



# The Epistle To The Galatians



**A Study Guide With Introductory Comments,  
Summaries, Outlines, And Review Questions**

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# The Epistle To The Galatians

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This study guide was developed in preparation for teaching adult Bible classes.

- ♦ The objectives for each section are usually things I plan to emphasize during the class.
- ♦ I have found that summarizing and outlining helps me to better understand the Word of God. It is a practice I highly recommend to others.
- ♦ I generally delete the answers to the review questions before printing the material and giving it to the students. But that you might know what answers were intended by the questions, I have included them in these guides.

This material is from **ExecutableOutlines.com**, a web site containing sermon outlines and Bible studies by Mark A. Copeland. Visit the web site to browse or download additional material for church or personal use.

The outlines were developed in the course of my ministry as a preacher of the gospel. Feel free to use them as they are, or adapt them to suit your own personal style. To God be the glory!

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# The Epistle To The Galatians

## Introduction

### AUTHOR

The apostle **Paul (1:1; 5:2)**. This was the unanimous view of the early church, and even those modern critics who challenge the authorship of many of the New Testament books concede that Galatians is truly Pauline.

### BACKGROUND OF THE EPISTLE

During his first missionary journey (46-48 A.D.), Paul together with Barnabas had the opportunity to establish several churches in the Roman province of Galatia (**Ac 13:14-14:23**). On his second trip (49-52 A.D.), Paul and Silas visited them again (**Ac 16:1-5**).

It wasn't long, however, before some Jewish Christians came in and began teaching that Gentile Christians needed to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses (similar to what happened at Antioch of Syria, cf. **Ac 15:1**). In an effort to persuade the Galatians, it appears the tactic was to discredit Paul as an apostle, challenge his concept of the gospel of Christ, and charge his doctrine with leading to loose living.

### TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING

Dating Galatians is affected by one's view of whether the churches of Galatia were located in the north central part of Asia Minor (ethnic Galatia), or in the south central part (the Roman province of Galatia). The "**North Galatia Theory**" maintains that the churches were in the north, and that Paul had not been there until the beginning of his third missionary journey (54-55 A.D.; cf. **Ac 18:23**). This would require that Paul wrote his epistle sometime toward the end of that journey, or afterward (i.e., around 57-58 A.D. or later).

I subscribe to the "**South Galatia Theory**", which identifies the churches of Galatia as those established on Paul's first journey (cf. **Ac 13:14-14:23**). I also believe that the meeting described in **Ga 2:1-10** took place during the "Jerusalem Conference" related in **Ac 15:1-29**. This view opens several possibilities for the place and time of writing:

- ◆ Corinth, in the period of **Ac 18:1-17**
- ◆ Antioch, in the period of **Ac 18:22**
- ◆ Ephesus, in the period covered by **Ac 19:1-41**
- ◆ Macedonia or Achaia in the period of **Ac 20:1-3**

With such uncertainty one cannot be dogmatic, but in view of Paul's lengthy stay in **Ephesus**, that would seem a likely possibility, and the date would be approximately **A.D. 55**.

## **PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE**

The churches in Galatia were being influenced by those who would "pervert the gospel of Christ" (**1:6-7**; cf. **3:1**). Known as "Judaizing teachers", these individuals taught that Gentile Christians needed to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses (cf. **Ac 15:1**). Paul recognized that this doctrine would jeopardize the salvation of those souls who accepted it (cf. **5:4**). Because the enemies of the true gospel were trying to support their case by undermining Paul's authority as an apostle of Christ, it was necessary to verify that he was truly an apostle "not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father" (**1:1**). Therefore, Paul writes:

### **TO VERIFY HIS APOSTLESHIP AND THE GOSPEL OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH IN CHRIST**

Because of his outstanding defense of the gospel of Christ in which we have freedom from sin and the Law, this epistle has frequently been called "The Magna Carta Of Christian Liberty."

## **KEY VERSE: Galatians 5:1**

*"Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage."*

## **OUTLINE**

### **INTRODUCTION (1:1-10)**

1. Salutation (**1-5**)
2. Reason for the letter (**6-10**)

### **I. PAUL'S DEFENSE OF HIS APOSTLESHIP (1:11-2:21)**

#### **A. THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF HIS GOSPEL (1:11-17)**

1. Thesis: His gospel received directly from God (**1:11-12**)
2. His pre-Christian years, and conversion (**1:13-17**)

#### **B. HIS RELATIONSHIP TO THE OTHER APOSTLES (1:18-2:21)**

1. His first visit with Peter, and early years as a Christian (**1:18-24**)
2. The council at Jerusalem (**2:1-5**)
3. His sanction by James, Cephas, and John (**2:6-10**)
4. His rebuke of Peter at Antioch (**2:11-21**)
  - a. Peter's hypocrisy (**2:11-13**)
  - b. His speech to Peter, how we are justified by faith in Christ (**2:14-21**)

## **II. PAUL'S DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH (3:1-4:31)**

### **A. THE PERSONAL ARGUMENT (3:1-5)**

1. How they received the Spirit (3:1-4)
2. From whom they received the Spirit (3:5)

### **B. THE SCRIPTURAL ARGUMENT (3:6-25)**

1. The example of Abraham (3:6-9)
2. The curse of the Law (3:10-14)
3. The priority of the Promise over the Law (3:15-18)
4. The purpose of the Law (3:19-25)

### **C. THE PRACTICAL ARGUMENT (3:26-4:7)**

1. In Christ they are one, as children of God, Abraham's seed, and heirs of the promise (3:26-29)
2. Redeemed from the law, and adopted as sons, they are no longer slaves, but heirs (4:1-7)

### **D. THE SENTIMENTAL ARGUMENT (4:8-20)**

1. His fears over their returning to bondage (4:8-11)
2. Their past and present relationships to him (4:12-20)

### **E. THE ALLEGORICAL ARGUMENT (4:21-31)**

1. An allegory for those who desire to be under the Law (4:21-24a)
2. Symbolic of the two covenants; one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, and the other from the Jerusalem above which makes free (24b-31)

## **III. THE CALL TO STAND FAST IN THE LIBERTY OF THE GOSPEL (5:1-6:10)**

### **A. A LIBERTY THAT EXCLUDES THE NECESSITY OF CIRCUMCISION (5:1-6)**

1. Do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage (5:1)
2. Circumcision means nothing; requiring it results in falling from grace (5:2-4)
3. We should wait for the hope of righteousness with faith working through love (5:5-6)

### **B. A LIBERTY THAT FULFILLS THE LAW (5:7-15)**

1. Beware of those who would bind the Law (5:7-12)
2. Use your liberty as an opportunity to serve one another with love, and you will fulfill the Law (5:13-14)
3. But beware that you do not use it as an opportunity for the flesh in which you consume one another (5:13b,15)

### **C. A LIBERTY IN WHICH ONE IS TO BE LED BY THE SPIRIT (5:16-26)**

1. Liberty is not an excuse for license (5:16-18)
2. The works of the flesh contrasted with the fruits of the Spirit (5:19-23)
3. Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh and are walking in the Spirit (5:24-26)

**D. A LIBERTY WITH A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY (6:1-10)**

1. For helping those with burdens (6:1-5)
2. For doing good to all, thus sowing to the Spirit (6:6-10)

**CONCLUSION (6:11-18)**

1. A final rebuke to those who would bind circumcision (6:11-13)
2. Paul's confidence in the cross of Christ (6:14-17)
3. Benediction (6:18)

**REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE INTRODUCTION**

- 1) **According to the "South Galatia Theory", on which journey did Paul establish the churches in Galatia?**
  - His first journey
- 2) **Where does one read about the establishment of these churches?**
  - Ac 13:14-14:23
- 3) **What are some of the cities in which these churches were located? (14:20-23)**
  - Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia
- 4) **Among the many possibilities for the place of writing and time of this epistle, which one seems likely because of Paul's extended stay at that place?**
  - Ephesus, on his third missionary journey, A.D. 55
- 5) **What two things were being required of the Gentile Christians that jeopardized their salvation? (cf. Ac 15:1; Ga 5:2-4)**
  - Circumcision
  - Observance of the Law of Moses
- 6) **What three tactics appear to have been used by "Judaizing teachers"?**
  - Discredit Paul as an apostle
  - Challenge his concept of the gospel of Christ
  - Charge his doctrine with leading to loose living
- 7) **What is Paul's purpose in writing this epistle?**
  - To verify his apostleship and the gospel of justification by faith in Christ
- 8) **What has The Epistle To The Galatians been frequently called?**
  - The Magna Carta Of Christian Liberty
- 9) **Which verse in the book stands out as the "key" verse?**
  - Ga 5:1

# The Epistle To The Galatians

## Chapter One

### OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To understand the divine origin of Paul's apostleship
- 2) To appreciate the danger of twisting the gospel of Christ

### SUMMARY

Paul begins his letter to the churches of Galatia immediately addressing a key issue of the epistle: that he is an apostle "not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ..." (1). Joined by unnamed brethren, he sends grace and peace from God and Christ, making reference to the deliverance made possible by Jesus' death for our sins in keeping with God's will (2-4). This in turns leads to a short doxology (5).

Without any thanksgiving or prayer for his recipients as found in other epistles, Paul expresses his amazement that they are so soon turning to a different gospel being offered by those who wish to pervert the gospel of Christ (6-7). This is followed by a condemnation repeated for emphasis of anyone, even an apostle or angel, who would preach a different gospel than they had already received (8-9). Strong words, yes, but as a servant of Christ Paul is seeking to please God, not man (10).

The gospel preached by Paul was being twisted by those who challenged his authority as an apostle. Therefore Paul proceeds to defend both the gospel and his apostleship by stressing that his gospel was by revelation, and not from man (11-12). As evidence, Paul relates his conduct prior to his conversion, and how by the grace of God he was called to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (13-14). That his gospel was not from man is supported by the scarcity of opportunities he had to be around Peter or the other apostles (15-20). In the early years after his conversion, most of his time was spent in Syria and Cilicia, with the churches of Judea knowing Paul only by what they heard. And what they heard led them to glorify God (21-24)!

### OUTLINE

#### I. INTRODUCTION (1-10)

##### A. SALUTATION (1-5)

1. From Paul, an apostle, and those with him, to the churches of Galatia (1-2)
2. With a desire for them to have grace and peace from God and Jesus (3)
3. With mention of Christ's sacrifice for our sins, designed to deliver us from this evil age, in keeping with God's will, to Whom be glory forever (4-5)

##### B. REASON FOR THE LETTER (6-10)

1. He is amazed that they are turning from the One who called them in the grace of Christ, to a different and perverted gospel (**6-7**)
2. A repeated condemnation against anyone (man, apostle, or angel) who would preach a different gospel than what they had already received (**8-9**)
3. Strong words, yes, but coming from one who seeks to serve Christ, not man (**10**)

## **II. PAUL'S DEFENSE OF HIS APOSTLESHIP (11-24)**

### **A. THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF HIS GOSPEL (11-17)**

1. His gospel was not according to man, or from man, but directly from Jesus Christ (**11-12**)
2. A review of his conduct in Judaism prior to conversion (**13-14**)
3. Upon his conversion, an act of Divine revelation itself, he did not confer with man, especially the apostles in Jerusalem (**15-17a**)
4. But went to Arabia, and then returned to Damascus (**17b**)

### **B. HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER APOSTLES (18-24)**

1. After three years he went to Jerusalem to see Peter, and only then for fifteen days (**18**)
  - a. He saw none of the other apostles, except James, the Lord's brother (**19**)
  - b. With a solemn declaration he affirms these things to be true (**20**)
2. Then he went to the regions of Syria and Cilicia (**21**)
  - a. Remaining unknown by face to the churches of Judea (**22**)
  - b. They heard only of his preaching brought about by his conversion, and they glorified God in him (**23-24**)

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER**

### **1) What are the main points of this chapter?**

- Introduction (1-10)
- Paul's defense of his apostleship (11-24)

### **2) In identifying himself as an apostle, what point does Paul stress? (1)**

- It was not from men nor through man
- But through Jesus Christ and God the Father

### **3) To whom is this epistle written? (2)**

- To the churches of Galatia

### **4) Why did Jesus give Himself for our sins? (4)**

- That He might deliver us from this present evil age

### **5) Why did Paul marvel? (6)**

- That the Galatians were turning away so soon from God to a different gospel

### **6) What were those who were troubling them actually doing? (7)**

- Seeking to pervert the gospel of Christ



- 7) What does Paul say of those who would preach a different gospel? (8-9)**
  - Let them be accursed
  
- 8) Who was Paul seeking to please? Why? (10)**
  - God, not man
  - Otherwise he would not be a servant of Christ
  
- 9) What does Paul stress about the gospel he preached? (11-12)**
  - It is not according to man (neither received from man, nor was taught it)
  - It came through the revelation of Jesus Christ
  
- 10) What did Paul remind them concerning his former conduct in Judaism? (13-14)**
  - How he persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it
  - How he advanced in Judaism beyond many of his contemporaries
  
- 11) Why did God call Paul and reveal His Son in him? (15-16)**
  - To preach Christ among the Gentiles
  
- 12) Where did Paul NOT go after his conversion? (17)**
  - To Jerusalem and the apostles who were there
  
- 13) How long was it before Paul saw any of the apostles in Jerusalem? Which ones did he see? (18-19)**
  - Three years
  - Peter, and James, the Lord's brother
  
- 14) Where did he go then? (21)**
  - The regions of Syria and Cilicia
  
- 15) What three things are said about Paul's connection with the churches of Judea? (22-24)**
  - He was unknown by face to them
  - They were only hearing about his preaching
  - They glorified God because of Paul

# The Epistle To The Galatians

## Chapter Two

### OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To understand why Paul would refuse to circumcise Titus (but then had Timothy circumcised later, as recorded in **Acts 16:1-3**)
- 2) To appreciate why it was necessary for Paul to rebuke Peter to his face
- 3) To understand why if righteousness comes by the law, then Christ's death was in vain

### SUMMARY

As Paul continues defending his apostleship, he describes a meeting in Jerusalem fourteen years after the one with Peter related in chapter one. It was prompted by a revelation, and Barnabas and Titus went with him to meet "those who were of reputation". The meeting was private, but some false brethren were secretly brought in who sought to demand that Titus, a Gentile, be circumcised. Paul refused, viewing it as an effort to bring them back into bondage from which Christ set them free (**1-5**).

The result of the meeting was that "those who seemed to be something" added nothing to Paul. In fact, once they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcised had been given to him just as the gospel of the circumcised had been given to Peter, and once James, Cephas, and John perceived the grace that had been given to Paul, he was extended the right hand of fellowship. They only asked that Paul be mindful of the poor, something he was very eager to do (**6-10**).

The rest of the chapter describes a confrontation in Antioch between Peter and Paul. Peter, who was visiting, at first was willing to eat with the Gentiles; but when some came from James, out of fear he withdrew himself. Through his influence the rest of the Jews, even Barnabas, were carried away into hypocrisy. This prompted Paul to withstand Peter "to his face", and to rebuke him in the presence of all. In the course of his rebuke, Paul stressed that we are justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law, otherwise Christ died in vain (**11-24**).

### OUTLINE

#### I. THE MEETING AT JERUSALEM (1-10)

##### A. IN PRIVATE, WITH THOSE OF REPUTATION (1-5)

1. Occurring fourteen years later, accompanied by Barnabas and Titus (**1**)
2. Spurred to go by revelation, he communicated the gospel he had preached (**2**)
3. Refused to allow Titus to be circumcised, as some brethren desired who were secretly brought in to the meeting (**3-5**)

## **B. HIS SANCTION BY JAMES, CEPHAS, AND JOHN (6-10)**

1. Those who seemed to be something (reputation really made no difference) did not add anything to Paul (6)
2. When those of reputation saw...
  - a. That the gospel of the uncircumcised had been committed to Paul just as the gospel of the circumcised was to Peter (7-8)
  - b. That James, Cephas, and John perceived the grace given to Paul ...they extended the right hand of fellowship to Paul and Barnabas (9)
3. They asked only that the poor be remembered, something Paul was very eager to do (10)

## **II. THE CONFRONTATION AT ANTIOCH (11-21)**

### **A. PETER'S HYPOCRISY (11-13)**

1. Paul had to withstand Peter to the face, because he would not eat with Gentiles when those from James came to Antioch (11-12)
2. Peter's example of hypocrisy influenced other Jews, even Barnabas (13)

### **B. PAUL'S REBUKE (14-21)**

1. Peter's hypocrisy (14)
  - a. He himself, though Jewish, lived as a Gentile
  - b. Yet he was compelling Gentiles to live as Jews
2. A summary of Paul's rebuke (15-21)
  - a. Jewish Christians realize that they are justified by faith in Christ, not by the works of the law by which no flesh can be justified (15-16)
  - b. If I seek to be justified by Christ through a means which cannot justify, isn't that making Christ a minister of sin? (17)
  - c. If I rebuild that which cannot justify and has been destroyed (i.e., the law), won't I become a transgressor again? (18)
  - d. Through the law, I have died to the law, having been crucified with Christ; Christ now lives in me and the life I now live to God is a life of faith in the Son of God (19-20)
  - e. If righteousness comes through the law, Christ died in vain, and the grace of God has been set aside (21)

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER**

### **1) What are the main points of this chapter?**

- The meeting at Jerusalem (1-10)
- The confrontation at Antioch (11-21)

### **2) How long was it before Paul returned to Jerusalem? Who went with him? (1)**

- Fourteen years
- Barnabas and Titus

### **3) What prompted him to go? What did he do there? (2)**

- A revelation; communicated to those of reputation the gospel he preached among the Gentiles

- 4) What did some who were secretly brought in to this meeting try to get Paul to do? Did Paul submit to their command? (3-5)**
  - To have Titus circumcised; no
  
- 5) How do you reconcile Paul's refusal to circumcise Titus with the fact that Paul later had Timothy circumcised? (cf. Ac 16:1-3)**
  - Circumcision of a Jewish Christian as a matter of expediency was permissible; but circumcision imposed upon a Gentile as an element necessary for salvation was not!
  
- 6) When did those who "seemed to be something" add to Paul? (6)**
  - Nothing
  
- 7) What two things prompted them to extend the right hand of fellowship to Paul and Barnabas? (7-9)**
  - When they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcised had been committed to Paul, just as the gospel to the circumcised had been committed to Peter
  - When James, Cephas, and John perceived the grace that had been given to Paul
  
- 8) What was the only thing they asked of Paul? (10)**
  - To remember the poor
  
- 9) When Peter came to Antioch, why did Paul find it necessary to withstand him to his face? (11-12)**
  - Because he was willing to eat with Gentiles at first, but when certain men from James came, he withdrew himself out of fear
  
- 10) Who else was carried away by Peter's hypocrisy? (13)**
  - The rest of the Jews, including Barnabas
  
- 11) Briefly describe Paul's main argument as found in verse 16.**
  - One is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Christ
  
- 12) How did Paul live his life, once he had died to the law? (19-20)**
  - Having been crucified with Christ, he lives by faith in the Son of God who loved Him and gave Himself for him
  
- 13) If righteousness comes through the law, what does that say about the death of Christ? (21)**
  - It was in vain

# The Epistle To The Galatians

## Chapter Three

### OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To perceive how we are clearly justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law
- 2) To understand why the Law was given, what purpose it served, and how long it was to last
- 3) To appreciate the purpose of baptism as it relates to becoming sons of God

### SUMMARY

With a defense of his apostleship behind him, Paul spends the next two chapters defending the gospel he received by revelation. It is a gospel which proclaims justification by faith in Christ, not by keeping the works of the Law. As support, Paul begins by providing a personal argument, asking the Galatians to recall how they themselves had received the Spirit, and from Whom. That it came not by the works of the Law but through the hearing of faith should be obvious to them. If they were so begun in the Spirit, why seek to be made perfect by the flesh (**1-5**)?

For his next argument, Paul appeals to the Scriptures. First, **Genesis 15:6** reveals that Abraham's faith was accounted to him as righteousness, and **Genesis 12:3** foretold that in Abraham all the nations would be blessed. Therefore, those who are of faith are sons of Abraham and blessed along with him (**6-9**). As for the Law itself, the Scriptures reveal that those who are of the works of the Law are under a curse, while proclaiming that the just shall live by faith (**Deu 27:26; Hab 2:4**). Christ, however, has redeemed us from the curse of the Law and made it possible for the blessing of Abraham to come upon the Gentiles, especially that the promise of the Spirit might be received through faith (**10-14**).

Continuing in his argument from the Scriptures, Paul reminds them that the covenantal nature of the promise made to Abraham means it cannot be broken. Therefore, the promise (along with its inheritance) to Abraham and His "Seed" (Christ) remained firm, even when the Law came along 430 years later (**15-18**). What was the purpose of the Law then? Paul answers that it was added because of transgressions until the Seed (Christ) should come. It was not against the promises of God, but because it could not provide life itself, it served the purpose of confining all under sin until the promise by faith in Jesus could be given to those who believe (**19-22**). Thus the law served to keep them under guard, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. To put it another way, it was like a tutor leading them to Christ where they could be justified by faith. Once faith had arrived, the tutor was no longer over them (**23-25**).

Paul then proceeds with a practical argument to prove we are justified by faith in Christ, which will be continued on into the fourth chapter. Through faith they have become sons of God in Christ, for in being

baptized into Christ they had put on Christ (26-27). Being in Christ, they are now one in Him, with all racial, social, and sexual distinctions removed as it pertains to salvation. Being in Christ also makes them Abraham's seed and thereby heirs according to promise God made to him (28-29).

## OUTLINE

### **I. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH: THE PERSONAL ARGUMENT (1-5)**

#### **A. HOW THEY RECEIVED THE SPIRIT (1-4)**

1. Paul's concern that they have been misled (1)
2. Did they received the Spirit by the hearing of faith, or by the works of the Law? (2)
3. Having begun their Christian life in the Spirit, did they expect to be made perfect by the flesh? (3)
4. Would this not make their previous suffering in vain? (4)

#### **B. FROM WHOM THEY RECEIVED THE SPIRIT (5)**

1. Consider the One who supplies the Spirit and works miracles among them (5a)
2. Does He do it by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith? (5b)

### **II. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH: THE SCRIPTURAL ARGUMENT (6-25)**

#### **A. THE EXAMPLE OF ABRAHAM (6-9)**

1. Abraham's faith was accounted to him for righteousness (6)
2. Those who are of faith are sons of Abraham (7)
3. As foretold by Scripture, God would justify the nations by faith (8)
4. Thus, those of faith are blessed along with believing Abraham (9)

#### **B. THE CURSE OF THE LAW (10-14)**

1. Those who live by the works of the Law are under a curse (10)
2. The Old Testament proclaimed that one would be justified by faith, and not by the Law, which itself was based upon works (11-12)
3. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, by His death on the cross (13)
4. Making it possible for Gentiles to receive the blessing of Abraham in Christ, in particular the promise of the Spirit which is received through faith (14)

#### **C. THE PRIORITY OF THE PROMISE OVER THE LAW (15-18)**

1. The Law, given 430 years after the promises to Abraham, did not nullify the covenant and its promises that God made with Abraham and His "Seed" (15-17)
  - a. Just as a man's covenant is not to be broken or added to it (15)
  - b. God made promises to Abraham and His "Seed", that is, Christ (16)
  - c. The Law cannot annul the covenant God confirmed with Abraham, so as to make the promise of no effect (17)
2. If the inheritance was based the Law, then it is no longer based upon a promise; but it is obvious that God gave the inheritance by promise, not by the Law (18)

**D. THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW (19-25)**

1. It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come (19-20)
2. The Law was not against the promises of God, but served to confine all under sin until the promise by faith in Jesus could be given to those who believe (21-23)
3. The Law served as a tutor, leading people to Christ, where they could be justified by faith and eliminating the need for a tutor (24-25)

**III. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH: THE PRACTICAL ARGUMENT (26-29)**

**A. THEY BECAME SONS OF GOD BY FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS (26-27)**

1. It was through faith in Jesus they became sons of God (26)
2. For by being baptized into Christ (an act of faith), they had put on Christ (27)

**B. THEY ARE ONE IN CHRIST, AND THUS ABRAHAM'S SEED (28-29)**

1. In Christ, there is no distinction, they are all one (28)
2. In Christ, they rightfully become Abraham's seed, and thus heirs according to the promise (29)

**REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER**

**1) What are the main points of this chapter?**

- Justification by faith: The personal argument (1-5)
- Justification by faith: The scriptural argument (6-25)
- Justification by faith: The practical argument (26-29)

**2) What was Paul afraid had happened to the Galatians? (1)**

- Someone had "bewitched" them, so that they should not obey the truth

**3) To demonstrate that they were justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law, what did Paul ask them? (2)**

- How did they receive the Spirit? By the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?

**4) What did Paul consider foolish on their part? (3)**

- Having begun in the Spirit, trying to be made perfect by the flesh (i.e., the Law)

**5) To further show that they were justified by faith, what did Paul ask them? (5)**

- How did the One who supplied the Spirit, and worked miracles among them, do it? By the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?

**6) What was accounted to Abraham for righteousness? (6)**

- That he believed God

**7) Who are the true sons of Abraham? (7)**

- Those who are of faith

- 8) What did the Scripture foresee that God would do? (8)**  
- Justify the nations by faith
- 9) What is the condition of those who are of the works of the Law? (10)**  
- They are under the curse
- 10) What did the Old Testament say that makes it evident no one is justified by the Law? (11)**  
- "The just shall live by faith"
- 11) What did Christ do by becoming a curse for us? (13)**  
- He has redeemed us from the curse of the Law
- 12) What else did Christ make possible by becoming a curse? (14)**  
- That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus  
- That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith
- 13) To whom were the promises made? Who is the "Seed"? (16)**  
- Abraham and his "Seed"  
- Christ
- 14) How long after the promise or covenant that God made with Abraham did the Law come in? Did the Law annul the promise? (17)**  
- 430 years  
- No
- 15) What purpose did the Law serve? How long was it to last? (19)**  
- It was added because of transgressions  
- Till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made
- 16) What function therefore did the Law serve? Are we still under the Law? (24-25)**  
- As a tutor, to bring them to Christ so that they could be justified by faith  
- No
- 17) How does one become a son of God? (26-27)**  
- Through faith in Christ Jesus  
- By putting Christ on in baptism
- 18) What happens to the racial, social, and sexual differences in Christ as they relate to salvation? (28)**  
- They are no more, for we are one in Christ
- 19) If we are Christ's, who are we? (29)**  
- Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise



# The Epistle To The Galatians

## Chapter Four

### OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To appreciate the significance and blessedness of receiving the Spirit in our hearts (cf. **Jn 7:37-39; Ac 2:38; 5:32; Ro 5:5; 8:11-17; 15:13; 2 Co 1:22; 5:5; Ep 1:13-14; 3:16; 4:30**)
- 2) To understand Paul's concern over the Galatians' observance of holy days (cf. **Co 2:16-17; Ga 5:4**)
- 3) To comprehend the implications of the allegory of Hagar and Sarah

### SUMMARY

In this chapter Paul continues and concludes his defense of the gospel of justification by faith in Christ, in contrast to seeking justification by the works of the Law. The previous chapter ended with Paul making a practical argument, how that by faith they had become the sons of God, the true seed of Abraham and heirs of the promise, when they put on Christ in baptism.

The practical argument continues in the first part of chapter four as Paul describes the condition of those under the Law prior to the coming of Christ. They were "children", and really no different than slaves. But when Christ came, He redeemed those under the Law and made it possible for them to receive the adoption as "sons". A special blessing of this sonship was receiving the Spirit in their hearts, and now they are no longer as a slave but as a son and a heir of God through Christ (**1-7**).

Paul then argues along sentimental lines. After having come to know the true God and being recognized by Him, their observance of holy days is indicative of a desire to return to bondage. That greatly concerns Paul, who would have them become like him. He reminds them of their reception of him in the past, and he hopes that by telling them the truth he has not become their enemy. Wishing he could be with them in person and use a different tone, he feels like a woman going through labor again as he seeks to ensure that Christ is formed in them. All of this because he has doubts about them (**8-20**).

His final argument is an appeal to the Law itself, addressed directly to those who desire to be under it. He reminds them of Abraham's two sons by Sarah and Hagar, and contends there are allegorical implications concerning the two covenants. Hagar, the bondwoman who gave birth to Ishmael, represents the covenant given at Mt. Sinai, and corresponds to physical Jerusalem and the bondage of those under the Law. Sarah, Abraham's wife who gave birth to Isaac, represents the new covenant and corresponds to the heavenly Jerusalem which offers freedom to all who accept it. With a reminder that those born of the Spirit can expect persecution by those born according to the flesh, Paul concludes his defense of the gospel of justification by faith in Christ by proclaiming that those in Christ are of not of the bondwoman but of the free (**21-31**).

## OUTLINE

### **I. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH: THE PRACTICAL ARGUMENT, cont. (1-7)**

#### **A. THEY HAD BEEN AS CHILDREN, NO DIFFERENT THAN SLAVES (1-3)**

1. The illustration of an heir (1-2)
  - a. While a child, is no different than a slave, even though a "master" (1)
  - b. Under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father (2)
2. In like manner, they had been as children, in bondage to the elements of the world (3)

#### **B. THEY'VE RECEIVED ADOPTION AS SONS, NO LONGER AS SLAVES (4-7)**

1. At the right time, God sent His Son, born of woman, born under the Law (4)
  - a. To redeem those under the Law (5a)
  - b. That they might receive the adoptions as sons (5b)
2. Because they are now "sons" (and not just "children")...
  - a. God sent the Spirit into their hearts, crying out "Abba, Father!" (6)
  - b. No longer are they as "slaves", but as "sons", thus heirs of God through Christ (7)

### **II. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH: THE SENTIMENTAL ARGUMENT (8-20)**

#### **A. PAUL'S FEAR OVER THEIR CONDITION (8-11)**

1. They had come to know God, and to be known by God (8-9a)
2. But they seem to desire to be in bondage again, returning to weak and beggarly elements (9b)
3. Their observance of holy days gives Paul fear that his labor was in vain (10-11)

#### **B. THEIR PAST AND PRESENT RELATIONS WITH HIM (12-20)**

1. A plea for them to be as he is (12)
2. A reminder of their past relations with him (13-15)
  - a. They had not allowed his physical infirmities to hinder their reception of him and his gospel (13-14)
  - b. They were even willing to pluck out their own eyes for him (15)
3. Has he become their enemy because he tells them the truth? (16)
4. They are being zealously courted by others, but zeal is good only when for the right cause (17-18)
5. He labors over them again, that Christ might be formed in them, wishing he could change his tone, but he has doubts about them (19-20)

### **III. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH: THE ALLEGORICAL ARGUMENT (21-31)**

#### **A. AN ALLEGORY FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE TO BE UNDER THE LAW (21-24a)**

1. For those who wish to be under the law, will you hear what the law says? (21)
2. For we read Abraham had two sons (22-23)
  - a. One of a bondwoman (Hagar), born according to the flesh (Ishmael)
  - b. The other of a freewoman (Sarah), born through promise (Isaac)

3. These things are symbolic (24a)

## **B. THE TWO COVENANTS (24b-31)**

1. The two women represent two covenants (24b-26)
  - a. Hagar represents the covenant from Mount Sinai (the Law), physical Jerusalem, and the bondage shared with her children
  - b. Sarah represents a new covenant from Jerusalem above (spiritual Jerusalem), which offers freedom to all
2. As prophesied, the barren woman (Sarah) would have more children (27)
3. Those under the new covenant are like Isaac, children of promise (28)
4. Those born of the Spirit can expect animosity from those born of the flesh (29)
5. But the Scripture says that the children of the free woman (Sarah, the Jerusalem above) will be the heir (30)
6. We are not children of the bondwoman but of the free (31)

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER**

### **1) What are the main points of this chapter?**

- Justification by faith: The practical argument, continued (1-7)
- Justification by faith: The sentimental argument (8-20)
- Justification by faith: The allegorical argument (21-31)

### **2) What is the condition of a child, even though an heir? (1-2)**

- No different from a slave
- Under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father

### **3) What was the condition of those under the Law? (3)**

- As children, in bondage under the elements of the world

### **4) When did God send His Son? Why? (4-5)**

- When the fullness of time had come
- To redeem those under the Law, that they might receive the adoption as "sons"

### **5) As sons of God, what do we receive? What is our condition? (6-7)**

- The Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying "Abba, Father!"
- No longer a slave, but a "son" and an "heir" of God through Christ

### **6) What indication was there that the Galatians sought to be in bondage again? (8-10)**

- Their observance of days, months, seasons, and years

### **7) What did Paul fear? (11)**

- That his labor with them had been in vain

### **8) How had the Galatians received Paul when he first preached the gospel to them? (14)**

- As an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus Himself

**9) What were they apparently willing to do when Paul was with them? (15)**

- They would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to Paul

**10) What concern did Paul have in telling them the truth? (16)**

- Had he become their enemy?

**11) Why did Paul wish he could be with them and change his tone? (20)**

- He had doubts about them

**12) For those who desired to be under the Law, what story from the Law does Paul relate? (21-23)**

- That of Hagar and Sarah, and their sons

**13) What do the two women represent? (24-26)**

- Two covenants
- Hagar represents the covenant given at Mt. Sinai which gives birth to bondage, and relates to physical Jerusalem
- Sarah represents the covenant in Christ, corresponding to the Jerusalem above which gives freedom to all

**14) How are Christians like Isaac? (28,31)**

- We are children of promise
- We are children of the freewoman, not of the bondwoman who represents the Law

# The Epistle To The Galatians

## Chapter Five

### OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To see that liberty in Christ does not mean license to do whatever we want
- 2) To understand how one might be separated from Christ, and fall from grace
- 3) To appreciate the need to walk in the Spirit, and the true evidence of one led by the Spirit

### SUMMARY

With verse one, Paul reaches the climax of this epistle, stating what can properly be called the theme of his letter: *"Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage."* He follows with dire warnings about the consequences of seeking to be circumcised and justified by the Law. He then reminds them that the hope of righteousness is for those who through the Spirit eagerly wait for it with a faith working through love (1-6).

The next few verses continue with warnings about allowing others to hinder their progress, with Paul's harshest words reserved for those trying to impose circumcision. Yet Paul does not want anyone to think that liberty in Christ means license, and encourages them to use their liberty in order to serve one another in love. The two-fold benefit of this proper use of liberty is that one actually fulfills the Law, and at the same time does not give the flesh an opportunity to cause them to bite and devour one another (7-15).

Paul then stresses the need for the Christian to walk in the Spirit so as not to fulfill the lust of the flesh. He describes the enmity between the flesh and the Spirit, explaining why we must bear the fruit of the Spirit instead practicing the works of the flesh. Not only is there no inheritance in the kingdom of God for those engaging in the works of the flesh, but those in Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Having been made alive in the Spirit, they ought to walk in the Spirit so as not to be conceited, not provoking nor envying one another (16-26).

### OUTLINE

#### I. A LIBERTY THAT EXCLUDES THE NECESSITY OF CIRCUMCISION (1-6)

##### A. STAND FAST IN THE LIBERTY CHRIST HAS MADE POSSIBLE (1)

1. A call to stand strong in the freedom we now have in Christ (1a)
2. A plea not to be entangled again with a yoke of bondage (1b)

##### B. CIRCUMCISION IS NO LONGER NECESSARY (2-4)

1. If one is circumcised out of a belief it is necessary, Christ will profit you nothing (2)
2. Observing circumcision as a necessity requires keeping the whole law (3)
3. Attempting to be justified by the Law will separate you from Christ and you will thereby fall from grace (4)

**C. THE BASIS FOR OUR HOPE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (5-6)**

1. Through the Spirit and by faith, we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness (5)
2. Circumcision is inconsequential; what avails is faith working through love (6)

**II. A LIBERTY THAT FULFILLS THE LAW (7-15)**

**A. A WARNING ABOUT THOSE WHO WOULD BIND THE LAW (7-12)**

1. Despite a good start, they were being hindered and it did not come from God (7-8)
2. Beware of the influence of "a little leaven" (9)
3. Paul is confident the Galatians will come around, and that the Lord will judge the trouble makers (10)
4. A reminder that Paul himself was not preaching circumcision, with a strong condemnation of those who were troubling them (11-12)

**B. A PROPER USE OUR LIBERTY WILL FULFILL THE LAW (13-15)**

1. Use our liberty to serve one another in love, and the Law will be fulfilled (13-14)
2. Abuse your liberty, and it will be an opportunity to consume one another! (13b,15)

**III. A LIBERTY IN WHICH ONE IS TO BE LED BY THE SPIRIT (16-26)**

**A. WE MUST WALK IN THE SPIRIT (16-18)**

1. Only then will we not fulfill the flesh, which is contrary to the Spirit (16-17)
2. If we are led by the Spirit, we are not under the Law (18)

**B. THE WORKS OF THE FLESH VS. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT (19-23)**

1. The works of the flesh...
  - a. Identified by Paul (19-21a)
  - b. Will keep one from inheriting the kingdom of God (21b)
2. The fruit of the Spirit...
  - a. Identified by Paul (22-23a)
  - b. Against which there is no law (23b)

**C. THOSE WHO ARE CHRIST'S ARE TO WALK IN THE SPIRIT (24-26)**

1. For they have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires (24)
2. For they live in the Spirit (25)
3. Therefore they should not be conceited, provoking and envying one another (26)

**REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER**

- 1) What are the main points of this chapter?**
  - A liberty that excludes the necessity of circumcision (1-6)
  - A liberty that fulfills the Law (7-15)
  - A liberty in which one is to be led by the Spirit (16-26)
- 2) What does Paul enjoin which serves as the theme of this epistle? (1)**
  - Stand fast in the liberty in which Christ has made us free
- 3) What are two consequences of becoming circumcised in order to be saved? (2-3)**
  - Christ will profit you nothing
  - You become a debtor to keep the whole Law
- 4) What two things happen when one seeks to be justified by the Law? (4)**
  - You become estranged from Christ
  - You fall from grace
- 5) How are we to eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness? (5)**
  - Through the Spirit, by faith
- 6) What truly avails something in Christ Jesus? (6)**
  - Faith working through love
- 7) What saying did Paul use to illustrate the danger of the false teachers? (9)**
  - A little leaven leavens the whole lump
- 8) What did Paul wish those who were so bent on enforcing circumcision would do? (12)**
  - Even cut themselves off
- 9) What would be a misuse of our liberty in Christ? How should we use it instead? (13)**
  - As an opportunity for the flesh
  - To serve one another through love
- 10) What one command fulfills the Law? (14)**
  - You shall love your neighbor as yourself
- 11) How does a Christian avoid fulfilling the lust of the flesh? (16)**
  - By walking in the Spirit
- 12) If one is led by the Spirit, what is their relation to the Law? (18)**
  - They are not under the Law
- 13) List the works of the flesh as described by Paul (19-21)**
  - Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like

**14) What will be true of those who practice the works of the flesh? (21)**

- They will not inherit the kingdom of God

**15) What elements constitute the fruit of the Spirit? (22-23)**

- Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control

**16) What have those who are Christ's done? (24)**

- They have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires

**17) If one lives in the Spirit, what is expected of them? (25)**

- To walk in the Spirit

**18) How would people manifest that they are walking in the Spirit? (26)**

- By not being conceited, nor provoking or envying one another



# The Epistle To The Galatians

## Chapter Six

### OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To see that liberty in Christ involves responsibility toward others and our own selves
- 2) To appreciate the principles involved in "sowing" and "reaping", especially as they relate to the flesh and Spirit
- 3) To understand the importance of becoming "a new creation" in Christ Jesus

### SUMMARY

In this final chapter, Paul reveals that liberty in Christ involves responsibilities. Those who are "spiritual" are to restore those overtaken in trespasses, and all are to bear one another's burden thereby fulfilling the "law of Christ" (1-2). At the same time, each Christian ought to examine himself and seek to bear his own load (3-5). Further responsibilities involve sharing with those who teach, and not growing weary in doing good to all, especially those of the household of faith. As motivation to do good, Paul reminds them of the principles of "sowing" and "reaping", particularly as it relates to the flesh and Spirit (6-10).

Paul's concluding remarks include an insight into the motivation behind those seeking to compel circumcision. While such people may seek to glory in the flesh, Paul himself will only glory in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ (11-14). Summarizing his whole epistle in one verse, Paul reasserts that circumcision is inconsequential, and that in Christ Jesus becoming a new creation is what really matters (15). With a plea for no one to trouble him since he bears in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus, Paul closes this epistle with a prayer of peace, mercy, and grace upon those who walk according to his teaching, and upon the Israel of God (16-18).

### OUTLINE

#### I. A LIBERTY WITH A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY (1-10)

##### A. IN THE MATTER OF BEARING BURDENS (1-5)

1. Be willing to bear one another's burdens (1-2)
  - a. Those who are spiritual ought to restore those overtaken in a trespass (1)
  - b. Bearing one another's burdens fulfills the law of Christ (2)
2. Be willing to bear your own burden (3-4)
  - a. If one thinks himself to be something when he is not, he deceives himself (3)
  - b. Examine your own work, and bear your own load (4)

##### B. IN THE MATTER OF GENEROSITY (6-10)

1. Those who are taught should share in all good things with those who teach (6)
2. Principles governing sowing and reaping (7-9)
  - a. What a man sows, that he will also reap (7)
  - b. Sow to the flesh, and you reap corruption; sow to the Spirit, and you reap everlasting life (8)
  - c. Don't grow weary in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not lose heart (9)
3. Where there is opportunity, do good to all, especially to those of the household of faith (10)

## **II. CONCLUDING REMARKS (11-18)**

### **A. A FINAL REBUKE OF THOSE WHO WOULD BIND CIRCUMCISION (11-13)**

1. The large letters confirm that Paul has written with his own hands (11)
2. The motivation behind those who compel others to be circumcised (12,13b)
  - a. They desire to make a good showing in the flesh (12a)
  - b. They do not want to suffer persecution for the cross of Christ (12b)
  - c. They wish to glory in your flesh (13b)
3. Those who would bind circumcision do not even keep the Law themselves (13a)

### **B. PAUL'S OWN CONFIDENCE IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST (14-17)**

1. God forbid that he might glory in anything other than in the cross of Jesus (14a)
2. For by Christ the world has been crucified to him, and he to the world (14b)
3. In Christ, circumcision is inconsequential; what matters is a new creation (15)
4. For those who abide by this same rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God (16)
5. Let no one trouble him, for he bears in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus (17)

### **C. BENEDICTION (18)**

1. Directed toward the brethren
2. That the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with their spirit

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER**

### **1) What are the main points of this chapter?**

- A liberty with a sense of responsibility (1-10)
- Concluding remarks (11-18)

### **2) What should those who are "spiritual" be willing to do? What attitudes should accompany them in what they do? (1)**

- Restore those overtaken in a trespass
- A spirit of gentleness, and a watchful eye for one's own self

### **3) How can we fulfill "the law of Christ"? (2)**

- By bearing one another's burdens

- 4) What responsibility is placed upon each person? (4)**
  - To bear his or her own load
- 5) What responsibility does the person taught have toward the one who teaches? (6)**
  - To share in all good things with him
- 6) What three principles are given by Paul concerning "sowing" and "reaping"? (7-9)**
  - Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap
  - Sow to the flesh, and you will of the flesh reap corruption; sow to the Spirit, and you will of the Spirit reap everlasting life
  - Don't grow weary in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not lose heart
- 7) As we have opportunity, what is our responsibility? (10)**
  - To do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith
- 8) What motivation does Paul ascribe to those who would compel circumcision? (12-13)**
  - They desire to make a good showing in the flesh
  - That they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ
  - That they may glory in your flesh
- 9) What was the inconsistency of those compelling circumcision? (13)**
  - They themselves did not keep the Law
- 10) In what did Paul glory? (14)**
  - The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world had been crucified to him, and he to the world
- 11) In Christ Jesus, what is it that avails anything? (15)**
  - A new creation
- 12) Upon whom did Paul pray for peace and mercy? (16)**
  - As many as walk according to the rule that a new creation in Christ is what really matters
  - The Israel of God
- 13) Why did Paul ask that no one trouble him? (17)**
  - Because he bore in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus
- 14) What was Paul's final benediction to the Galatians? (18)**
  - "Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."

"Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." - Galatians 1:1-5 (KJV). Start of this project gutenber ebook epistle to the galatians \*\*\*. Produced by Laura J. Hoelter and David Widger. Commentary on the epistle to the galatians. (1535). By Martin Luther.Â The preparation of this edition of Luther's Commentary on Galatians was first suggested to me by Mr. P. J. Zondervan, of the firm of publishers, in March, 1937. The consultation had the twofold merit of definiteness and brevity. "Luther is still the greatest name in Protestantism. We want you to help us publish some leading work of Luther's for the general American market. Will you do it?" "I will, on one condition." "And what is that?" Galatians is the ninth book of the New Testament and the forty-eighth book of the Bible . It is a letter written by Paul the apostle to the Galatians , warning them about what he called "another gospel ": depending on the Law, and circumcision in particular, for salvation. He would show that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone. It also offers some insights into the very early history of the Church. Were the recipients of the letter Galatians in the ethnic sense, or only in the political sense, as inhabitants of the Roman province of that name?9. Closely connected to the destination of the epistle is its date. In fact, Guthrie says that the "œdate of the epistle depends on the decision regarding its destination."10 Generally speaking those who hold to a North Galatia theory, date the book on or about the time of Paul's Ephesian ministry, ca. 56 A.D.11 On the other hand, those who hold to the South Galatia theory generally date the book either before or after the Jerusalem council of Acts 1