

# Spirit Fruit



## INTRODUCTION

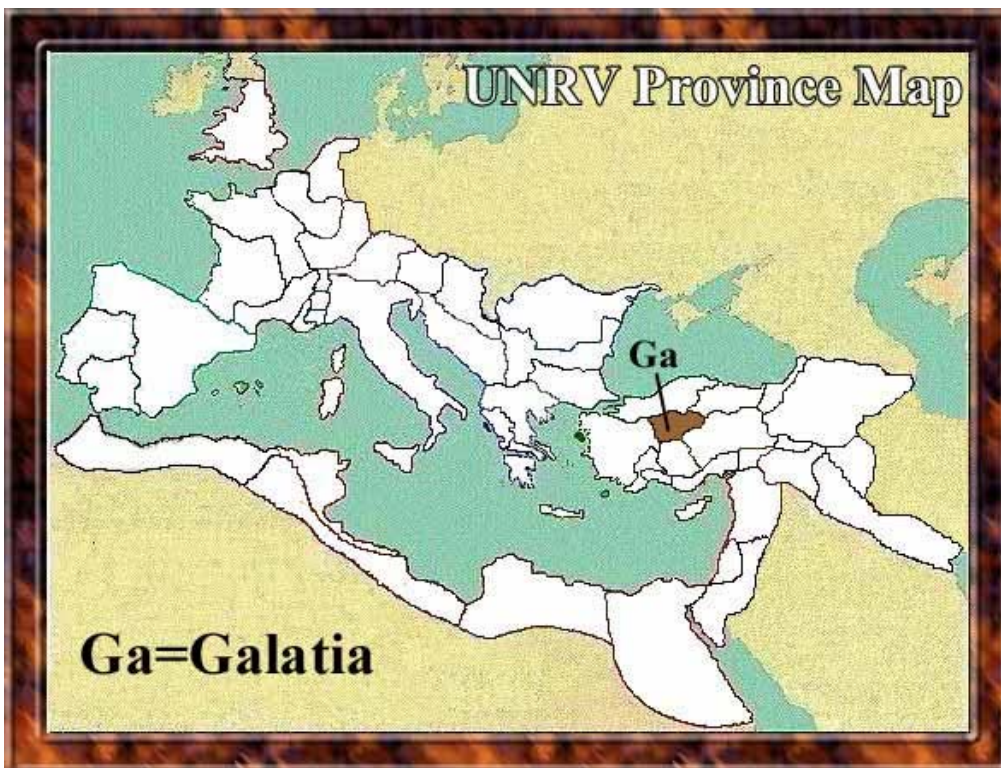
We often speak about...

- moving by the direction of the Holy Spirit
- living by the power of the Holy Spirit
- receiving the Gifts of the Holy Spirit
- but it seems that we hear little of the fruit of the Holy Spirit

This study sets out to rediscover the purpose and procedure for living by the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

We find the fruit described in just 2 verses in Galatians 5 v 22 – 23

To understand the fruit, we need to understand the book of Galatians



Galatia was an area in the highlands of central Anatolia (now Turkey). It was bounded on the north by Bithynia and Paphlagonia, on the east by Pontus, on the south by Lycaonia and Cappadocia, and on the west by the remainder of Phrygia.

Galatia was originally home of the ancient civilization of the Hittites, but came to be occupied by Gallic Celts in the 3rd century BC, hence Galatia, or "Gallia of the East."

## BACKGROUND TO THE BOOK OF GALATIANS

The book of Galatians was written by the Apostle Paul (ch 1v1) to the Church at Galatia, somewhere between A.D 48 – A.D 57. There are differing opinions as to the exact date and whether Paul was writing to the church in the North or the South.

As with any burgeoning group there were a number of teething problems.

There were criticisms of Paul's teaching. Namely, that he was compromising Jewish tradition and long held belief systems. It was suggested that he was trying to make the gospel more appealing to the Gentiles. It was also argued that Paul was not actually a true apostle.



This may have been based on the discussions by Peter, found in Acts 1 v 21 - 22

The attacks on Paul's teaching came from Judaisers, Jewish believers. Although they accepted that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, they still held closely to the familiar, works of the law, and particularly circumcision. Therefore, they insisted that Gentile converts should follow Jewish customs.

In their defense, the Judaisers were, themselves, under pressure from the Zealots who strongly disagreed with the union between the Jews and Gentiles.

Paul's response to this situation was to expound the message of Grace (unmerited favour). That man can reach out to God, not by works or tradition but through the Grace of God, as revealed in the death of Christ.

It is significant therefore, that this book, which seeks to turn people from the law to grace and from slavery to son-ship, should carry a penultimate chapter dealing with spiritual lifestyles witnessed by its fruit. This is a clear call away from legalism and law to lifestyle and liberty in the Holy Spirit.

Jerome (4<sup>th</sup> century prophet and early Bible Translator) 'observes the similarity of the subject matter in the letters to the Romans and the Galatians but points out the difference in the tone of the latter, 'rebuking rather than teaching' and notes that the letter is 'the kind stupid people could understand', with everyday expressions and language.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Reading Through Galatians', C.R. Hume, SCM Press Ltd 1997

## THEME OF GALATIANS

Like many of Paul's letters, Galatians was written with a specific purpose in mind and a particular situation to address.

(1) We have already seen that there was pressure for Christians of a non-Jewish background to conform to Jewish traditions and practices.

There were, perhaps, a number of reasons for this tendency, namely...

- the temptation to mimic anyone who you respect
- the fact that these traditions would appear quite powerful
- Paul, himself was from a Jewish background
- Paul was circumcised
- Paul attended the temple at Jerusalem (Acts 21 v 17 – 26)
- Paul circumcised Timothy (Acts 16 v 1 – 5)
- It would have seemed a natural way to go

(2) We have also seen that there was much criticism aimed at Paul. Part of this book, therefore, is his defense of his right to minister.

- his message was a revelation from Christ      1 v 11 – 12 (see also 2 v 6 – 8)
- he was called by God from birth                      1 v 15 – 16
- assurance that these claims are true                1 v 20

(3) As mentioned above, Paul also uses this letter to persuade the new church that they must no longer follow the law, rather, they should live under the grace of God revealed in Christ.

- Christ set us apart for freedom                      chapter 5

Throughout history, there have been those, including Luther, who have seen the main theme of this book to be the contrast between justification by works and justification by faith. This suggestion has been aimed, to a great degree towards the Roman Catholic Church and Judaism.

Recent commentators of the bible, however, point out that the main focus of Judaism, was not the dependence upon works for salvation, but their covenant with God.

Paul, in Galatians is showing that Christians also share in this same covenant. Not because of our genealogy, but by the shed blood of Christ. Therefore, we base our salvation, not on works, or natural birth, but our justification through the free gift of God, by the death and resurrection of Jesus and accepted by faith.

The overall aim of Paul is not to denigrate works.



Matthew 5 v 16

Jesus did not come to destroy the law



Matthew 5 v 17

The emphasis that Paul places here is to make it plain that good works should be a part of a Christian's lifestyle but not part of our covenant with God.

We also note that when Paul speaks of works he is nearly always referring to works of the Law, not good deeds. He speaks of 'The Law' more frequently than 'Works'. Commentators of the bible recognize that Paul uses the phrase 'works of the Law' when speaking to, or about, Jews or Jewish believers.


Some theologians suggest that Paul's comments about the works of the law are frequently taken out of context. It has become accepted, therefore, that Paul is speaking of any attempt to win God's favour by our own achievement. This thought may not be quite what Paul was saying, but of course, the truth is still the same.

The book of Galatians was written, mainly, to non-Jews, in order to persuade them not to go down the path of orthodoxy and be caught up with the many man-made laws which had become so confused with those ordained by God. He uses a mixture of rabbinical teaching and scripture, but most of all, this plea comes from his heart.

William Barclay suggests that 'if Paul's opponents had had their way, the gospel might have been kept for Jews, and we might never have had the chance to know the love of Christ', and 'Christianity might have become just another Jewish sect. It might have become a thing for Jews and for Jews alone; a thing which was dependent upon circumcision and on keeping the law, instead of being a thing of grace'.<sup>2</sup>

To satisfy the Jews, including the Jewish believers, there was only one way that a Gentile could become a Christian, and that was to become a Jew first (be circumcised).

Before we move on, we need to ask where the law fits into all this, and to examine this further we need to make a few points...

- the true law was given by God
- there were other laws added by man
- Jesus had not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it.
- without the law we would not know what sin is Romans 7 v 7 
- it is impossible to keep the law, except through grace Rom 7v 22 – 24
- Christ could fulfill the Law, because of Grace

It is important to answer these questions before we consider the fruit of the Spirit. If we do not, they can easily become the fruit of the law, or man's ability.

A basic outline of the book of Galatians, as it approaches the fruit of the Spirit might look something like this...

- Chapter 1 v 1 – 5 Introduction and greetings
- Chapter 1 v 6 – 24 The true gospel as revealed by revelation to Paul
- Chapter 2 v 1 – 10 Paul's 'credentials' recognized by the other Apostles
- Chapter 2 v 11 – 21 Paul disagrees with Peter over the law

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<sup>2</sup> 'The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians, William Barclay, The Saint Andrew Press Edinburgh, 5<sup>th</sup> impression, 1966  
Spirit-Fruit Bible Study by Rev. David Hughes at New Day Baptist Church, Morton.

- Chapter 3 v 1 – 18      The difference between the true gospel and the law
- Chapter 3 v 19 – 25      The purpose of the law
- Chapter 3 v 26 – 4 v 7      Grace takes us from being slaves to becoming Heirs
- Chapter 4 v 8 – 20      Teaching the difference between the two (concern)
- Chapter 4 v 21 – 31      The lesson from Hagar and Sarah
- Chapter 5 v 1 – 15      Freedom by Grace ( dependence on Christ)  
not by the Law (dependence on self)
- Chapter 5 v 16 – 21      Walking in the Spirit not by man's dictates
- Chapter 5 v 22 – 23      **THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS...**

*(note the change in emphasis from this point)*

- Chapter 5 v 24 – 26      Walking in the Spirit makes a difference
- Chapter 6 v 1 - 10      Living in the Grace of Christ
- Chapter 6 v 11 – 18      Final greetings and encouragement to go on in grace

Throughout the New Testament, there is a call for God's people to be fruit bearers...

- Matthew 3 v 8 – 10      'Produce fruit in keeping with repentance'
- Matthew 7 v 16 – 20      'By their fruit you will recognize them'
- Mark 11 v 13 – 14      The tree with leaves but no fruit
- Luke 13 v 6 – 9      'He went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any'
- John 15 v 2 – 16      'Go and bear fruit – fruit that will last'
- Romans 7 v 4 – 6      'We might bear fruit to God'
- Romans 15 v 28      'Made sure that they have received this fruit' (gifts)
- Ephesians 5 v 8 – 11      'The fruit of the light'

Philippians 1 v 9 - 11	'Filled with the fruit of righteousness'
Colossians 1 v 6	'The gospel is bearing fruit'
Colossians 1 v 10	'Bearing fruit in every good work'
Hebrews 13 v 15	'The fruit of our lips'
James 3 v 17	'Full of mercy and good fruit'
Jude v 12	'Autumn trees without fruit'

### Some questions to consider...

- ❖ Why do you think that people think more about the Gifts of the Spirit than the Fruit of the Spirit?
- ❖ Why were the Jews so against Paul?
- ❖ What areas can you think of in which Christians might compromise?
- ❖ In which way can Christian ministry be misunderstood?
- ❖ How can you get a better mix of faith and works operating in your life?
- ❖ What fruit have you seen in your life?

### Other Scriptures about Fruit

Type questions for group or at home