**Metadata**

* + **Unsettled question:** Did Paul address his letter to ethnic Galatians (Gauls, northern Galatia) [Ancyra, Pessinus, Tavium] *North Galatia Theory?* Or provincial Galatians (Roman province, southern Galatia [Antioch, Lystra, Derbe, Iconium]? *South Galatia Theory?*
  + If written to ethnic Galatians, [as Conybeare believes] the book was probably written around 57 A.D. If written to the southern churches, the epistle may have been one of the earliest New Testament books, written 4-8 years earlier.
  + Two compelling arguments for South Galatia theory. 1) The reference to Barnabas as familiar to the Galatians (2:1,13). Barnabas was with Paul on 1st journey, but not on 2nd and 3rd, when the northern churches would have been founded. 2) Luke records the southern churches being bothered by Judaizers (cf. Acts 16:3-4)
  + Gaul settled northern area of province in 278-277 B.C. The larger province of Galatia was formed by Romans in 25 B.C. (Note: Paul as a Roman would possibly use the term in the provincial sense). (Inclusion of southern cities in the province proven by archaeological work in the late 19th century, W. M. Ramsay)
  + Universally acclaimed as a work of Paul. Galatians is a very “autobiographical” book.
  + The Epistle has been divided into 6 chapters and 149 verses.

**Concise Outline of Book**

1. **Introduction (1:1-10)**
   1. Salutation (1:1-5)
   2. Rebuke for Apostasy (1:6-10)
2. **Paul’s defense of the gospel through a defense of his apostleship (1:11-2:21)**
   1. Paul’s doctrine and apostleship were received by revelation from God (1:11-24)
   2. The authenticity of Paul’s message was validated by the Jerusalem “pillars” (2:1-10)
   3. Paul’s conflict with Peter as evidence of Paul’s apostleship and certification of his gospel (2:11-21)
3. **Justification by faith apart from works of the Mosaical law defended (3:1 – 4:31)**
   1. An appeal to the experience of the Galatians (3:1-5)
   2. Abraham was justified by faith (3:6-9)
   3. Legal justification is impossible (3:10-14)
   4. The Law did not annul the promise (3:15-18)
   5. The Law was not contrary to the promise (3:19-22)
   6. The Law brought us to Christ through whom we are release from the burden of sin (3:23-29)
   7. An heir receives his inheritance through Christ (4:1-7)
   8. Exhortations to abide in the doctrine of justification by faith (4:8-20)
   9. Appeal to accept justification by faith based on an allegory from the Old Testament (4:21-31)
4. **Exhortations based on justification by faith (5:1 – 6:10)**
   1. The danger of apostasy (5:1-12)
   2. Obligations of liberty (5:13-15)
   3. The warfare between flesh and Spirit (5:16-26)
   4. Responsibility toward the fallen (6:1-5)
   5. Responsibility of a Christian to use his money properly (6:6-10)
5. **Conclusion (6:11-18)**
   1. Final warnings concerning Judaizers (6:11-16)
   2. Appeal based on personal suffering (6:17)
   3. Farewell (6:18)

**Paul’s Purpose in Writing Galatians**

* His letter is an authoritative, and rather severe denunciation of Judaizing doctrine. (cf. Gala-tians 1:6-9). The doctrine was leading the Galatians into apostasy.
* The letter consists primarily of a denunciation of the contention that justification can be obtained through the Law of Moses.

**Chapter Synopses**

1. After his greeting, Paul admonishes the Galatians for being taken in by men’s perversion of the gospel. He defends the gospel he preached as a product of God, not men. He did this by defending his office as an apostle.
2. Paul continues defending the gospel against the Judaizers, expressing an unwillingness to compromise in any way with their error. He even withstood Peter when his fellow apostle’s courage had faltered in the face of these men of strife.
3. Paul argues justification by faith, separate from the works of the law. He points out that the law is, in a sense, a “curse,” and that the promise of eternity is found through faith in Christ. Christ is our Redeemer. He argues that the law served a purpose, to bring us to Christ. But, it no longer is authoritative, because the covenant of Christ has superseded it. Both Jew and Gentile (all mankind) has hope because of this change.
4. Because of Christ’s coming, the redeemed become children rather than slaves. God is their Father, and they are His heirs according to promise. Paul repeats his admonition to them, stating that their appeal to law is a return to bondage. He was concerned that they might forfeit their salvation, and uses Sarah and Hagar to argue allegorically the folly of appealing to law for justification. We are children of the free woman!
5. Paul calls for them to stand in the liberty granted in Christ, noting that an appeal to law invalidates their standing by grace. He expresses disdain for the Judaizers, stating a willingness to see these ungodly men “cut themselves off” because of their destructive heresy. In this chapter, he contrasts the lusts of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit, calling them to a sanctified life, resisting their fleshly inclinations.
6. As Paul brings his epistle to a close, he calls the Galatians to care for one another. He is especially desirous that they concern themselves with each man’s spiritual welfare. He calls all to do good to all men, and ends his epistle with an extremely personal appeal to God on their behalf.

**Suggested Memory Work**

**(1:6-8)**, *“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.”*

**(1:10)**, *“For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.”*

**(2:16)**, *“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”*

**(2:20)**, *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*

**(3:19)**, *“What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.”*

**(3:23-25)**, *“But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”*

**(3:26-29),** *“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”*

**(4:6-7),** *“And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’ Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”*

**(4:16),** *“Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?”*

**(5:4),** *“You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.”*

**(5:13),** *“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”*

**(5:16),** *“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”*

**(6:1-2),** *“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”*

**(6:9-10),** *“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”*

**(6:15),** *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.”*

**Difficult Passages**

* Explain the context and possible explanations of the phrase, *“God shows no personal favoritism to no man.”* (2:6)
* What does Paul mean when he contrasts the Jew with *“sinners of the Gentiles”* (2:15)
* Explain Paul’s words in (2:17-19)
* In what way is the Law of Moses, which came from God, a curse to men? (3:10-12)
* What does the phrase *“in the fullness of time”* mean? (4:4)
* Reconcile Paul’s condemnation of their observance of days (4:10) with his teaching concerning days in Romans 14.
* Explain Paul’s allegory in (4:21-31)
* Explain how becoming a slave to Christ can bring liberty? (5:1; cf. Romans 6:16-18)
* What is the difference between the burden we share (6:2) and the load we bear alone (6:5)?
* What did Paul mean, *“I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus”* (6:16)?

**Doctrinal Considerations**

* The redemptive work of Christ (1:3-4)
* Possibility of apostasy (1:6-9; 3:3-4; 4:20; 5:4)
* The basis of apostleship (1:11-24)
* Origin of the gospel of Christ (1:11-12)
* **Justification by faith apart from works of the law (2:3-5, 11-21; 3:1-25; 4:1-10, 21-31; 5:1-6, 11-15; 6:12-16)**
* Circumcision and the Christian (2:4-5; 5:2,6; 6:13-15)
* Gentile’s access to the gospel (2:7-8; 3:26-29)
* **The purpose of the Old Law (3:19-25)**
* The interaction of faith and baptism (3:26-27)
* **The Fruit of the Spirit VS The Lust of the Flesh** (5:16-26)

**Practical Considerations**

* Consider the negative influence of false teaching (1:6; 3:1)
* Our responsibility is to please God, not men! (1:10)
* Discuss where and when we can compromise, and when we cannot. (2:1-5)
* It is important to care for the poor (2:10)
* Consider how your inappropriate actions can influence others to sin (2:13)
* A person’s enemy is not the one who tells them the truth (4:16), rather those who tells them a lie! (4:17, cf. 5:12)
* *“A little leaven leavens the whole lump.”* (5:9)
* Liberty does not excuse sinfulness (5:13)
* Our responsibility is to look out for the welfare of our brethren (6:1-10)

**Questions to Consider**

* Upon what basis does Paul contend for his own apostleship? (1:1)
* How do we act toward those who preach false doctrine? (1:6-9; cf. 2 John 9-11)
* What did Paul mean, *“And they glorified God in me”*, and how can we emulate that? (1:24)
* Why does Paul distinguish between *the “hearing of faith”* and the *“works of the law”* (3:2,5)
* What does *“And I went up by revelation”* mean? (2:1)
* What is the *“right hand of fellowship”*? (2:9)
* What does it mean, *“Christ lives in me”*? (2:20)
* How can Gentiles be *“sons of Abraham”*? (3:7-9)
* Explain Christ as the “Seed” of Abraham (3:16)
* Apart from the main consideration of man’s redemption, how does the ending of the law impact the Christian? (cf. 23-25)
* What is the law of sowing and reaping? (6:7-8)
* What is the significance of Paul’s words in (6:11)?

**Student Questions**

*(Use the back of the page to prepare questions and comments for class discussion. Since this is not a “verse by verse” study, make sure that all your questions concerning the text are answered).*