

## DOES THE CHRISTIAN HAVE "FLESH" IN GAL 5:13-26?

WALTER BO RUSSELL, III\*

### I. THE VIEW THROUGH OUR PRESENT INTERPRETATIVE GLASSES

Probably since Augustine we have used a set of hermeneutical glasses to read Paul that some have argued does not correspond to Paul's set of glasses.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, in passages like Romans 6-8 and Galatians 5-6 we have read Paul's descriptions of human behavior vertically (metaphysically) rather than horizontally (historically). We have taken his ethical statements primarily as abstract anthropological descriptions of parts of the Christian rather than as historical descriptions of the whole identity of persons.

In Galatians 5-6 we have understood *sarx* and *pneuma* ("flesh" and "Spirit") as a description of an internal duality within the Christian. Thus the Christian is commonly described as "a battlefield of the opposing forces of flesh and Spirit."<sup>2</sup>

Within this understanding, "the flesh" is defined as "that element in man's nature which is opposed to goodness, that in him which makes for evil; sometimes thought of as an element of himself, sometimes objectified as a force distinct from him, this latter usage being, however, rather rhetorical."<sup>3</sup> Robert Jewett defines "the flesh" in Galatians 5-6 as "Paul's term for everything aside from God in which one places his final trust."<sup>4</sup>

Lexical works echo the same view of *sarx* in contexts like Romans 6-8 and Galatians 5-6. Louw and Nida, in particular, place *sarx* within the semantic domain of "psychological faculties" with similar terms like "the inner man," "the hidden person," "heart," and "the inner self." They define *sarx* as "the psychological aspect of human nature which contrasts with the spiritual nature; in other words, that aspect of human nature which is characterized by or reflects typical human reasoning and desires in contrast

\* Walter Russell is associate professor of New Testament at Talbot School of Theology, 13800 Biola Avenue, La Mirada, CA 90639.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. e.g. K. Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976) 78-96 (originally published in *HTR* 56 [1963] 199-215).

<sup>2</sup> H. D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Hermenia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 272.

<sup>3</sup> E. D. Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1921) 493. This is the seventh and final meaning of *sarx* in its NT usage, according to Burton.

<sup>4</sup> R. Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings*. AGJU 10 (Leiden: Brill, 1971) 103.

with aspects of human thought and behavior which relate to God and spiritual life . . . 1 Cor 1:26; Gal 5:19; Gal 6:8."<sup>5</sup>

Recent translations also reflect an internal, nonphysical sense of *sarx* by translating with the extended, less body-oriented sense of "a nature": "So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature" (Gal 5:16 NIV). "What I mean is this: be guided by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of your unspiritual nature" (REB). "This is what I say: let the Spirit direct your lives, and do not satisfy the desires of the human nature" (TEV). By the time you get to Gal 5:24 with its crucifixion of the *sarx*, you have your "sinful nature" or "unspiritual nature" or "human nature" put to death in these respective translations. With the death of this alleged nature or capacity in the Christian, one is now hard pressed to explain why the Christian still sins apart from what appears to me to be confusing identity talk.<sup>6</sup> This dissatisfaction, among other factors, has driven me to rethink the widespread understanding of Paul's use of the *sarx/pneuma* antithesis in Galatians 5–6.

## II. A SUGGESTED NEW SET OF INTERPRETATIVE GLASSES

I believe we have misunderstood the main aspect of Paul's usage of *sarx* and *pneuma*. I would suggest that he does not appear to be using the two terms primarily to describe an internal duality. Rather, as Herman Ridderbos has argued in other contexts,<sup>7</sup> the terms are primarily used in a redemptive-historical manner and represent two successive historical eras or modes of existence, separated by Christ's death, burial and resurrection. The Christian does not have "flesh" (in the ethical sense) in him/her but rather was "in the flesh" (*en sarki*) apart from Christ. "Flesh" is the merely human, frail and transitory body that stands in stark contrast to God as Spirit. To be "in the flesh" is to be in a mode of existence of "what is merely human."<sup>8</sup> Again, this stands in stark contrast to being "in the Spirit"—that is, indwelt and empowered by God's *pneuma*. Everyone was "in the flesh" before Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. The Christian enters a new mode of existence in Christ and is now "in the Spirit" (*en pneumatē*) rather than being "in the flesh," as Rom 8:9 states: "However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him" (NASB).

Particularly, Paul uses *sarx* and *pneuma* in antithesis in his extended discussions of the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the Church in Galatians 3–6 and Romans 7–8. In these contexts *sarx* is in tandem with

<sup>5</sup> *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (ed. J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida; New York: United Bible Societies, 1988) 1.322 (italics mine).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. e.g. D. C. Needham, *Birthright: Christian, Do You Know Who You Are?* (Portland: Multnomah, 1979).

<sup>7</sup> H. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 57–68; *When the Time Had Fully Come* (Jordan Station: Paideia, 1982 [1957]) 44–60.

<sup>8</sup> J. M. G. Barclay, *Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1988) 206.

*nomos* ("law") and is associated with the era of Israel under the Mosaic law. This is why Paul connects "flesh" and "law" in passages like Gal 5:17-18; Rom 6:12-14; 8:1-4 in a manner that is disconcerting to many commentators. He is arguing against the Jewish Christians' advocacy of the proselyte model of Gentile incorporation and against their advocacy of the use of the Mosaic law as the primary means for constraining the Christians' behavior. Jewish Christians were advocating an anachronistic redemptive-historical model, and Paul's response is appropriately redemptive-historical in its logic. The issue confusing the Galatians is a redemptive-historical one: "This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit are you now being perfected by the flesh?" (Gal 3:2-3 NASB).

Most commentators on Galatians now agree with this assessment and assert that Paul confronted the Judaistic threat in Galatians 1-4. But they also posit a shift in the argument from Galatians 4 to Galatians 5 and see a chasm of sorts between the argumentation of Galatians 1-4 and that of Galatians 5-6.<sup>9</sup> This pivot also entails a shift from the bodily sense that *sarx* has in Galatians 1-4 to a more extended sense in Galatians 5-6. Some argue that the extended sense is achieved by a "metonymy of container": The evil impulse is focused upon by referring to the bodily tissues that contain it.<sup>10</sup> E. D. Burton is representative of commentators when he writes on Gal 5:13:

The word *sarx*, previously in this epistle a purely physical term, is used here and throughout this chapter (see vv. 16, 17, 20, 24) in a definitely ethical sense, "that element of man's nature which is opposed to goodness, and makes for evil," in which it appears also in Rom., chap. 8; . . . Of any physical association with this ethical sense of the term there is no trace in this passage.<sup>11</sup>

The heart of my thesis is that *sarx* does not change its basic sense by metonymy from Galatians 1-4 to Galatians 5-6. Rather, the basic bodily sense in chaps. 1-4 is simply enriched in chaps. 5-6 by Paul's continued use of redemptive-historical reasoning. The ideal way to validate this continued sense of *sarx* would be by a careful exegesis of Galatians 5-6. But in lieu of such a lengthy task, which I have tackled elsewhere,<sup>12</sup> two shorter pieces of evidence will be offered. The first is a clarification of the role of Galatians 5-6 within the argument of the epistle. The second is a brief rhetorical analysis of 5:13-26. My hope is that the combined weight of the evidence would at least begin the significant questioning of the *sarx/pneuma* antithesis as an internal duality.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. e.g. Betz, *Galatians* 253-255.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. e.g. E. D. Burton, *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usages of Pneuma, Psychē, and Sarx in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 180 A.D.; and of Their Equivalents Rūah, Nepeš, and Bāšār in the Hebrew Old Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1918) 191-198.

<sup>11</sup> Burton, *Galatians* 292.

<sup>12</sup> W. B. Russell, III, *Paul's Use of Sarx and Pneuma in Galatians 5-6 in Light of the Argument of Galatians* (dissertation; Philadelphia: Westminster Theological Seminary, 1991).

## III. THE ROLE OF GALATIANS 5-6 WITHIN THE ARGUMENT OF GALATIANS

The traditional understanding of the central issue of Galatians is that of an ideological clash between Paul's justification by faith and the Judaizers' legalism (e.g. Luther's 1535 commentary on Galatians). This understanding has been overturned within the last few years through better literary analysis of Galatians and through better sociological/anthropological analysis of first-century Mediterranean peoples like the Galatians. The newer understanding of the central issue of Galatians is represented by scholars like T. David Gordon and John Barclay.<sup>13</sup> The latter specifically concludes that the central issue of the Galatians crisis is twofold:

The issues at stake in the Galatian crisis were *the identity* of these Galatian Christians and their *appropriate patterns of behaviour*: should they regularize and confirm their place among God's people by getting circumcised and becoming proselytes? And should they adopt the ritual and ethical norms of the Jewish people? Our investigation has demonstrated how attractive and reasonable the agitators' proposal in these matters appeared.<sup>14</sup>

Recent rhetorical analysis of Galatians by Fletcher, Kraftchick, and Matera,<sup>15</sup> to name a few, confirm that Paul develops his argument about the Galatians' identity as the sons of God/Abraham and about their appropriate pattern of behavior through three main headings or proofs in the epistle: (1) The universal nature of his gospel and its resulting identity was legitimately confirmed by Jerusalem, while the ethnocentric nature of the Judaizers' nongospel was rejected (1:11-2:21). (2) Only Paul's universal gospel gave them their identity as the true people of God through their faith in Christ (3:1-4:31). (3) His gospel alone also provided them with true deliverance from sin's powers and with the true pattern of behavior for God's people through the receiving of the Holy Spirit (5:1-6:10).

Understanding that Galatians 5-6 actually continues and climaxes Paul's previous argumentation against the Judaizers' nongospel has cut the Gordian knot of the beginning point of the parenthesis or moral exhortation in Galatians. Otto Merk noted that scholars had advocated six different beginnings for this section in their epistolary analysis of Galatians (4:12; 4:21; 5:1; 5:2; 5:7; 5:13).<sup>16</sup> This should give some indication of the paucity of definitive epistolary features in this part of Galatians.<sup>17</sup> Actu-

<sup>13</sup> T. D. Gordon, "The Problem at Galatia," *Int* 41 (1987) 32-43; J. M. G. Barclay, "Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case," *JSNT* 31 (1987) 73-93; *Obeying the Truth*.

<sup>14</sup> Barclay, *Obeying the Truth* 73 (italics his).

<sup>15</sup> D. K. Fletcher, *The Singular Argument of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (dissertation; Princeton: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1982); S. J. Kraftchick, *Ethos and Pathos Appeals in Galatians Five and Six: A Rhetorical Analysis* (dissertation; Emory University, 1985); F. J. Matera, "The Culmination of Paul's Argument to the Galatians: Gal. 5:1-6:17," *JSNT* 32 (1988) 79-91.

<sup>16</sup> O. Merk, "Der Beginn der Paränese im Galaterbrief," *ZNW* 60 (1969) 83-104.

<sup>17</sup> See, however, the recent excellent monograph on Galatians by G. W. Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts* (JSNTSup 29; Sheffield: JSOT, 1989), for a highlighting of the sparse epistolary features.

ally, in tracing the flow of Paul's argument rhetorical analysis seems much more promising than looking for nonexistent epistolary markers.

One reason that we know that Galatians 5-6 is the climax of Paul's persuasive argument toward the Galatians is because it is not until 5:1-12 that he finally mentions circumcision. This recognition caused Frank Matera to conclude that

Gal 5.1-6.17 forms the culmination of Paul's argument to the Galatians, the point he has intended to make from the beginning of the letter: the Galatians must not submit to circumcision. Thus, although these chapters contain a great deal of moral exhortation, they should not be viewed exclusively as paraenesis. They are the climax of Paul's deliberative argument aimed at persuading the Galatians not to be circumcised.<sup>18</sup>

George A. Kennedy echoes this: "What Paul is leading to in chapters 1-4 is the exhortation of chapters 5-6. This is the point of the letter."<sup>19</sup>

Galatians 5:1 signals the beginning of the discussion of the epistle's second issue of the appropriate pattern of behavior and moves beyond the first issue of the identity of the true people of God that was discussed in 1:11-4:31. The argument flows smoothly from the free identity of God's true children (4:21-31) to the topic of their experiencing and using of that freedom in 5:1-6:10. The question Paul is answering in 5:1-6:10 is this: Which pattern of behavior manifests true freedom from sin's powers? The issue of freedom from the power of transgressions was apparently the primary felt need to which the Judaizers appealed.<sup>20</sup> Of course their answer was to take up the yoke of Torah and the mark of circumcision so that one could be included within the safety of God's covenant community (ethnic Israel).

Paul's answer to the burning issue in 5:1-6:10 is found in a comparison of the behavior patterns of two competing identities of the people of God. While the content of the section is ethical and hortatory in nature, its function is argumentative and not purely hortatory within Paul's epistle. First, he continues his antithetical or contrasting argumentation between the Judaizers and himself. Of course he argues for the superiority of his position over theirs. Second, he now proves the superiority of his true gospel over their nongospel in the third area. The first area concerned their antithetical natures and the confirmation by Jerusalem of his gospel (1:11-2:21). The second area involved the conflicting gospels' abilities to impart true Abrahamic sonship (3:1-4:31). Now in the third major area Paul proves the superiority of his gospel within the ethical realm. His gospel provides the only adequate and appropriate constraint for their behavior: the Holy Spirit (versus the constraint of circumcision and Torah observance). There is nothing new about Paul's exhortation to choose between the options. What

<sup>18</sup> Matera, "Culmination" 79-80.

<sup>19</sup> G. A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1984) 146.

<sup>20</sup> H. D. Betz, "Spirit, Freedom, and Law: Paul's Message to the Galatian Churches," *SEÅ* 39 (1974) 153-155.

is new in 5:1–6:10 is the realm of choice—ethical or behavioral. Therefore the parenetic material serves a vital—perhaps climactic—function within the whole rhetoric of Galatians.<sup>21</sup>

The conclusion that I am pointing toward about the climactic role of Galatians 5–6 is also true of Paul's climactic usage of the *sarx/pneuma* antithesis in the chapters. The antithetical usage began in 3:3. Paul initiated the first stage in 3:3 when he contrasted his means for spiritual growth with the Judaizers' means. The Judaizers were emphasizing the means of the circumcision of the Galatians' bodies.<sup>22</sup> But this is not the end of the antithesis. Paul enriched it in a second stage<sup>23</sup> with his discussion of Ishmael and Isaac in 4:21–31. In a powerful use of irony against what appears to be a key Judaizer proof-text, Paul notes that the true son of Abraham is the one born *kata pneuma*, not *kata sarka* (4:23, 29). This builds upon his earlier point in 3:1–14 that the undeniable proof of Abrahamic blessing is the possession of the Holy Spirit. So the distinctive of the true children of Isaac is that they are born like Isaac (*kata pneuma*). To emphasize being born *kata sarka* is to emphasize that one is an Ishmaelite. We now see that *sarx* and *pneuma* are brought into full dialectic:

He correlates flesh with the old aeon, the law, slavery, the present Jerusalem and the agitating Judaizers, while opposing flesh with spirit, which in turn was correlated with the new aeon, the promise given to Abraham, freedom, and the church.<sup>24</sup>

The rhetorical stage is now set for the third and climactic phase in Paul's usage of *sarx* and *pneuma* in Galatians. We see this in Galatians 5–6. If the Judaizers are characterized as those who are born according to the norm or standard of the *sarx* in 4:21–31, it logically follows that they will also live or walk according to that norm or standard. This is Paul's point in Galatians 5–6. He now rips back the curtain to reveal how the community of the *sarx* will really function in the absence of the empowering work of the Spirit. Such a community stands in stark contrast to the functioning of the community of the *pneuma*.

#### IV. PAUL'S RHETORICAL USE OF SARX IN GAL 5:13–26

In Gal 5:1 Paul begins the third and climactic argument within his lengthy proof section (1:11–6:10) that shows the superiority of his gospel over the Judaizers' nongospel. In the first segment (5:1–12) Paul exhorts and warns about the antithetical consequences of the Galatians' identity choice for their continued deliverance from sin's power. In 5:13–26<sup>25</sup> Paul

<sup>21</sup> See Kraftchick, *Ethos* 3–61; Barclay, *Obedying the Truth* 1–35, for recent surveys of the role of Galatians 5–6 within the whole epistle.

<sup>22</sup> Betz, *Galatians* 133–134.

<sup>23</sup> Jewett, *Anthropological* 113.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> H. D. Betz and those who follow his basic structuring of Galatians divide Gal 5:1–6:10 into three sections, each begun by a restatement of the "indicative" of salvation: 5:1–12; 5:13–24;

then develops the central contrast between the relational dynamics of his communities and the Judaizers' communities with this main theme: The fundamental manifestation of deliverance from sin's powers in the community of God's people (5:13-26) is not competitive striving with one another. Rather, it is serving one another through love.<sup>26</sup>

The manifestation of freedom from the constraints of the Mosaic law within the community of God's people should not be used as an opportunity for continued fleshly failure, which is vitriolic and self-consuming, but rather as an opportunity through love to serve one another, which is the summation principle of the whole Mosaic law (5:13-15).<sup>27</sup>

Those who insist on living according to the past standard of fleshly behavior within the community under the Mosaic law will share in the sins of a community composed of those who will not inherit the kingdom of God, but those who identify with the community of the Spirit will be enabled by

---

5:25-6:10 ("The Literary Composition and Function of Paul's Letter to the Galatians," *NTS* 21 [1975] 376-377). It is an appealing structure but not altogether convincing, especially in using *ei zōmen pneumatī* in 5:25 as the third indicative statement. A more accurate description of the three indicatives of salvation is that each is half of an antithesis contrasting the appropriate response to freedom from the Mosaic law's daily constraints with the inappropriate Judaizers' response. One must then see how the antitheses are being used in Paul's argument. The latter two antitheses (5:13-15; 5:25-26) seem to function as brackets for 5:13-26 because they deal with the same topic of community unity/coherence *versus* community jealousy/competitive strife. Additionally, 5:25 is related to 5:24 by *asyndeton*, which makes for a forceful connection. Also, Paul's use of the vocative *Adelphoi* in 6:1 is typical of usage in the beginning of a new section of the argument (e.g. Gal 1:11; 3:15; 4:12; 5:13).

<sup>26</sup> The basic argument of 5:1-6:10 is a causal one that argues from obvious effects to the causes that created them. In 5:1-12 the Galatians were being persuaded by Paul to question the cause behind the Judaizers if it resulted in the negative effects of 5:7-9. Now in 5:13-26 Paul continues his causal argument by again arguing from the effects backward to the cause that produced them. He invites the comparison of the two communities—the Judaizers and his—in the area of community unity and coherence. If in fact Christ is delivering them from sin's power, then that deliverance should manifest itself in a unified and loving community of believers. This is the only appropriate community manifestation for those born *kata pneuma*. To paraphrase Scripture, by their fruits you will know him. Conversely, those born *kata sarka* will approach community as an opportunity for the flesh (5:13) and will manifest community phenomena or effects that are readily observable as a fulfilling of the desires of the flesh (5:16). Structurally, therefore, Paul brackets the listing of the two antithetical effects or manifestations of community life in 5:16-24 with the corresponding antithetical causes of those effects in 5:13-15; 5:25-26. He is persuading the Galatians that the people of God who are born *kata pneuma* should manifest a life in community that is directly traceable to God's Spirit. An objective comparison of the community lives of the two groups will clearly reveal both the standards and causes of such a life.

<sup>27</sup> These verses introduce the theme of this section (5:13-26). Paul is showing the contrary ends of the two gospels that the Galatians have heard. The "gospel" preached by the community of the flesh ends up in providing more opportunity for fleshly expression. The end of this kind of Judaizing emphasis is mutually destructive relationships. Ironically the end of the true gospel and its manifestation is the fulfillment of the basic purpose of the whole Mosaic law: loving edification of one's neighbor. In other words the law's fulfillment ultimately can be distilled into relational terms. So in another manifestation of the causal argument of the whole section (5:1-6:10) Paul is arguing that observing the effects of community relationships and unity should reveal the true cause of those effects. This is why mutual destruction is powerfully tied to *sarx* and mutual edification to *pneuma*. Observing the community effects reveals the root community cause.

God's Spirit to manifest the fruit of loving unity apart from the daily constraints of the Mosaic law (5:16–24).

The standards of the Holy Spirit and the community of the Spirit are diametrically opposed to the fulfilling of fleshly behavior that takes place within the community of the flesh that is *hypo nomon*, so that those who possess the Spirit but live within the flesh community will not be able to do what they wish (5:16–18).

The community of the flesh manifests the relationally destructive effects of fleshly behavior that confirm that this community is not composed of the true sons of Abraham who will inherit the kingdom of God (5:19–21).

In contrast, the community of the Spirit manifests the relationally edifying effects of spiritual behavior that are not legally prohibited and that evidence that those in the community of the Spirit have seen their *sarx* and its manifestations crucified (5:22–24).

Being a part of the community of the Spirit means that one should choose to live according to the rule or standard of the Spirit and not according to the competitive striving that characterizes the community of the flesh (5:25–26).<sup>28</sup>

#### V. CONCLUSION

This brief journey through Paul's argumentation in Gal 5:13–26 is an attempt to show the viability of the continued bodily sense of *sarx*. Paul has enriched the word with a redemptive-historical depth because it appears to be a central Judaistic term that he appropriated and turned on its head. It now represents not only the Judaizers' emphasis on their covenant in the flesh with Abraham (Gen 17:13 LXX) but also—tragically—all the moral frailty and weakness that accompanies persons on their own, unaided by God's Spirit.

In this sense, I believe that *sarx* and *pneuma* have become theological abbreviations in Paul's argument that represent the two competing identities of the people of God in Galatia. The "flesh community" (Judaizers) is a community identified with the Mosaic law era and is therefore a community identified and characterized by a person bodily in his or her frailty and transitoriness and not indwelt by God's Spirit. This community is representative of a person before or apart from Christ's liberating death, burial and resurrection. By contrast the "Spirit community" is a community identified and characterized by a person bodily aided and enabled by

<sup>28</sup> In addition to the rhetorical devices of *contrarium* (which I have called antithetical expressions) and *repetitio* (of flesh and Spirit) in 5:13–26, Kraftchick has observed the use of *synonymia* in this section (*Ethos* 248). Paul describes the Christian life in relationship to the Holy Spirit with the terms *peripateite* (5:16), *ageste* (5:18), *zömen* (5:25) and *stoichömen* (5:26). G. S. Duncan (*The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians* [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1934] 178) paraphrases Gal 5:25 to bring out the corporate nature of Christians' relationship with the Holy Spirit that *stoichömen* seems to indicate: "If our individual lives are lived 'by the Spirit,' let us allow the Spirit to marshal us in our corporate relationships."



God's presence and also bodily liberated from sin's dominion, a person experiencing the full liberation of Jesus' death and resurrection. Such persons are experiencing the freedom that Christ set them free to experience (Gal 5:1).

The choice that the Galatians faced was to continue to follow the true gospel that Paul had preached to them and not to desert to a nongospel (1:6-7). Therefore they must reject becoming proselytes to Judaism and being circumcised (5:1-12). Ethically this meant they must "walk according to the rule of the Spirit" and not fulfill the desires connected with those who still live according to the rule of the flesh (5:16). To be "led according to the rule of the Spirit" is not to be "under the law" (5:18). The choice to live in the Judaizers' "law/flesh community" will manifest itself in the behavior of that community: the deeds of the flesh (5:19-21). Conversely the choice to continue to live in the "Spirit community" will manifest itself in the fruit of the Spirit (5:22-23). This is true because Christians have crucified the *sarx*—that is, the mode of existence of their body being under sin's mastery and not indwelt by God's Spirit ended (5:24). Since they live according to the rule of the Spirit they should also corporately walk according to the rule of the Spirit (5:25).

Essentially, what Paul is saying in Galatians 5-6 is that the Galatians who have been born "according to the Spirit" (4:29) should continue to live "according to the rule of the Spirit." This is the greatest antidote to Judaistic—that is, fleshly—behavior. Therefore the "flesh" for which the Galatians are not to make opportunity (5:13) or to walk according to its rule or direction and thereby fulfill its desire (5:16) is the bodily emphasis of the Judaizers. "Flesh" in this context is "that which is merely human and distinctively Jewish." This is an anachronistic historical mode of existence and redemptively-historical inferior way of life for the Galatian Christians to turn back to in light of their crucifixion of the bodily state in Christ (5:24). In answer to our original question, the Christian does not have "flesh" in 5:13-26. Instead the Christian has the true identity mark of the children of Abraham (3:6-14) and the antithetical bodily condition to the flesh (3:1-5). The Christian has the Holy Spirit, not the flesh.