

Lessons from Galatians

Righteousness by Faith Series



Lesson 1—Preaching Heaven’s Gospel

Galatians 1:1-24

I. Introduction and Brief overview of Issues in the Book of Galatians:

- a. **The letter to the Galatians** was the only one of Paul’s letters that was actually addressed to a whole group of churches rather than to just one church. “...to the churches of Galatia...” (1:2). Galatia is a geographic region, not merely a city. This letter was also written by Paul’s own handwriting (it’s the only one of his letters to be like that) (6:11). Generally, Paul dictated his messages to a secretary or literary helper who would write down his words exactly. Galatians is not that way.
- b. **The dating for Paul’s letter to the Galatians** is a little less certain than some of his letters. One theory puts the timing on his third missionary journey. This theory suggests that it was written either from Ephesus (AD 53-56), or from somewhere in Macedonia (AD 56). The second major theory, based on available evidence, is that the letter was probably written from Syrian Antioch in AD 49. (This would have been after Paul’s first missionary journey, and just before Paul went to the Jerusalem council, which is recorded in Acts 15).
- c. Paul wrote this letter as a response to reports that the Galatian believers had been overtaken by false teachers, some Jewish believers, who were suggesting that these Christians needed to be circumcised and to keep the entire Law of Moses to be saved. The basic outline of Paul’s letter covers three primary areas (1) the gospel of grace defended (ch.1,2), (2) the gospel of grace explained (ch.3,4), (3) the gospel of grace applied (ch.5,6). This letter deals with righteousness by faith, the “law” and it’s relation to the gospel, and the conflict of the Spirit vs. the flesh. These basic ideas are also presented in the book of Romans, but here in Galatians, Paul explains more on the covenants and the law specifically.
- d. One very wise Christian woman once pointed out our desperate need to study and understand the truth’s contained in the book of Galatians. She said, “...but this I do know, that our churches are dying for the want of teaching on the subject of righteousness by faith in Christ, and on kindred truths”-Gospel Workers, p.301.

II. Greetings from a servant of the Almighty who saves us (v.1-5)

- a. Paul was an apostle, “not of men,” but of God. He was hand chosen by God himself. He came with the authority from the ALL POWERFUL God who raised up Jesus! Addressing his letter to “all the churches in Galatia” Paul wished them “grace and peace” (v.3) from God, the Father of us all, and Jesus Christ. Truly, all grace and peace are found in God! We must then reflect upon the power of the gospel which, through Christ offering himself for us, gives us the power to be overcomers of our sins in “this present evil age” (v.4). The gospel of Jesus Christ has that very power to deliver us (Matthew 1:21; Titus 2:11-14). Christ died for our sins, “according to the will of God” (v.5; Luke 22:42).

III. Is there “another” Gospel? (v.6-9)

- a. This point is driven home **twice** in a row!! Let no mistake be made! **The gospel is at the heart and center of our faith!** Without it, you’ve got nothing! If we are turned away from Christ’s true gospel then we are left empty handed and “accursed”! Surely, if any other knowledge in us was to fail, we must not get this one wrong!!

- b. *These Galatians believers were being “troubled” (v.7) by false teachers with a false gospel message! **Circumcision** was one of the big issues at the heart of this controversy. This matter was dealt with especially at the Jerusalem counsel, when the Apostles met together to discuss these matters prayerfully. Their decision from that place was to be carried out in all the churches everywhere. (See **Acts 15:1-5; vs.24** mentions those who were troubling the churches, and the conclusion is found in **vs.19,20**). Paul also makes the final point clear in **1 Corinthians 7:18,19**. Circumcision was not important anymore in Christ (The rite of Baptism has essentially taken its place); Keeping God’s Ten Commandments is what really mattered!*
- c. *(v.8) **“Though we or an angel preach any other gospel...”** Be careful, for “...Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light...” (See **2 Corinthians 11:13-15**). The Devil loves to send out false teachers and false ministers among God’s people. They come to us looking to be in all innocence, but their teachings at heart, are entirely corrupt. This very thing happens in our day! Paul marveled that the believers were “so soon” (v.6) misled and turned away from the truth. We ourselves must be weary of this very danger!*
- d. ***The only protection** we have against being misled is to **know our Bibles thoroughly for ourselves and to sincerely seek God’s strength through prayer**. Live God’s word, and be settled in His faith. We must be **“willing to do God’s will”** if we would be sure to know God’s truth (**John 7:17**). Then we must search for the truth “as for hidden treasure” in God’s word (Proverbs 2:1-6). Be willing to listen, but check every teacher’s words by the Bible (Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15; John 17:17).*
- e. ***What is the real gospel?** The real gospel is quite simple basically. Jesus came to save us “from our sins” (Matthew 1:21); from sin’s power (John 8:32-36), and its penalty (Romans 6:23; John 3:16). “All” of us have sinned and “come short of God’s glory” (Romans 3:23). We are **all** in need of Jesus’ saving grace! There are two basic errors or false teachings which people have fallen into. **(1)** Thinking that you can earn your way to heaven by keeping the Law (see Ephesians 2:8,9). **(2)** Thinking that Grace saves you from having to obey the Law (see Romans 3:31). The second of these often comes from unlearned and even deceitful men twisting the writings of Paul to say something they do not (2 Peter 3:15,16; Jude 1:3,4).*

IV. The Origen of Paul’s Gospel (v.10-17)

- a. *Paul did not receive his teachings from men, neither did he seek to please men. He received his message from God alone, and he sought to please God alone! **We cannot please men**. We cannot follow every social expectation of the sinful world around us. We must live according to the convictions of truth that God has placed upon our hearts. **The power of this gospel entirely transformed Paul’s life**. And, it will do the same for us! Perhaps you may have experienced this already in your own life.*
- b. *If Paul had merely listened to men, as in his former life, perhaps he never would have placed his faith in Jesus Christ. Men had taught him to kill God’s faithful children (v.13,14). Thankfully, if there was hope for Paul to be converted, there’s hope for us! We should learn the lesson Paul learned. “I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood...” (v.16). If you know God has called you to something, then you had better pursue it and not let men talk you out of it!*

V. The Places Paul went and the People he saw (v.18-24) *The glory of God is incredible! The power of Christ to transform our lives is indescribable! The testimony of Paul’s transformed life was surely a cause for which to glorify God! The gospel works!!*

Taking it Home: Would you like to experience the transforming power of Jesus’ gospel in your life?

_____ *(You may surely receive it by faith. Invite Jesus into your life today and find His peace—Revelation 3:20; 22:17)*