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Comments are welcomed and may be emailed to [Curtis.D.Byers@gmail.com](mailto:Curtis.D.Byers@gmail.com).

# ***PAUL'S LETTER TO THE GALATIANS***

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*A Study*



***Curtis Byers***  
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*Saint Paul Writing His Epistles.* Painting either by Valentin de Boulogne or Nicolas Tournier in the 16<sup>th</sup> 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 truth 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. 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 will fail. 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 is 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 study questions are intended to point one to the main points of the text that I see. Class discussion will not necessarily follow the questions, but will build upon the lessons learned from the questions. Since I may be missing significant points, please exam the text carefully.

The *English Standard Version* (ESV; Text Edition 2016\*) will be used as the basis of this study. On occasion, comparison will be made to the following translations: (listed by date of latest published revision)

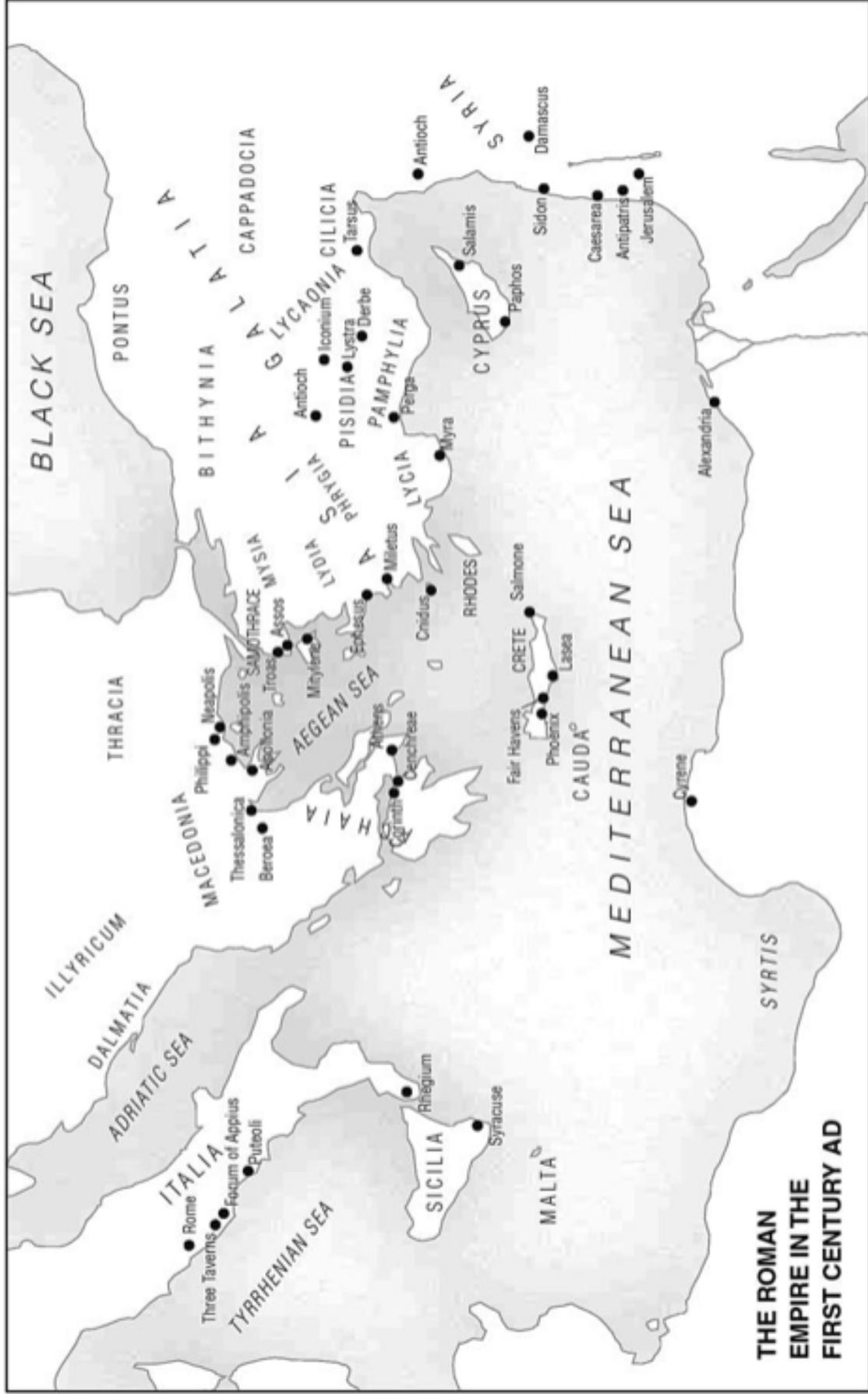
KJV	<i>King James Version (1769)</i>	NAB	<i>New American Bible (2010)</i>
ASV	<i>American Standard Version (1901)</i>	NIV	<i>New International Version (2011)</i>
NJB	<i>New Jerusalem Bible (1985)</i>	CEB	<i>Common English Bible (2012)</i>
NRSV	<i>New Revised Standard Ver. (1989)</i>	CSB	<i>Christian Standard Bible (2017)</i>
REB	<i>Revised English Bible (1989)</i>	NET	<i>New English Translation (2019)</i>
		NASB	<i>New American Standard Bible (2020)</i>

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May God give us wisdom as we study.

**Course Outline**

- Lesson 1** Introduction / Chapter 1:1-10
- Lesson 2** Chapter 1:11-24
- Lesson 3** Chapter 2:1-10
- Lesson 4** Chapter 2:11-21
- Lesson 5** Paul's Early Contacts with Jerusalem Recorded in Acts
- Lesson 6** Comparative Study of Paul's Jerusalem Visits in Acts and Galatians
- Lesson 7** Chapter 3:1-18
- Lesson 8** Chapter 3:19 – 4:7
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**THE ROMAN  
EMPIRE IN THE  
FIRST CENTURY AD**

**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 most of the answers to these questions 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?*

**Form of Ancient Letters**

**Opening**

*Prescript: X (superscription) to Y (adscription), greetings (salutation)  
Health Wish (Optional)  
Thanksgiving (Optional)*

**Body of the Letter**

**Closing (Subscription)**

*Greetings from Acquaintances (Optional)  
Peace Wish  
Reference to Paul's handwriting (i.e., his "autograph")  
Concluding Exhortations  
Grace Benediction (Optional)  
Farewell Expression (Typical in Greco-Roman letters, but absent in Paul's letters)*

**Opening: Galatians 1:1-5**

- 1 Paul, an apostle— not from men nor through man<sup>a</sup>, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—
- 2 and all the brothers<sup>b</sup> 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<sup>c</sup> 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"  
b NIV, CEB "and sisters"; NRSV "all members of God's family"  
c REB, NAB, CSB, NET, NASB "rescue" (same word used in Ex.3:8 (LXX) to describe Israel's deliverance); compare Col.1:3 "delivered us from the domain of darkness..,"

**Comments / Questions**

1. In the opening superscription, Paul identifies himself as an apostle and elaborates on the origin of his apostleship. (1:1)

*Paul's Letter to the Galatians*

- 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(s)" in these passages.]
  - c. Paul often includes in his opening that he is an apostle "by the will of God" (e.g. 1 Cor.1:1; 2 Cor.1:1, Eph.1:1; Col.1:1. His apostleship is not mentioned in the opening to 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Philippians, and Philemon). But nowhere else does he specify that it is "not from man nor through men". Significant?
2. Paul often includes others in the superscription as co-senders (in 7 of his 13 letters). But the general reference here - "all the brothers who are with me" - is unique. Are they joint authors with Paul of this letter?
3. The letter is written to the "churches of Galatia" (1:2) [which is also unique in that he is addressing multiple churches].
- 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?
4. Paul customarily concludes his opening with a note of thanksgiving to God for some feature of the recipients.
- a. Does Paul express thanks for the Galatians? [Note: Galatians, 2 Corinthians, 1 Timothy and Titus are the only letters of Paul not to contain a note of thanksgiving.]
  - b. Instead, Paul closes his opening with a doxology (Gk. *doxa* = "glory"): "to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen" (compare Rev.1:6). This type of doxology is usually reserved for the end of a letter (e.g., Rom.16:27; Phil.4:20; 2 Tim.4:18; Heb.13:21; 2 Pet.3:18). Sometimes this type of doxology can be found at the end of a major section within the body of a letter (e.g., Rom.11:36; Eph.3:21; 1 Tim.1:17; 1 Pet.4:11).

**Galatians 1:6-10**

- 6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in<sup>a</sup> the grace of Christ<sup>b</sup> and are turning to a different gospel—  
7 not that there is another one, but there are some<sup>c</sup> who trouble<sup>d</sup> 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<sup>e</sup>.  
9 As we have said before, so now I say again<sup>f</sup>: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed<sup>e</sup>.  
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<sup>g</sup> of Christ.

- Notes a KJV "into", REB, NASB "by"  
b Some manuscripts omit "of Christ" (REB)  
c NJB adds "among you"  
d NRSV "are confusing"; REB "unsettle your minds"; NAB "disturbing"  
e REB "banned"; NET "condemned to hell"  
f REB "I warned you in the past and I warn you again"  
g NAB, NET "slave"

**Comments / Questions**

5. In lieu of the thanksgiving, what does Paul express?  
[The expression "*I am astonished*" was a standard opening for reproving and reproaching letters [Keener, 40].)
6. Pronouns!
- a. Who is the "*whom*" of verse 5?  
b. Who is the "*him*" of verse 6?
7. About what is Paul "*astonished*"? (1:6)
- a. How quick is "*so quickly*"?  
b. "*So quickly*" from when? (I can think of 3 possibilities.)  
1)  
2)  
3)  
Which possibility seems to make the most sense?
8. 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?

Are they current members in the churches of Galatia? (cf. NJB translation, *Note c* above) Does Paul address these troublemakers?

- b. What does it mean to "*distort*" the gospel?
  - c. Are we told what is different about their message than that which Paul taught?
9. 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"?
10. 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 addresses 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. But "in AD 74, Vespasian detached almost all of Pisidia from Galatia, and about AD 137 Lycaonia Galactica was removed Galatia and joined to Cilicia and Isaurica to form an enlarged province of Cilicia" [Longenecker, lxiii].
- 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 that Paul evangelized on his three missionary journeys (the South Galatian view)?

**II. The North Galatian View:** The traditional view until the 19<sup>th</sup> century and advocated strongly by Lightfoot (1865 but it should be noted that the relevant work of Ramsey had not yet been done) and continues to be held by many modern scholars.

- 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 ("at first"), possibly even after his visit on the third missionary journey.

**III. The South Galatian View:** The view popularized by Sir William Ramsey (1900's) and held by many (probably most [Keener, 11] modern scholars.

- 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. A further consideration: "...the Roman roads of the north part of the province were constructed for the first time in the 70s and 80 A.D." [Mitchell "Galatia", *ABD*, 870]; hence may explain why Paul may not have evangelized north 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.
- D. The churches of Galatia apparently knew Barnabas (Gal.2:9, 13) which is consistent with the view that he is writing churches that he and Barnabas established on the First Missionary Journey. Barnabas was not with Paul when, according to the North Galatia view, Paul supposedly established churches in the northern region of Galatia.
- 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.

#### IV. Significance

- A. Proponents of both views acknowledge that there is nothing in the letter where the interpretation depends on knowing which view is correct.
- B. The North vs. South divide is not a liberal vs. conservative divide. There are competent conservative scholars with a high view of Scripture on both sides of this question [Longenecker, lxix].

**Lesson 2**

**Galatians 1:11-24**

**Introduction** After his expression of astonishment of the Galatians' desertion, Paul immediately affirms 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<sup>a</sup>, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel<sup>b</sup>.
- 12 For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a<sup>c</sup> 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<sup>d</sup> 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<sup>e</sup>, and who called me by his grace,
- 16 was pleased to reveal his Son to<sup>f</sup> me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone<sup>g</sup>;
- 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again<sup>h</sup> to Damascus.

- Notes
- a NRSV, NIV, CEB, CSB, NET, NASB "and sisters"
  - b NAB, CSB, NET "of human origin"
  - c KJV "the"
  - d KJV "Jew's religion"
  - e Allusion to Jer.1:5 or Isa.49:5? REB, NET sim. "from my birth"; NAB, NASB, KJV sim., ASV, NJB sim. "even from my mother's womb"
  - f So also NRSV, NAB but KJV, ASV, NJB, NIV, CSB, NET, NASB "in", and could also be translated "by" [Keener, 54], REB "in and through".
  - g KJV, NASB "flesh and blood"
  - h NASB "once more"

**Comments / Questions**

1. Paul's central point is found in verses 11-12. Note: 1) how his point reflects his opening superscription in v.1, and 2) that verses 10-13 all start with "For" (any significance?).
  - a. State his point in your own words.
  - b. Is it reasonable to infer that Paul's opponents were saying that Paul got his gospel from some other man (or men)? What men may be in view?
  - c. How does his relating his past in Judaism (v.13-14) advance his argument?

**The Troublemakers**

*One of the challenges in understanding Paul's letter is determining exactly who were troubling the Galatians and exactly what they were teaching. In neither case does Paul explicitly tell us. So, we are left with what is called "mirror-reading". The idea is to see what information is "reflected" by the text. That is, can we infer from what we are told who they were and what they taught? This process is not precise - we could simply be seeing reflections of what we want to see.*

*From 1:8-9, it is clear that they are teaching something in opposition to what Paul preached, so they could be simply referred to as Paul's opponents.*

*From 1:1, 11, it seems they were suggesting that Paul received his gospel from someone else - apparently from Peter and the earlier apostles (1:17-19). Agree?*

- d. As proof, Paul gives two reasons from his background why his point must be true. The first proof is in verses 15-17. Explain in your own words.
2. The genitive phrase "*a revelation of Jesus Christ*" in verse 12 can either mean that (a) Jesus Christ was that which was revealed [Bruce, 89], compare verse 16 or (b) that Jesus Christ revealed something [Longenecker, 24]. 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; Acts 22:3-4.
  - b. What does this say about how one advanced in Judaism?
  - c. What is the lesson for us?
5. Paul literally says that God "*separated (him), even from (his) mother's womb*" (v.15). This appears to be an allusion to Jeremiah 1:5 and Isaiah 49:1. If intentional, what might be Paul's point?
6. In verses 15-17, Paul gives the circumstances of his conversion. Read Acts 9:1-28 as background. (We will look at this again in Lesson 5.) (Compare also 1 Cor.9:1 and 15:8.)
  - a. Where do we find in Acts the conversion of Paul?  
  
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. "*Arabia*" (1:17) probably refers to Nabatea, which Josephus calls Arabia on several occasions, and was located to the east and south of Damascus. Locate Damascus and Nabatea on a map.  
  
Luke does not mention Paul's trip to Arabia.  
  
Why might Paul have gone there? (Note that although Jews may have lived in Arabia, it was a predominantly Gentile region.)  
  
Is this the same occasion alluded to in 2 Corinthians 11:32?  
  
Why would King Aretas want to apprehend Paul? [It was Aretas' daughter that Herod Antipas divorced to marry Herodias (Mk.6:14f). For this insult Aretas later inflicted a major military defeat on Herod.]
7. 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<sup>a</sup> Cephas<sup>b</sup> 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!)<sup>c</sup>
- 21 Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.
- 22 And I was still unknown in person<sup>d</sup> 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 NAB "to confer with", REB, NASB sim. "to get to know"; Bruce notes the former trans. is consistent with classical Greek (technically meaning "to interview Cephas, to make inquiry of him") and the latter with Hellenistic Greek [98].  
b KJV "Peter"  
c NRSV does not include the parenthesis.  
d KJV "by face"; NASB "by sight"

**Comments / Questions**

8. 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 a long time ("*three years*") before Paul met Peter and James, or does Paul just happen to mention the time difference? Most agree that this would be an inclusive time reference; parts of a year are counted as whole, so a length of time between 13 and 36 months [Keener, 59].

But from when? His conversion [majority view, Keener, 59] or his return to Damascus?

9. 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 (in the 60s; Josephus). Again, tradition ascribes to him the authorship of the letter of James (cf. James 1:1).*

10. Is verse 19 saying that James is an apostle just like Peter? How so, since he was not one of the original twelve (comp. 1 Cor.15:7)?

**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. This lesson intentionally avoids any comparison with Acts; that relationship will be studied in subsequent lessons.

**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<sup>a</sup> revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed<sup>b</sup> 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<sup>c</sup> forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.
- 4 Yet because<sup>d</sup> 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<sup>b</sup> 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<sup>e</sup> 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<sup>b</sup> 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<sup>f</sup> the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

- Notes
- a KJV, ASV "went up by"; NRSV, REB, NIV "in response to a"; NAB "up in accord with"
  - b NRSV "acknowledged leaders (v.9 "pillars") (Gk *dokeô* can mean either "seemed" or "recognized" [Keener, 66])
  - c One early manuscript omits "not" – suggesting Titus was circumcised (so believes Duncan).
  - d KJV "And that because"; "NIV "This matter arose because",
  - e REB, NIV "God"
  - f Bruce notes that the verb "remember" is in the present tense and thus could be translated "continue to remember the poor" [126; Wright, 93]].

**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 [Longenecker, 45; Schreiner, 119], or his

- first visit to Jerusalem [Witherington, 126-27]? Either way, this is probably an inclusive time reference.
- b. Do you think Paul is saying that this is just his second visit to Jerusalem after his conversion? Note the sequence "Then (1:18) ... Then (1:21) ... Then (2:1)".
  - c. What was Paul's purpose in going up to Jerusalem? (2:2)
2. What possible range of meanings may be ascribed to Paul's statement that he "went up" to Jerusalem "because of a revelation"? (2:2; see Note a above)
  3. Paul informed those "who seemed influential" in Jerusalem of the gospel he preached. (2:2)
    - a. Who were those "who seemed influential" (v.2,6; same as the "pillars"? v.9)?
    - b. Why did Paul need to tell them about the gospel he preached? What does Paul mean by "in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain"?
    - c. Why did Paul meet with these brethren in private?
    - d. Is there any indication that there was a public meeting on this visit?
  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. Part of the confusion results from verse 4 being a sentence fragment.
    - 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. But, in this case, what is the point of verse 4?
    - 2) Titus became a focus of dispute, especially among the "false brothers secretly brought in." (cf. KJV, NIV in Notes above).
      - a. Which way seems correct to you? (There is a minority view that Titus, like Timothy, agreed to be circumcised [see Note c above]. But, if so, how can Paul say what he does in v.5?)

- b. Is there any support for the idea that some of the apostles wanted Titus to be circumcised, but did not compel it?
        - c. And, were the "*false brothers secretly brought in*" brought into the private meeting between Paul and the apostles, or into a later meeting? In any case, did someone invite these false brothers, or otherwise assist them in attending the meeting?
7. What else do we know about Titus?

2 Corinthians 2:13

2 Corinthians 7:6, 13-14; 8:6, 16, 23

2 Corinthians 12:18

2 Timothy 4:10

Titus 1:4
8. But why would Paul disagree with the "*false brothers*"? After all, didn't Paul himself circumcise Timothy because of the Jews? (cf. Acts 16:3)
9. So, just what is the "*truth of the gospel*" (v.5)?
10. Verse 6: "*God shows no partiality.*" The impartiality of God is a characteristic of God that is often taught in both the Old and New Testaments: Deuteronomy 10:17; 2 Chronicles 19:7; Malachi 2:9; Luke 20:21 (of Jesus); Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25.
11. 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)
12. Paul has been talking about his interactions with the church in Jerusalem, but does it seem that the question of whether Gentile believers should be circumcised was the question troubling the Galatian churches?

**Lesson 4**

**Galatians 2:11-21**

**Introduction**

From what has been previously written, it appears that the troublemakers in Galatia were claiming that Paul's gospel was derived from the Jerusalem apostles, but was inferior to that preached by the apostles. Paul used the long lapse of time between his conversion and his initial visits to Jerusalem as evidence that his gospel was independent of the Jerusalem apostles. Plus, when Paul presented his gospel to the Jerusalem apostles, they extended to him "the right hand of fellowship". Paul now uses an episode that took place in Antioch to illustrate how the gospel should be carried out in practice.

**Galatians 2:11-21**

- 11 But when Cephas<sup>a</sup> 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<sup>b</sup> 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?"<sup>c</sup>
- 15 We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners;
- 16 yet we know that a person is not justified<sup>d</sup> by works of the law but through faith in<sup>e</sup> Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified<sup>d</sup> by faith in<sup>e</sup> 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<sup>f</sup> of sin<sup>g</sup>? 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<sup>h</sup> the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
- 21 I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness<sup>i</sup> were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

- Notes
- a KJV "Peter"
  - b NRSV, NET sim. "were not acting consistently"; REB "did not square with", NIV "were not acting in line with"
  - c NIV, NKJV, NASB ends the quotation of Paul's speech at the end of v.21; NLT at end of verse 16.
  - d NJB "reckoned as upright"
  - e KJV, NRSV marg. "of"; CEB, NET "by the faithfulness of"
  - f KJV "minister"
  - g NET "is Christ then one who encourages sin?"
  - h CEB, NET "by the faithfulness of"
  - i NJB "saving justice"; NRSV "justification"

**Comments / Questions**

1. Although we do know of some occasions when both Paul and Barnabas were in Antioch together, we do not have any other information in the Scriptures about Peter's visiting

- Antioch. Hence, we do not know when this visit occurred. It appears that Peter's visit took place after Paul's visit to Jerusalem described in 2:1-10 (doesn't it?).
- a. Antioch was the third largest city in the Roman Empire with its population estimated to be between 150,000 and 500,000 and a Jewish population between 20,000 and 40,000 [Keener, 85].
  - b. From Peter's earlier interaction with Cornelius, it is believable that Peter would eat with Gentiles (Acts 10:48; 11:3). And, Peter had already defended his eating with Cornelius to those in Jerusalem that challenged his actions (Acts 11:4-17). Luke records that the those in Jerusalem "*glorified God, saying, 'Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life'*" (Acts 11:18). And, given that the meeting just described in 2:1-10 had already taken place, why would Peter have "*separated himself, fearing the circumcision party*" (Gal.2:12)? What might he have said to justify himself?
  - c. It is equally perplexing, if not more so, why Barnabas would yield to those who said that the uncircumcised Gentile believers were unclean. In addition to being present at the Jerusalem meeting just described in 2:1-10, he and Paul had already traveled together converting Gentiles (1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey) without requiring them to be circumcised. And Barnabas had labored for some time in Antioch with the Gentiles, later bringing Paul to work there with him (Acts 11:19-26).
  - d. Does the "*eating*" refer to a common meal, or to eating the Lord's Supper, or perhaps both?
2. The Jewish brethren that caused Peter to withdraw himself "*came from James*" (2:12).
- a. Did they have James' approval, or did they simply claim to have James' approval, or can we tell? (compare Acts 15:24)
  - b. Are these brethren the same as the "*circumcision party*" (end of v.12)? (That seems to me to be the natural reading, but not all agree, e.g., Bruce thinks these are unbelieving "Jewish militants" [131]).
  - c. Could this incident in Antioch the same one recorded by Luke in Acts 15:1-3? What is the particular issue at play in Acts 15:1-3? Would the question of "eating with Gentiles" naturally arise if Gentiles were accepted without being circumcised?
3. In verse 14, Paul reports his conversation with Peter.
- a. Does this conversation end in verse 14 (as in the ESV above, NRSV, REB, NJB, CSB, NET) or are verses 15-21 a continuation of Paul's comments (as suggested by the NIV's (also NASB) punctuation)?
  - b. Paul reuses the phrase "*the truth of the gospel*" in verse 14 (cf. 2:5). What must Paul mean by this phrase?
  - c. How did Peter's actions "*force the Gentiles to live like Jews*" (2:14)?
  - d. Paul does not tell us the "end of the story". Do you think this episode damaged Paul's relationship with Peter and Barnabas?
4. How does this episode at Antioch fit into Paul's argument in this letter?

5. Having defended his apostleship, Paul now addresses the doctrinal points at issue.
- a. One confusing aspect behind the ideas of justification and righteousness and faith is that we use two words in English to translate the same Greek word as shown in the chart below:

	<u>Greek</u>	<u>Anglo-Saxon</u>	<u>French</u>
Noun	<i>dikaiosyne</i>	righteousness	justification
Adj.	<i>dikaios</i>	righteous	just
Verb	<i>dikaion</i>	-----	to justify
Noun	<i>pistis</i>	belief	faith
Adj.	<i>pistos</i>	believing	faithful
Verb	<i>pisteuein</i>	believe	-----

And translators do not always help us. For example, the ESV in 2:16ff (as does the NASB, CSB, NET, etc. – all following the KJV tradition) uses the word “*justified*”, but in 2:21 instead of using “*justification*” (NRSV), they use “*righteousness*”. Can that give the impression that two different things are being talking about?

- b. The expression “*works of the law*” (2:16) is understood in two different ways (and perhaps in more ways): 1) the entire law of Moses with all its demands, or 2) those particular laws which identified the Jews as being a separate people, i.e. primarily circumcision, the Sabbath, other holy days, and the cleanliness laws (esp. regarding food) – some refer to these laws as “boundary markers”.
- a) Could either view make sense in this passage?
- b) Does one view make more sense to you than the other?
- c. Note the contrast between “*works of the law*” and “*faith in Jesus Christ*”. This contrast is central to Paul’s argument as he continues his letter.
- d. Explain v.17. Is Paul showing the fallacy of his opponent’s reasoning?
- e. Paul links “*(dying) to the law*” with being “*crucified with Christ*” (2:19-20). It may be helpful to consider Romans 7:1-6 (esp. v.4) to get a fuller sense of what Paul may be thinking.
6. In recent decades, some scholars have challenged the traditional understanding of the genitive “*by the faith of Christ*” (KJV, 2;16, 20). Traditionally, this has been understood to be an objective genitive (the majority view and the way it was read by nearly all the early Greek fathers [Keener, 11013].)– that is, it refers to the faith of the believer (hence, most translations read “*by faith in Christ*”). These more recent scholars say that it is a subjective genitive – that is, it refers to the faith/faithfulness of Jesus (see the CEB and NET translation in *Note d* and *g* above).
- a. Is there truth in both views?
- b. But, the only way to decide such issues is by the immediate and wider context. Which view seems more correct?

*Note:* In addition to the three instances in Galatians (2:16, 20; 3:22), the same construction is found in Romans 3:26; Ephesians 3:12, and Philippians 3:9.

**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. In the next Lesson we will study the interplay between events in Acts and Galatians 1-2.

**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.*)

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

2. Paul supplements Luke's account in 2 Corinthians 11:32-33. Besides the Jews, who else was trying to seize Paul? Why?
3. 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. Witherington offers the following concerning Judean famines in the reign of Claudius and around the time Herod died (which occurred in AD 44):

"Egypt was the breadbasket for the entire region. ... We have clear evidence that there was an unusually high Nile during the reign of Claudius ... in AD 45 ... By August-September of 45 the price of grain had already jumped to twice that of any recorded price in the Roman period before the rule of Vespasian because it was known what sort of bad crop was in store by the end of the that year." [Acts, 372-373]

Bruce adds:

"We know that Judea did in fact suffer severely from a famine at some point between AD 45 and 48. At that time Helena, queen mother of Adiabene, a Jewish proselyte, bought grain in Egypt and figs in Cyprus and had them taken to Jerusalem for distribution, while her son King Izates sent a large sum of money to the authorities in Jerusalem to be used for famine relief." [Acts, 230, from Josephus]

- 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.

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

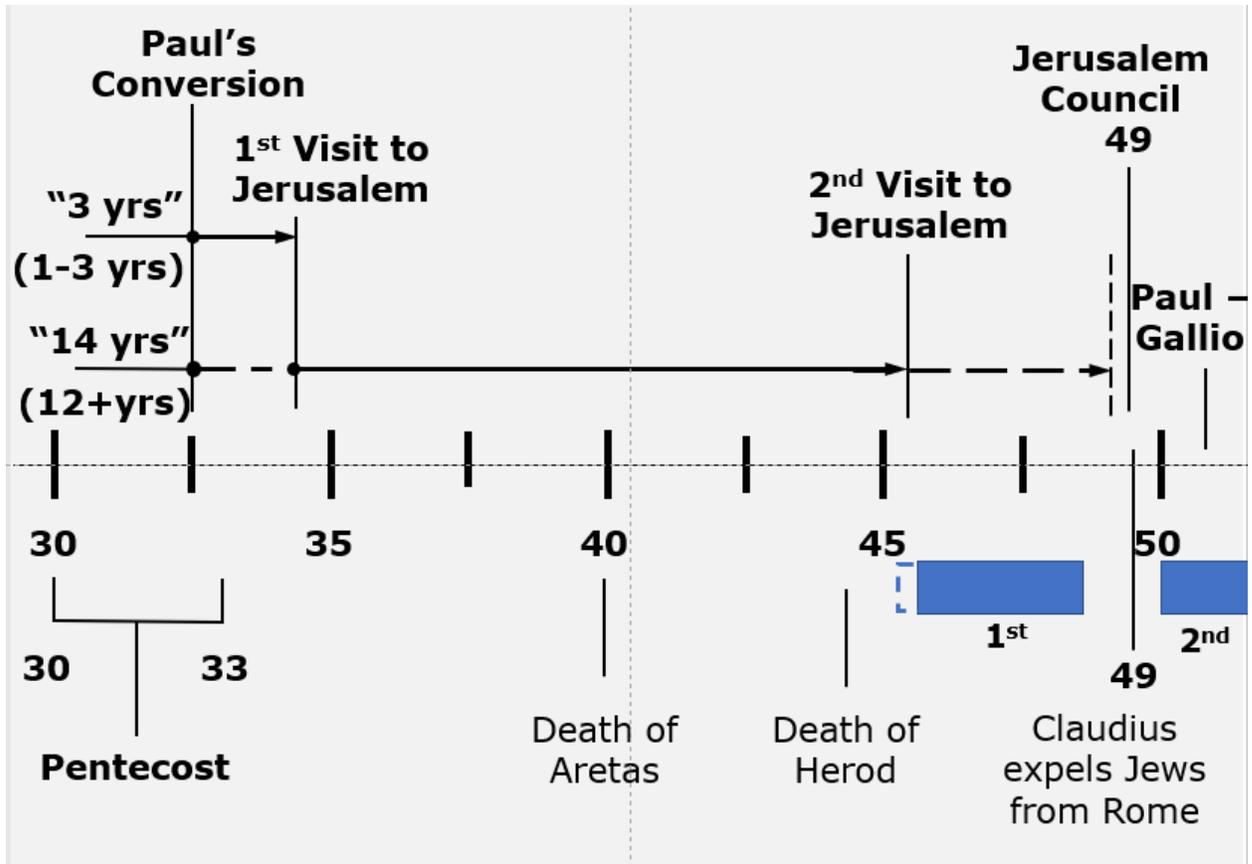
How many times did they visit these cities on this journey? (14:21-23)

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? (The total time required for the travel would probably be no more than 2-3 months.)
  
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)  
  
Why is it addressed to those in Cilicia?
  
  - 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, unsettling your minds, although we gave them no instructions, ...*" (15:24)?
  
  - 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.

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

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

**Comments / Questions**

- Since both Acts 9:26-30 and Galatians 1:18-22 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. Can these differences be adequately explained?
  
- The real difficulty is in deciding if the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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:

	<b>Galatians 2</b>	<b>Acts 11</b>	<b>Acts 15</b>
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. 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? (Remember that Paul swears that he is telling the truth. (1:20))
  
  - 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 leaving Jerusalem with the written decrees Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch and that at some time thereafter Paul departed on his 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 (hence, more probable) if it occurred before the Jerusalem Council Meeting?
  
  - d. And there are differences between Galatians 2 and Acts 15. Can those be reasonably explained?
  
5. To many the above 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?

6. So what do you think? Does the Galatians 2 visit correspond with the Famine Relief Visit in Acts 11 or the Jerusalem Council Meeting in Acts 15? Any other factors that have led you to your decision?
  
7. 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?
  
8. Chronological Considerations: The 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey must have begun by AD 49 or 50 to accommodate Paul's appearance before Gallio (Acts 18:12) in AD 51. Hence, the Jerusalem Council Meeting would probably have been in AD 48 or AD 49. If Paul's conversion was within AD 32-33 the Famine Relief Visit would be in AD 46 at the earliest. (Why?) This means the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey could have taken place somewhere between AD 46 and 49. This scheme works with either Galatians 2 = Acts 11 or Galatians 2 = Acts 15.

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? (Yes, but not if the "fourteen years" (Gal.2:1) includes the "three years" (Gal.1:18).)

The remaining problem is where the incident Paul rebuked Peter fits in the chronology.

- a. If Galatians 2 = Acts 15, then it could have occurred anytime after the Jerusalem Council Meeting until Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians.
  
- b. If Galatians 2 = Acts 11, then it must have occurred either before the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey or between the end of the Journey and the incident at Antioch recorded in Acts 15:1-2 and before Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians.

**Lesson 7**

**Galatians 3:1-18**

**Introduction** Having concluded his autobiographical arguments in Chapter 1 and 2, Paul now will make formal arguments (experiential and Scriptural) for the Galatians to return to the correct path. Paul discusses similar themes 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<sup>a</sup> faith<sup>b</sup>?
- 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh<sup>c</sup>?
- 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<sup>d</sup> to him as righteousness"<sup>e</sup>?
- 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<sup>f</sup> be blessed."<sup>g</sup>
- 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."<sup>h</sup>
- 11 Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith."<sup>i</sup>
- 12 But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them."<sup>j</sup>
- 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"<sup>k</sup>—
- 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<sup>l</sup>! It does not say, "And to offsprings<sup>m</sup>," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring<sup>l</sup>," 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.

Notes a KJV, ASV "of"

b NRSV, NIV, NET, CSB "by believing what you heard"; REB "by believing the gospel message"

c NET "trying to finish by human effort"

d NRSV "reckoned"; NIV, NET "credited"

e Quotation of Genesis 15:6.

f Gk. *ethnos* -same word trans. Gentiles earlier in verse, cf NRSV

g Quotation of Genesis 12:3 with 18:18.

h Quotation of Deuteronomy 27:26.

i Quotation of Habakkuk 2:4.

j Quotation of Leviticus 18:5.

k Quotation of Deuteronomy 21:23.

l ASV, CSB, NIV, NASB "seed"; NET "descendant"

m ASV, CSB, NIV, NASB "seeds"; NET

"descendants"

### Comments / Questions

Paul first will appeal to the experience of the Galatians (3:1-5) and then to the example of Abraham (3:6-18). But these arguments are not independent of each other -verse 14 ties them both together!

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) [Note: Paul uses the same vocabulary as Luke - "receive the Spirit" (Acts 1:8; 2:38; 8:15, 19; 19:2).]
  - b. Paul's argument here to his Gentile converts with respect to the giving of the Spirit is the same he makes elsewhere to Gentile readers (e.g., Eph.1:13-14) and that he made to the Jews at the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15:7-9).
  - c. What does the phrase "by hearing with faith" mean? (See Note a above)
  - d. In verse 3, the contrast is between "the Spirit" and "the flesh". What does Paul mean by being "perfected by the flesh"?
  - e. 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)
2. It may be (mirror-reading again) 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 Gentile believers should be circumcised also. Yet, Paul appeals to the example of Abraham as proof that God accepts people on the basis of faith. He makes a series of interlocking arguments with support from the OT, but it is difficult to precisely delineate the arguments (at least it is for me).
  - 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 (i.e., what we call a "Faithful life")?

3. Since Abraham was counted righteous (i.e. justified) on the basis of faith (v.6), then it is "*those of faith who are the sons of Abraham*" (v.7).
4. Paul personifies "*Scripture*" as 'preaching' (v.8). The blessing promised to Abraham includes the Gentiles "*who are of faith*" (v.9).
5. In verses 10-13, Paul discusses the impossibility of justification by works of the law.
  - a. What demand does the law make on those who seek to be justified by it? (v.10, 12)
  - b. Why is it "*evident*" that no one is justified by the law? (v.11)

To support this conclusion, Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4, "*The righteous shall live by faith*". [The Hebrew in Habakkuk includes the possessive pronoun "his faith (or, faithfulness)"; the LXX has "my faith (or faithfulness)" apparently referring to God's faithfulness.]

- Refresh your understanding of the context in Habakkuk.
  - Paul also uses this quote in Romans 1:17, as did the Hebrew writer in Hebrews 10:38. Study both those passages.
  - Does the phrase "*by faith*" refer to the verb "*shall live*" (i.e., the righteous will live their lives based on faith/trust), or to the noun "*righteous*" (i.e., "the righteous by faith shall live"? (The Greek could be understood either way.) In the former case, the "life" is generally understood to be this earthly life, and in the latter case, it is generally thought to be "eternal life", i.e. salvation.
- c. What is the curse associated with the law? (v.10, 13)
  - d. How did Christ become a "*curse for us*"?
  - e. What is the meaning of "*redeemed*"? (v.13)
6. 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*". It cannot mean that the original promised blessing to Abraham only envisioned one recipient – Christ. Consider Genesis 22:17 ("*as the stars...*") and v.29 ("*you are Abraham's offspring...*"). So what is Paul's point?
  - c. To what period does Paul attribute the 430 years? Paul is apparently alluding to Genesis 15:13 and Exodus 12:40. To what period do these passages refer? So, is Paul wrong?
  - 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, Paul argued that the Galatians enjoyed the promise of the Spirit without following the law (3:1-6), that Gentiles, like Abraham, are justified by faith (3:6-9), 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<sup>a</sup> should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary<sup>b</sup>.
- 20 Now an intermediary<sup>b</sup> 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<sup>c</sup> had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law<sup>d</sup>.
- 22 But the Scripture imprisoned everything<sup>e</sup> under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ<sup>f</sup> 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<sup>g</sup> 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<sup>h</sup> of God, through faith.
- 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on<sup>i</sup> Christ.
- 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek<sup>j</sup>, 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<sup>a</sup>, heirs according to promise.
- 4:1 I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child<sup>k</sup>, 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<sup>k</sup>, were enslaved to<sup>l</sup> the elementary principles<sup>m</sup> of the world.
- 4 But when the fullness of time<sup>n</sup> 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<sup>o</sup> of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba<sup>p</sup> Father!"
- 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Notes a ASV, CSB, NIV, NASB "seed"; NET "descendant"  
b NRSV, NIV, CSB, NASB "mediator"  
c NJB "Law" (all verses; NASB all except v.21b, c)  
d NASB "be based on law"  
e REB "whole world"; NET "everything and everyone"  
f NET "the faithfulness of Jesus Christ"  
g KJV "schoolmaster", ASV "custodian", NRSV "disciplinarian"

h NASB "sons and daughters"  
i NRSV "have clothed yourselves with"  
j NIV "Gentile"  
k NRSV, REB, NET "minor(s)", NIV "underage"  
l also NRSV; KJV, ASV, NET "under"  
m NRSV "spirits", REB sim. "elemental forces"  
n CSB "time came to completion"  
o NAB "spirit"  
p Aramaic for Father.

**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 5:13  
  
Romans 7:7-13
  - b. How long was the law "added"?
  - c. What was the law "added" to? the promise?
  - d. Paul said the law "was put in place through angels" (v.19). Compare Acts 7:53; Heb.2:2. At the end of Deut.33:2, the LXX adds "angels with him."
2. 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)

Similarly, did God expect for people to keep the law perfectly?

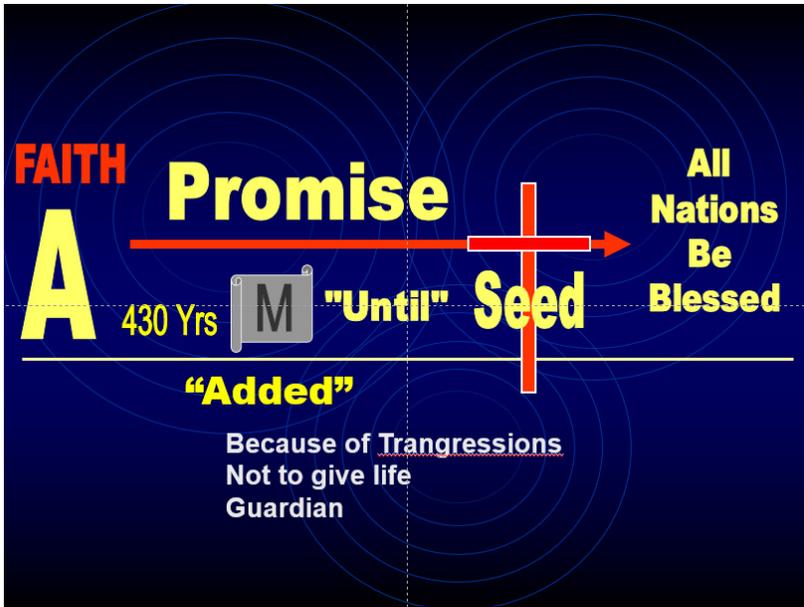
3. "So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came." (3:23-24)
  - a. What do verses 22 - 24 give as the law's function as a guardian?
  - b. Other translations call the law a "schoolmaster" (KJV) or "tutor" (NKJV) instead of a guardian. Those terms refer to one who instructs or teaches others. 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" (3:29)?
6. Probably one of the best known passages in Galatians is: "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" (3:28). Compare similar statements in Colossians 3:11 and 1 Corinthians 12:12-13. This statement is commonly taken to mean that anyone can do anything. Hence, women can be preachers or elders, etc. Is this Paul's point? If not, what is Paul saying?
7. Paul speaks of the time to "when we were children" (4:3).
- a. To what time is he referring?
  - b. So what are "the elementary principles of the world"? In Greek literature, the expression was used to refer to 1) The Fundamental Principles of Learning, e.g. the A, B, Cs, 2) the Elements of Nature, or 3) the spirits worshipped ad deities. Instead of "enslaved to", more literally the passage reads "enslaved under" (see Note 1 above. What else were the Jews "under"? (cf.3:10, 22, 23, 25; 4:2, 4, 5)
8. What does Paul mean by the expression "fullness 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.

Is the "Spirit of his Son" (v.6) the Holy Spirit (as suggested by the capitalization)? Or, should "spirit" not be capitalized as in the NAB (or in Campbell's *Living Oracles*)? Note also that the similar expression in Romans 8:15 ("Spirit of adoption") is not capitalized in the ASV. Which makes the most sense do you think?



**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<sup>a</sup> of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?
- 10 You observe <sup>b</sup>days and months and seasons and years!
- 11 I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.
- 12 Brothers<sup>c</sup>, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are<sup>d</sup>. You did me no wrong.
- 13 You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first<sup>e</sup>,
- 14 and though my condition was a trial to you<sup>f</sup>, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus.
- 15 What then has become of your blessedness? 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<sup>h</sup>, 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<sup>i</sup>.
- 21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law<sup>j</sup>?
- 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<sup>k</sup>, while the son of the free woman was born through promise.
- 24 Now this may be interpreted allegorically<sup>l</sup>: 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<sup>m</sup>, 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."<sup>n</sup>
- 28 Now you, brothers<sup>c</sup>, like Isaac, are children of promise.
- 29 But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh<sup>k</sup> 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."<sup>o</sup>

- 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 Same term used in 4:3. NRSV, REB sim. "Beggary elemental spirits"; NIV "miserable forces"; NET "basic forces"
  - b NRSV, REB, NIV adds "special"; NET adds "religious"
  - c NRSV, REB "friends"; CSB, NET, NASB "and sisters"
  - d REB "Put yourselves in my place, my friends, I beg you, as I put myself in yours"
  - e ASV, NASB "first time"; REB "originally"; CSB "previously preached"; in classical Greek, the expression strictly implied the first of two, but in Hellenistic Greek the expression simply meant 'earlier' [Bruce, 209; Witherington, 11]
  - f NRSV "put you to the test"
  - g NRSV "goodwill"; REB, NET "happiness"
  - h NRSV "To exclude you"; NIV "alienate you from us"; CSB "exclude you from me"
  - i CSB "I do not know what to do about you"
  - j NIV "Are you unaware what the law says"; NET "not understand the law"
  - k NET "by natural descent"
  - l NRSV "Now this is an allegory"
  - l REB "the free woman"
  - n Isaiah 54:1
  - o Genesis 21:10,12

### Comments / Questions

1. In Galatians 4:8-10, Paul is addressing the Gentile brethren at Galatia. He alludes to their being enslaved again to "*elementary principles of the world*" (the same phrase previously used in 4:3). So there is something in common about the elementary principles they previously were enslaved to (presumably associated with their worship of pagan deities) and the ones they will be enslaved to if they put their trust in the Law of Moses.
  - a. Apparently, the elementary principles involved "days", "months", "seasons" and "years". What are these? Does it seem that they are already observing these things?
  - b. Does this mean that a Christian in that day could not observe these? For example, could a Christian Jew still observe the Sabbath? (cf. Rom.14:5-6)  
  
But what about a Gentile? (cf. 1 Cor.7:17ff)
2. In verse 11 and later in verses 19-20, Paul expresses concern about the spiritual future of the Galatians. Why is Paul so pessimistic about their future?
3. Paul recalls when he preached the gospel to them "*at first*" (v.13).
  - a. In classical Greek, this term technically meant the 'first of two' (cf. ASV "first time"). Consequently, it was used at times by those arguing for the North Galatian view – which is surprising since Paul visited the churches of South Galatia twice on the first

journey (Acts 14:21-22). So, this verse cannot be determinative. Besides, by the first century, the term could simply mean 'formerly' or 'earlier' (i.e. a second visit not implied) [Keener, 200].

- b. He also mentions that it was due to a physical infirmity that he first visited them (v.13). Further, 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? (Gal.6:11) [Keener argues that the 'gouging out of eyes' was a common idiom – much like our 'give our right arm', 201, 205]

Could this be related to the 'thorn in the flesh'? (2 Cor.12:7-10; so Lightfoot, 23)

Even so, the Galatians did not despise him because of his infirmity (v.14). In fact, they received him as an "angel" of God (v.14). The word for "angel" is also at times translated 'messenger'. Any coincidence that it was at Lystra (a city of Galatia) that the Gentiles there called Paul "Hermes" who was considered the 'herald' or 'messenger' of Zeus (Acts 14:12)?

- 4. Who are the "they" of verse 17? What is going on (i.e., what does all this mean)? Good luck!

Do the alternate translations in *Note h* above help?

- 5. In 4:21-31, Paul concludes his arguments by drawing an 'allegory' about Sarah and her servant, Hagar.

What is an allegory?

Note the parallels between the story of Sarah and Hagar:

<u>Sarah</u>	<u>Hagar</u>
Son	Son
Free Woman	Slave Woman
Born according to the Promise (Spirit)	Born according to the Flesh
Covenant	Covenant - Mt.Sinai
Jerusalem Above	Present Jerusalem
Free	Slave

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?

- 6. Many see 5:1 as a key verse in the letter: "For freedom Christ has set us free". But freedom can be freedom "from" something, freedom "to do" something, or, perhaps both. Which do you think makes the most sense in light of Paul's argument?

**Lesson 10**

**Galatians 5:1-15**

**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 5:1-15**

- 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<sup>a</sup>, 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<sup>b</sup>.
- 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love<sup>c</sup>.
- 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<sup>d</sup>.
- 10 I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is.
- 11 But if I, brothers<sup>e</sup>, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense<sup>f</sup> of the cross has been removed.
- 12 I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate<sup>g</sup> themselves!
- 13 For you were called to freedom, brothers<sup>h</sup>. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve<sup>i</sup> one another.
- 14 For the whole law is fulfilled<sup>j</sup> in one word<sup>k</sup>: "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.

- Notes
- a NRSV "cut yourselves off from Christ"
  - b KJV "hope of righteousness by faith", REB "hope to attain that righteousness for which we hope", CEB "for the hope of righteousness through the Spirit by faith"
  - c NRSV, REB "faith expressing itself through love"
  - d NRSV, NIV, CSB, NET, NASB sim. "batch of dough"
  - e NRSV, REB "my Friends"; NIV, CSB, NET, NASB "and sisters"
  - f NAB, NASB "stumbling block"
  - g NRSV, NAB "castrate"
  - h NRSV, NIV, CSB, NET, NASB "and sisters"; REB "my friends"
  - i NRSV "become slaves to one another"
  - j NRSV, REB, NET "summed up"
  - k NRSV, NIV sim., NET "single commandment"

**Comments / Questions**

1. Verse 1 was used in the last lesson as the conclusion of that section. But since many see it as the introduction of a new thought, it is repeated in this lesson. Where do you think it should go?

2. An *inclusio* is a literary device where, typically, a word or phrase is repeated for the purpose of noting the start and end of a discussion. Some commentators (e.g., Longenecker) believe that 5:2-12 forms an *inclusio* with 1:6-10. [This is the only time where I have seen an *inclusio* composed of multiple verses.] Note the following parallels:

1:6 "deserting him who called you"	5:8 "This persuasion is not from him who calls you"
1:6 "the grace of Christ"	5:4 "severed from Christ ... fallen from grace"
1:9 "again"	5:3 "again"
1:8, 9 "let him be accursed"	1:10 "will bear the penalty"

Are you convinced? I am not sure if the parallels are strong enough to warrant calling this an *inclusio*. However, verse 12 does conclude Paul's discussion of the circumcision issue (except for his closing comments in 6:12-15).

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

4:3

4:8-9

4:21-31

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

4. In verses 2-6, Paul for the first time in the letter clearly identifies circumcision as the central demand of the troublemakers. Paul forcefully argues against submitting to circumcision.
- What are the consequences if they submit to circumcision?
  - Then why did Paul have Timothy submit to circumcision (Acts 16:3)? Did this cause Timothy to 'fall from grace'? If not, why not?
  - Have some of the Gentile Christians already been circumcised? Or, does it seem that they are simply considering it?
5. In verse 5, "the *hope of righteousness*" can be understood to mean 1) that 'righteousness' is what is hoped for (cf. REB) or 2) that 'righteousness' is the basis of our hope for some reward. See *Note b* above. Which seems best to you?
6. Paul assertion that "*in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything*" is common to Paul's writings.
- Compare the following passages; What is Paul's point in all these passages?  
Galatians 3:26-29  
1 Corinthians 12:13  
Colossians 3:11

- 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?
  
6. 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?
  
7. 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*"?
  
8. 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 that present this same contrast?]
  
9. 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.

**Lesson 11**

**Galatians 5:16 - 6:10**

**Introduction** Having made his doctrinal arguments concerning the law and circumcision, Paul now seeks to draw attention to the practical aspects of following Christ (the 'practical' comments probably began at v. 13). To make this type of change is not uncommon in Paul's letters (Ephesians being the clearest example).

**Galatians 5:16 - 6:10**

- 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<sup>a</sup>, impurity, sensuality<sup>b</sup>,
- 20 idolatry, sorcery<sup>c</sup>, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries<sup>d</sup>, dissensions, divisions<sup>e</sup>,
- 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies<sup>f</sup>, 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<sup>g</sup> of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness<sup>h</sup>, 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<sup>i</sup> we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with<sup>j</sup> the Spirit.
- 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking<sup>k</sup> one another, envying one another.
- 6:1 Brothers<sup>l</sup>, if anyone is caught<sup>m</sup> in any transgression, you who are spiritual<sup>n</sup> 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.<sup>o</sup>
- 5 For each will have to bear his own load.
- 6 Let the one who is taught the word 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<sup>p</sup> 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<sup>q</sup> of faith.

- Notes** a KJV "adultery, fornication", ASV "fornication"  
b KJV, ASV "lasciviousness"; NRSV "licentiousness"; REB "debauchery"; CSB "promiscuity"; NET "depravity"; NASB "indecent behavior"  
c KJV, NIV, NASB "witchcraft"  
d NIV, CSB, NASB "selfish ambition"  
e NRSV "factions"

- f ASV "revellings"; NRSV,NET, NASB "carousing"
- g REB "harvest"
- h NRSV "generosity"
- i NIV "Since"
- j NRSV "be guided by"; NAB "follow the"
- k NRSV "competing against"
- l NRSV, REB "my friends"; NIV, CSB, NET, NASB "and sisters"
- m KJV, ASV, CSB "overtaken"; NRSV "detected"; NET "discovered"
- n NRSV "you who have received the Spirit"; REB "who live by the Spirit"
- o NRSV "All must test their own work; then that work, rather than their neighbor's work, will become a source of pride."; NIV "Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, ..."
- p REB "in the field of his unspiritual nature"
- q NRSV "family"

**Comments / Questions**

1. Is 'walking by the Spirit' (5:16), being "led by the Spirit" (5:18) and "sowing to the Spirit" (6:8) the same thing? What is the difference between "live by the Spirit" and "walk by the Spirit" in verse 25?
  
2. Verses 19-21 list the "works of the flesh." Compare similar lists in other letters:

<b>Rom. 1:29-32</b>	<b>1 Cor. 6:9-10</b>	<b>2 Cor.12:20-21</b>	<b>Eph.4:31,5:3-7</b>	<b>Col. 3:5-10</b>	<b>1 Tim. 1:8-10</b>
unrighteousness	unrighteous	quarreling	bitterness	sexual	lawless
evil	sexually	jealousy	wrath	immorality	disobedient
covetousness	immoral	anger	anger	impurity	ungodly
malice	idolaters	hostility	clamor	passion	sinners
envy,	adulterers	slander	Slander	evil desire	unholy
murder	homosexuality	gossip	malice	covetousness	profane
strife	thieves	conceit	sexual	anger	strike fathers
deceit	greedy	disorder	immorality	wrath	and mothers
maliciousness	drunkards	impurity	impurity	malice	murderers,
gossips	revilers	sexual	covetousness	slander	sexually
slanders	swindlers	immorality	filthiness	obscene talk	immoral
haters of God		sensuality	foolish talk	lie	homosexuality
insolent			crude joking		enslavers
haughty					liars
boastful,					perjurers
inventors of evil					
disobedient to parents					
foolish					
faithless					
heartless					
ruthless					

Categorize these sins. For example, several fall within the category of *Sexual Sins*.

3. 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	Goodness
Joy	Faithfulness
Peace	Gentleness
Patience	Self-control
Kindness	

4. 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.

5. "*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, NAB, NIV, NASB) suggest?

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

What does the word "*detected*" (NRSV) suggest?

What does the word "*discovered*" (NET) suggest?

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

6. Explain the apparent disagreement between verse 2 ("*Bear one another's burdens*") and verse 5 ("*For each will have to bear his own load*"). Note the different context of each passage.

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

8. What type of boasting is Paul prohibiting in verse 4?

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

10. 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.

**Lesson 12**

**Galatians 6:11-18**

**Introduction** It is generally agreed that the letter's subscription begins in verse 11. This subscription, unlike other Paul's letters, does not contain a peace wish nor any greetings. Like some of his other letters it contains a reference to his handwriting and some concluding exhortations.

**Galatians 6:11-18**

- 11 See with what large letters<sup>a</sup> I am writing<sup>b</sup> 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<sup>c</sup> a new creation<sup>d</sup>.
- 16 And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God<sup>e</sup>.
- 17 From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear<sup>f</sup> on my body the marks of Jesus.
- 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers<sup>g</sup>. Amen.

- Notes*
- a KJV "how large a letter I am..."
  - b REB "now that I am writing..."
  - c REB, NET sim. "the only thing that counts is a new creation"
  - d ASV "creature"
  - e REB, NIV sim. "upon them, the Israel of God"
  - f ASV, NRSV sim. "bear branded"
  - g NRSV, NIV, NET, NASB "brothers and sisters", REB "my friends"

**Comments / Questions**

1. Note the different translation of verse 11 by the KJV: "see how large a letter I have written you..."
  - a. Although the KJV translation is possible (and was the common translation of all the early English versions), why do think all modern translations translate the verse like the ESV?
  - b. It is almost universally agreed by modern scholars that Paul used a scribe to write the bulk of the letter and that it is at verse 11 that Paul picks up the pen to write the final subscription. (It was also a frequent practice for the authors of Greek and Roman letters to personally write the subscription. [Reece, *Large Letters*, 82, 198]
    - a. This seems to be a common practice of Paul's (see 1 Cor.16:21, Col.4:18, 2 Thess.3:17; compare Phile.19).
    - b. Why might be one reason Paul had for this practice? (2 Thess.2:2)

- c. Why would Paul write with large letters?
2. Paul appears to accuse the troublemakers of wanting the Gentiles to be circumcised so that they (the troublemakers) could avoid persecution. (v.12)
  - a. Who would persecute the troublemakers if Gentiles were accepted into the church uncircumcised?
  - b. Further, why would this be a source of boasting for the troublemakers? (v.13)
3. Verses 14-15 contain a summary of the main points of his letter.
  - a. What does it mean to "*boast ... in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (v.14). (Read 1 Cor. 1:12-31)
  - b. How the expression "*by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world*" reflect earlier portions of the letter.
  - c. Is it fair to say that "*For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation*" adequately summarizes a major point of this letter?
  - d. Compare Galatians 6:15 with 5:6, especially the last phrase of each verse.
4. Who is "*the Israel of God*"? Are two groups envisioned: the first being those "who walk by this rule" and the second being "the Israel of God"? Or is there just one group as suggested by the REB (NIV sim.) "All who take this principle for their guide, peace and mercy be upon them, the Israel of God." (and held by most commentators [Keener, 289]. Both options are grammatically possible; Keener notes that the Greek connector *kai* can mean "and", "even", or "also" [288].
5. Bruce interprets v.17 as "Let no one interfere with me, because I am the slave – the branded slave of another." He then compares this to Romans 14:4 and suggests that Paul is telling the troublemakers that he is responsible only to Jesus for the gospel he has been preaching. [Bruce, 275].

**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 \_\_\_\_\_." ( \_\_\_:\_\_\_ )
10. "But when the \_\_\_\_\_ had come, God sent forth \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ under the \_\_\_\_\_, ..." ( \_\_\_:\_\_\_ )
11. "You know it was \_\_\_\_\_ of a \_\_\_\_\_ that I preached the \_\_\_\_\_ to you at \_\_\_\_\_, ..." ( \_\_\_:\_\_\_ )
12. "For it is \_\_\_\_\_ that Abraham had \_\_\_\_\_, one by a \_\_\_\_\_ and one by a \_\_\_\_\_." ( \_\_\_:\_\_\_ )
13. "For \_\_\_\_\_ Christ has set us \_\_\_\_\_; stand firm therefore, and do not \_\_\_\_\_ again to a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_." ( \_\_\_:\_\_\_ )
14. "For the \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ in one \_\_\_\_\_: "You shall \_\_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_ as yourself." ( \_\_\_:\_\_\_ )
15. But the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ is love, \_\_\_\_\_, peace, \_\_\_\_\_, kindness, \_\_\_\_\_, faithfulness, \_\_\_\_\_, self-control; against such things there is no \_\_\_\_\_." ( \_\_\_:\_\_\_ )

**True (T) or False (F)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Paul had been taught the gospel by the other apostles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. After his conversion, Paul visited Arabia before he visited Jerusalem.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Under no circumstances would Paul require a Gentile to be circumcised.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. The Galatians had not yet suffered persecution, but Paul warned them of the possibility.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. The law was a guardian of the Jewish people to bring them to Christ.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. Paul said it would be better to be uncircumcised than circumcised.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. He who "sows to the Spirit" will "reap eternal life."

**Match the Description That Best Fits Each of the Following Men**

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| _____ 23. Paul     | A. Apostle to the circumcised             |
| _____ 24. Peter    | B. Pillar of the Jerusalem church         |
| _____ 25. Barnabas | C. Not compelled to be circumcised        |
| _____ 26. James    | D. Received the gospel through revelation |
| _____ 27. Titus    | E. "led astray" by the Jews' hypocrisy    |

**Multiple Choice**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. Which word or phrase best describes the book as a whole?
- Paul's authority
  - the liberty to be had in Christ
  - the advantages of uncircumcision
  - the uselessness of the Law
  - the truth of the gospel
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. The basis of our justification is:
- obedience to the Law
  - baptism
  - faith in Christ
  - living a good moral life

**Short Answer**

30. Who were "those who seemed influential" in the Jerusalem church?
31. What statement summarizes the whole Law?

32. What could not annul the covenant God made with Abraham?

33. 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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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

7 and  
are turning to a different gospel—  
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 righteousness 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  
and supplies the Spirit to you  
works miracles among you  
do so  
or by works of the law,  
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 your blessedness?

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 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.

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,  
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 keep in step with 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 Let the one who is taught the word 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.