



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



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

“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

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.
- 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 Gospel

- *“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

- What must I do to be saved?, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

Acts 16:31

- “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

Paul's Credentials

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



The Epistle to the Galatians

Chapter 2

Chapter 1 - Review

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

Chapter 1 - Review

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

Chapter 1 - Review

*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

Chapter 1 - Review

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

Chapter 1 - Review

*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



The Epistle to the Galatians

Chapter 2

Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

Galatians 2:1

- Paul converted **c.Summer 32AD**
- Starts preaching in Damascus
 - **The Jews try to kill him but he escapes (Acts 9:23-26)**
- He goes to Arabia (Sinai?) then to Damascus
- 3 yrs later Paul goes to Jerusalem
 - **Only sees Peter & James**
- Paul then went back to Syria & Cilicia
 - **Worked as a tent-maker & preached the Gospel**
- Barnabas goes to bring Paul to Jerusalem

Barnabas

- ‘Son of consolation/encouragement’
- Barnabas was a key person in the church
- He ‘persuaded’ Paul to leave Tarsus & go to Jerusalem to meet the other Apostles
- Barnabas was “a good man, full of the Holy Spirit” **Acts 11:24**
- Paul wanted to take Titus as a test case as Titus was a Gentile believer

And I went up **by revelation**, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

Galatians 2:2

- Paul goes with Barnabas, not because Barnabas asked, but because God revealed to Him that it was part of His plan!
- The steps of a good man are ordered of the LORD – Psalm 37:23

And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, **but privately** to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

Galatians 2:2

- Note the humility of Paul and the respect he showed to those who were older in the faith than he was.
- We have to remain teachable – **1 Tim 3:2**

But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

Galatians 2:3

- The reason for Paul's bringing Titus along becomes evident:

And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

Galatians 2,4

- Paul met with them privately:
 - To ensure he had not run in vain
 - To avoid any open disagreements that could lead to disunity
 - To keep out the “spies” who would unwittingly bring them into bondage if given the chance

To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

Galatians 2:5

- Paul would not tolerate anything that would lead people away from the simplicity of the Gospel

But of these *who seemed to be somewhat*,
(*whatsoever they were*, it maketh no matter to
me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they
who seemed to be somewhat in conference added
nothing to me:

Galatians 2:6

- Paul was not intimidated by man
- In Christ we are all one and all equal!
 - At the end of the book of 2nd Corinthians Paul lists his credentials in detail to show that he was well qualified to talk on these things

But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

Galatians 2:7,8

- The same Spirit who worked in Paul worked in Peter as well.
- Both had the same message and the same Spirit but were responsible for different spheres of ministry.

And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

Galatians 2:9

- Note that Paul is the only one given the responsibility to go to the Gentiles.
- Note that God will also call you to 'your own' people (family, work colleagues etc.)
 - The Gospel went to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria then to the ends of the earth!

The Gospel for the Gentiles

- 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.

Only *they would* that we should remember the poor; the same *which* I also was forward to do.

Galatians 2:10

‘Two Pronged Attack’

- A few years before, God had revealed the door opening to the Gentiles through Peter at Joppa Acts 10:12-15
- Paul is now ‘ordained’ as the one to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles
- They however requested that the missionaries to the Gentile world remember the Jewish believers
 - especially those at Jerusalem, who were notoriously poor, having given up homes and possessions. (Rom 15:26)

But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

Galatians 2:11

- *“Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful”* Prov 27:5-6
- Paul was absolutely right to bring this rebuke
- Consider the possible outcomes:
 - 1. Peter accepted and acknowledged his error
 - 2. Peter rejected Paul's rebuke and refused his counsel
 - 1. The first led to unity & the furtherance of the Gospel
 - 2. the second would have led to an unnecessary division

For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, **fearing** them which were of the circumcision.

Galatians 2:12

- The action of the council in Acts 15:28-29 had opened the way for fellowship between Jews and Gentiles
- Peter was glad to fellowship with them until...
- 'Certain men' had come from Jerusalem
 - Peter had already been rebuked by these men before!
- The fear of man brings a snare! – Prov 29:25

*And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him;
insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away
with their dissimulation.*

Galatians 2:13

- “Dissimulation” = hypocrisy.
- None of us is immune

But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

Galatians 2:14

What's at stake?

- Peter was a Jew who had started to live as the Gentiles – enjoying the liberty of not being bound by the Law
 - Hence his table companionship with them.
- But now, having gone that far and then broken off, he was unwittingly compelling Gentile believers to live as Jews, that is, to imply that Jews were more righteous because of circumcision, the dietary laws et al.

What's at stake?

- But if Gentile believers did this, they would undermine what had been affirmed at Jerusalem.
- The church had decided that no such burden was to be laid on Gentile believers.
- The whole principle of grace was at stake.
 - The logical outcome of Peter's conduct was to make Jews out of Gentile Christians
 - or else force the creation of a Gentile church alongside the Jewish church, which would break the unity of the body of Christ. -
- *The very truth of the Gospel of Grace was at stake!*

The Rock?

- “Papal Supremacy”? If this was the “Rock” upon which the Church was to be built, it seems a bit wobbly... Matt 16:18
 - Peter knew of no such supremacy doctrine, as he himself emphasizes 1 Pet. 5:1ff
- Peter was “spirit-filled,” but he still “blew it...”
- Paul didn’t spare Peter’s feelings:
“Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.”
Lev 19:17

We *who are* Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even **we** have believed in Jesus Christ, that **we** might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: **for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.**

Galatians 2:15,16

The OT itself testifies that justification does not come from the works of the law **Ps 143:2**

Are You a Good Person?

- “I keep the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount.”

Strike One.

- “I am as good as the next person.”

Strike Two.

- “I am doing the best I can.”

Strike Three.

James 2:10. Gal 3:10

But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ,
we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore
Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I
make myself a transgressor.

Galatians 2:17,18

- “We” Jews:

Cf. Rom 3:19-23

(2:17 Paraphrased)

- *“If we Jews, in seeking to be justified by faith in Christ, become like the Gentiles (i.e. sinners without the Law of Moses), is it therefore Christ who makes us sinners?”*
- Absolutely not!
- Rather, it is by putting ‘ourselves’ (as Jews) again under the law that we are found to be transgressors because we cannot keep the Law!
Cp. Gal 5:1-4
 - The underlying question here is ‘how am I to be made righteous?’

Reconciliation

- We know that Paul's rebuke accomplished its purpose:
- One of the last admonitions Peter wrote was that believers should read Paul's letters to find God's truth about this present age

2 Peter 3:16–18

And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

To Hebrews:

1 Pet 1:1; 2 Pet 3:1

As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they* do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.

2 Peter 3:15,16

Paul & Barnabas

- Paul & Barnabas remained friends, 1 Cor 9:6
- But they soon parted company over the dispute regarding John Mark Acts 15:36-40
 - Who had deserted them during their 1st missionary journey Acts 13:13
- Sadly there is no record of Paul and Barnabas reconciling after this event
 - Although Paul later reinstates Mark 2 Tim 4:11

For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

Galatians 2:19

- The Law can drive a man to the cross... but no further! (see Colossians 2:14)
- We are now freed from the demands of the Law...
- And ultimately, in Christ, we are free from the curse of the Law – namely death

The Power Of The Law

- ¹ Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?
- ² For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

Romans 7:1-3

The Power Of The Law

3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

Romans 7:1-3

The Power Of The Law



The Power Of The Law

- The Law is holy, because God is Holy
- The Law principally addresses the attitude of the human heart
- The heart is incurably sinful
- God will judge all men by His righteous standard

Escape Clause:

- The Law only has power over the living

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

- One of the key verses in the NT
- The point of the Book of Galatians
- Paul will go on to expound more about living by Grace
 - This is one area most Christians are still not familiar with!

The Law vs. Grace

- Believer not under the law, but grace
Rom 6:14
 - ...loosed from the law
Rom 7:2
 - ...delivered from the law
Rom 7:6
 - ...Christ = end of the law
Rom 10:4; 7:4
 - ...free from the law
Rom 8:2
- Law cannot punish a man twice.
Certificate of debt: Col 2:14
- Church = His Body.
I Cor 12:13;
Eph 5:30; Col 1:18
- Before the foundation of the world. Eph 1:3-5

Law vs. Grace (contrasted)

- [Stoned for sticks] Num 15:32-36
- Rebellious Son Stoned Deut 21:18
 - Prodigal Son Luke 15:20
- Adulteress stoned Lev 20:10
 - Go and sin no more John 8:11

The Law

- The **Law** is perfect:
 - Which is why imperfect men cannot keep it.
- The **Law** is holy:
 - Which is why sinners are condemned by it.
- The **Law** is just:
 - Therefore cannot show mercy to the guilty.
- The **Law** prohibits;
 - **Grace** *invites* and *gives*.
- The **Law** condemns the sinner;
 - **Grace** *redeems* the sinner.

The Law

- The Law reveals sin;
 - Grace atones for sin.
- By the Law is the knowledge of sin;
 - By Grace is redemption from sin.
- The Law was given by Moses;
 - Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.
- The Law demands obedience;
 - Grace bestows and gives power to obey.
- The Law says do and do not;
 - Grace says “It is done.”

The Law

- The Law says, Continue to be holy;
 - Grace says, *It is finished.*
- The Law curses;
 - Grace blesses.
- The Law slays the sinner;
 - Grace makes the sinner *alive*.
- The Law shuts every mouth before God;
 - Grace opens the mouth to praise God.
- The Law condemns the best man;
 - Grace saves the worst man.

The Law

- The **Law** says, pay what you owe;
 - **Grace** says, *I freely forgive you all.*
- The **Law** says “The wages of sin is death”;
 - **Grace** says, *“The gift of God is eternal life.”*
- The **Law** says, “The soul that sinneth it shall die”;
 - **Grace** says, *Believe and live.*
- The **Law** was done away in Christ;
 - **Grace** abides *forever.*
- The **Law** puts us under bondage;
 - **Grace** sets us in the *liberty* of the sons of God.

Romans 12:1

I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if
righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is
dead in vain.

Galatians 2:21

Gal 3:21,22; Rom 3:28

