



# The Epistle to the Galatians

A historical map of the Roman Empire, showing various provinces and cities. The map is rendered in a dark, aged style with muted colors. Overlaid on the map is the text 'The Epistle to the Galatians' in a large, bold, yellow font. The word 'Galatians' is significantly larger than 'The Epistle to the'.

# The Epistle to the Galatians

## Introduction

# Introduction

- 27 books in NT: 13 written by one man: Paul.
  - 17 of 28 chapters of Acts deal with Paul;
  - from Acts 15 on the other apostles are never mentioned.
- Without the letters of Paul, we would not understand the Church as the Body of Christ,
  - its function, activity, and destiny
- Paul was chosen by God, in part because of his knowledge and zeal for the Law of Moses

# Introduction

- The Epistle to the Galatians is regarded as one of Paul's greatest and most important letters.
- It has been characterized as a “short Romans;”
  - Romans can viewed as an expansion of Galatians.

# Introduction

- *“Few books have had a more profound influence on the history of mankind than has this small tract, for such it should be called. Christianity might have been just one more Jewish sect, and the thought of the Western world might have been entirely pagan had it never been written.”*

Dr Merrill Tenney



# Introduction

- *“Galatians embodies the germinal teaching on Christian freedom which separated Christianity from Judaism, and which launched it upon a career of missionary conquest... It was the cornerstone of the Protestant Reformation, because its teaching of salvation by grace alone became the dominant theme of the preaching of the Reformers.”*

Dr Merrill Tenney

# Introduction

*“It is a unique and marvelous letter, which embraces in its six short chapters such a variety of vehement and intense emotion as could probably not be paralleled in any other work.”*

William Ramsay

# Introduction





# Introduction





## 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey: Galatians

Saul and Barnabas sent out by Antioch Church, with John Mark

Acts 13:1-3

They encounter Bar-Jesus, a false prophet and friend of governor.

Bar-Jesus is struck blind; governor becomes a believer.

Acts 13:4-12

John Mark leaves to return to Jerusalem. (A dispute will ensue later)

Acts 13:13

Paul preaches; jealous Jews stir up opposition

Acts 13:14-15

They stay a long time; but a Gentile plot on their lives forces them on.

Acts 14:1-7



## 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey: Galatians

At Lystra Paul heals a cripple. They are hailed as gods.

Enemies arrive from Antioch and Iconium; they are almost killed.

Acts 14:8-20

They flee to Derbe; many more disciples won.



## 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey: Galatians

They return the way they came, encouraging the young churches.

Acts 14:21-26

They report everything to the church in Antioch.

Acts 14:27-28

The letter to the Galatian believers was among the earliest of Paul's epistles and its intended recipients were the Christians in Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe

# The Galatian Problem

- There were Jews who tried to mix the simple message of grace with the Law, blending improperly the kingdom message and the church message.
  - They taught that a person was saved by faith and by keeping the Law.
  - They wanted the believers to follow the Jewish laws and customs. These teachers were upsetting the people in Galatia Gal. 1:6–9; 3:1; 4:8–11; 5:7–9; 5:12; 6:12–13
- The only Gospel that God approves and blesses is the **Gospel of the grace of God**, justification by faith in Christ Jesus alone.
- We are not saved by making promises to God but by believing the promises He has made to us!.

# The Judaizers

- These “legal men”—“Old Testament Christians”—were called “Judaizers” from the Latin word *ludaizo*, meaning “to be or live like a Jew.”
- It is a religious designation rather than a national description.
- Their fundamental belief was that Gentiles should live like Jews; that is, follow the Mosaic Law and Jewish customs and traditions, when and after they become Christians.



# The Judaizers

- It is not that Judaizers were wicked people or that they did not have good intentions.
  - For them the issue was a matter of principle
- It was one thing to preach grace to Jews who had their background...
- It was quite another to preach to a mixture of Jews, Greeks, Syrians, et al., especially while still in a Jewish Synagogue.

# The Judaizers

- The Jew knew what he had:
  - circumcision, the glory of Israel, the pride of Judaism with its one God and high morality.
- What did the Gentile have?
  - False gods, fornication, immorality, drunkenness, etc.
- The Jew took for granted that a Gentile should become a Jew (just as the earlier proselytes) and *then* become a Christian.
- This was the cause of the division and had ultimately led to the Council in Acts 15

# The Acts 15 Council

Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ **we shall be saved, even as they.**

Acts 15:9-11

Note Peter's clever inversion!

# The Judaizers

- Paul made it plain that the Gospel was not an addendum to Judaism, no mere supplement to the law; but rather the end and fulfillment of the law and actually in antithesis to it.
- The new kingdom would go beyond the boundaries of Israel, not just nationally but also theologically and socially—even though Jesus the Messiah came from David's line, now *“every one that believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.”* Acts 13:39
- For Paul it was not “both-and” but “either-or.” The choice is between grace or law, faith or works, either Moses or Christ. Grace excludes all works.

# The Battle Against Legalism

- Grace = God's answer to man's pride. Good works do not make a good man; a good man does good works = true liberty
- False teaching: substituting Law for Grace.
  - *There is something about error when it once grips the mind that makes it assume an importance that the truth itself never had...*
- Legalism always seems to take the heart out of Christianity and replace it with a heart of stone.
- The heart of Christianity is God's free grace in Jesus Christ. Let the law do the honorable work of showing a man his sin, but it can't save man from sin.

- The Mosaic Law is neither discredited, despised, nor disregarded. Its majesty, perfection, demands, fullness, and purpose are maintained.
  - Yet these very qualities make it utterly impossible for man to come this route to God.
- Another way is opened for man to be justified before God, a way which entirely bypasses the Mosaic Law.
  - The new route is by *faith*: Justification by faith is the theme, with the emphasis upon *faith*.



# Relevance Today

- “*Galatians is God’s strongest word against legalism*” – Chuck Missler
- The flesh loves to do religious things
  - celebrate holy days, practice rituals, attempt to do good works for God, justify our worthiness for salvation
- Many religious systems today mix law and grace and present a garbled, confused way of salvation that is actually a way of bondage (Gal. 2:4; 4:9; 5:1)
  - Keeping the Sabbath, dietary laws, an earthly priesthood, holy days, obeying rules, doing ‘things’
- All of these are swept away in Galatians and replaced by the glorious liberty the believer has through faith in Christ!

# When Written?

- At least 17 years after Paul's conversion **AD 32**
  - 3 yrs **Gal 1:18**
  - 14 yrs **Gal 2:1**
- After Conference in Jerusalem **AD 49**  
**Gal 2:1-10**
- After Peter's visit to Antioch **Gal 2:11-14**
- After Thessalonians sent from Corinth **AD 50-51**
- **From Corinth** on the 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey  
(before Romans was written)? **AD 53**
- **From Ephesus** on the 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey during  
his two years of residence there? **AD 57**
- *Either way, this is not a 'knee jerk' reactionary  
response, but a considered admonition*

# Distinctives

1) If you compare this epistle with Paul's other epistles, there are some key differences:

- It is a stern, severe, and solemn message  
Cf. Gal. 1:6–9; 3:1–5
  - The Galatian believers were in grave peril because the foundations of their faith were being attacked.
- The epistle contains no word of commendation, praise, or thanksgiving.
- There is no request for prayer, or for the ongoing work of the ministry.
- No one with him is mentioned by name.

# Distinctives

2) In this epistle the heart of Paul the apostle is laid bare, and there is deep emotion and strong feeling.

- This is his *fighting epistle*:
  - The Apostle who places 'love' above all (1 Cor 13) now shows no tolerance for the most crucial issue
  - Legalism and a distortion of the Gospel must be silenced
    - The Epistle to the Romans comes from the head of Paul
    - The Epistle to the Galatians comes from the heart of Paul.

# Distinctives

- 3) This epistle is a *declaration of freedom* from legalism of any type.
- This was Martin Luther's favorite epistle. He said, "This is *my* epistle. I am wedded to it."
  - "It was on the masthead of the Reformation. It has been called the *Magna Carta* of the early church. It is the manifesto of Christian liberty, the impregnable citadel, and a veritable Gibraltar against any attack on the heart of the gospel"
    - Dr Chuck Missler

# Distinctives

- 4) Galatians is the strongest declaration and defense of the doctrine of *justification by faith* in or out of Scripture.
- It is God's polemic on behalf of the most vital truth of the Christian faith against any attack.
- Not only is a sinner saved by grace through faith plus nothing, but the saved sinner lives by that same grace.
  - We are sanctified by Grace (Acts 20:32 / Acts 26:18)



# The Paradigm of Salvation

“I have been saved;  
I am being saved;  
and I will be saved.”

--Earl D. Rachmacher

# The Paradigm of Salvation

## Past Tense:

Separation from the *Penalty* of Sin  
Justification

## Present Tense:

Separation from the *Power* of Sin  
Sanctification

## Future Tense:

Separation from the *Presence* of Sin  
Glorification

# The Paradigm of Salvation

Justification is *for* us;

Sanctification is *in* us.

Justification *declares* the sinner righteous;

Sanctification *makes* the sinner righteous.

Justification removes the  
*guilt and penalty* of sin;

Sanctification removes the  
*growth and the power* of sin.

# The Paradigm of Salvation

- **Justification** (Past tense)
  - The gift from God of everlasting life received by faith alone in Christ alone John 3:18; 5:24; Eph 2:5,8
- **Sanctification** (Present tense)
  - A progressive work that involves the faith and the works of the believer
- **Glorification** (Future tense)
  - A result of the previous aspects
  - All believers will be glorified (resurrected and given a body like Christ), but some will have more glory (i.e. reward) than others.

# Outline of the Book

- Authenticity of the Gospel 1, 2
  - Genuine as to its origin (1)
  - Genuine as to its nature (2)
- Superiority of the Gospel 3, 4
  - The new relation it effects (3)
  - The privileges it releases (4)
- The True Liberty of the Gospel 5, 6
  - Love-service ends Law-bondage (5:1-15)
  - Spirit ends flesh-bondage (5:16-6:18)

# Outline of the Book

- Personal 1 & 2
- Doctrinal 3 & 4
- Practical 5 & 6



# The Epistle to the Galatians

## Chapter 1

Paul, an **apostle**, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)

Galatians 1:1

- “Paul, an apostle” - personal commission from God. **Acts 26:15-18**
- Apostle = “sent one” [prefers to speak of himself as a “servant” (“bondslave”) of Jesus Christ.”]



Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but  
by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who  
raised him from the dead;)

Galatians 1:1

- Jesus laid His hand upon Paul, called him,  
and set him apart for the office Acts 9:15–16

*Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but  
by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who  
raised him from the dead;)*

**Galatians 1:1**

- Note the emphasis on the resurrection.
- The resurrection is central to the message of the Gospel: Jesus' victory over death is our reason to hope.

**1 Cor 15:1-4**

# God's Message

- Paul's aim was to show that his message and ministry came directly from Christ and not from men.
  - Paul did not preach a secondhand message that he learned from Peter or any of the apostles.
- Rather, God took every measure necessary to keep Paul's ministry separate from that of the Twelve, lest anyone think Paul's ministry was given to him by the apostles.

And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:

Grace be to you and peace from God the Father,  
and from our Lord Jesus Christ,

Galatians 1:2,3

- Grace, *charis* = Greek greeting.  
In the NT sense, grace = unmerited favor.
- Peace = Hebrew greeting, *Shalom*.
- Only when we know the grace of God,  
can we experience the peace of God.

Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

Galatians 1:4

- There is nothing that we can add to the value of His sacrifice.
- The Purpose of God's grace: to deliver us from this present evil world;
- The Source of God's grace: sovereign will of our Father.

Who gave himself for our sins, that he might  
deliver us from this present evil world,  
according to the will of God and our Father:

*To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

**Galatians 1:4,5**

No wonder Paul adds, “To whom be glory for ever  
and ever!”

I marvel that ye are **so soon removed** from him  
that called you into the grace of Christ unto  
**another** gospel:

**heteros:** another  
of a different kind

Which is not **another**; but there be some that  
trouble you, and would pervert  
Christ.

**allos:** another  
of the same kind

Galatians 1:6,7

- Paul seems surprised that they so quickly yield truth to untruth.
- Two Greek words used for “another”

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him  
that called you into the grace of Christ unto  
another gospel:

Which is not another; but there be some that  
trouble you, and would **pervert** the gospel of  
Christ.

Galatians 1:6,7

- *metastrepho* = twist, or distort; thus, by clever deceivers, enchanter, bewitchers.



But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be **accursed**.

As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be **accursed**.

Galatians 1:8,9

- *anathema*; accursed!
- Paul uses a deliberate & extreme statement (x2!).
- He calls down a curse on any one who proclaims a gospel to them contrary to that which they had received from him.

But though we, **or an angel from heaven,** preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

**Galatians 1:8,9**

- This is how Mormonism apparently began!

# The Gospel

For **by grace are ye saved through faith;** and that  
not of yourselves: *it is the gift of God:*  
Not of works, lest any man should boast.

**Ephesians 2:8, 9**

# The Gospel

- The Reason for God's grace: to bring glory (only) to God for ever and ever.
  - Grace excludes all human effort II Tim 1:9
  - Grace + nothing Rom 11:6

# The Gospel

- This is one of the oldest heresies known, and it is still with us today. It is *adding* something to the gospel of grace; Every cult and “ism” has something for you to *do* in order to be saved.
- What must I do to be saved?
- Paul said to the Philippian jailer, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Acts 16:31

# The Gospel

- The first and only condition for Salvation is Faith (believing)!
- This is confirmed in more than 200 verses in Scripture
- *“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” John 1:12*
- *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” John 3:16*

# The Gospel

- *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved”*

Romans 10:9-11

# The Gospel

- May we never be confused as to the content and intent of the Gospel:
  - The Gospel is *not* “to follow Christ and imitate His life”
  - but “to receive Christ by faith and allow Him to set you free.”
- There is no place in the Gospel for a salvation that is attained by keeping the Law.
- The “Gospel of the kingdom” that was emphasized from **Matt 3** to **Acts 7** is *not* our message today.



For do I now **persuade** men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

**Galatians 1:10,11**

- The Galatians know Paul: that he is no seeker after popularity
- He puts his known character behind the assertion that his gospel of grace was a revelation from God

For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the **revelation** of Jesus Christ.

Galatians 1:12

- Paul's apostleship had been challenged by false teachers. They questioned his authority because he had not been ordained by men; he was ordained directly by Jesus Christ **Acts 9:1-22**
- He had numerous visions of Christ: concerning the origin of the Lord's Supper he expressly says, "I received again ("**parelabon**") from the Lord."

**I Cor. 11:23**

# Paul's Credentials

1. He is no seeker after popularity 1:10
2. His revelation was from Christ 1:11,12
3. His zeal forsaken for something better  
1:13,14
4. He preached grace before he met with any  
other Apostles 1:15-24
5. Later, they added nothing 2:1-6
6. They recognized his apostleship 2:7-10
7. Peter yielded when rebuked by Paul 2:11-21

# Paul's Credentials

- God never meant for Paul to belong to the Twelve.
  - Their ministry was primarily to the Jews and was related to the Kingdom;
- Paul's ministry was to the Gentiles and was related to the mystery of the church, the one body.
  - The Twelve received their call from Christ on earth because their message presented the hope of Israel's earthly Kingdom.
- Paul received his call from heaven, because his message presented the "heavenly calling" of the church in Christ.
  - There were twelve apostles, associated with the twelve tribes.  
Matt 19:38; Luke 22:30
- Paul was one man (and a Jew with Gentile citizenship) representing the one body in Christ.

For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

Galatians 1:13

- “Manner of life”
- Reputation. [Twice: “Jew’s religion”]  
Judaism dearer than life to him.
- “Wasted” – Devastated. As the ravening wolf of Benjamin, he was engaged in laying waste the church  
Acts 7 to 9
- Paul would have lived and died as an advocate of Judaism but for the miracle of grace...  
Acts 26:5

And profited in the **Jews' religion** above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

**Galatians 1:14**

- Taught by Gamaliel himself **Acts 5:34; 22:3**

But when it pleased God, who **separated me** from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

**Galatians 1:15,16**

- Like Jeremiah, God's hand was upon him from his birth and prepared him for ministry: a well-educated Jew, a Roman citizen, and immersed in the Greek culture from his boyhood. **Jer 1:5**
- God has a specific purpose for each of us which can only be fulfilled when we are serving Him according to His plan.

# Don't Confer!

- *“Never ask another person’s advice about anything God makes you decide before Him. If you ask advice, you will almost always side with Satan. “...I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood...””*
  - *Oswald Chambers, My Utmost for His highest*



# Don't Confer!

- *Do not “confer with flesh and blood”. With every new proposal, the people around us seem to become more and more isolated, and that is where the tension develops. God allows the opinion of His other saints to matter to you, and yet you become less and less certain that others really understand the step you are taking. You have no business trying to find out where God is leading—the only thing God will explain to you is Himself.*  
— Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His highest*

Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

**Galatians 1:17,18**

But other of the apostles saw I none, save James  
the Lord's brother.

Now the things which I write unto you, behold,  
before God, I lie not.

**Galatians 1:19,20**

*Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;*

*And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ:*

**Galatians 1:21,22**

- Paul was not idle, but at work in Tarsus and the surrounding country, he took up the trade of a tentmaker
  - Prior to this he had been a member of the Sanhedrin

*But they had heard only, That he which  
persecuted us in times past now preacheth the  
faith which once he destroyed.*

*And they glorified God in me.*

**Galatians 1:23,24**

- Apostles recognized Paul's distinctive ministry to the Gentiles: **Gal 2:7-10**
- Council at Jerusalem **Acts 15:1-24**  
Gentiles are not under the law
- Key passages: **Gal 3:10-12**  
**Gal 2:21b**



calvary  
chapel  
portsmouth

[www.calvaryportsmouth.co.uk](http://www.calvaryportsmouth.co.uk)