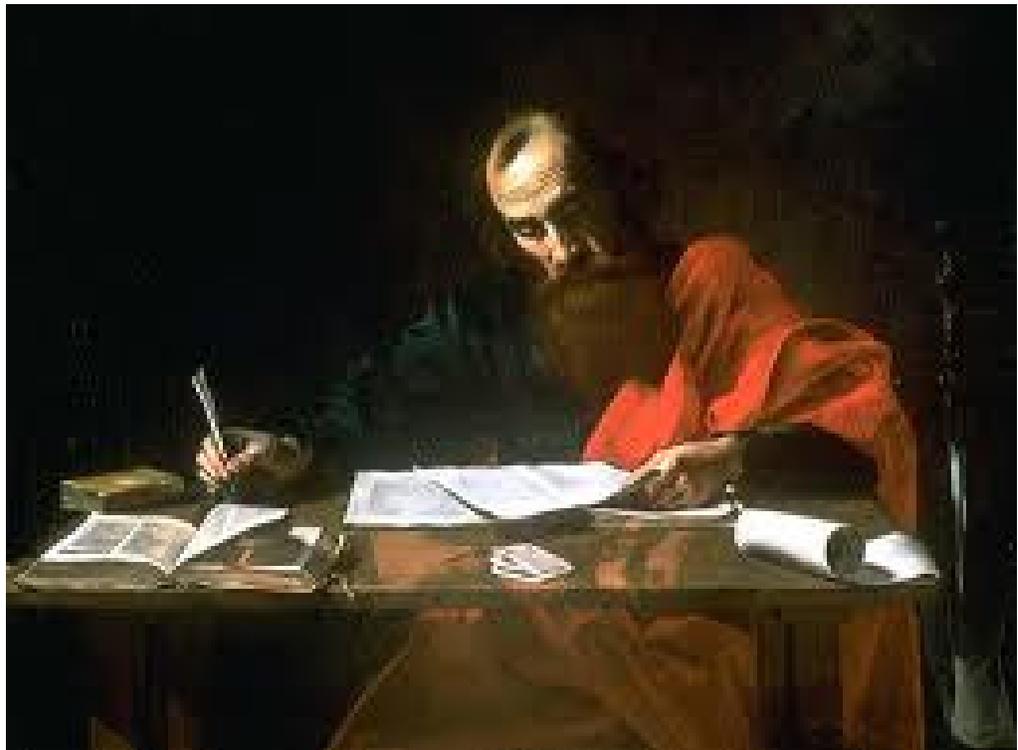


PAUL'S LETTER TO THE GALATIANS

A Study



Curtis Byers
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Saint Paul Writing His Epistles. Painting either by Valentin de Boulogne or Nicolas Tournier in the 16th century. Currently housed in the Blaffer Foundation Collection, Houston, TX.

Preface

Galatians may be the earliest letter we have of the apostle Paul. He wrote it under dire circumstances: converts to Christ were abandoning the simplicity of the gospel. Paul had to act in order to pull these souls back to Christ. Of necessity, the content of the letter deals with fundamental truths of the gospel. Its message still needs to be heard.

The goal of any Bible study is to help one to become more like Christ. Two distinct steps are required to reach that goal. First, the text of Scripture must be interpreted in light of its historical context. In the case of the New Testament letters that means: what did Paul intend to convey to those whom he was writing? How did his words have meaning in the life of those who received the letter? Second, we must then apply the teaching to our lives. What universal truths have meaning for and give direction to our daily walk?

It is tempting to immediately try to apply the Scriptures to our circumstances (the second step) without first doing the careful task of understanding the scriptures in the life of its original recipients (the first step). Any such attempt is doomed to failure. Either we will misapply the teaching of scripture or we will overlook truths essential to the life of a Christian.

Thus, the primary task of our study will be to do a careful study of the text. What does the text say, and equally important, what does the text not say? Who were these early Christians to whom Paul was writing and what "baggage" did they bring to Christianity? Not all students of the book have given the same answers to these questions. Pitfalls abound, so we must be careful.

The *English Standard Version* (ESV) will be used as the basis of the study, but for one's first reading, the *New Living Translation* (NLT) of Galatians is provided in full. Other translations will be consulted.

The study questions provided are intended to help one see the main points of the text. Class discussion will not necessarily follow the questions, but will build upon the lessons learned from the questions. Consequently, it is best to carefully consider and answer the questions in preparation for the class.

May God give us wisdom as we study.

Course Outline

<i>Lesson 1</i>	Introduction / Chapter 1: 1-10
<i>Lesson 2</i>	Chapter 1: 11-24
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<i>Lesson 13</i>	Review

GALATIANS

1¹This letter is from Paul, an apostle. I was not appointed by any group or by human authority. My call is from Jesus Christ himself and from God the Father, who raised Jesus from the dead.

²All the brothers and sisters, here join me in sending greetings to the churches of Galatia.

³May grace and peace be yours from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴He died for our sins, just as God our Father planned, in order to rescue us from this evil world in which we live. ⁵That is why all glory belongs to God through all the ages of eternity. Amen.

⁶I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who in his love and mercy called you to share the eternal life he gives through Christ. You are already following a different way ⁷that pretends to be the Good News but is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who twist and change the truth concerning Christ.

⁸Let God's curse fall on anyone, including myself, who preaches any other message than the one we told you about. Even if an angel comes from heaven and preaches any other message, let him be forever cursed. ⁹I will say it again: If anyone preaches any other gospel than the one you welcomed, let God's curse fall upon that person.

¹⁰Obviously, I'm not trying to be a people pleaser! No, I am trying to please God. If I were still trying to please people, I would not be Christ's servant.

¹¹Dear brothers and sisters, I solemnly assure you that the Good News of salvation which I preach is not based on mere human

reasoning or logic. ¹²For my message came by a direct revelation from Jesus Christ himself. No one else taught me.

¹³You know what I was like when I followed the Jewish religion—how I violently persecuted the Christians. I did my best to get rid of them. ¹⁴I was one of the most religious Jews of my own age, and I tried as hard as possible to follow all the old traditions of my religion.

¹⁵But then something happened! For it pleased God in his kindness to choose me and call me, even before I was born! What undeserved mercy! ¹⁶Then he revealed his Son to me so that I could proclaim the Good News about Jesus to the Gentiles. When all this happened to me, I did not rush out to consult with anyone else; ¹⁷nor did I go up to Jerusalem to consult with those who were apostles before I was. No, I went away into Arabia and later returned to the city of Damascus. ¹⁸It was not until three years later that I finally went to Jerusalem for a visit with Peter and stayed there with him for fifteen days. ¹⁹And the only other apostle I met at that time was James, our Lord's brother. ²⁰You must believe what I am saying, for I declare before God that I am not lying. ²¹Then after this visit, I went north into the provinces of Syria and Cilicia. ²²And still the Christians in the churches in Judea didn't know me personally. ²³All they knew was that people were saying, "The one who used to persecute us now preaches the very faith he tried to destroy!" ²⁴And they gave glory to God because of me.

²Then fourteen years later I went back to Jerusalem again, this time with Barnabas; and Titus came along, too. ²I went there because God revealed to me that I should go. While I was there I talked privately with the leaders of the church. I wanted them to understand what I had been preaching to the Gentiles. I wanted to make sure they did not disagree, or my ministry would have been useless. ³And they did agree. They did not even demand that my companion Titus be circumcised, though he was a Gentile.

⁴Even that question wouldn't have come up except for some so-called Christians there—false ones, really—who came to spy on us and see our freedom in Christ Jesus. They wanted to force us, like slaves, to follow their Jewish regulations. ⁵But we refused to listen to them for a single moment. We wanted to preserve the truth of the Good News for you.

⁶And the leaders of the church who were there had nothing to add to what I was preaching. (By the way, their reputation as great leaders made no difference to me, for God has no favorites.) ⁷They saw that God had given me the responsibility of preaching the Good News to the Gentiles, just as he had given Peter the responsibility of preaching to the Jews. ⁸For the same God who worked through Peter for the benefit of the Jews worked through me for the benefit of the Gentiles. ⁹In fact, James, Peter, and John, who were known as pillars of the church, recognized the gift God had given me, and they accepted Barnabas and me as their co-workers. They encouraged us to keep preaching to the Gentiles, while they continued their work with the Jews. ¹⁰The only thing they suggested was that we remember to help the poor, and I have certainly been eager to do that.

¹¹But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him publicly, speaking strongly against what he was doing, for it was very wrong. ¹²When

he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile Christians, who don't bother with circumcision. But afterward, when some Jewish friends of James came, Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore because he was afraid of what these legalists would say. ¹³Then the other Jewish Christians followed Peter's hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was influenced to join them in their hypocrisy.

¹⁴When I saw that they were not following the truth of the Good News, I said to Peter in front of all the others, "Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a Gentile, why are you trying to make these Gentiles obey the Jewish laws you abandoned?" ¹⁵You and I are Jews by birth, not 'sinners' like the Gentiles. ¹⁶And yet we Jewish Christians know that we become right with God, not by doing what the law commands, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be accepted by God because of our faith in Christ—and not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be saved by obeying the law."

¹⁷But what if we seek to be made right with God through faith in Christ and then find out that we are still sinners? Has Christ led us into sin? Of course not! ¹⁸Rather, I make myself guilty if I rebuild the old system I already tore down. ¹⁹For when I tried to keep the law, I realized I could never earn God's approval. So I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ. ²⁰I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. So I live my life in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹I am not one of those who treats the grace of God as meaningless. For if we could be saved by keeping the law, then there was no need for Christ to die.

³Oh, foolish Galatians! What magician has cast an evil spell on you? For you used to see the meaning of Jesus Christ's death as clearly as though I had shown you a signboard with a picture of Christ dying on the cross. ²Let me ask you this one question: Did you receive the Holy Spirit by keeping the law? Of course not, for the Holy Spirit came upon you only after you believed the message you heard about Christ. ³Have you lost your senses? After starting your Christian lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort? ⁴You have suffered so much for the Good News. Surely it was not in vain, was it? Are you now going to just throw it all away?

⁵I ask you again, does God give you the Holy Spirit and work miracles among you because you obey the law of Moses? Of course not! It is because you believe the message you heard about Christ.

⁶In the same way, "Abraham believed God, so God declared him righteous because of his faith." ⁷The real children of Abraham, then, are all those who put their faith in God.

⁸What's more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would accept the Gentiles, too, on the basis of their faith. God promised this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, "All nations will be blessed through you." ⁹And so it is: All who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith.

¹⁰But those who depend on the law to make them right with God are under his curse, for the Scriptures say, "Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all these commands that are written in God's Book of the Law." ¹¹Consequently, it is clear that no one can ever be right with God by trying to keep the law. For the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life."

¹²How different from this way of faith is the way of law, which says, "If you wish to find life by obeying the law, you must obey all of its commands."

¹³But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

¹⁴Through the work of Christ Jesus, God has blessed the Gentiles with the same blessing he promised to Abraham, and we Christians receive the promised Holy Spirit through faith.

¹⁵Dear brothers and sisters, here's an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or

amend an irrevocable agreement, so it is in this case. ¹⁶God gave the promise to Abraham and his child. And notice that it doesn't say the promise was to his children, as if it meant many descendants. But the promise was to his child—and that, of course, means Christ. ¹⁷This is what I am trying to say: The agreement God made with Abraham could not be canceled 430 years later when God gave the law to Moses. God would be breaking his promise. ¹⁸For if the inheritance could be received only by keeping the law, then it would not be the result of accepting God's promise. But God gave it to Abraham as a promise.

¹⁹Well then, why was the law given? It was given to show people how guilty they are. But this system of law was to last only until the coming of the child to whom God's promise was made. And there is this further difference. God gave his laws to angels to give to Moses, who was the mediator between God and the people. ²⁰Now a mediator is needed if two people enter into an agreement, but God acted on his own when he made his promise to Abraham.

²¹Well then, is there a conflict between God's law and God's promises? Absolutely not! If the law could have given us new life, we could have been made right with God by obeying it. ²²But the Scriptures have declared that we are all prisoners of sin, so the only way to receive God's promise is to believe in Jesus Christ.

²³Until faith in Christ was shown to us as the way of becoming right with God, we were guarded by the law. We were kept in protective custody, so to speak, until we could put our faith in the coming Savior.

²⁴Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian and teacher to lead us until Christ came. So now, through faith in Christ, we are made right with God. ²⁵But now that faith in Christ has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian. ²⁶So you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have been made like him. ²⁸There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. For you are all Christians—you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and now all the promises God gave to him belong to you.

⁴Think of it this way. If a father dies and leaves great wealth for his young children, those children are not much better off than slaves until they grow up, even though they actually own everything their father had. ²They have to obey their guardians until they reach whatever age their father set.

³And that's the way it was with us before Christ came. We were slaves to the spiritual powers of this world. ⁴But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. ⁵God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children. ⁶And because you Gentiles have become his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, and now you can call God your dear Father. ⁷Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, everything he has belongs to you.

⁸Before you Gentiles knew God, you were slaves to so-called gods that do not even exist. ⁹And now that you have found God (or should I say, now that God has found you), why do you want to go back again and become slaves once more to the weak and useless spiritual powers of this world? ¹⁰You are trying to find favor with God by what you do or don't do on certain days or months or seasons or years. ¹¹I fear for you. I am afraid that all my hard work for you was worth nothing. ¹²Dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to live as I do in freedom from these things, for I have become like you Gentiles were—free from the law.

You did not mistreat me when I first preached to you. ¹³Surely you remember that I was sick when I first brought you the Good News of Christ. ¹⁴But even though my sickness was revolting to you, you did not reject me and turn me away. No, you took me in and cared for me as though I were an angel from God or even Christ Jesus himself. ¹⁵Where is that joyful spirit we felt together then? In those days, I know you would gladly have taken out your own eyes and given them to me if it had been possible. ¹⁶Have I now become your enemy because I am telling you the truth?

¹⁷Those false teachers who are so anxious to win your favor are not doing it for your good. They are trying to shut you off from me so that you will pay more attention to them. ¹⁸Now it's wonderful if you are eager to do good, and especially when I am not with you. ¹⁹But oh, my dear children! I feel as if I am going through labor pains for you again, and they will continue until Christ is fully developed in your lives. ²⁰How I wish I were there with you right now, so that I could be more gentle with you. But at this distance I frankly don't know what else to do.

²¹Listen to me, you who want to live under the law. Do you know what the law really says? ²²The Scriptures say that Abraham had two sons, one from his slave-wife and one from his freeborn wife. ²³The son of the slave-wife was born in a human attempt to bring about the fulfillment of God's promise. But the son of the freeborn wife was born as God's own fulfillment of his promise.

²⁴Now these two women serve as an illustration of God's two covenants. Hagar, the slave-wife, represents Mount Sinai where people first became enslaved to the law. ²⁵And now Jerusalem is just like Mount Sinai in Arabia, because she and her children live in slavery. ²⁶But Sarah, the free woman, represents the heavenly Jerusalem. And she is our mother. ²⁷That is what Isaiah meant when he prophesied, "Rejoice, O childless woman! Break forth into loud and joyful song, even though you never gave birth to a child. For the woman who could bear no children now has more than all the other women!"

²⁸And you, dear brothers and sisters, are children of the promise, just like Isaac. ²⁹And we who are born of the Holy Spirit are persecuted by those who want us to keep the law, just as Isaac, the child of promise, was persecuted by Ishmael, the son of the slave-wife.

³⁰But what do the Scriptures say about that? "Get rid of the slave and her son, for the son of the slave woman will not share the family inheritance with the free woman's son." ³¹So, dear brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman, obligated to the law. We are children of the free woman, acceptable to God because of our faith.

⁵So Christ has really set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.

²Listen! I, Paul, tell you this: If you are counting on circumcision to make you right with God, then Christ cannot help you. ³I'll say it again. If you are trying to find favor with God by being circumcised, you must obey all of the regulations in the whole law of Moses. ⁴For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have fallen away from God's grace.

⁵But we who live by the Spirit eagerly wait to receive everything promised to us who are right with God through faith. ⁶For when we place our faith in Christ Jesus, it makes no difference to God whether we are circumcised or not circumcised. What is important is faith expressing itself in love.

⁷You were getting along so well. Who has interfered with you to hold you back from following the truth? ⁸It certainly isn't God, for he is the one who called you to freedom. ⁹But it takes only one wrong person among you to infect all the others—a little yeast spreads quickly through the whole batch of dough! ¹⁰I am trusting the Lord to bring you back to believing as I do about these things. God will judge that person, whoever it is, who has been troubling and confusing you.

¹¹Dear brothers and sisters, if I were still preaching that you must be circumcised—as some say I do—why would the Jews persecute me? The fact that I am still being persecuted proves that I am still preaching salvation through the cross of Christ alone. ¹²I only wish that those troublemakers who want to mutilate you by circumcision would mutilate themselves.

¹³For you have been called to live in freedom—not freedom to satisfy your sinful nature, but freedom to serve one another in love.

¹⁴For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵But if instead of showing love among yourselves you are always biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another.

¹⁶So I advise you to live according to your new life in the Holy Spirit. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. ¹⁷The old sinful nature loves to do evil, which is just opposite from what the Holy Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are opposite from what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict. ¹⁸But when you are directed by the Holy Spirit, you are no longer subject to the law.

¹⁹When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, your lives will produce these evil results: sexual immorality, impure thoughts, eagerness for lustful pleasure, ²⁰idolatry, participation in demonic activities, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, divisions, the feeling that everyone is wrong except those in your own little group, ²¹envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other kinds of sin. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

²²But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control. Here there is no conflict with the law.

²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. ²⁵If we are living now by the Holy Spirit, let us follow the Holy Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, or irritate one another, or be jealous of one another.

⁶Dear brothers and sisters, if another Christian is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. ²Share each other's troubles and problems, and in this way obey the law of Christ. ³If you think you are too important to help someone in need, you are only fooling yourself. You are really a nobody.

⁴Be sure to do what you should, for then you will enjoy the personal satisfaction of having done your work well, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else. ⁵For we are each responsible for our own conduct.

⁶Those who are taught the word of God should help their teachers by paying them.

⁷Don't be misled. Remember that you can't ignore God and get away with it. You will always reap what you sow! ⁸Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful desires will harvest the consequences of decay and death. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. ⁹So don't get tired of doing what is good. Don't get discouraged and give up, for we will reap a harvest of blessing at the appropriate time.

¹⁰Whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone, especially to our Christian brothers and sisters.

¹¹Notice what large letters I use as I write these closing words in my own handwriting.

¹²Those who are trying to force you to be circumcised are doing it for just one reason. They don't want to be persecuted for teaching that the cross of Christ alone can save. ¹³And even those who advocate circumcision don't really keep the whole law. They only want you to be circumcised so they can brag about it and claim you as their disciples.

¹⁴As for me, God forbid that I should boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world died long ago, and the world's interest in me is also long dead. ¹⁵It doesn't make any difference now whether we have been circumcised or not. What counts is whether we really have been changed into new and different people. ¹⁶May God's mercy and peace be upon

all those who live by this principle. They are the new people of God.

¹⁷From now on, don't let anyone trouble me with these things. For I bear on my body the scars that show I belong to Jesus.

¹⁸My dear brothers and sisters, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Lesson 1

Introduction / Galatians 1:1-10

Questions of Introduction

The immediate context of a letter is vital in understanding the message of the letter. How well did the author know his intended recipients? Did the author write the letter to instruct, to commend, or to rebuke his readers? Was the letter written in response to certain events, or was the letter written with some future goal in mind? These sorts of questions must be considered when approaching any letter, including Biblical letters.

Since the answers to these questions for Paul's letter to the Galatians are an integral part of the body of his letter, we will address these questions as the answers arise in the letter.

Questions to Answer

- ◆ *Who is the author?*
- ◆ *Who is the recipient(s)?*
- ◆ *What is the nature of the letter?*
- ◆ *When was the letter written?*
- ◆ *Where are the author and recipient at the time of writing?*
- ◆ *Why was the letter written?*

Salutation and Greeting: Galatians 1:1-5

- 1 Paul, an apostle— not from men nor through man^a, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—
- 2 and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:
- 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,
- 4 who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,
- 5 to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Notes a NRSV, "sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities"

Comments / Questions

1. Paul identifies himself as an apostle and elaborates on the nature of his apostleship. (1:1)
 - a. An "apostle" is, in general, simply 'one who is sent'. What is the point that Paul makes about his apostleship?
 - b. Contrast Paul's apostleship to that described in 2 Corinthians 8:23 and Philippians 2:25. [Note that the word is translated "messenger" in each of these passages.]
 - c. Why would Paul start his letter with this statement of his apostleship?
 - d. Why did the translators enclose the phrase in parenthesis?
2. Are "all the brothers who are with" Paul joint authors of this letter?

3. The letter is written to the "*churches of Galatia*". (1:2)
 - a. Note the following references to Galatia in the New Testament.

Acts 16:6

Acts 18:23

1 Corinthians 16:1

2 Timothy 4:10

1 Peter 1:1
 - b. Locate Galatia on a map and note some of the cities within its borders.
 - c. There is disagreement as to the identity of the Galatians. The two major views are presented in an outline summary following this lesson. Read the summary and make note of any questions you have.
 - d. By the way, how do you write a single letter to several different churches which, presumably, are located in different cities?

Galatians 1:6-10

- 6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—
- 7 not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble^a 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 the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.
- 9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.
- 10 For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Notes a NRSV "are confusing"; REB, "unsettle your minds"

Comments / Questions

4. Paul customarily in his letters follows his salutation with a note of thanksgiving to God for some feature of the recipients.
 - a. Does Paul express thanks for the Galatians?
 - b. Instead what does Paul express?

[Note: Galatians, 2 Corinthians, 1 Timothy and Titus are the only letters of Paul not to contain a note of thanksgiving.]

5. Pronouns!
 - a. Who is the "whom" of verse 5?
 - b. Who is the "him" of verse 6?

6. About what does Paul "marvel"? (1:6)
 - a. How quick is "so quickly"?
 - b. "So quickly" from when? (I can think of 3 possibilities.)
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)

7. Paul alludes to "some" who were troubling the Galatians and would "distort the gospel of Christ." (1:7)
 - a. Are the "some" identified? Are they Christians?

 - b. What does it mean to "distort" the gospel?

 - c. Are we told what is different about their message than that which Paul taught?

8. Is it possible that Paul could teach error? (1:8, 9)
 - a. If not, why does he make the statement that he does in verse 8?

 - b. If so, what does that say about the nature of inspiration?

9. Verses 8 and 9 are similar, but each verse does make a different point. What are these points?
Verse 8:

Verse 9:

The Galatians: Who Are They?

Paul address the letter *"To the churches of Galatia"* (1:2) and later calls them *"Galatians"* (3:1). Since the term Galatia can be understood in two senses, there is some uncertainty as to the location of these congregations.

I. The Two Understandings of the term "Galatia"

- A. **Historical Background:** The original ethnic kingdom of Galatia was located in the northern part of Asia Minor and was populated by Phrygians. They were overtaken by the Gauls (hence the name Galatia) in the third century BC. In 64 BC Galatia became a client state of Rome, and, when their last king (Amyntas) died in 25 BC, Augustus formed the province of Galatia and included the geographical areas of Pontus, Phrygia, Lycaonia, Pisidia, Pamphylia, Paphlagonia, and Isauria. For the most part, the Galatian province remained as reorganized by Augustus through the New Testament Period.
- B. **Question:** When Paul wrote to the *"Galatians"* was he addressing Christians located in the original ethnic territory of Galatia (the North Galatian view) or in the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia (the South Galatian view)?

II. The North Galatian View: The traditional view until the 19th century and advocated strongly by Lightfoot (1865).

- A. In Acts, Luke often uses the geographical districts rather than the provincial titles in describing cities Paul visited. Thus, he writes *"Perga in Pamphylia"* (13:13; cf. 14:24), *"Antioch of Pisidia"* (13:14; cf. 14:24), and the *"Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia"* (14:6). Note that Antioch, Lystra, and Derbe were all located in the province of Galatia.
- B. Therefore, it is reasonable to think that Luke's reference to Paul's travels through the *"region of Phrygia and Galatia"* (Acts 16:6; 18:23) on his second and third missionary journeys is to the geographical districts of Phrygia and Galatia and not to the Roman province of Galatia.
- C. **Date of the Letter:** If this view is correct, then the Galatian letter must have been written after Paul's visit on the second missionary journey and depending on how one interprets Galatians 4:13, possibly even after his visit on the third missionary journey.

III. The South Galatian View: The view popularized by Sir William Ramsey (1890's) and held by many modern students of the letter.

- A. According to this view, the churches Paul addressed would be the ones he established on his first missionary journey in the cities of Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.
- B. Just because Luke used geographical districts instead of provincial titles does not mean that Paul did as well. In fact, Paul commonly used provincial titles in his letters to refer

to Christians in different locations, e.g. Romans 15:26; 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:5, 15; 2 Corinthians 2:13; 9:2, 4; 1 Thessalonians 1:8.

- C. It has been suggested that the phrase referring to Phrygia and Galatia in Acts 16:6 be translated as the Phrygian-Galatian region. Also, in Acts 18:23 the phrase "*went from one place to the next in the region of Galatia and Phrygia ...*" could be interpreted to mean that Paul went through the districts in the province of Galatia and also the part of Phrygia in the adjoining province of Asia since Paul was not forbidden at this time to preach in Asia (cf. Acts 16:6). If so, Luke does not record any missionary activity of Paul in the northern geographical district of Galatia. But even if these passages in Acts do refer to such activity, Paul's letter could still be to the southern cities of Galatia noted above.
- D. Date of the Letter: If this view is correct, then the letter could have been written soon after his visits to South Galatia on his first missionary journey. Of course, any later date could also be maintained with this view.

Lesson 2

Galatians 1:11-24

Introduction In opening his letter, Paul immediately affirmed that there is only one gospel and that there were some who were preaching a false gospel. Paul now seeks to establish that the gospel he preached was the true gospel because it came directly from Jesus Christ.

Galatians 1:11-17

- 11 For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel.
- 12 For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.
- 13 For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it.
- 14 And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.
- 15 But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace,
- 16 was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone;
- 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

Comments / Questions

1. Paul's central point is contained in verses 11-12.
 - a. State his point in your own words.
 - b. How does this relate to his salutation? (1:1)
 - c. As proof, Paul gives two reasons from his background why his point must be true. The first proof is in verses 13-17. Explain in your own words.
2. The phrase "*a revelation of Jesus Christ*" in verse 12 can either mean that (a) Jesus Christ was that which was revealed, hence "*the revelation...*" (NKJV) or (b) that Jesus Christ revealed something. Which do you think Paul meant in this context?
3. Where can we read of Paul persecuting "the church of God"?

4. In verse 14, Paul states that he *"was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers."*
 - a. Compare Philippians 3:3-6
 - b. What does this say about how one advanced in Judaism?
 - c. What is the lesson for us?
5. In verses 15-17, Paul gives the circumstances of his conversion. Read Acts 9:1-19 as background.

- a. Where does Acts say that Paul was converted?

Do these verses in Galatians agree with Acts or can we tell?

- b. Why does Paul say God chose him?

Does Acts mention this reason?

- c. Locate Damascus and Arabia on a map.

6. Where did Paul not go after his conversion?

In particular, what men could not have been the ones to have taught Paul the gospel?

Why is this significant?

Galatians 1:18-24

- 18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days.
- 19 But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.
- 20 (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!)^a
- 21 Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.
- 22 And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ.
- 23 They only were hearing it said, "He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy."
- 24 And they glorified God because of me.

Notes a NRSV does not include the parenthesis.

Comments / Questions

7. Verses 18-24 give the second proof of Paul's claim and it centers around a visit Paul made to Jerusalem. It is important to Paul that the Galatians understand that he is telling them the truth.

a. Is this Paul's first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion?

Is this significant to Paul's argument?

b. What is the significance that it was "three years" before Paul met Peter and James, or does Paul just happen to mention the time difference?

8. James, Jesus' brother, plays an important role in Paul's letter. Summarize what we know of James from the following passages:

Matthew 13:55

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

Acts 12:17

Acts 15:6-21

Acts 21:17-25

James, the Lord's Brother

Tradition says that James was appointed an elder at Jerusalem by the Lord himself and the apostles (Eusebius) and that he suffered martyrdom due to stoning by the high priest after the death of Festus (Josephus). Again, tradition ascribes to him the authorship of the letter of James (cf. James 1:1).

Extra Credit: How many James are mentioned in the New Testament?

9. Is verse 19 saying that James is an apostle? How so, since he was not one of the original twelve?

Lesson 3

Galatians 2:1-10

Introduction In Galatians 1:11, Paul contends that he received the gospel he preached directly from God and not from any man. As proof, he cites his lack of contact with the other apostles. In chapter 2, Paul continues describing his interaction with the other apostles.

Galatians 2:1-10

- 1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me.
- 2 I went up because of a^a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain.
- 3 But even Titus, who was with me, was not^b forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.
- 4 Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery—
- 5 to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.
- 6 And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me.
- 7 On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised
- 8 (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles),
- 9 and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.
- 10 Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

Notes a ASV “up by”; NRSV “in response to a”

b One early manuscript omits “not” – suggesting Titus was circumcised (so believes Duncan).

Comments / Questions

1. In 1:18, Paul says his first visit in Jerusalem with Peter and James was “*after three years*” which apparently refers to the time from his conversion. In 2:1, Paul says he went up again to Jerusalem “*after 14 years.*”
 - a. Fourteen years after what? His conversion, or his first visit to Jerusalem?
 - b. Do you think this is just his second visit to Jerusalem after his conversion?

2. What does Paul mean when he says he went up to Jerusalem "because of a revelation"? (2:2; see *Notes* above)
3. Paul informed those "who seemed influential" in Jerusalem of the gospel he preached. (2:2)
 - a. Who were those "who seemed influential"?
 - b. Why did Paul meet with these brethren in private?
 - c. Why would Paul need to tell them about the gospel he preached? Was it not the same gospel they preached, or was Paul's gospel different from theirs?
4. To this point in the letter we are only told that some were distorting the gospel, but we are not told in what way it was being distorted.
 - a. What does this paragraph (2:1-10) imply as being the point of dispute?
 - b. Can we tell if the recipients of this letter are Jews or Gentiles, or both?
5. There are a couple of ways of understanding verse 3 and the transition to verse 4:
 - 1) Those in Jerusalem were so convinced of the truthfulness of Paul's message that the question of whether Titus should be circumcised never even arose.
 - 2) Titus became a focus of dispute, especially among the "false brothers secretly brought in." [cf. NKJV, v.4 "And *this occurred* because of false brethren..."]

Which way seems correct to you?
6. But why would Paul disagree with them? After all, didn't Paul himself circumcise Timothy because of the Jews? (cf. Acts 16:3)
7. So, just what is the "truth of the gospel" (v.5)?
8. Paul's point in referring to this Jerusalem visit is summarized in 2:7-9.
 - a. Why was it important to Paul that those "who seemed influential added nothing" to him? (2:6)
 - b. Yet, at the same time, why is it important to Paul that these "influential" ones had given him the "right hand of fellowship"?
 - c. How were James, Peter, and John able to discern that grace had been given to Paul? (2:9)

Lesson 4

Galatians 2:11-21

Introduction Having used his initial visits to Jerusalem as support for the gospel which he preached, Paul now uses an episode that took place in Antioch to illustrate a practical application of the gospel.

Galatians 2:11-21

- 11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.
- 12 For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.
- 13 And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.
- 14 But when I saw that their conduct was not in step^a with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"
- 15 We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners;
- 16 yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.
- 17 But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not!
- 18 For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor.
- 19 For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ.
- 20 It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
- 21 I do not nullify the grace of God, for if justification were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

Notes a NRSV, "were not acting consistently"

Comments / Questions

1. We do not have any other information in the Scriptures about Peter's visit to Antioch. We do know of some occasions when both Paul and Barnabas were in Antioch together. It appears that Peter's visit took place after Paul's visit to Jerusalem described in 2: 1-10 (doesn't it?).
 - a. In your words explain how Peter's action was hypocritical and why he was to be "condemned"? (cf. Acts 10:28)
 - b. Does the "eating" refer to a common meal, or to eating the Lord's Supper?

- c. When Paul visited Jerusalem, Peter (along with James and John) gave Paul the right hand of fellowship in his efforts to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. But is there a difference between 'preaching the gospel to the Gentiles' and 'eating with the Gentiles'?
 - d. How do you think Peter and Barnabas would have justified their action? In other words, what arguments could they make in their support?
 - e. How did Peter "*force the Gentiles to live like Jews*" (2:14)?
2. The Jewish brethren that caused Peter to withdraw himself "*came from James*" (2:12).
 - a. Did these brethren disapprove of Jewish Christians eating with the Gentiles?
 - b. Did they have James approval, or did they simply claim to have James approval? (cf. Acts 15:24)
3. Paul reuses the phrase "*the truth of the gospel*" in verse 14 (cf. 2:5). What does he mean by this phrase?
4. In verse 14, Paul reports his conversation with Peter. Does this conversation end in verse 14 (as in the ESV above) or are verses 15-21 a continuation of Paul's comments (as suggested by the NKJV)? Compare other translations.
5. Having defended his apostleship, Paul now addresses the doctrinal points at issue. In verses 15-21, several key concepts are introduced (with use of some difficult expressions). Try to explain or define the following phrases:
 - a. "*Gentile sinners*" (v.15)
 - b. "*justified*" (v.16)

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- c. *"works of the law" vs. "faith in Christ"* (v.16)
 - d. *"is Christ then a servant of sin?"* (v.17)
 - e. *"For through the law I died to the law"* (v.19)
6. Explain how Paul's discussion in verses 15-21 applies to the immediate problem in the churches of Galatia?
7. How does this episode at Antioch fit into Paul's argument in this letter?

Lesson 5 Paul's Early Contacts with Jerusalem Recorded in Acts

Introduction Paul's arguments in Galatians 1 and 2 refer to his initial contacts with the Jerusalem church. Acts supplies additional information concerning these early visits. This lesson will review the life of Paul from his conversion to after the Jerusalem conference.

Comments / Questions

1. The conversion of Paul is given in Acts 9. List Paul's subsequent actions in Acts 9:19-30 by completing the following chart: *(Note: The Time Reference may not be given for all events.)*

Verse	Time Reference	Action(s) or Event(s)
18	Immediately	Paul received sight and was baptized
19		
20		
22		
23		
25		
26		
27		
29		
30		

2. Paul apparently remains in Tarsus until Barnabas asks him to join him in the work at the church in Antioch (Acts 11:19-30).
 - a. Describe the people who made up this congregation: Jews, Gentiles, or both? (v.20)
 - b. How long did Paul and Barnabas work with this congregation?
 - c. The prophet Agabus foretells of a famine in Judea. What action do the Antioch brethren take? What time reference is given?
 - d. Acts 12:25 depicts Barnabas and Paul completing their "service" and returning to Antioch with John Mark. What major events happen "about that time"? (Acts 12:1-2; 20-24).

- e. Check a Bible dictionary for possible dates of the famine under Claudius and the death of Herod.
3. Acts 13-14 records the first missionary journey of Barnabas and Paul. Of possible relevance to a study of Galatians are the visits to four cities within the southern province of Galatia. For each city, summarize the events recorded in Acts.

Chapter/ Verse	City	Action(s) or Event(s)
13:14-52	Antioch of Pisidia	
14:1-6	Iconium	
14:6-20	Lystra	
14:20-21	Derbe	

How many times did they visit these cities on this journey? (14:21-23)

Are both Jews and Gentiles converted in these cities?

- 4. How long do you think that it took Paul and Barnabas to complete their first journey? What time references are there in Acts 13-14?
- 5. While Paul and Barnabas were continuing their work in Antioch after their first journey, the question arose concerning circumcision for Gentile converts. This dispute led to a gathering in Jerusalem of the apostles, Jerusalem elders, and others. Read Acts 15.
 - a. What exactly were the men from Judea teaching? (v.1)
 - b. Upon arriving in Jerusalem, to whom did Paul and Barnabas report their work to?

- c. What group in particular repeated the belief that Gentiles must be circumcised *and* to observe the Law of Moses?
 - d. When the text says that "the apostles and elders were gathered together to consider this matter" (v.6) is this describing a private meeting of just the apostles and elders, or a public meeting with others in the church?
 - e. Summarize their conclusions.
 - f. These conclusions (decrees) were put into a letter. To whom is the letter addressed and to whom was the letter given? (Acts 15:22-35)
 - g. What is significant about this statement in the letter, "Since we have heard that some persons have gone out from us and troubled you with words...although we gave them instructions, ..."?
 - h. Who else does Paul and Barnabas inform of the decrees at the start of the second missionary journey? (Acts 16:1-6)
6. Summarizing, list the reference and occasion for Paul's first three visits to Jerusalem after his conversion as given in Acts.

<i>Visit</i>	<i>Chapter/Verse</i>	<i>Occasion</i>
<i>1st</i>		
<i>2nd</i>		
<i>3rd</i>		

Are these *necessarily* the only three visits that Paul took to Jerusalem during this time period?

Lesson 6 Comparative Study of Paul's Jerusalem Visits in Acts and Galatians

Introduction It is instructive to compare the two Jerusalem visits Paul records in Galatians with his first three visits recorded in Acts. Study the following chart:

	<u>Acts</u>	=	<u>Galatians</u>		
Paul's Conversion	9:10-19	=	1:15-16	Paul's Conversion	
	?	=	1:17	Trip to Arabia	
Preaching in Damascus	9:19-22	=	1:17	Return to Damascus	
1st Visit to Jerusalem	9:26-30	=	1:18-19	"after three years"	
2nd Visit to Jerusalem (Famine Relief Visit)	11:30	}	?	2:1	"after fourteen years"
3rd Visit to Jerusalem (Jerusalem Council)	15:2ff				
	?	=	2:11-14	Confronts Peter at Antioch	

Comments / Questions

- Since both Acts 9:26-30 and Galatians 1:18-19 purport to record Paul's first visit to Jerusalem, they both must be referring to the same visit. However, list the differences in the two accounts. How can these differences be explained?
- The real difficulty is in deciding if the 2nd Visit mentioned in Galatians (2:1) is the visit recorded in Acts 11:30ff (the Famine Relief Visit) or Acts 15:2ff (the Jerusalem Council Meeting). For each account, complete the following chart:

	<i>Galatians 2</i>	<i>Acts 11</i>	<i>Acts 15</i>
City Paul Left			
Paul's Associates			
Reason Paul Went			
Who Paul Met			
Type of Meeting			
Paul's Opponents			
The Conclusion			

3. Is there anything in the above comparison that prevents either the Famine Relief Visit (Acts 11) or the Jerusalem Council Meeting (Acts 15) from being identified with the Galatians 2 visit?

4. Reread Galatians 1:15 – 2:1. Does it seem as if Paul is saying that “after fourteen years” he made his *second* visit to Jerusalem? (Compare your answer to how you previously answered this same question in Lesson 2, Question 1b.)

5. Even though the most natural reading of Galatians probably suggests that the visit recorded in Galatians 2 is Paul's second visit to Jerusalem (which according to Acts is the Famine Relief Visit), many argue that the similarities between the Galatians 2 visit and the Jerusalem Council Meeting suggest that they are the same visit. If this is the case, consider the following consequences of this view:
 - a. This would mean that the Galatians 2 visit is at least Paul's third visit to Jerusalem. If so, would this affect Paul's argument in Galatians 1 and 2, or not? In other words, if Paul omitted one visit he made to Jerusalem, would Paul's argument be weakened?

 - b. If the Galatians 2 visit is the Jerusalem Council Meeting, that obviously means that Paul is writing to the Galatians sometime after the Jerusalem Council Meeting. Acts tells us that after the leaving Jerusalem with the written decrees Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch and that at some time thereafter Paul departed on his 2nd Journey with the decrees. In particular, Acts 16:1-6 records Paul taking the decrees to the cities of Galatia. Since Paul appears to be arguing in Galatians that his gospel is not at odds with that preached by the other apostles and those in Jerusalem, then why didn't Paul simply refer to the decrees in his letter (which the Galatians may have read themselves) as positive proof that he and the other apostles were in agreement?

 - c. If the Galatians 2 visit is the Jerusalem Council Meeting, then Peter's inconsistent behavior at Antioch occurred after his speech in the Jerusalem Council Meeting and the common agreement achieved there. Is this conceivable? Would such behavior by Peter be more understandable if it occurred before the Jerusalem Council Meeting?

6. To many the consequences of saying that the Galatians 2 visit is the Jerusalem Council Meeting are unacceptable. Most of these would then argue that the Galatians 2 visit is the same as the Famine Relief Visit. Are there any negative consequences to this view?

7. So what do you think? Does the Galatians 2 visit corresponds with the Famine Relief Visit in Acts 11 or the Jerusalem Council Meeting in Acts 15?

8. Whether the Galatians 2 visit is the famine relief visit in Acts 11 or the Jerusalem Council Meeting in Acts 15 will have some impact on the date the letter was written and to whom it was written (i.e., to the churches in South Galatia or to those in North Galatia).
 - a. Assuming that Galatians 2 corresponds with Acts 11, when would the letter have been written? Who were the recipients: churches in South Galatia or North Galatia?

 - b. Assuming that Galatians 2 corresponds with Acts 15, when could the letter have been written? Could the recipients be either the churches in South Galatia or North Galatia?

9. Chronological Considerations: The Famine Relief Visit probably occurred in AD 46-47 and the Jerusalem Council Meeting about AD 49. If the Galatians 2 visit is the Famine Relief Visit, then Paul's conversion was about AD 33-34. (Why?) Is this a reasonable date if Jesus' crucifixion and Pentecost occurred in AD 30?

Many argue that Jesus' crucifixion occurred in AD 33. If so, would this present a challenge to the view that Galatians 2 is the Famine Relief Visit?

Lesson 7

Galatians 3:1-18

Introduction In Chapters 3 and 4, Paul argues that all men can be justified by faith and that no one is justified by "works of the law." Paul makes a similar statement in the first half of his letter to the Romans. As a supplement to this study, read Romans 3:21-4:25.

Galatians 3:1-18

- 1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified.
- 2 Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?
- 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?
- 4 Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?
- 5 Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— 6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"^a?
- 7 Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.
- 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed."^b
- 9 So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.
- 10 For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."^c
- 11 Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith."^d
- 12 But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them."^e
- 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"^f—
- 14 so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.
- 15 To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified.
- 16 Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring^g. It does not say, "And to offsprings^h," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring^g," who is Christ.
- 17 This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void.
- 18 For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

<i>Notes</i>	<i>a</i> Quotation of Genesis 15:6.	<i>e</i> Quotation of Leviticus 18:5.
	<i>b</i> Quotation of Genesis 12:3.	<i>f</i> Quotation of Deuteronomy 21:23.
	<i>c</i> Quotation of Deuteronomy 27:26.	<i>g</i> <i>Gk</i> "seed"
	<i>d</i> Quotation of Habakkuk 2:4.	<i>h</i> <i>Gk</i> "seeds"

Comments / Questions

1. Paul seeks to establish his case by appealing to the Galatians' reception of the Spirit. He asks whether they received the Spirit "by works of the law, or by hearing with faith?" (3:2)
 - a. In this context, what does Paul mean by, or at least associates with, receiving the Spirit? (cf. 3:5,14)
 - b. Why would Paul use their reception of the Spirit as part of his argument? In other words, what is significant about one receiving the Spirit? (Also compare v.14 with Acts 2:38-39)
 - c. What does the phrase "by hearing with faith" mean?
 - d. In verse 3, the contrast is between "the Spirit" and "the flesh". What is meant by "the flesh"?

What is "so foolish" about the Galatians' attempt to be "perfected by the flesh"?

2. Paul refers to the suffering the Galatians endured for Christ in verse 4. If the letter is addressed to the Galatians in South Galatia that we read about in Acts 13 and 14, what suffering do we know that they experienced? (cf. Acts 13:50; 14:5, 19, 21-22)
3. It may be that the 'troublemakers' in Galatia were appealing to Abraham as the one to whom God had given the covenant of circumcision with the appeal that if Abraham was circumcised then they should be circumcised also. Yet, Paul appeals to the example of Abraham as proof that God accepts people on the basis of faith.
 - a. Paul quotes Genesis 15:6 – "(Abraham) believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." In Genesis 15, what is the occasion when this statement is made concerning Abraham?
 - b. Paul also refers to Abraham's example in Romans 4 and quotes Genesis 15:6 (Romans 4:3, 9, 22). To what occasion in Abraham's life does Paul refer? (cf. Romans 4:19-22)
 - c. What is significant about both of these occasions? (cf. Romans 4:9-12)

- d. James also makes use of Abraham's example by quoting Genesis 15:6 in James 2:23. To what occasion in Abraham's life does James refer?
 - e. In considering the life of Abraham as used by Paul and James, is *justification by faith* a singular experience or is it a way of life?
4. In verses 10-13, Paul discusses justification by works of the law.
- a. What demand does the law make on those who seek to be justified by it? (v.12)
 - b. Why is it "evident" that no one is justified by the law? (v.11)
 - c. What is the curse associated with the law? (v.10,13)
5. In arguing for the acceptance of the Gentiles, Paul appeals to the covenant that God made with Abraham (v.15-18). [The conclusion of Paul's argument is given in 3:26ff, which will be covered in Lesson 8.]
- a. To whom was the promise (covenant) made?
 - b. Explain Paul's argument about "*offspring*" vs. "*offsprings*".
 - c. To what period does the 430 years refer? (cf. Genesis 15:13; Exodus 12:40)
 - d. What is his point in this section about the relation between the covenant and the (Mosaic) law?

Lesson 8

Galatians 3:19 – 4:7

Introduction In the preceding section of Paul's letter, Paul argued that the Galatians enjoyed the promise of the Spirit without following the law, that the law was inadequate to justify anyone (3:10-14), and that the blessing of Abraham extended to all people on the basis of promise and not law (3:15-18). As he will now argue, that does not mean that the law was useless. In 3:19-25, Paul tells the Galatians why the law was given.

Galatians 3:19 – 4:7

- 19 Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary.
- 20 Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.
- 21 Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law.
- 22 But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.
- 23 Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed.
- 24 So then, the law was our guardian^a until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.
- 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,
- 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.
- 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on^b Christ.
- 28 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.
- 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.
- 4:1 I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything,
- 2 but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father.
- 3 In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.
- 4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law,
- 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.
- 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"
- 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Notes a NRSV "disciplinarian"

c Aramaic for *Father*.

b NRSV "have clothed yourselves with"

Comments / Questions

1. *"(The law) was added because of transgressions."* (3:19)
 - a. What does Paul mean by the phrase *"because of transgressions"*? Consider these passages in Romans:

Romans 3:20

Romans 4:13-15

Romans 5:13

Romans 7:7-13
 - b. How long was the law *"added"*?
 - c. What was the law *"added"* to? the promise?
2. Thought Question: Did God give the law with the intent that man would abide by it and be saved by it? (Reconsider these passages: Galatians 2:21; 3:18,21)
3. *"So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came."* (3:23-24)
 - a. What do verses 23 and 24 give as the law's function as a guardian?
 - b. Other translations (KJV, ASV, NKJV) call the law a *"tutor"* instead of a guardian. We use the word *"tutor"* to refer to one who instructs or teaches others. Are the functions identified above teaching functions, i.e. is Paul saying that the law was a teacher to those under it? (see also 4:1-2)
 - c. Does the law still perform this function? (3:25)

In 3:26 – 4:7, Paul returns to his thoughts about the *"seed of Abraham."*

4. In 3:18, Paul spoke of the inheritance that is associated with the promise. In 3:29, he implies that the seed of Abraham are *"heirs according to promise."*
 - a. Generally, who is the heir of a person?

- b. So, to be heirs of God is the same things as being _____ of God. (3:26; 4:5-7)
5. Since Paul argued that the *"offspring"* (singular) of Abraham is Christ (3:16), how is it that we (plural) are to be considered *"Abraham's offspring"*?
6. Read and consider 3:28. Does this passage mean that there are not to be any distinctions between people in Christ? Support your answer with scripture.
7. Paul speaks of the time to "when we were children." (4:3) To what time is he referring?
8. What does Paul mean by the expression *"fulness of time"*? (4:4)
9. Was it necessary that Christ be "born under the law"? (4:4) Why?
10. Compare 4:6-7 with Romans 8:12-17.

Lesson 9

Galatians 4:8 – 5:1

Introduction Having made a scriptural appeal to the Galatians, Paul now makes a more personal appeal calling upon them to consider the consequences of their choice.

Galatians 4:8 – 5:1

- 8 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods.
- 9 But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?
- 10 You observe days and months and seasons and years!
- 11 I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.
- 12 Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You did me no wrong.
- 13 You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first^a,
- 14 and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus.
- 15 What then has become of the blessing you felt? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me.
- 16 Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?
- 17 They make much of you, but for no good purpose. They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them.
- 18 It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose, and not only when I am present with you,
- 19 my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!
- 20 I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.
- 21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law?
- 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman.
- 23 But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise.
- 24 Now this may be interpreted allegorically^b: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar.
- 25 Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.
- 26 But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.
- 27 For it is written,
"Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear;
break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor!
For the children of the desolate one will be more
than those of the one who has a husband."^c
- 28 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.

A Study of Galatians

- 29 But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now.
- 30 But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman."^d
- 31 So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.
- 5:1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Notes a ASV, NASV "first time"; in Hellenistic Greek the expression could simply mean 'earlier' (Bruce, p.209), cf. REB "originally"

b NRSV "Now this is an allegory"

c Isaiah 54:1

d Genesis 21:10,12

Comments / Questions

1. In Galatians 4:8-11, is Paul addressing the Jewish brethren at Galatia, or the Gentile brethren?

[Who was Paul primarily addressing in the previous section: Galatians 3:19 – 4:7? Jews or Gentiles? Cf. 3:23-25, 4:5]

2. In verse 9, is Paul concerned that the Gentile Christians are going to return to their pagan past?

If not, what 'slavery' is he referring to?

3. If Paul is concerned that the Gentile brethren will subject themselves to bondage under the Mosical law (as I believe he is), what is Paul alluding to in verse 10?

"days"

"months"

"seasons"

"years"

Does this mean that a Christian in that day could not observe these? For example, could a Christian Jew still observe the Sabbath?

4. In verse 11 and later in verse 20, Paul expresses concern about the spiritual future of the Galatians. On the basis of what we know about the Galatians and their problem, why is Paul so pessimistic about their future?

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5. In verse 13, Paul mentions the *"first time"* (ASV) he preached the gospel to them. Does this imply he preached to them a second time?

If so, and assuming that Paul is writing to the South Galatians, what does this tell us about the date of the letter, if anything?

If Paul is writing to the North Galatians, what would this tell us about the date of the letter, if anything?

6. Paul refers to a physical infirmity he had. First, he says it was *"because"* of this infirmity that he preached to the Galatians (v.13). Second, the Galatians did not despise him because of his infirmity (v.14). And possibly third, Paul says that the Galatians would have been willing to give their *"eyes"* to him. Any guesses about what this infirmity might be (v.15)?

Does this infirmity necessarily involve his eyes? (Galatians 6:11)

Could this be related to the *"thorn in the flesh"*? (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

7. In 4:21-31, Paul concludes his arguments by drawing an *"allegory"* (NRSV) about Sarah and her servant, Hagar.

What is an allegory?

What are the parallels between the story of Sarah and Hagar and the lesson Paul is making?

What is it about this story that makes Paul want to use it in arguing to the Galatians? Or, in other words, what is the main point Paul makes by means of this allegory?

Lesson 10

Galatians 5:2-12

Introduction Paul contrasts the freedom in Christ with the bondage of the law. In particular, to be circumcised would result in their losing the very thing they sought.

Galatians 5:2-12

- 2 Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you.
- 3 I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law.
- 4 You are severed from Christ^a, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.
- 5 For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.
- 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.
- 7 You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?
- 8 This persuasion is not from him who calls you.
- 9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.
- 10 I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view than mine, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is.
- 11 But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed.
- 12 I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves!

Notes a NRSV "cut yourselves off from Christ"

Comments / Questions

1. Retrace Paul's allusions to "slavery" in this letter.

4:3

4:9

4:21-31

Thus, what is Paul referring to by the expression "yoke of slavery" in 5:1?

2. In verses 2-6, Paul forcefully argues against submitting to circumcision. To do so, Paul says, makes him "obligated to keep the whole law" and estranges one from Christ. Then why did Paul have Timothy submit to circumcision (Acts 16:3)? Did this cause Timothy to 'fall from grace'? If not, why not?

3. Paul assertion that "*in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything*" is common to Paul's writings.
 - a. Compare the following passages:

Galatians 3:26-29

1 Corinthians 12:13

Colossians 3:11

What is Paul's point in all these passages?
 - b. In the context of each of these passages, Paul refers to baptism. [In Colossians, the context extends back to chapter 2. In particular, see Colossians 2:11-14.] What does baptism have to do with Paul's point?
4. Paul uses the saying "*A little leaven leavens the whole lump*" in this context and also in 1 Corinthians 5:6. What is the general lesson that can be drawn from these passages?
5. Read the first sentence in verse 11.
 - a. What does it appear that Paul's opponents were saying about Paul?
 - b. How could they arrive at that conclusion?
 - c. Paul answers this misunderstanding by stating he was still suffering persecution. Persecution by whom?
 - d. What does Paul mean by the expression "*offense of the cross*"?

Lesson 11

Galatians 5:13-26

Introduction Having made his doctrinal arguments concerning the law and circumcision, Paul now seeks to draw attention to the practical aspects of following Christ.

Galatians 5:13-26

- 13 For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.
- 14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word^a: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
- 15 But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.
- 16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.
- 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.
- 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.
- 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality^b,
- 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions^c,
- 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies^d, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
- 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness^e, faithfulness,
- 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
- 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.
- 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.
- 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking^f one another, envying one another.

- Notes* a NRSV "single commandment"
b NRSV "licentiousness"
c NRSV "factions"
d NRSV "carousing"
e NRSV "generosity"
f NRSV "competing against"

Comments / Questions

1. Verse 13 presents a common contrast in the New Testament. We are free (*"called to freedom"*), but we are also servants (*"serve one another"*)! How can we be both at the same time? Explain. [Can you recall any other NT passages the present this same contrast?]

Paul's Letter to the Galatians

2. Verse 14 sets forth an amazing claim: *All* the law is contained in *one* commandment. Consider the following passages:

Matthew 7:12

Matthew 22:36-40

Romans 13:8-10

Now explain Galatians 5:14.

3. Verses 19-21 contain the "*works of the flesh.*" Compare similar lists in other letters:

Romans 1:29-32

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

2 Corinthians 12:20-21

Ephesians 4:31; 5:3-7

Colossians 3:5-10

1 Timothy 1:8-10

Categorize the list of sins. For example, the first three are sexual sins.

Paul's Letter to the Galatians

4. Verses 22-23 lists the *"fruit of the Spirit."* For each item in the list, note the contrasting item(s), if any, in the *"works of the flesh."*

Love

Joy

Peace

Patience

Kindness

Goodness

Faithfulness

Gentleness

Self-control

5. Note the picture presented in verses 24 and 25. Paul uses the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus as a model for the Christian. Explain the parallel.

Introduction In chapter 5, Paul made a transition between a discussion of doctrinal matters to a discourse on the proper relationships between brethren and the conduct that is expected of a follower of Christ. He continues this line of thought in 6:1-10. The last 8 verses of the letter summarizes his plea to the Galatians.

Galatians 6:1-18

- 1 Brothers, if anyone is caught^a in any transgression, you who are spiritual^b should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.
- 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.
- 3 For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.
- 4 But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor.
- 5 For each will have to bear his own load.
- 6 One who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches.
- 7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.
- 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.
- 9 And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.
- 10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household^c of faith.
- 11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.
- 12 It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.
- 13 For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.
- 14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.
- 15 For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.
- 16 And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.
- 17 From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.
- 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

Notes a KJV, ASV, RSV, NKJV "overtaken"; NRSV "detected"
b NRSV "you who have received the Spirit"
c NRSV "family"

Comments / Questions

1. *"Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual ..."* (v.1)
 - a. The word "caught" is translated differently.
What does the word *"caught"* (ESV, NASV, NIV) suggest?

What does the word *"overtaken"* (KJV, ASV, RSV, NKJV) suggest?

What does the word *"detected"* (NRSV) suggest?
 - b. How is one *"spiritual"*? [Note (1) the translation of the NRSV in *Note b* above, and (2) that *"gentleness"* is one of the fruits of the Spirit (5:23).]

2. Explain the apparent disagreement between verse 2 (*"Bear one another's burdens"*) and verse 5 (*"For every man shall bear his own burden"* KJV).

[Give up? Perhaps the NEB translation will help. Verse 2: *"Help one another carry these heavy loads..."* Verse 5: *"For everyone has his own proper burden to bear."*]

3. What do you think is the *"law of Christ"* that Paul refers to? (v.2)

4. Why type of boasting is Paul prohibiting in verse 4?

5. What in particular do you think that Paul is asking the Galatian brethren to share in verse 6?

6. Throughout Paul's letter he has drawn the contrast between the Spirit and the flesh (cf. 3:2f; 4:29f; 5:16f). Explain what *"sows to his own flesh"* and *"sows to the Spirit"* means in verse 8. Make note of what one *"reaps"* when he sows to the flesh as opposed to him who sows to the Spirit.

7. Note the different translation of verse 11 by the KJV: *"see how large a letter I have written you..."*
 - a. Why do think all modern translations translate the verse like the ESV?

 - b. Why would Paul write with large letters? (Consider 4:15)

8. It would appear that persecution awaited those who taught that you did not have to be circumcised (5:11; 6:12). If so, who would the persecutors be?

But what did Paul say was another motive for his opponents to preach circumcision? (v.13)

9. What does it mean to *"boast ... in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (v.14). (Read 1 Corinthians 1:12-31)

10. Compare Galatians 6:15 with 5:6, especially the last phrase of each verse.

Lesson 13

Review

Try to answer as many questions as possible **before** looking at your Bible.

Fill in the Blanks of the Following Passages and Then Enter the Chapter and Verse of Each Passage.

1. "_____, an apostle... and all the _____ who are with me, to the _____ of Galatia:" (____:____)
2. "I am _____ that you are so _____ deserting him ... and are turning to a different _____" (____:____)
3. "Then after _____ years I went up to _____ to visit Cephas, and remained with him _____ days." (____:____)
4. "Then after _____ years I went up again to Jerusalem with _____, taking _____ along with me." (____:____)
5. "Now when _____ came to _____, I opposed him to his _____, because he stood _____." (____:____)
6. "...just as Abraham _____ God, and it was _____ to him as _____." (____:____)
7. "Christ redeemed us from the _____ of the law, having become a _____ for us - for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is _____ on a tree.' - ..." (____:____)
8. "Why then the _____? It was _____ because of _____, until the _____ should come to whom the promise was made ..." (____:____)
9. "And if you are _____, then you are Abraham's _____, _____ according to _____." (____:____)

True (T) or False (F)

- _____ 10. Paul had been taught the gospel by the other apostles.
- _____ 11. After his conversion, Paul visited Arabia before he visited Jerusalem.
- _____ 12. Under no circumstances would Paul require a Gentile to be circumcised.
- _____ 13. The Galatians had not yet suffered persecution, but Paul warned them of the possibility.
- _____ 14. The law was a guardian of the Jewish people to bring them to Christ.
- _____ 15. Paul said it would be better to be uncircumcised than circumcised.
- _____ 16. He who "sows to the Spirit" will "reap eternal life."

Match the Description That Best Fits Each of the Following Men

- | | | |
|-----------|----------|---|
| _____ 17. | Paul | A. Apostle to the circumcised |
| _____ 18. | Peter | B. Pillar of the Jerusalem church |
| _____ 19. | Barnabas | C. Not compelled to be circumcised |
| _____ 20. | James | D. Received the gospel through revelation |
| _____ 21. | Titus | E. "led astray" by the Jews' hypocrisy |

Multiple Choice

- _____ 22. Which word or phrase best describes the book as a whole?
- a. Paul's authority
 - b. the liberty to be had in Christ
 - c. the advantages of uncircumcision
 - d. the uselessness of the Law
 - e. the truth of the gospel
- _____ 23. The basis of our justification is:
- a. obedience to the Law
 - b. baptism
 - c. faith in Christ
 - d. living a good moral life

Short Answer

24. Who were "those who seemed influential" in the Jerusalem church?
25. What statement summarizes the whole Law?
26. What could not annul the covenant God made with Abraham?
27. Was Titus a Jew or a Gentile?

List the Things You Know About the Galatians From What Paul Wrote

For Ease of Memory, Paul's Letter Can Be Broken Into Three Parts of Two Chapters Each. Briefly Describe Each Part.

Chapter 1 and 2:

Chapter 3 and 4:

Chapter 5 and 6:

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Galatians ESV

1:1 Paul, an apostle—
not from men
nor through man,
but through Jesus Christ
and
God the Father,
who raised him from the dead—

2 and
all the brothers
who are with me,

To the churches of Galatia:

3 Grace to you
and
peace from God our Father
and
the Lord Jesus Christ,
4 who gave himself for our sins
to deliver us from the present evil age,
according to the will
of our God and Father,
5 to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

6 I am astonished
that you are so quickly deserting him
who called you
in the grace of Christ
and are turning to a different gospel—
7 not that there is another one,
but there are some
who trouble 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 the one we preached to you,
let him be accursed.

9 As we have said before, so now I say again:
If anyone is preaching to you a gospel
contrary to the one you received,
let him be accursed.

10 For am I now seeking the approval of man,
or
of God?
Or am I trying to please man?
If I were still trying to please man,
I would not be a servant of Christ.

11 For I would have you know, brothers,
that the gospel
that was preached by me
is not man's gospel.

12 For I did not receive it from any man,
nor was I taught it,
but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

13 For you have heard of my former life
in Judaism,
how I persecuted the church of God violently
and
tried to destroy it.

14 And I was advancing in Judaism
beyond many
of my own age
among my people,
so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.

15 But when he
who had set me apart before I was born,
and
who called me by his grace,

16 was pleased to reveal his Son to me,
in order that I might preach him
among the Gentiles,

I did not immediately consult with anyone;
17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem
to those who were apostles before me,
but I went away into Arabia,
and
returned again to Damascus.

18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem
to visit Cephas
and
remained with him fifteen days.

19 But I saw none of the other apostles
except James the Lord's brother.

20 (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!)

21 Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.

22 And I was still unknown
in person
to the churches of Judea
that are in Christ.

23 They only were hearing it said,
"He who used to persecute us
is now preaching the faith
he once tried to destroy."

24 And they glorified God because of me.

2:1 Then after fourteen years
I went up again
to Jerusalem
with Barnabas,
taking Titus along with me.

2 I went up because of a revelation
and
set before them
(though privately before those who seemed influential)
the gospel
that I proclaim among the Gentiles,
in order to make sure I was not running
or
had not run in vain.

3 But even Titus,
who was with me,
was not forced to be circumcised,
though he was a Greek.

4 Yet because of false brothers
secretly brought in
—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus,
so that they might bring us into slavery—

5 to them we did not yield in submission
even for a moment,
so that
the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

6 And from those
who seemed to be influential
(what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—
those, I say,
who seemed influential added nothing to me.

- 7 On the contrary,
when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised,
just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised
- 8 (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised
worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles),
- 9 and when James and Cephas and John,
who seemed to be pillars,
perceived the grace that was given to me,
they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas
and
me,
that we should go to the Gentiles
and they to the circumcised.
- 10 Only, they asked us to remember the poor,
the very thing I was eager to do.
- 11 But when Cephas came to Antioch,
I opposed him to his face,
because he stood condemned.
- 12 For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles;
but when they came he drew back
and
separated himself,
fearing the circumcision party.
- 13 And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him,
so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.
- 14 But when I saw that their conduct
was not in step with the truth of the gospel,
I said to Cephas before them all,
"If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile
and
not like a Jew,
how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"
- 15 We ourselves are Jews by birth
and
not Gentile sinners;
- 16 yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law
but through faith in Jesus Christ,
so we also have believed in Christ Jesus,
in order to be justified by faith in Christ
and
not by works of the law,
because by works of the law no one will be justified.

17 But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners,
is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not!

18 For if I rebuild what I tore down,
I prove myself to be a transgressor.

19 For through the law I died to the law,
so that I might live to God.
I have been crucified with Christ.

20 It is no longer I who live,
but Christ who lives in me.
And the life I now live in the flesh
I live by faith in the Son of God,
who loved me
and
gave himself for me.

21 I do not nullify the grace of God,
for if justification were through the law,
then Christ died for no purpose.

3:1 O foolish Galatians!

Who has bewitched you?

It was before your eyes
that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed
as crucified.

2 Let me ask you only this:

Did you receive the Spirit
by works of the law
or
by hearing with faith?

3 Are you so foolish?

Having begun by the Spirit,
are you now being perfected by the flesh?

4 Did you suffer so many things in vain
—if indeed it was in vain?

5 Does he who

supplies the Spirit to you
and works miracles among you

do so

by works of the law,
or by hearing with faith—

6 just as Abraham "believed God,
and
it was counted to him as righteousness"?

7 Know then
that it is those
of faith
who are the sons of Abraham.

8 And the Scripture,
foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles
by faith,
preached the gospel
beforehand to Abraham,
saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed."

9 So then, those who
are of faith
are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

10 For all who
rely on works of the law
are under a curse;
for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who
does not abide by all things
written in the Book of the Law,
and do them."

11 Now it is evident
that no one is justified before God
by the law,
for "The righteous shall live
by faith."

12 But the law is not of faith,
rather "The one who does them shall live by them."

13 Christ redeemed us
from the curse of the law
by becoming a curse for us—
for it is written, "Cursed is everyone
who is hanged on a tree"—

14 so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles,
so that we might receive
the promised Spirit
through faith.

15 To give a human example, brothers:
even with a man-made covenant,
no one annuls it
or adds to it once it has been ratified.

16 Now the promises were made to Abraham
and
to his offspring.

It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many,
but "And to your offspring," [referring to one,]
who is Christ.

17 This is what I mean:
the law,
which came 430 years afterward,
does not annul a covenant
previously ratified by God,
so as to make the promise void.

18 For if the inheritance comes by the law,
it no longer comes by promise;
but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

19 Why then the law?
It was added
because of transgressions,
until the offspring should come
to whom the promise had been made,
and
it was put in place
through angels
by an intermediary.

20 Now an intermediary implies more than one,
but God is one.

21 Is the law then contrary to the promises of God?
Certainly not!

For if a law had been given that could give life,
then righteousness would indeed be by the law.

22 But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin,
so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ
might be given to those who believe.

23 Now before faith came,
we were held captive under the law,
imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed.

24 So then, the law was our guardian
until Christ came,
in order that we might be justified by faith.

25 But now that faith has come,
we are no longer under a guardian,

26 for in Christ Jesus
you are all sons of God,
through faith.

27 For as many of you
as were baptized into Christ
have put on Christ.

28 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.

29 And if you are Christ's,
then you are Abraham's offspring,
heirs according to promise.

4:1 I mean that the heir,
as long as he is a child,
is no different from a slave,
though he is the owner of everything,
2 but he is under guardians
and
managers
until the date
set by his father.

3 In the same way we also,
when we were children,
were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.

4 But when the fullness of time had come,
God sent forth his Son,
born of woman,
born under the law,

5 to redeem those who were under the law,
so that we might receive adoption as sons.

6 And because you are sons,
God has sent the Spirit of his Son
into our hearts,
crying, "Abba! Father!"

7 So you are no longer a slave,
but a son,
and
if a son,
then an heir through God.

8 Formerly,
when you did not know God,
you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods.

9 But now
that you have come to know God,
or rather
to be known by God,
how can you turn back again
to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world,
whose slaves you want to be once more?

10 You observe days
and
months
and
seasons
and
years!

11 I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

12 Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am,
for I also have become as you are.

You did me no wrong.

13 You know it was
because of a bodily ailment
that I preached the gospel to you
at first,

14 and
though my condition was a trial to you,
you did not scorn
or
despise me,
but received me
as an angel of God,
as Christ Jesus.

15 What then has become of the blessing you felt?
For I testify to you
that, if possible, you would have gouged out your eyes
and
given them to me.

- 16 Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?
- 17 They make much of you, but for no good purpose.
They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them.
- 18 It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose,
and
not only when I am present with you,
19 my little children,
for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth
until Christ is formed in you!
- 20 I wish I could be present with you now
and
change my tone,
for I am perplexed about you.
- 21 Tell me,
you who desire to be under the law,
do you not listen to the law?
- 22 For it is written
that Abraham had two sons,
one by a slave woman
and
one by a free woman.
- 23 But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh,
while the son of the free woman was born through promise.
- 24 Now this may be interpreted allegorically:
these women are two covenants.
One is from Mount Sinai,
bearing children for slavery;
she is Hagar.
- 25 Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia;
she corresponds to the present Jerusalem,
for she is in slavery with her children.
- 26 But the Jerusalem above is free,
and
she is our mother.
- 27 For it is written,
"Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear;
break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor!
For the children of the desolate one will be more
than those of the one who has a husband."

28 Now you, brothers,
like Isaac,
are children of promise.

29 But just as at that time
he
who was born according to the flesh
persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit,
so also it is now.

30 But what does the Scripture say?
"Cast out the slave woman
and
her son,
for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman."

31 So, brothers, we are not children
but of the slave
of the free woman.

5:1 For freedom Christ has set us free;
stand firm therefore,
and
do not submit again
to a yoke of slavery.

2 Look: I, Paul, say to you that
if you accept circumcision,
Christ will be of no advantage to you.

3 I testify again
to every man
who accepts circumcision
that he is obligated to keep the whole law.

4 You are severed from Christ,
you
who would be justified by the law;
you have fallen away from grace.

5 For through the Spirit,
by faith,
we ourselves eagerly wait
for the hope of righteousness.

6 For in Christ Jesus
neither circumcision
nor uncircumcision
counts for anything,
but only
faith working through love.

- 7 You were running well.
Who hindered you from obeying the truth?
- 8 This persuasion is not from him who calls you.
- 9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.
- 10 I have confidence in the Lord
that you will take no other view than mine,
and
the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty,
whoever he is.
- 11 But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision,
why am I still being persecuted?
In that case the offense of the cross has been removed.
- 12 I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves!
- 13 For you were called to freedom, brothers.
Only do not use your freedom
as an opportunity for the flesh,
but through love serve one another.
- 14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word:
"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
- 15 But if you bite
and
devour one another,
watch out
that you are not consumed by one another.
- 16 But I say, walk by the Spirit,
and
you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.
- 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit,
and
the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh,

for these are opposed to each other,
to keep you from doing the things you want to do.
- 18 But if you are led by the Spirit,
you are not under the law.

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident:

sexual immorality,
impurity,
sensuality,
20 idolatry,
sorcery,
enmity,
strife,
jealousy,
fits of anger,
rivalries,
dissensions,
divisions,
21 envy,
drunkenness,
orgies,
and
things like these.

I warn you,
as I warned you before,
that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is

love,
joy,
peace,
patience,
kindness,
goodness,
faithfulness,
23 gentleness,
self-control;
against such things there is no law.

24 And those
who belong to Christ Jesus
have crucified the flesh
with its passions and desires.

25 If we live by the Spirit,
let us also walk by the Spirit.

26 Let us not become
conceited,
provoking one another,
envying one another.

6:1 Brothers,
if anyone is caught in any transgression,
you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.

Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

2 Bear one another's burdens,
and
so fulfill the law of Christ.

3 For if anyone thinks he is something,
when he is nothing,
he deceives himself.

4 But let each one test his own work,
and
then his reason to boast
will be in himself alone
and
not in his neighbor.

5 For each will have to bear his own load.

6 One who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches.

7 Do not be deceived:
God is not mocked,
for whatever one sows,
that will he also reap.

8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption,
but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

9 And
let us not grow weary of doing good,
for in due season we will reap,
if we do not give up.

10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone,
and
especially to those
who are of the household of faith.

11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.

12 It is those
who want to make a good showing in the flesh
who would force you to be circumcised,
and
only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.

13 For even those
 who are circumcised
do not themselves keep the law,
but they desire to have you circumcised
that they may boast in your flesh.

14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 by which the world has been crucified to me,
 and
 I to the world.

15 For neither circumcision counts for anything,
 nor uncircumcision,
but a new creation.

16 And as for all who walk by this rule,
 peace and mercy be upon them,
 and
 upon the Israel of God.

17 From now on
let no one cause me trouble,
for I bear on my body
 the marks of Jesus.

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers.

Amen.