; Gal. 1:9; 1 Thess. 3:4; 4:6). It is used elsewhere to indicate the prophetic nature of the Old Testament (Acts 1:16; Rom. 9:29; Heb. 4:7; Jude 17). Thus, Paul is not threatening the Galatians but rather restating a principle.⁵⁹

The fact that Paul here exhorted believers instead of warning them should not be viewed as not motivating believers to change. Many times the element of embarrassment by reprimand before a group of peers carries more weight than fear of discipline, since exposing a person’s error in public may have a deeper conviction than being disciplined by the Lord in private. Furthermore motivating a believer to behave in keeping with his new identity in Christ can help build him up spiritually. It is in this light that Paul cited the list of fifteen vices in Galatians 5:19–21.

In the final article in this series the vice list in Ephesians 5:2–3 will be studied.

⁵⁸ Borgen, *Early Christianity and Hellenistic Judaism*, 240, 242.

⁵⁹ Brown, “The New Testament Concept of the Believer’s Inheritance,” 125. For more on this issue see Vögtle, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament*, 3–4; and Wibbing, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament*, 4–7.