

Galatians

AUTHOR: Paul

TIME WRITTEN: If A.D. 53-56 then from Ephesus
If A.D. 56 then from Macedonia

POSITION IN THE BIBLE:

- 48th Book in the Bible
- 9th book in the New Testament
- 4th of 21 epistles books
- 5th of Paul's 13 books
- 47 have preceded it. 18 to follow it.

CHAPTERS: 6

VERSES: 149

WORDS: 3,098

KEY WORD: Freedom from the Law

TWO KEY PASSAGES:

1. **Galatians 2:20-21** - "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.
I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."
2. **Galatians 5:1** - "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

KEY CHAPTER: Galatians 5

1. The impact of the truth concerning freedom is staggering: freedom must not be used "as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another" (**5:13**)
2. Galatians 5 records:
 - a. The **POWER** of the freedom: "Walk in the Spirit." **5:16**
 - b. The **RESULTS** of that freedom: "the fruit of the Spirit." **5:22**

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT GALATIANS

1. It appears that Paul did the actual writing of the book of Galatians rather than dictating it to a secretary, as was his usual practice.
 - a. **Galatians 5:2** - "Indeed, I, Paul say to you . . ."
 - b. **Galatians 6:11** - "See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!"
2. The term "Galatia" was used in two senses:
 - a. An ethnographic sense (that is, cultural and geographic origin) and in a political sense
 - b. A political sense.

3. The original **ETHNOGRAPHIC** sense refers to the central part of Asia Minor where these Celtic tribes eventually settled after their conflicts with the Romans and Macedonians.
 - a. Later, in 189 B.C. the Galatia came under Roman domination.
 - b. In 25 B.C. Augustus Caesar declared it a Roman province.
4. The **POLITICAL** or provincial Galatia included territory to the south that was not originally considered part of Galatia. For example: the cities of Pisidian Antioch (Antioch of Pisidia), Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.
5. There are two theories regarding the date and setting of Galatians.
 - a. **The North Galatian Theory**
 1. The North Galatian theory holds that Paul was speaking of Galatia in its earlier, more restricted sense.
 2. According to this theory, the churches of Galatia were north of the cities Paul visited in his first missionary journey.
 3. Paul visited the ethnographic Galatia (the smaller region of the north) for the first time on his second missionary journey, probably while he was on his way to Troas in Acts 16:6.
 4. According to Acts 18:23, Paul revisited the Galatian churches he had established.
 5. At which time he wrote the Galatian letter in Ephesus (A.D. 53-56) or in Macedonia (A.D. 56)
 - b. **The Southern Galatian theory**
 1. According to the Southern Galatian theory, Paul was referring to Galatia in its wider political sense as a province of Rome.
 2. This means that the churches he had in mind in this epistle were the cities he evangelized during his first missionary journey with Barnabas (Acts 13:13 - 14:23)
 3. This was just prior to the Jerusalem Council (Acts 17), so the Jerusalem visit in Galatians 2:1-10 must have been the Acts 11:27-30 famine-relief visit.
 4. Galatians was probably written in Antioch of Syria in A.D. 49 just before Paul went to the Council in Jerusalem.
6. Paul wrote the Galatian epistle in response to a report that the Galatian churches were suddenly taken over by the false teaching of certain Judiazers who professed Jesus yet sought to place Gentile converts under the requirements of the Mosaic Law (1:7; 4:17-21; 5:2-12; 6:12-16).
7. The Book of Galatians has been called “The Christian’s Declaration of Independence.”

SUMMARY OF GALATIANS

INTRODUCTION:

A. The Epistle to the Galatians has been called “the Magna Carta of Christian liberty.”

1. Paul directs this great charter of Christian freedom to a people who are willing to give up the priceless liberty they possess in Christ.
2. The oppressive theology of certain Jewish legalizers has been causing Christians in Galatia to trade their freedom in Christ for bondage to the law.
3. Paul writes this forceful epistle to do away with the false teachings of those Judaizing teachers.
4. Christ has freed the Christian from the bondage of the law and sin and has placed him in a position of liberty.
6. The Galatians were to move forward . . . not backward.

B. There are three major sections in the book:

1. The Gospel of Grace Defended. (1-2)
2. The Gospel of Grace Explained. (3-4)
3. The Gospel of Grace Applied. (5-6)

THE GOSPEL OF GRACE DEFENDED. (1-2)

A. Paul affirms His divinely given apostleship (1:1-5) and then begins to present the gospel because it has been distorted by false teachers among the Galatians (1:6-10).

1. Paul affirms that he had not received the gospel message from men, but rather, he received it directly from God (1:11-24).
2. When he submits his teaching of Christian liberty to the apostles in Jerusalem, they all acknowledge the validity and authority of his message (2:1-10).

B. Paul had to correct Peter in a matter at Antioch (2:11-12).

THE GOSPEL OF GRACE EXPLAINED. (3-4)

A. In this section of the book, Paul uses eight lines of reasoning to show the superiority of Christianity over the Law.

1. The Galatians began by faith, and their growth in Christ must continue to be by faith. 3:1-5
2. Abraham was justified by faith. (3:6-9)
3. Christ has redeemed us from the law, and not “the just shall live by faith”. 3:10-14
4. The promise made to Abraham was not nullified by the Law. 3:15-18
5. The law was given to make man aware of sin. The gospel was given to reveal how to remove the sin. 3:19-22

6. Christians are adopted sons of God and are no longer bound by the law. 3:23 - 4:7
7. The Galatians must recognize their inconsistency and regain their original freedom in Christ. 4:8-20
8. Abraham's two sons allegorically reveal the superiority of the Abrahamic promise to the Mosaic Law. 4:21-31

THE GOSPEL OF GRACE APPLIED. (5-6)

- A. The Judaizers seek to place the Galatians under bondage to their perverted gospel of being justified by the law, but Paul warns them that law and grace are two contrary principles (5:1-12).
1. The Christian is not only set free from bondage of law, but he is also set free from the bondage of sin.
 2. Liberty is not an excuse to indulge in the deeds of the flesh; rather, it provokes the privilege of bearing the fruit of the Spirit.
 3. The letter closes with a contrast between the Judaizers—who are motivated by pride and a desire to avoid persecution—and Paul, who has suffered for the true gospel, but boasts only in Christ. 6:11-18