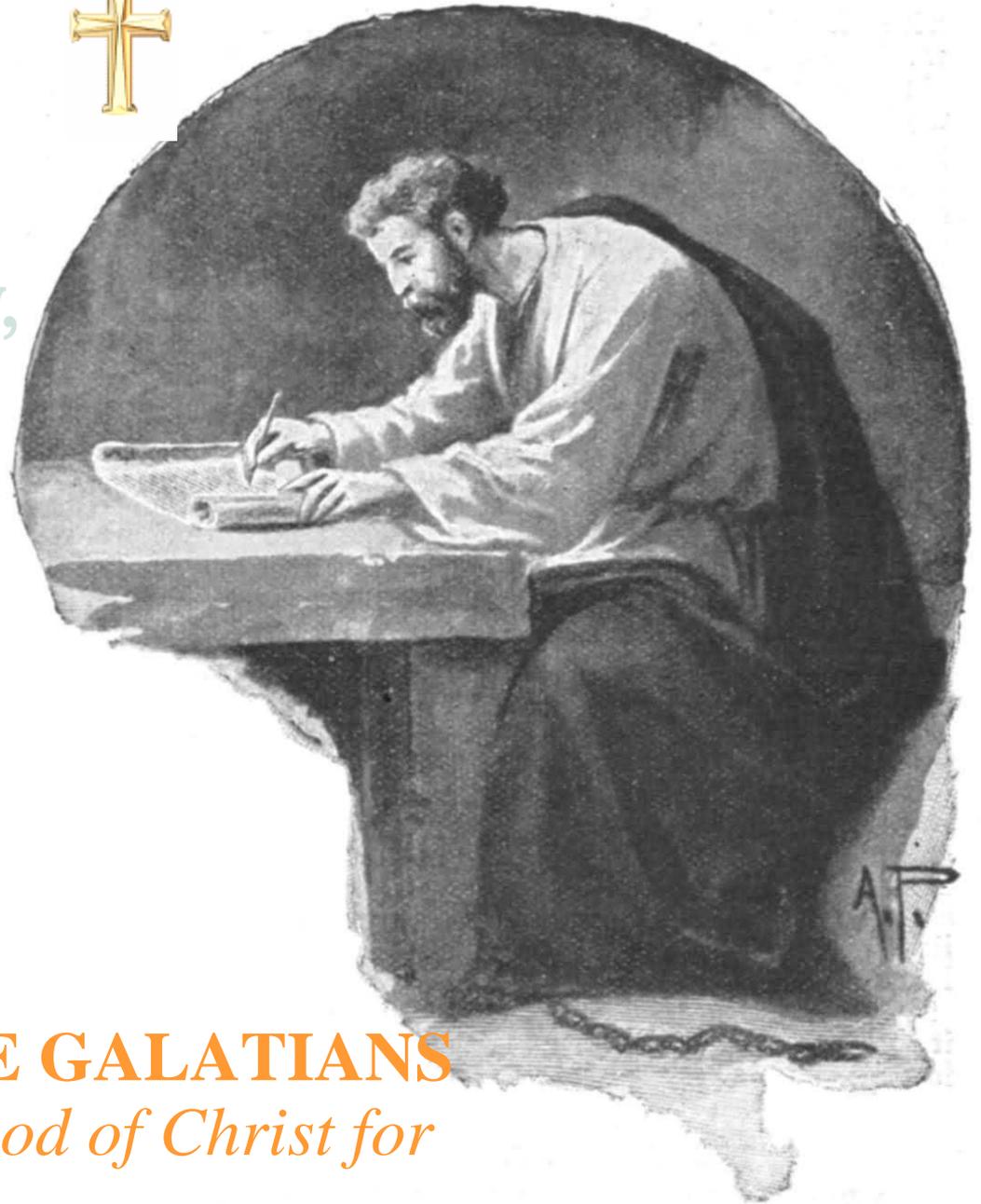




Christ has redeemed us

Christ has redeemed us
from the curse of the law,
having become a curse
for us (for it is written,
Cursed is everyone who
hangs on a tree)
(Gal 3:13)



THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

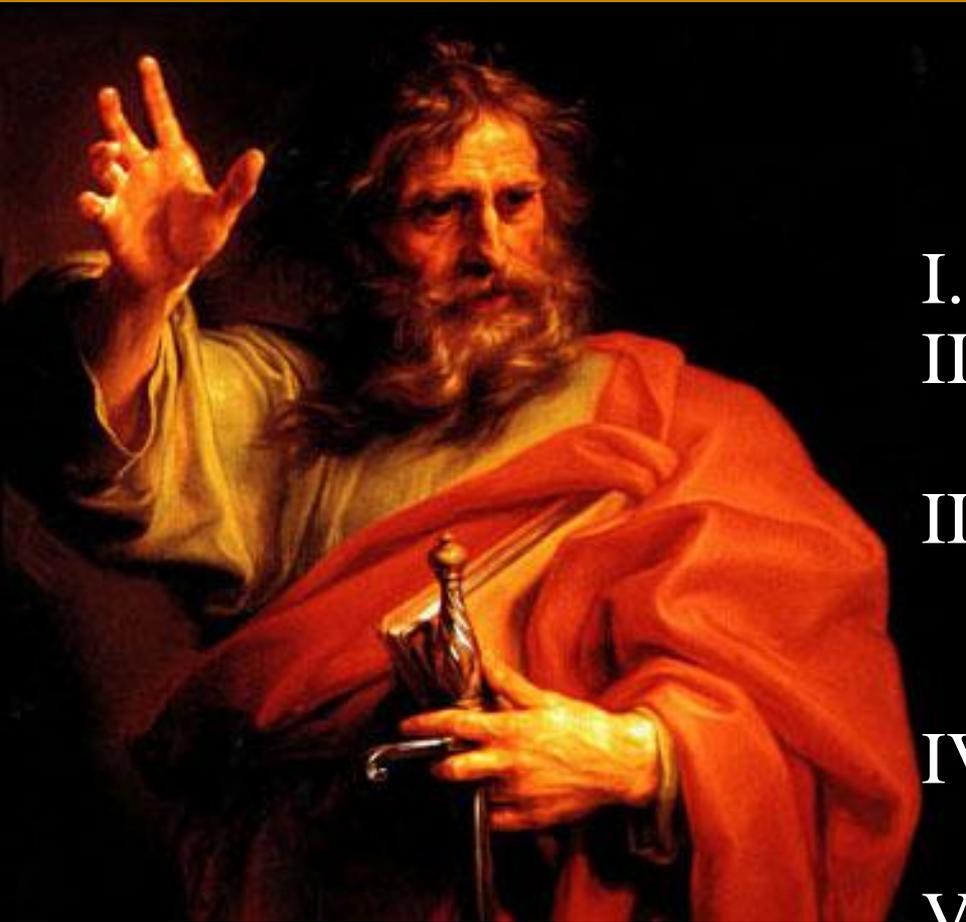
*The sufficiency of the blood of Christ for
Salvation*

PAUL WRITING TO THE GALATIANS.

A Brief Outline by Chapter

- 1: Greeting
His Call by Christ
- 2: The Council of Jerusalem
Peter's Inconsistency at Antioch
Faith and Works
- 3: Justification by Faith
The Law Did Not Nullify the Promise
What Faith Has Brought Us
- 4: God's Free Children in Christ
Do Not Throw This Freedom Away
Appeal to Former Loyalty
An Allegory on Christian Freedom
- 5: The Importance of Faith
Be Not Misled
Freedom for Service
- 6: Life in the Community of Christ
Final Appeal

*The
righteous
will live by faith.*



The principal divisions of the Letter to the Galatians are the following:

- I. Address (Gal 1:1-5)
- II. Loyalty to the Gospel (Gal 1:6-10)
- III. St Paul's Defense of His Gospel and His Authority (Gal 1:11-2:21)
- IV. Faith and Liberty (Gal 3:1-4:31)
- V. Exhortation to Christian Living (Gal 5:1-6:10)
- VI. Conclusion (Gal 6:11-18)



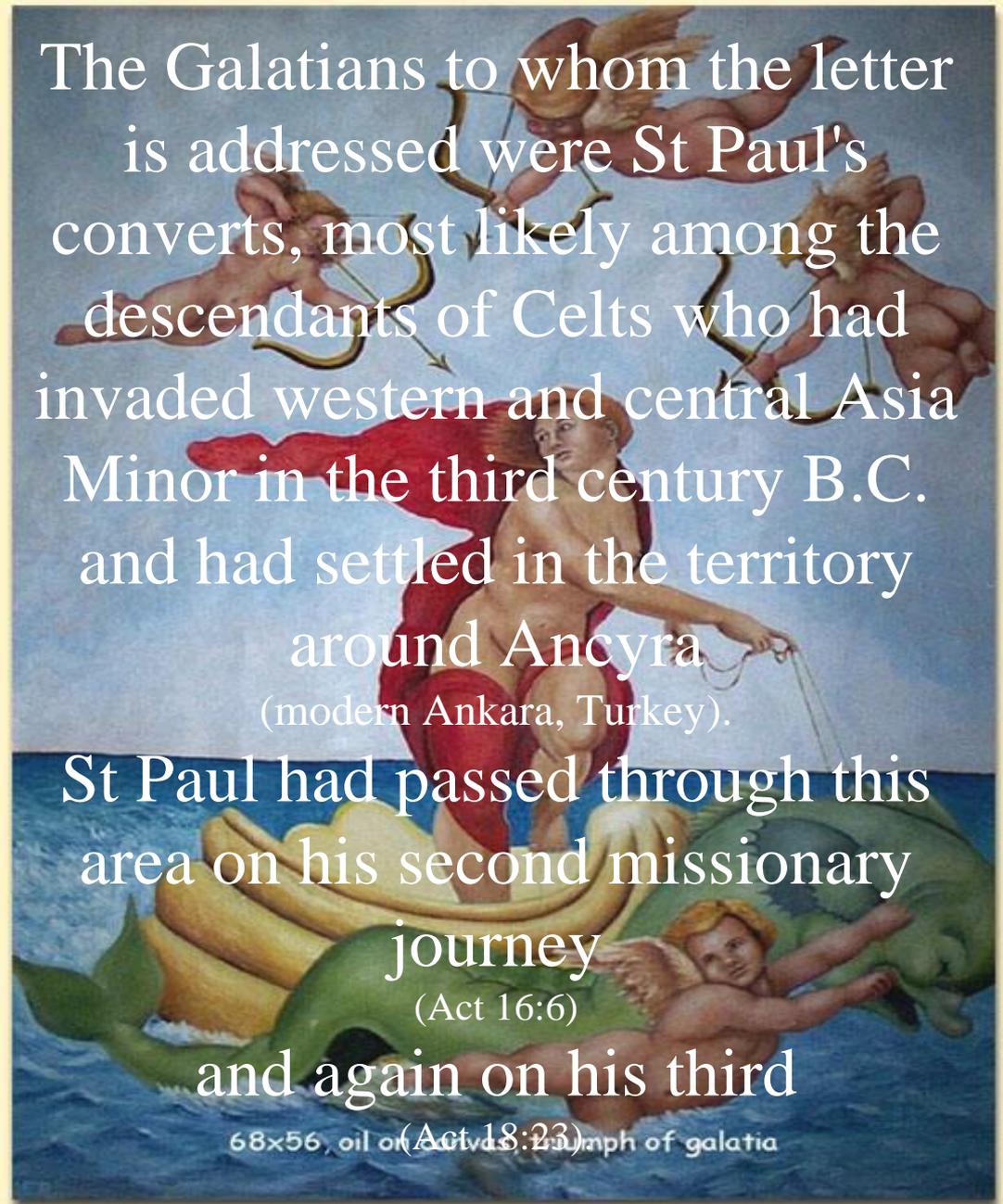
The Galatians to whom the letter is addressed were St Paul's converts, most likely among the descendants of Celts who had invaded western and central Asia Minor in the third century B.C. and had settled in the territory around Ancyra

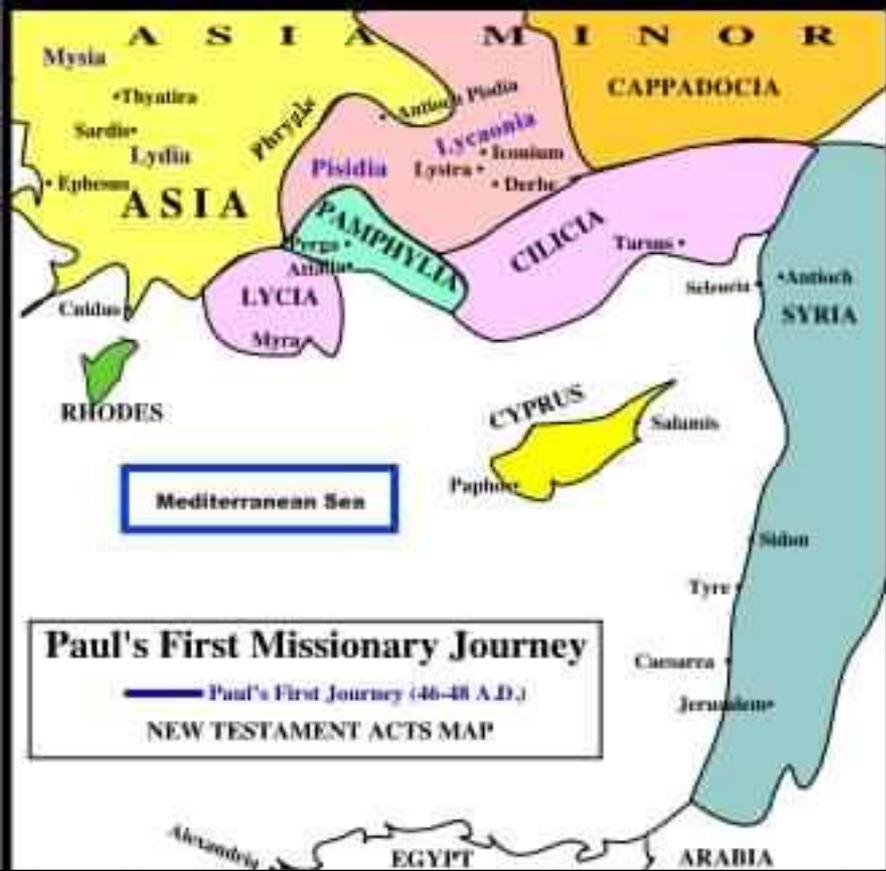
(modern Ankara, Turkey).

St Paul had passed through this area on his second missionary journey (Act 16:6) and again on his third

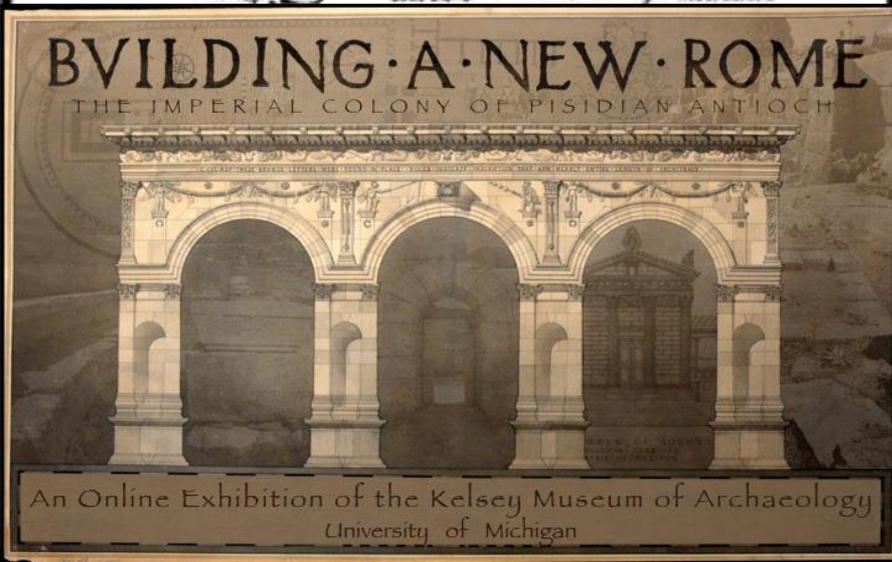
(Act 18:23)

68x56, oil on canvas, Triumph of galatia





It is less likely that the recipients of this letter were St Paul's churches in the southern regions of Pisidia, Lycaonia, and Pamphylia where he had preached earlier in the Hellenized cities of Perge, Iconium, Pisidian Antioch, Lystra, and Derbe (Act 13:13-14:27); this area was part of the Roman province of Galatia, and some scholars think that South Galatia was the destination of this letter.





If it is addressed to the Galatians in the north, the letter was probably written around A.D. 54 or 55, most likely from Ephesus after St Paul's arrival there for a stay of several years on his third missionary journey (Act 19; 20:31).

On the South Galatian theory, the date would be earlier, perhaps A.D. 48-50. Involved is the question of how one relates the events of Gal 2:1-10 to the "*Council of Jerusalem*" described in Acts 15.

Why did St Paul write the epistle?



St. Paul had to address some important issues. Issues brought up in the epistle include:

- Galatians were questioning whether or not St Paul was a **genuine apostle**
- Some Galatian Christians (influenced by heretics) thought that to be a Christian, they had to first go through **Jewish traditions and rituals** (e.g. circumcision).

THERE IS
NEITHER JEW
NOR GREEK,

SLAVE NOR FREE,

MALE NOR
FEMALE,

FOR YOU
ARE ALL ONE IN

CHRIST JESUS.

- GALATIANS 3:28

In any case, the new Christians whom St Paul is addressing were converts from paganism

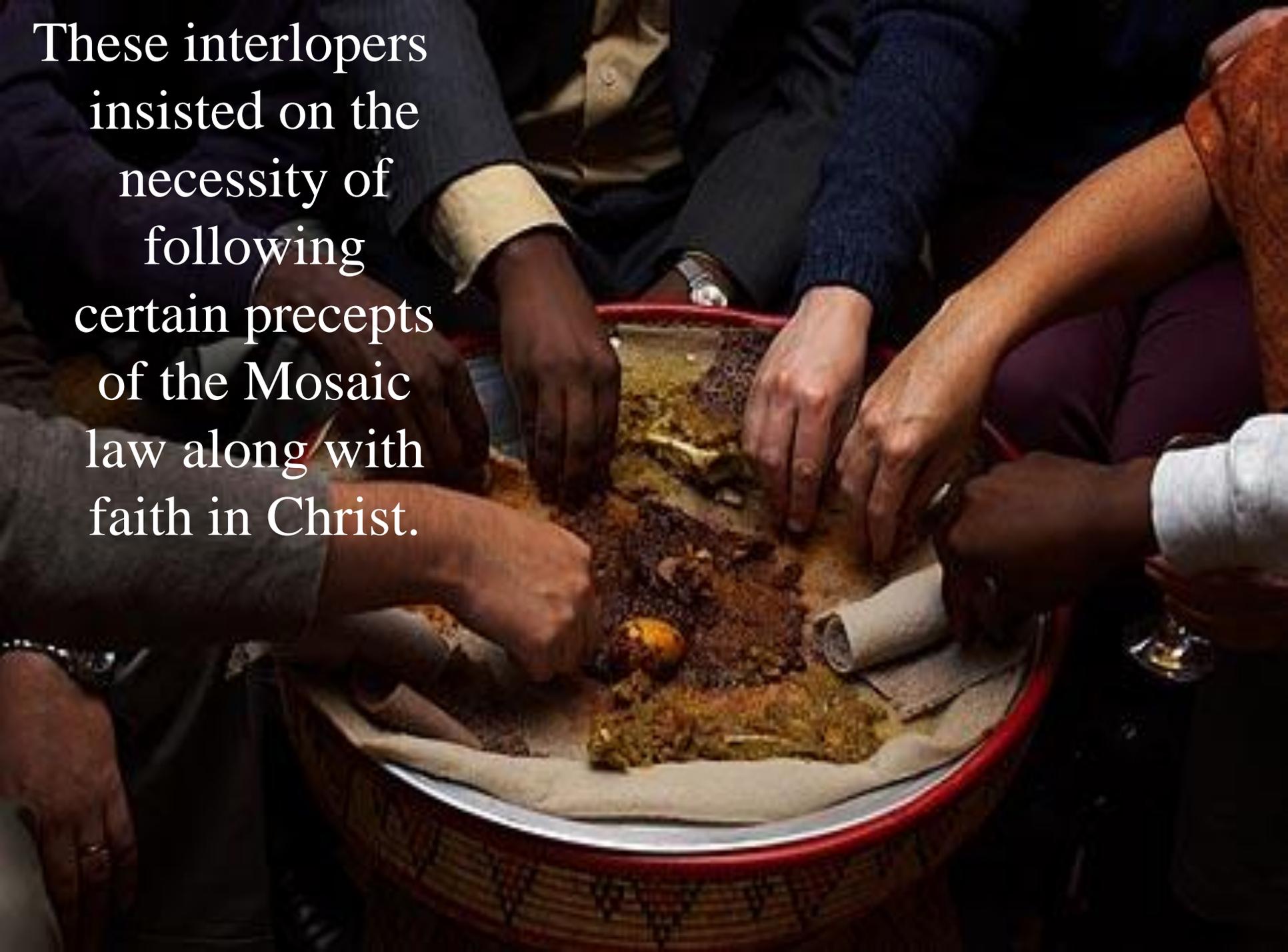
(Gal 4:8-9)

who were now being enticed by other missionaries to add the observances of the Jewish law, including the rite of circumcision, to the cross of Christ as a means of salvation.



For, since St Paul's visit, some other interpretation of Christianity had been brought to these neophytes, probably by converts from Judaism (the name "Judaizers" is sometimes applied to them); it has specifically been suggested that they were Jewish Christians who had come from the austere Essene sect.

These interlopers
insisted on the
necessity of
following
certain precepts
of the Mosaic
law along with
faith in Christ.





They were undermining St Paul's authority also,

- asserting that he had not been trained by Jesus himself,
- that his gospel did not agree with that of the original and true apostles in Jerusalem,
- that he had kept from his converts in Galatia the necessity of accepting circumcision and other key obligations of the Jewish law, in order more easily to win them to Christ,
- and that his gospel was thus not the full and authentic one held by "those of repute" in Jerusalem

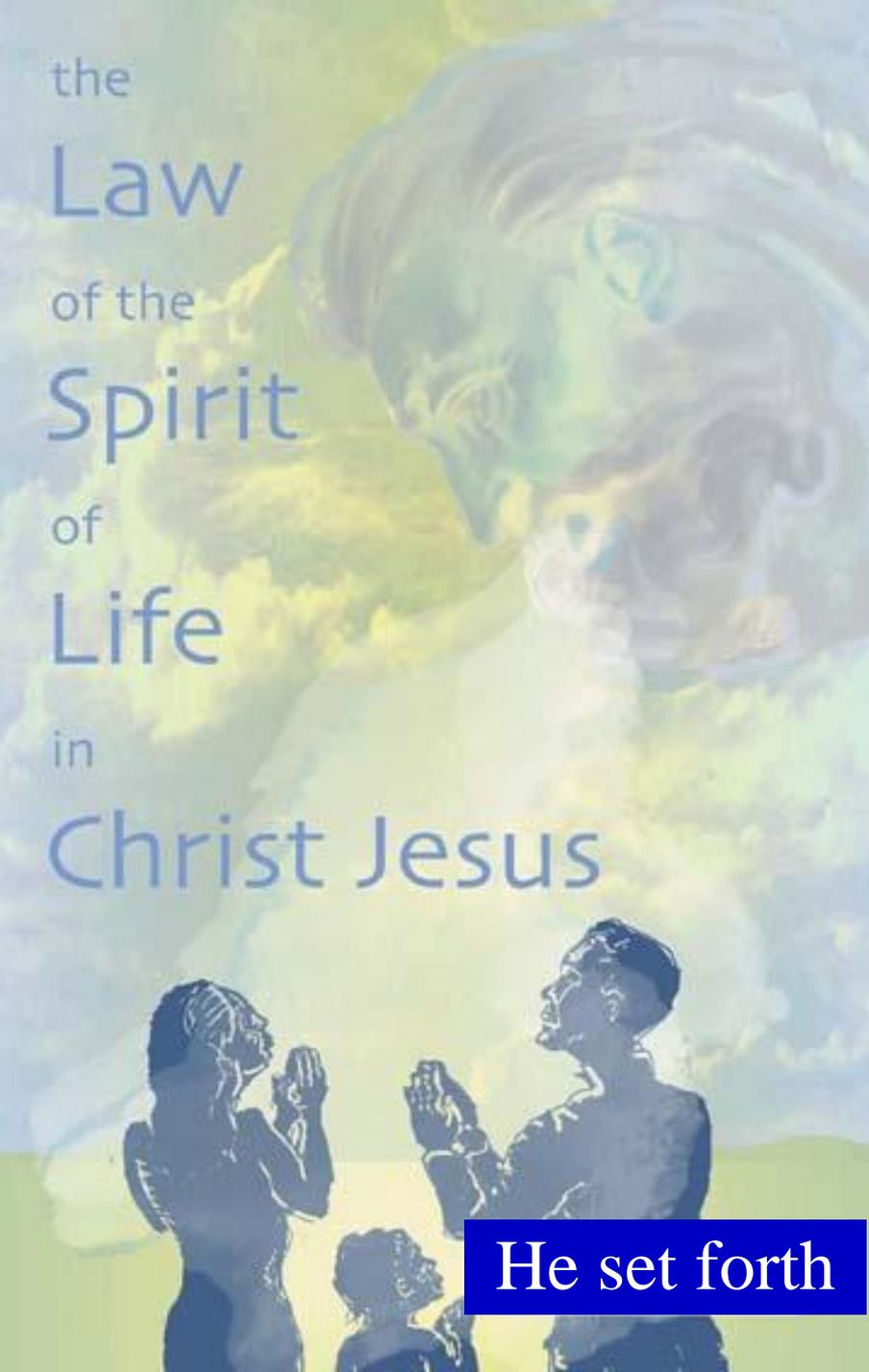
(Gal 2:2).

For in Christ Jesus
neither circumcision nor uncircumcision
has any value. The only thing that counts
is faith expressing itself through love.

Galatians 5:6

www.heartlight.org

Some scholars also see in Gal 5; 6 another set of opponents against whom St Paul writes, people who in their emphasis on the Spirit set aside all norms for conduct and became libertines in practice. When St Paul learned of the situation, he wrote this defense of his apostolic authority and of the correct understanding of the faith.



the
Law
of the
Spirit
of
Life
in
Christ Jesus

- the unique importance of Christ and his redemptive sacrifice on the cross,
- the freedom that Christians enjoy from the old burdens of the law,
- the total sufficiency of Christ and of faith in Christ as the way to God and to eternal life,
- and the beauty of the new life of the Spirit.

Galatians is thus a summary of basic Pauline theology. Its themes were more fully and less polemically developed in the Letter to the Romans.

He set forth



Autobiographically, the
letter gives us St Paul's
own accounts of how he
came to faith
(Gal 1:15-24),

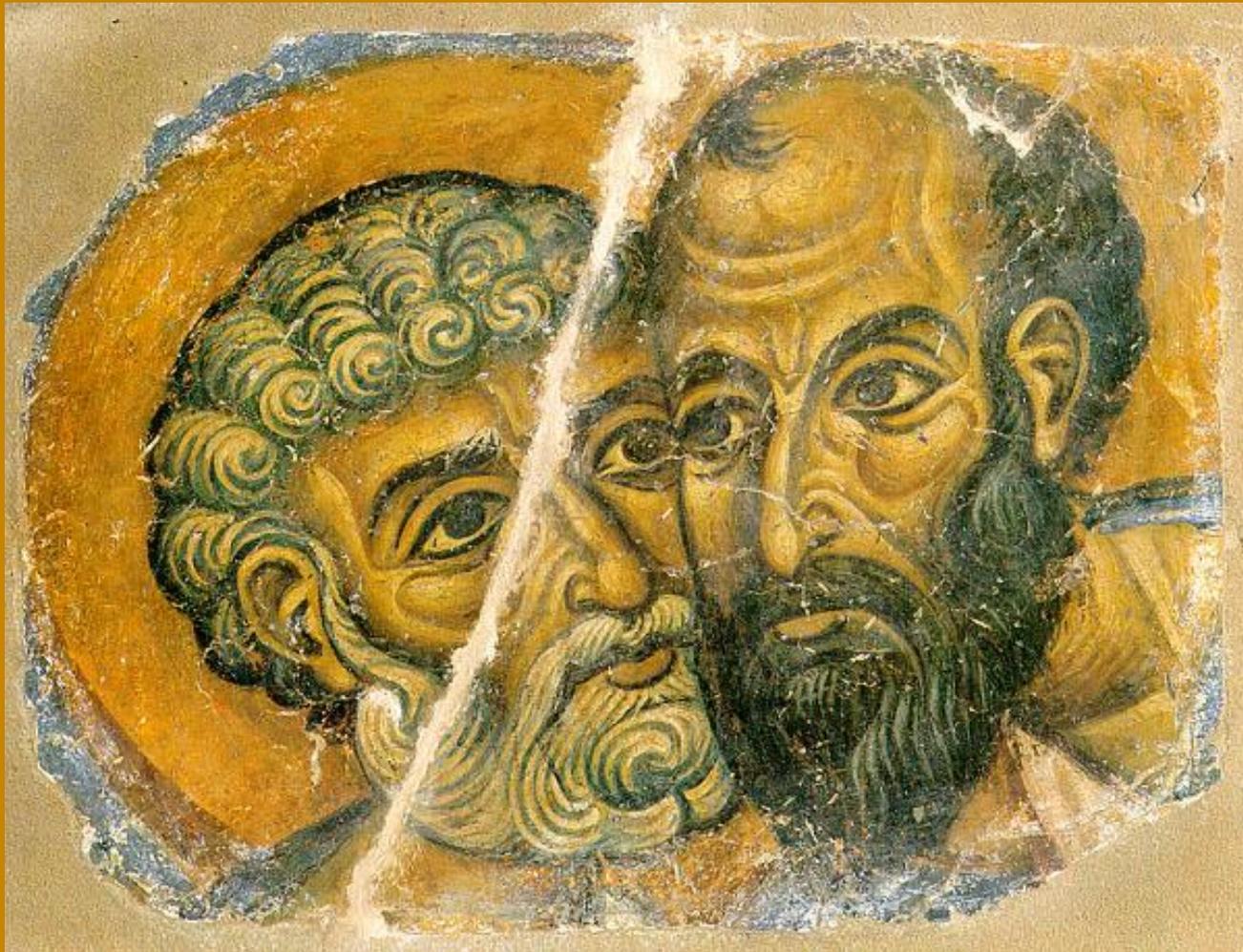
It also points out the
agreement in
*"the truth of the
gospel"*

(Gal 2:5,14)

that he shared with the
Jewish Christian leaders
in Jerusalem,
James, Cephas, and
John

(Gal 2:1-10),





and the rebuke he had to deliver to Cephas in Antioch for inconsistency, contrary to the gospel, on the issue of table fellowship in the racially mixed church of Jewish and Gentile Christians in Antioch
(Gal 2:11-14; cf Gal 2:15-21).

No Other GOSPEL



At the conclusion of the
letter

(Gal 6:11-18),

St Paul wrote in his own
hand

(cf 2Th 3:17-18)

a vivid summary of the
message to the Galatians.

In his vigorous emphasis on
the absolute preeminence of

Christ and his cross as
God's way to salvation and
holiness,

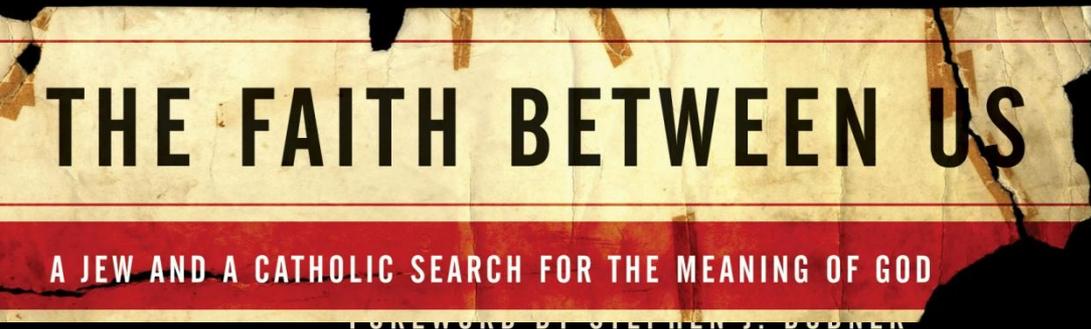
St Paul stresses Christian
freedom and the

ineffectiveness of the
Mosaic law for gaining
divine favor and blessings

(Gal 3:19-29).



The pious Jew saw in the law a way established by God to win divine approval by a life of meticulous observance of ritual, social, and moral regulations. **But St Paul's profound insight into the higher designs of God in Christ led him to understand and welcome the priority of promise and faith** (shown in the experience of Abraham, Gal 3:6-18)



THE FAITH BETWEEN US

A JEW AND A CATHOLIC SEARCH FOR THE MEANING OF GOD

FOREWORD BY STEPHEN J. BOYNER



and the supernatural gifts
of the Spirit
(Gal 3:2-5; 5:16-6:10).

GALATIANS 5:22-23

**BUT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS
LOVE, JOY,
PEACE, PATIENCE,
KINDNESS, GOODNESS,
FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS
AND SELF-CONTROL. AGAINST
SUCH THINGS THERE IS NO LAW.**



His enthusiasm for this new vision of the life of grace in Christ and of the uniquely salvific role of Christ's redemptive death on the cross shines through this whole letter to the Galatians.



**Glory Be To God For Ever and
Ever. AMEN.**