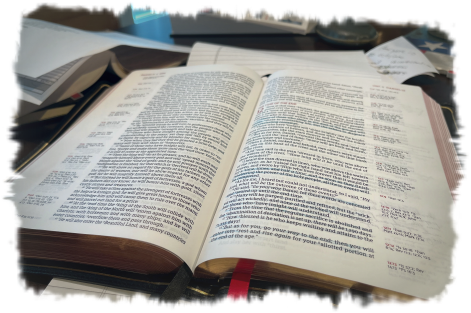
" To the Churches of Galatia:

Paul's Letter to the Churches of Galatia



Introduction to Galatians and Galatians 1

The Setting

In Paul's first missionary journey, he and Barnabas left Antioch of Syria for Cyprus and after preaching from east to west on the island, they went to the southern coast of what we'd call modern day Turkey (Acts 13). Starting in Pisidian Antioch they went and preached the Gospel to Iconium, Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe. These churches were all in what was known at the time as Galatia. At each city they first went to the local synagogue first, usually converting a few, and then to the Gentile population. They then returned to Antioch of Syria and reported the things that God had done through them.

Not long after their return, however, some Jewish Christians came to Antioch and began teaching that in order for the Gentiles to truly be Christians, they needed to follow the Law of Moses and be circumcised, observe the Sabbath, observe kosher laws, etc. (Acts 15). Paul and Barnabas greatly disagreed, and the Antioch brethren sent them and some others to Jerusalem to get a definitive answer from the apostles and elders of Jerusalem. The apostles and elders through the Holy Spirit agreed with Paul and Barnabas, and a letter was sent out proclaiming God's will regarding what was to be required of the Gentiles (and Jews) as they came into the fellowship of God's people, the church. This letter was to be read to the church in Antioch and elsewhere. Nevertheless, Jewish Christian teachers continued to spread their teachings and one of their first stops was the churches in the Galatian region. Thus, Paul finds himself confronting this false doctrine — he calls it a "different gospel" — vigorously and passionately in this letter probably written about AD 48-50.

XXX

[1] Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead), [2] and all the brethren who are with me,

To the churches of Galatia:

The formal address

- How did Paul become an apostle?
  - Why mention this qualification?
  - What might opponents say of Paul's claim to apostleship?
  - What is the point of mentioning "all the brethren who are with me"?
- Which churches would these be for sure?

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen.

- Although this is a typical greeting in the early centuries of Christianity, what do you think Paul may be wanting to remind them of, given the subject that he will be teaching in the rest of the letter?

Getting down to business: I'm flabbergasted!

6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; 7 which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

- What does "so quickly" imply as to the timing of this letter?
- Who was being deserted by this "different gospel"?
- What made this "gospel" different?
  - What is a distortion?
  - What specifically had been distorted?
- Why does Paul mention the preaching of an angel here?
- How serious is distorting the Gospel? ("accursed" is the NASB's translation of "anathema" and anathema means "damned")
  - In what ways is the Gospel (as opposed to opinions or personal tastes) being distorted today?

10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I

- What message would Paul be preaching, *if* he were seeking to please men?
  - Preaching tolerance or approval of this distorted gospel would please *who*?

were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

- Therefore, who were the false teachers attempting to please?
- Who *should* they be trying to please?

11 For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

The Divine Origin of Paul's Gospel

- Where had Paul's Gospel come from?
- What made Paul's apostleship and Gospel suspect as far as his opponents were concerned?
- Where did Paul's opponents accuse him of getting his Gospel from?
  - What does the word "received" imply in the Jewish world?
  - What would the word "taught" imply?
- Where should we get our Gospel?

13 For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; 14 and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions. 15 But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased 16 to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before

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Paul's Gospel Journey

- Why is Paul reminding the Galatians of his Jewish background and "accomplishments"?
- Paul persecuted the church beyond _____
- Advancing beyond many of my contemporaries, being more extremely _____ for my ancestral _____
  - What are "traditions"?
- When did God set Paul apart for the ministry of the Gospel to the Gentiles?
- Could Paul have refused the call? Does God commandeer our wills?
- Considering all that you know about Paul, what made Paul especially fit for preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles?

me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.

18 Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days. 19 But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother. 20 (Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.) 21 Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. 22 I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ; 23 but only, they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy." 24 And they were glorifying God because of me.

- Where was he born?
- Into what kind of citizenship?
- What languages and customs would he have been familiar with?
- Where was he educated?
- Under whom?

- Immediately after his conversion and revelation of the Gospel from the Lord, with whom did Paul consult to make sure it was right?
  - Why?
  - Did he immediately go to Jerusalem, where the apostles were?
  - Where did he go? What's there?
  - Where did he return to?

- When did Paul actually return to Jerusalem after his conversion?
  - Who did he meet with?
  - How long did he stay?

- He returned to _____ and _____.
  - What is in Syria?
  - What is in Cilicia?
  - Who knew him in Jerusalem?
    - What had Christians heard about him?
    - What was their response?