

COMMENTARY

GALATIANS

INTRODUCTION:

The book of Galatians was a letter of instruction and correction that the Apostle Paul sent to the churches of Galatia (Southern Asia Minor or Turkey). This letter was written in 50 A.D. and was concerning confusion about the Jewish Laws and Rituals. Paul shows how they are no longer binding and then shows the Christians how to live for Jesus.

Chapter 1:

vs. 1- 5 Paul quickly establishes who he is and where his authority comes from. The Christians of Galatia would heed one who has authority and a message from God.

Paul wishes them the grace of God and peace in their lives. Notice how his salutation also contains the message and hope of the Gospel.

vs. 6-10

Paul had heard that these Christians had fallen prey to the false teaching that Gentile Christians had to accept the rituals and customs of the Jews, to be acceptable in the sight of God. Paul sees this as being contradictory to the gospel message and is amazed that the Galatians had not recognized it as being such. All who distort or change the message that God has given, are worthy of eternal punishment.

He explains to them that what he is proclaiming, is not popular among some groups. He is not concerned about those who become upset with him because of this. His attitude is, "I am a servant of Christ, I answer to Him and if that is not agreeable to some, then that is too bad." Paul would not compromise the message of God, to make friends and be popular.

vs. 11-24

Paul shows how the gospel that he has been preaching comes directly from God and not from men. He quickly reviews his past; a zealous Jew and persecutor of the Church. God then spoke to him in a manner that he could not ignore and Paul accepted God's Son as his Savior. Paul then spent time in solitude and then went out preaching to the Gentiles as God had directed. He had not conferred with men and therefore, his message had not originated or been affected by the teaching of others.

Paul mentions that it was much later that he went to Judea and met with Peter and James. Those in Judea praised God because of all that He had been able to accomplish with and through Paul.

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GALATIANS 2:

vs. 1-10:

14 years after Paul's first trip to Jerusalem (as a Christian), he returned. This time it was for the Jerusalem Council (as it has been called. See Acts 15). Paul was concerned that the legalism of the Jews was being forced upon the Gentile Christians. The purpose of the council was to decide, how this issue of Jews vs. Gentile should be handled. Paul felt that the imposing of Jewish laws and regulations would once again cause Christians to become bound to the Law that they had died to when they accepted Christ.

Paul did not allow the others to impose these things upon the Gentiles any longer. Now matter how seemingly important the spokespeople were, it didn't matter for God had shown Paul the way. Paul was able to convince the other apostles of the importance and validity of his ministry to the Gentiles. They came to understand that the Gentiles were free from the Law and they accepted Paul with open arms, realizing that his ministry to the Gentiles was as valid and important as their ministry to the Jews.

vs. 11-21:

Paul shows his commitment to the freedom from the law that all Christians, including Gentiles, should enjoy, by recounting his experience with Peter concerning the issue. He informs them how even Peter had fallen prey to this false teaching and was being a hypocrite for he had ceased to associate with Gentiles. Paul confronted Peter about the matter for not only was it not right, but Peter was leading others astray as well.

Paul's point is: we are justified by faith in Christ and not by keeping the law. Instead of trying to keep the law, we should be channeling our time and effort towards service for Christ! If one does not accept this, then they are saying that Christ's death and resurrection mean nothing and were totally meaningless.

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GALATIANS 3:

vs. 1-14

Paul shows the Galatians the folly of their error. Everything that they first accepted and experienced (Jesus' death, receiving of God's Spirit, justification, and the miracles) all were the result of faith in Christ. Now that they have found something that worked, they return to something that has failed.

Paul shows that they were originally on the right track as they were following the example of Abraham, who also was justified by faith. Paul reminds them that nobody was ever justified by keeping the law but rather became cursed by God. Jesus became a curse for us when He died; so there is no reason for us to become cursed by God. We need to continue to have faith in Christ so that God's Spirit might dwell in our lives.

vs. 15-25

The legalists were arguing that even though Abraham had been justified by faith, God changed things when He added the law and now man could only be justified by keeping the Law. Paul says, "NOT TRUE!" An agreement could not be altered so drastically. Man always has and always will be justified by faith! The promise to Abraham and his Seed (see Genesis 12:2,3) apply to Abraham and Christ. God raised up a people for Abraham and blessed him; He has now raised up a great body of believers for Christ and blesses them. These promises have not been done away with!

Paul shows that the purpose of the law was to show us our helplessness and lead us to the hope that Christ offers. We now are able to partake of that hope for we have been justified by our faith in Christ.

vs. 26-30

Paul now reminds the Galatians that all who were baptized have put on Christ. We all have this in common and we have become united and one. We are all children of Abraham and are among those who will partake of the promises.

STUDY GUIDE

GALATIANS 1:

1. Who was Paul sent by?
2. What did Jesus do, to rescue us from the present evil age?
3. What was Paul astonished at?
4. Who did Paul wish, to be eternally condemned?
5. What would Paul not be, if he were trying to please men?
6. How did Paul receive the gospel that he was preaching?
7. What had Paul done to the church of God, at one time?
8. What had Paul been extremely zealous for?
9. Why did God reveal His Son to Paul?
10. How long after Paul's conversion was it, when he first went to get acquainted with Peter?
11. Where was Paul personally unknown?
12. What report had these people heard?

BONUS:

1. What are some ways that Christians desert the Gospel, today?
2. What can we learn from Paul's life, as described in this chapter?

STUDY GUIDE

GALATIANS 2:

1. Why did Paul return to Jerusalem 14 years later?
2. What had some false brothers done, and why?
3. What did those, who seemed to be important, add to Pauls' message?
4. In whose ministry, was God at work?
5. Who gave Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to Paul?
6. Why did Paul oppose Peter, in Antioch?
7. How did Peter change, when certain men came from James?
8. Who joined in Peter's hypocrisy?
9. What was Peter forcing Gentiles to do?
10. How is one justified?
11. What is the result of being crucified with Christ?
12. If righteousness could be gained through the Law, then what would have been for nothing?

BONUS:

1. What are areas where Christians have to stand up and teach other Christians, the wil of God?
2. How do Christians become hypocrites today?

STUDY GUIDE

GALATIANS 3:

1. After following the Spirit, how were they now trying to attain their goal?
2. In verse 4, for what did Paul say they had suffered so much?
3. Who are children of Abraham?
4. How will the righteous live?
5. Why did Christ redeem us? (see vs. 14)
6. To whom, were the promises spoken?
7. How was Abraham's inheritance given?
8. Until what time, had the laws been added?
9. What does the Scripture declare?
10. Why was the law put in charge?
11. Now that faith has come, what supervision are we no longer under?
12. What have those who have been baptized into Christ done?

BONUS:

1. How does the Law, apply to Christians today?
2. How do the Old Testament promises apply today?
3. The promises made to Abraham, are they valid for Christians? Explain.

