

Community Presbyterian
Church

*Glimpses
of
Galatians*



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I. Introduction

A. Overview

Galatians is one of the most important books in the Bible. It is the clearest statement of the gospel next to the Book of Romans. It is often called the "Gospel of Grace." The book is one of the earliest of Paul's epistles. One of the most important features, besides his plea for a clear gospel message, is Paul's defense of his apostleship.

The epistle emphasizes that salvation is by grace through faith, not by the law. The Christian life is also lived by faith and grace and not by law. Christians are to avoid sin by walking in the Spirit and not by keeping the law. The book ends with Paul encouraging the Christians in Galatia to support their fellow Christians and to engage in good works.

An interesting feature of Galatians is that it appears to be the only one of Paul's letters that was written by his own hand. "See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!" Galatians 6:11

B. Title

The title of the book is "The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians." It comes from the first line of the book. Titles were given to the New Testament books as they were written. The titles come from three sources—author, recipients, and content.

Robert Stephanus invented verse divisions for the fourth edition of his Greek text of the New Testament in 1551. His system was widely accepted. The first edition



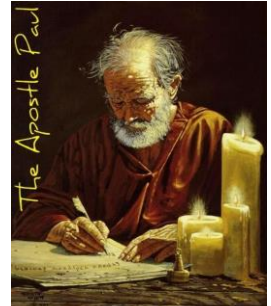
of the English Bible with both chapters and verse division was the Geneva Bible (1560).

C. Author

The Apostle Paul wrote this epistle to the Galatians.

(Galatians 1:1; 5:2, see 6:11). "Paul an apostle . . ."

The Pauline authorship is almost universally accepted. It is most likely Paul's initial epistle, and it is considered the foundation for all his writings. Additionally, the book fits well into the ministry of Paul depicted in the Book of Acts. The Pauline authorship is also well attested by one internal biblical source, 2 Peter 3:15 and several external sources, including Barnabas, Pope Clement I, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexander, and Origen.



The book is included in both the Marcion (c. 130-140) and Muratorian (late 2nd century) canons. A papyrus manuscript of Galatians is found in Papyrus 46 with other books of the New Testament including all of Paul's epistles. The manuscripts are dated between AD 175 and 225.

Paul was born a Jew. *"I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin"* (Romans 11:1). He was named for Saul who was the first king of Israel and also from the tribe of Benjamin. Acts 13:19 *"Then Saul, who is also called Paul, . . ."* It appears that on the island of Cyprus Saul began using his second name, probably to appeal more to the Gentiles. His name was not changed by the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus as some have believed.

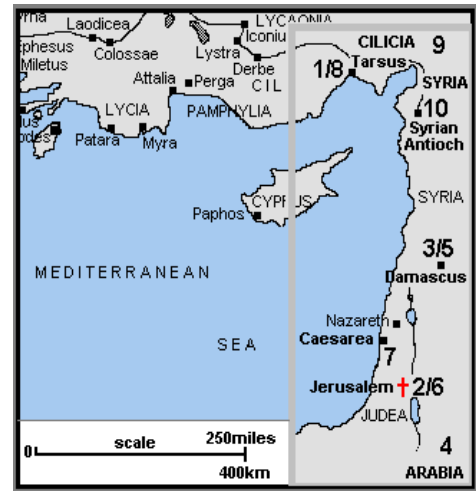
He was a devout Pharisee. *"If anyone thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church, as for legalistic righteousness, faultless"* (Philippians 3: 4-6). At some time in Paul's life, he studied from the great Pharisaic teacher, Gamaliel. He claims, "I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers."

He was a Roman citizen. "But Paul said to the officers: 'They beat us publicly without a trial even



though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison." (Acts 16:37). When Paul was arrested in Caesarea and facing trial, he claimed his right as a Roman citizen by stating, "I appeal to Caesar!" Procurator Felix responded, "You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!" In Acts 22:26 a Roman centurion proclaimed, "This man is a Roman citizen." When Paul was asked to confirm his citizenship, he said, "Yes, I am." The commander responded that he had paid a big price for his Roman citizenship to which Paul responded, "I was born a citizen." (Acts 22:27, 28)

Saul (Paul) was born in Tarsus in the Roman province of Cilicia. Cilicia was made a Roman province in 64 BC by Pompey. Its capital city of Tarsus became a free city from the time of Augustus. He was born a citizen. It is unknown how his parents became Roman citizens. The best suggestion is that Paul's father had done something favorable for the Romans and was rewarded with citizenship.



Paul made good use of his Roman citizenship to speak his message to a crowd of people. *"Paul answered. 'I am a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people.'"* (Acts 21:39). He was granted permission to do so.

Even though Paul's life coincided with that of Jesus, there is no record that they encountered each other. There can be little doubt, however, that Paul had heard about Jesus, his death, and the claim of his resurrection. Jesus would have been about ten years old when Paul was born. Paul would have been about twenty-five at the time of the crucifixion. Paul is first mentioned in the book of Acts shortly after the crucifixion at the stoning of Stephen the first Christian martyr. *"Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul."* (Acts 7:58)

The writer of Acts in the next verse says that "Saul was there giving his approval to his (Stephen's) death." Christians were scattered due to intense persecution. This is when Paul began his concentrated effort to extinguish Christians. Paul went about making "murderous threats" against the Lord's disciples.

Paul's life changed forever on a trip to Damascus in which he was seeking to arrest "those who belonged to the Way" (the name by which early Christians were called). Believers were first called Christians at Antioch (Acts 11:26).

On his way to Damascus, Paul was struck blind by a bright light. The risen Jesus identified himself to Paul as the one he was persecuting. After Paul "believed," Jesus told him to go to Damascus where he would receive his sight and receive further instructions. As soon as his sight was restored, Paul was baptized. He immediately began preaching the gospel



and "proving that Jesus is the Christ." (Acts 9:22) Paul's extensive knowledge of Judaism was extremely useful in convincing Jews that Jesus Christ was the Messiah from the Old Testament scriptures.

The Jews who did not accept Paul's witness, attempted to kill him. Followers of Paul were able to save his life by lowering him over the walls of the city in a basket. Paul then went to Jerusalem.

Barnabas introduced Paul to the Christians in the city of Jerusalem. He was able to convince them that he was indeed a changed man. Paul went about the city preaching. His success caused the Grecian Jews to try to kill him. He was quickly sent off to go to his hometown of Tarsus.

A while later Barnabas came to Tarsus to seek out Paul. When he found him, he brought him to Antioch. Paul and Barnabas served as pastors and teachers for the church in that city. Antioch became Paul's home church. During that time the elders of the church at Antioch send relief to Jerusalem during a severe famine. The relief was sent by Barnabas and Paul (Acts 11:27-30). After completing their mission, they returned to Jerusalem taking John who was also called Mark with them.

Barnabas and Paul continued to minister in Antioch until the Holy Spirit called them to set out as missionaries. This became Paul's first missionary trip in which he founded several churches in the region of Galatia. The account of the first journey is recorded in Acts 13:4-14:28.



The two missionaries along with John Mark left Antioch about AD 47, They first traveled to the Island of Cyprus on which they trekked across the Island preaching the gospel. When they reached Paphos on the far side of Cyprus they had audience with Sergius Paulus who became a believer after hearing the teaching of the missionaries.

Paul and Barnabas then left Cyprus for Asia Minor sailing to Perga on Coast. John Mark left to return to Jerusalem. From there they went to Antioch (Pisidia, not Syria). They first preached to the Jews about their history and the coming of the Messiah. The Jews leaders grew jealous due to the crowds and the many converts. They stirred up the leaders of the town and expelled them from the region.

They next went to Iconium where they first when to the Jewish Synagogue. A great number of Jews and Gentiles believed. Other Jews and Gentiles rejected the gospel message. The city was divided between the non-believers and those who supported Paul and Barnabas. The enemies of the disciples plotted to stone them. When they heard of the plot, Paul and Barnabas fled to Lystra.

In Lystra, Paul performed a miracle of healing. When the people of the city saw the miracle that thought Paul and Barnabas were gods. They reacted by proclaiming themselves to be mere men and preached message of the good news to the crowd. Some Jews came to Lystra and drew some supporters who stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city and left him for dead. He eventually got up and went back into the city. There is some who believe that Paul actually died from the stoning. In 2 Corinthians he

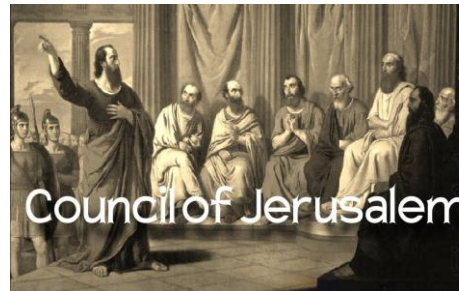


describes being caught up to the Third Heaven. It is possible that Paul had died and was resurrected. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

They preached the gospel in Derbe and won many converts. The two then traveled back to the cities of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. They strengthened the churches and encouraged believers to be strong in the Lord. They also appointed elders in the churches and committed them to the Lord.

They then traveled to Perga and Attalia and preached the gospel in these cities. From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch. Paul and Barnabas were welcomed back to their hometown where they shared their experiences on their journey. They all glorified the Lord.

After a significant time in Antioch, Paul and Barnabas traveled up to Jerusalem to attend the Council of Jerusalem (AD 49 or 50). The occasion of the council was that Jewish Christians were coming up from Jerusalem and demanding that the new Gentile believers keep the law of Moses, especially the practice of circumcision. Paul and Barnabas had a strong contention with them. This led to the calling of a meeting with the Jewish believers in Jerusalem. The conference of apostles and elders was led by Peter and James. Paul led a contingent from Antioch to attend the council. The meeting is described in Acts Chapter 15:6-29



After much discussion on the issue, Peter addressed the group. He expressed his belief that Gentiles should be accepted into the Church apart from the Mosaic Law. Peter had witnessed that the Holy Spirit had been given to Gentile believers when they believed. He asked Jewish believers why they should "test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear?" He answered that they should not. He then concluded, "We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved just as they are."

Paul and Barnabas addressed the assembly which listened intently to them as they recounted all the miracle God had done among the Gentiles in Galatia. It is assumed that they praised God for the multitudes of people that had accepted the gospel message.

James, who was the leader of the church in Jerusalem, then spoke. He quoted from the book of Amos to show that God intended Gentiles to be among his people. He concluded, "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God." (Acts 15:19) He, then, called for a letter be sent to the Gentiles in Antioch detailing the decision of the council. The letter was to be delivered by Judas (not that Judas) and Silas who were leaders of the Jerusalem congregation.



The Christians in Antioch read the letter and "were glad for the encouraging message." Judas and Silas returned to Jerusalem while Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch "where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord." (Acts 15:35)

After some time passed, Paul and Barnabas decided they wanted to return to the cities in Galatians and visit the churches there to visit their converts and meet those who had become believers since their first visit. This occasioned Paul's second missionary. Paul and Barnabas split over the inclusion of John Mark. Paul did not want to take him on this journey because he had abandoned them on their journey. Paul took Silas and Barnabas chose to take John Mark with him.



Paul's second missionary journey is recorded in Acts 15:36 to Acts 18:22 after which he returned to Antioch. He spent some time at his home church, then set off on his third mission journey that is recorded Acts 18:23 to Acts 21:15. Instead of returning to Antioch at the end of his third journey, he went to Jerusalem.

Paul was eventually arrested and sent to Rome where he was eventually martyred. The last recorded events in Paul's life find him in his own rented house in which he welcomed all who came to him. The last words in the book of Acts are, Paul spoke "Boldly and without hindrance, he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 28:31)

This is where the book of Acts ended, but a credible reconstruction can be made from other statements in the New Testament for what took place in Paul's later life.

It can be assumed that Paul appeared to Emperor Nero in Rome at some point. God had promised Paul in a vision that he would stand before Caesar. (Acts 27:24) God said, "Do not be afraid Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar."



It appears the Paul was released from prison for a time. Early church historian Eusebius who wrote about 325 that Paul was not executed during the two years that he was under house arrest. This is a clear indication that Paul was set free to continue his ministry.

He was expecting to stay with Philemon in Colossae. (Philemon 22), but he decided to go to Spain instead. He had planned to do so when he wrote to the Romans. "But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have longing for many years to see you. I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. (Romans 15:23, 24)

So, Paul probably went to Spain. Church father Clement writing in Rome about AD 95 tells us that Paul had preached in the East and in the West, he won the genuine glory for his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world and having reached the farthest limits of the West." (1 Clement 5:5-7)



When Paul returned from Spain, he continued his "fourth missionary journey." It is believed that he reached the island of Crete, Ephesus, Miletus, Troas, and various cities in Macedonia, Corinth, and probably Nicopolis.

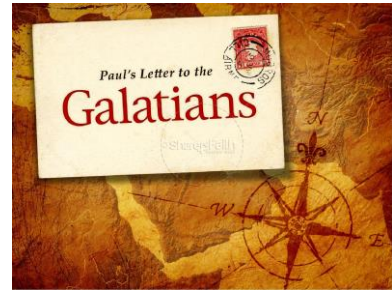
He was arrested after he his journey was coming to a close possibly in western Greece and taken to Rome and imprisoned. The happened during Nero's sever wave of persecution of Christians. His condition being much harsher than his first time in prison. Paul was most tried and likely beheaded in AD 67 or 68). He wrote that many Christians deserted him, but the Lord strengthened him. Paul died as bravely as he lived. "The Lord will rescue me

from every evil attack and bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. (2 Timothy 4:18)



D.. Organization

The book of Galatians is a general letter written to several cities. It is at the beginning of the document. The word comes from two Greek words—*epi* meaning "to," "on," "upon" and *stellein* meaning "to send." or "dispatch." It is interesting that the word "apostle" means "to send from."



It is extensive for a letter and its purpose is more than a normal letter. The book has six chapters, 149 verses, and 3093 words. It takes only about fifteen minutes to read the entire epistle. There were no chapters or verses in the original letter. It is sometimes helpful to read the New Testament book by ignoring the chapter and verse divisions.

E. Date

Galatians was written in AD 48 or 49. The date of the writing of the book depends on whether it was written to Southern Galatia or Northern Galatia. There are some good arguments for both places, but the cities of Southern Galatia is clearly the most obvious choice. If it was written to the cities in Southern Galatians, as most commentators believe, the date would be 48 or 49. Those dates represent the period between Paul's return from his first missionary journey and the Jerusalem Council in AD 50.

F. Location

Several suggestions have been offered as to the location from which the epistle was written. It could have been written at any of Paul's destinations after he left Galatia or, as many believe, on his return to Antioch.

Antioch is a good choice for the origin of the book. It was the location from which Paul and Barabbas initiated their first missionary journey. It would be logical that he would have written the letter as soon as he returned home and received the calamitous knowledge of the situation in Galatia. Others feel that the letter was written sometime sooner due to the urgent nature of Paul's tone. He may have not waited until he returned home.



G. Destination and Recipients

There are two possible locations for the destination of Paul's letter to the Galatians. It was either sent to the people of Northern Galatia or to the cities in Southern Galatia.



The name Galatia is derived from the ethnic group of people known as the Gauls who had migrated to central Asia Minor in the 3rd Century BC. The area eventually became a Roman protectorate and then a Roman province in 25 BC. This caused many ethnic Gauls to move to the northern region of the subcontinent.

In the mid-second century BC the Romans took control of the area. A little more than a century later the region became a Roman administrative providence called Galatia. The province encompassed the northern area occupied by the Gauls, and it also included a southern portion in which there were several Gentile cities.

The Apostle Paul evangelized these cities during his first missionary journey. The Epistle of Galatians was probably written to these southern cities which included Antioch (Pisidia), Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. There are various reasons that support either the northern or southern destinations for the letter. Most Bible teachers prefer the southern destination because Paul usually went to centers of population and the Book of Acts gives an account of Paul's ministry in those cities.



H. Historical Context

The third phase of Roman history, the Empire, had just begun. Julius Caesar was assassinated on March 15, 44 BC because he attempted to become the sole ruler of Rome. After a protracted struggle between Octavian, Caesar's adopted son, and Marc Anthony, one of Caesar's generals, Octavian emerged as the first emperor of Rome after the death of Marc Anthony. He ruled Rome from 27 BC to AD 14.



Octavian preferred the name Caesar Augustus. As the emperor of the Roman Empire, he announced that all the Roman world should be taxed. This decree forced Joseph and Mary to travel to Bethlehem at which the birth of Jesus Christ took place in either 4 or 5 BC.

The Apostle Paul was born with the name Saul (also Paul) in Tarsus in the Roman province of Cilicia in eastern Asia Minor. He came into the world in the middle of the first century (c. AD 5) and died in Rome about the year 66/67. His birth was during the reign of Augustus Caesar (37 BC-AD 14) and his death was at the hands of Emperor Nero (AD 54-68).

Between the birth and death of Paul, three men ruled Rome. Tiberius (AD 14-37), the adopted son of Augustus, was the emperor at the time of Christ's crucifixion. He was followed by the "Monster" emperor Caligula (AD 37-41). After Caligula was killed, Claudius (AD 41-54) was chosen to be emperor by the Praetorian Guard. He was emperor during the great famine when Paul and Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem with add to the Christians living there (Acts 11:28). Nero (54-68) came to the throne at age 17 after his mother Agrippina poisoned Claudius.

Nero was the first to persecute Christians. He blamed them for the fire in Rome in AD 64. Nero was emperor when Paul and Peter were executed in Rome. He became emperor during Paul's third missionary journey. Nero committed suicide by falling on his sword after being chased from Rome by his own guard. He was only 30 years old. Rome fell into a civil war after his death.



AD sixty-nine was the year of four emperors. The last of which was Vespasian (AD 69-79). He was a strong leader and brought order to the Roman Empire. His son Titus was the general who destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem in AD 70.

During Vespasian's reign work began on the Flavian Amphitheater, later to be called the Colosseum. It was completed in AD 80 when Titus (79-81) was emperor. Many Christians died in the Colosseum. Titus' brother Domitian (81-96) ruled Rome after his brother died of a fever. Many believed that Domitian murdered his brother.



The five Good Emperors, Nerva (96-98), Trajan (98-117), Hadrian (117-138), Antonius Pius (138-161) and Marcus Aurelius (161-180) ruled Rome for the next 84 years. The death of Emperor Aurelius the period in Roman history known as the Pax Romana, "The Peace of Rome" The 217 years between the reigns of Augustus and Marcus Aurelius—37 BC to AD 180.

The Bar Kokhba revolt took place between 134 and 136 under the reign of Emperor Hadrian. It was the third Jewish revolt against the Romans. The first was in AD 70 and the second was known as the Kitos War between 115 and 117.

After the Bar Kakhba revolt was ended, Hadrian sought to root out Jewish nationalism in Judea. He prohibited the Torah law. He executed Judaic scholars. He sought to erase the memory of the Jewish people. He destroyed the city of Jerusalem. He removed Judea from the map and changed the name of Judea to Syria Palaestina. The area was lost as a homeland of the Jews until modern times.



I Outline

I. Introduction (1:1-10)

- A. Greeting to the churches of Galatia (1:1-5)
- B. Purpose for the writing of the letter (1:6-10)

II. Defense of Paul's Apostleship (1:11-2:14)

- A. Source of Paul's Apostleship (1:11-12)
- B. History of Paul's Conversion (1:13-17)
- C. Relation of Paul to Other Apostles (1:18-2:14)
 - 1. Paul's first contact with other apostles (1:18-24)
 - 2. Paul's second trip to Jerusalem (2:1-10)
 - 3. Paul's opposition to Peter (2:11-14)

III. Exposition of Justification by Faith (2:15-4:31)

- A. Principle of Justification by Faith (2:15-21)
- B. Experience of the Galatians (3:1-5)
- C. Experience of Abraham (3:6-29)
- D. Method of Justification (4:1-31)

IV. Results of Justification by Faith (5:1-6:10)

- A. Freedom from the Law (5:1-12)
- B. Freedom from Sin (5:13-26)
- C. Freedom to Do Good (6:1-10)

V. Salutation (6:11-18)

- A. Motives of the Judaizers (6:11-13)
- B. Motives of Paul (6:14-17)
- C. Benediction (6:18)

J. Examination of Key Passages.

A. Paul Defends the True Gospel (Galatian 1:6-8)

"I am astonished. . ." *thaumazo* - "to wonder", "marvel", "to be amazed." The word is used 43 times in the New Testament.

The contrast between another ("different") gospel and which is not another ("not even") gospel

The first word is *heteros* and means another of a different kind. The second word is *allos* and means another of the same kind.

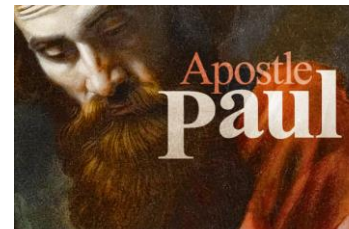
"Distort" *metastrepho* - the Greek word *strepho* means "to turn," "to turn around" "to change." When the word *meta* is attached to it, it becomes stronger and means "to twist," "to distort." The KJV uses the word "pervert."

"Troubling" *Tarasso* - "trouble," "disturb," "upset," terrify, "frighten," "stir up."

"Under a curse" *anathema* - "a curse," "the curse of God. A curse is a solemn utterance intended to invoke a supernatural power to inflict harm or punishment on someone or something.

B. The Defense of Paul's Apostleship (1:11-2:14)

Paul gives the account of his exceptional conversion. He claims that he met the risen Christ on the road to Damascus. Paul asserts that he received the gospel message from Jesus Christ directly, which was a requirement of an Apostle.



Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:8-10. "And last of all he appeared to me also as to one abnormally born. For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God was with me.

Paul was received by the Apostles that were chosen before him. The history of Paul's conversion and his eventual acceptance by the other Apostles and church leaders led them to accept Paul on an equal basis. Paul seems to clearly be God's choice to replace Judas among the twelve Apostles.

Paul's conflict with Peter over his hypocrisy was a clear indication of Paul's apostolic authority. Peter was exercising his freedom in Christ in Antioch. When Jews came from Jerusalem to visit the church in Antioch, Peter would go back to practicing Judaism.

Paul explains the theological basis for his confrontation with Peter. He proclaims that Christians are saved by faith and live by faith. They are not under the law in either case.

C. Exposition of Justification by Faith (2:15-4:31)

Paul rebukes the Galatians for abandoning the gospel of grace. "You foolish Galatians! Who hath bewitched you?"

Paul gives a lengthy exposition of how Christians are justified by faith and not by law. Paul explains that the purpose of the law was not to justify sinners.

The promise to Abraham that justification is by faith was not cancelled by the Law, which came 430 years after Abraham.

D. Results of Justification by Faith (5:1-6:10)

Paul moves to the matter of the spiritual life of Christians after they are justified by faith. Just as Christians are not saved by the law, they also do not live by the law. The Christian life is lived by grace, not by law.

The key verse of the passage is "So I say live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature." (Galatians 5:16)

E. Salutation (6:11-18)

Paul closes the letter by encouraging the Galatians to do good works. He shows his concern for those who he has brought to Christ by writing to them in his own hand.

Galatians

Chapter 1

¹Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead—²and all the brothers with me,

To the churches of Galatia:

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

⁶I am amazed how quickly you are deserting the One who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—⁷which is not even a gospel. Evidently some people are troubling you and trying to distort the gospel of Christ.

⁸But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be under a curse! ⁹As 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 under a curse!

¹⁰Am I now seeking the approval of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ. ¹¹For I certify to you, brothers, that the gospel I preached was not devised by man. ¹²I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

¹³For you have heard of my former way of life in Judaism, how severely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

¹⁵But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by His grace, was pleased ¹⁶to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not rush to consult with flesh and blood, ¹⁷nor did I go up to Jerusalem to the apostles who came before me, but I went into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.

18Only after three years did I go up to Jerusalem to confer with Cephas, and I stayed with him fifteen days. 19But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. 20I assure you before God that what I am writing to you is no lie.

21Later I went to the regions of Syria and Cilicia. 22I was personally unknown, however, to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. 23They only heard the account: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." 24And they glorified God because of me.



Chapter 2

¹Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, accompanied by Barnabas. I took Titus along also. ²I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I spoke privately to those recognized as leaders, for fear that I was running or had already run in vain. ³Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek.

⁴This issue arose because some false brothers had come in under false pretenses to spy on our freedom in Christ Jesus, in order to enslave us. ⁵We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.

⁶But as for the highly esteemed—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism—those leaders added nothing to me. ⁷On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted to preach the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised. ⁸For the One who was at work in Peter's apostleship to the circumcised was also at work in my apostleship to the Gentiles.

⁹And recognizing the grace that I had been given, James, Cephas, and John—those reputed to be pillars—gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. ¹⁰They only asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

¹¹When Cephas came to Antioch, however, I opposed him to his face, because he stood to be condemned. ¹²For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself, for fear of those in the circumcision group. ¹³The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

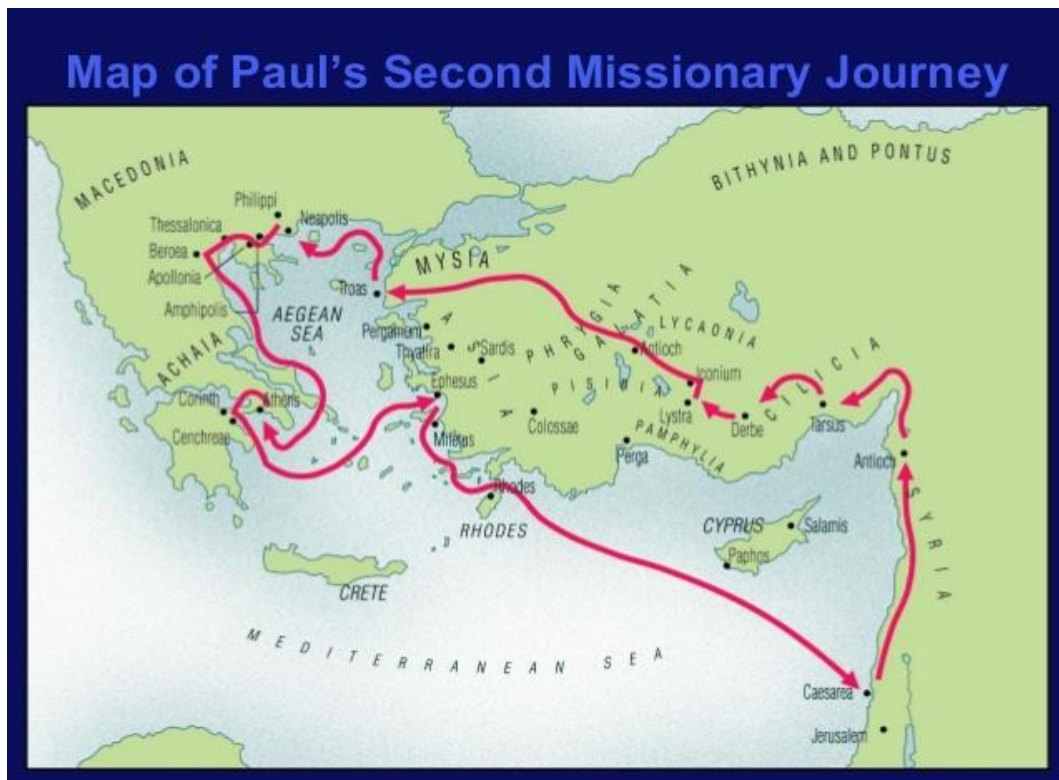
¹⁴When I saw that they were not walking in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, "If you, who are a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

¹⁵We who are Jews by birth and not Gentile "sinners" ¹⁶know that a man is not justified by works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So, we, too, have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

¹⁷But if, while we seek to be justified in Christ, we ourselves are found to be sinners, does that make Christ a minister of sin? Certainly not! ¹⁸If I rebuild what I have already torn down, I prove myself to be a lawbreaker.

¹⁹For through the law I died to the law so that I might live to God. ²⁰I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by

faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God. For if righteousness comes through the law, Christ died for nothing.



Chapter 3

¹O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. ²I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith?

³Are you so foolish? After starting in the Spirit, are you now finishing in the flesh? ⁴Have you suffered so much for nothing, if it really was for nothing? ⁵Does God lavish His Spirit on you and work miracles among you because you practice the law, or because you hear and believe?

⁶So also, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." ⁷Understand, then, that those who have faith are sons of Abraham. ⁸The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and foretold the gospel to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." ⁹So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

¹⁰All who rely on works of the law are under a curse. For it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." ¹¹Now it is clear that no one is justified before God by the law, because "The righteous will live by faith." ¹²The law, however, is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them."

¹³Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. For it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." ¹⁴He redeemed us in order that the blessing promised to Abraham would come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

¹⁵Brothers, let me put this in human terms. Even a human covenant, once it is ratified, cannot be canceled or amended. ¹⁶The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say, "and to seeds," meaning many, but "and to your seed," meaning One, who is Christ.

¹⁷What I mean is this: The law that came 430 years later does not revoke the covenant previously established by God, so as to nullify the promise. ¹⁸For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God freely granted it to Abraham through a promise.

¹⁹Why then was the law given? It was added because of transgressions, until the arrival of the seed to whom the promise referred. It was administered through angels by a mediator. ²⁰A mediator is unnecessary, however, for only one party; but God is one.

²¹Is the law, then, opposed to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come from the law.

22But the Scripture pronounces all things confined by sin, so that by faith in Jesus Christ the promise might be given to those who believe.

23Before this faith came, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. 24So the law became our guardian to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25Now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

26You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.



Chapter 4

¹What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he is the owner of everything. ²He is subject to guardians and trustees until the date set by his father.

³So also, when we were children, we were enslaved under the basic principles of the world. ⁴But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those under the law, that we might receive our adoption as sons. ⁶And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” ⁷So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, you are also an heir through God.

⁸Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. ⁹But now that you know God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you are turning back to those weak and worthless principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? ¹⁰You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! ¹¹I fear for you, that my efforts for you may have been in vain. ¹²I beg you, brothers, become like me, for I became like you. You have done me no wrong.

¹³You know that it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you. ¹⁴And although my illness was a trial to you, you did not despise or reject me. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus Himself. ¹⁵What then has become of your blessing? For I can testify that, if it were possible, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. ¹⁶Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?

¹⁷Those people are zealous for you, but not in a good way. Instead, they want to isolate you from us, so that you may be zealous for them. ¹⁸Nevertheless, it is good to be zealous if it serves a noble purpose—at any time, and not only when I am with you.

¹⁹My children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, ²⁰how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you.

²¹Tell me, you who want to be under the law, do you not understand what the law says? ²²For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. ²³His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born through the promise.

²⁴These things serve as illustrations, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children into slavery: This is Hagar. ²⁵Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present-day Jerusalem, because

she is in slavery with her children. ²⁶But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. ²⁷For it is written:

“Rejoice, O barren woman,
who bears no children;
break forth and cry aloud,
you who have never travailed;
because more are the children of the desolate woman
than of her who has a husband.”

²⁸Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. ²⁹At that time, however, the son born by the flesh persecuted the son born by the Spirit. It is the same now.

³⁰But what does the Scripture say? “Expel the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman’s son.” ³¹Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.



Chapter 5

¹It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not be encumbered once more by a yoke of slavery.

²Take notice: I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. ³Again I testify to every man who gets himself circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. ⁴You who are trying to be justified by the law have been severed from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

⁵But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the hope of righteousness. ⁶For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. All that matters is faith, expressed through love.

⁷You were running so well. Who has obstructed you from obeying the truth? ⁸Such persuasion does not come from the One who calls you. ⁹A little leaven works through the whole batch of dough. ¹⁰I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is troubling you will bear the judgment, whoever he may be.

¹¹Now, brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished. ¹²As for those who are agitating you, I wish they would proceed to emasculate themselves!

¹³For you, brothers, were called to freedom; but do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh. Rather, serve one another in love. ¹⁴The entire law is fulfilled in a single decree: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵But if you keep on biting and devouring one another, watch out, or you will be consumed by one another.

¹⁶So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh craves what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are opposed to each other, so that you do not do what you want. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

¹⁹The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery; ²⁰idolatry and sorcery; hatred, discord, jealousy, and rage; rivalries, divisions, factions, ²¹and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵Since we live by the Spirit, let us walk in step with the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying one another.

Chapter 6

¹Brothers, if someone is caught in a trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him with a spirit of gentleness. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. ²Carry one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

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

⁴Each one should test his own work. Then he will have reason to boast in himself alone, and not in someone else. ⁵For each one should carry his own load. ⁶Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word must share in all good things with his instructor.

⁷Do not be deceived: God is not to be mocked. Whatever a man sows, he will reap in return. ⁸The one who sows to please his flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; but the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

⁹Let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to the family of faith.

¹¹See what large letters I am using to write to you with my own hand!

¹²Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. They only do this to avoid persecution for the cross of Christ. ¹³For the circumcised do not even keep the law themselves, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.

¹⁴But as for me, may I never boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything. What counts is a new creation.

¹⁶Peace and mercy to all who walk by this rule, even to the Israel of God.

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

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

Amen.

The Council at Jerusalem

¹ Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." ² This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. ³ The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad. ⁴ When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

⁵ Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses."

⁶ The apostles and elders met to consider this question. ⁷ After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. ⁸ God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. ⁹ He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. ¹⁰ Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? ¹¹ No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."

¹² The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. ¹³ When they finished, James spoke up. "Brothers," he said, "listen to me. ¹⁴ Simon^[a] has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. ¹⁵ The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

¹⁶ "After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it,¹⁷ that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord even all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things'^[b]—¹⁸ things known from long ago.^[c]

¹⁹ "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. ²⁰ Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. ²¹ For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath."

The Council's Letter to Gentile Believers

²² Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, men who were leaders among the believers. ²³ With them they sent the following letter:

The apostles and elders, your brothers,

To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia:

Greetings.

²⁴ We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. ²⁵ So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul— ²⁶ men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷ Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. ²⁸ It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: ²⁹ You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.

Farewell.

³⁰ So the men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. ³¹ The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. ³² Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers. ³³ After spending some time there, they were sent off by the believers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them. ^[34] ^[d] ³⁵ But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

Disagreement Between Paul and Barnabas

³⁶ Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." ³⁷ Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, ³⁸ but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. ³⁹ They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, ⁴⁰ but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. ⁴¹ He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

<i>The First Emperors</i>	
27BC-AD14 Augustus	AD69-79 Vespasian
AD14-37 Tiberius	AD79-81 Titus
AD37-41 Gaius (Caligula)	AD81-96 Domitian
AD41-54 Claudius	AD96-98 Nerva
AD54-68 Nero	AD98-117 Trajan
AD64 Great fire of Rome	AD117-138 Hadrian
AD69 Year of the four emperors	AD138-161 Antoninus Pius
	AD161-180 Marcus Aurelius

K Conclusion

Examining the life of the Apostle Paul and his epistle to the Galatian churches is an exhilarating experience. One is actually reading an authentic letter written almost 2000 years ago by one of the foremost founders of the Christian Church.

In this epistle the very fundamental elements of the Christian faith are clearly presented. Paul plainly presents and strongly defends the greatest message to ever exist about the greatest story ever told—life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Today, the ones who have accepted this message of good news and call themselves by the name of Christ, have been given the responsibility to treat the gospel as the Apostle Paul did. He provides the highest example of how Christians should live their lives.

