

3/15/98

### Introduction to Galatians

Tonight we want to begin our study of Galatians by looking at an introduction of the letter so that we can better understand its content its history, content and purpose to the church.

If you are one who is bound by legalism I pray that you open your heart to the Lord through our study of Galatians.

#### **I. The epistle has stood out as a light house.**

##### **A. The preventing of men from suffering shipwreck of the faith.**

1. Galatians is called the "Magna Carta of Christian liberty."
2. "Spiritual dynamite", and "The Christian Declaration of Independence".
3. Galatians was the epistle that brought spiritual awakening to Luther, "The just shall live by faith," Gal. 3:11c
4. Galatians has been called, "The battle cry of the reformation."

##### **B. The perspective regarding the epistle through history.**

1. On October 31, 1517, Luther nailed his 95 thesis against the claims of Rome, based on works to merit salvation.
2. Luther, declared "The epistle to the Galatians is the character of evangelical faith."
3. Galatians was John Wesley's assurance of faith.
4. John Bunyan claimed to prefer Luther's commentary on Galatians above any book except the Bible.

#### **C. The particulars about the epistle.**

1. The epistle contains only six chapters, containing 149 verses.
2. Yet, it has proven to be one of the most powerful epistles Paul ever wrote.
3. The apostle wrote 13 epistles, 14 if he wrote Hebrews.
4. The other 13 books were written by 7 other men.
5. The letter is the only one that is addressed to a group of churches. Gal. 1:2b, 3:1
6. The letter to the Galatians is one of the four epistles that fall in the category of Soteriological, dealing with the theme of salvation based on the atonement of Christ.
  - \* The other three are Romans. 1&2 Corinthians.

7. The epistle is Polemic in nature, defending the faith.
  8. The date of the epistle is one of the most difficult, due to which theory one accepts, the Northern or Southern theory.
  9. Some say around the time of his visit after writing 2Corinthians, from Corinth, others Rome?
  10. The epistle to the Galatians is the only one in which Paul calls attention to his handwriting. Gal. 6:11
    - a. Some say it refers to the size of the letter to correspond with the idea of his eye infirmity.
    - b. Others to the length of the letter.
    - c. Remember that Paul's letters were written by an amanuensis and he just added closing words.
- D.** The providential hope in God's grace.
1. I equally pray that as we go through this epistle, those of us who are held bound by anything that is not based on grace, that we let it go.
  2. Traditions that opposes and contradicts the Word, that we would be set free. (Catholic, liberal, neo-orthodox)
  3. Those of us that are bound to works to merit salvation, that we might rest of the finished work of Christ.

4. Those of us who are bound by legalism, which is self-righteousness, that we might see our error.
5. And, those of us who are satisfied with the ritual and ceremonies of the church, oh, that we might see the deception and repent.

*The epistle has stood out as a light house!*

## **II. The Galatians were an interesting people.**

- A.** The origin of the Galatians.
1. They were sons of Celtic family whose tribes invaded Greece early in the 3rd century.
  2. In 280 B.C., a large group crossed over to Asia Minor, modern day Turkey.
  3. In 232 B.C., state became known as Galatia, after the people who occupied it, the Gauls.
  4. By the year 32-25 B.C., King Amyntas relinquished the kingdom to Rome and it became a Roman province.
- B.** The problem of who it was written to.
1. Therefore, the question is, was Paul using the term "Galatians" to identify the geographical and the ethnic race prior to Rome's possession?

2. Or, was Paul using the term to identify its political association to Rome as a province of Rome?
  3. There is a difference of opinion as to where the churches were by scholars.
    - a. Northern Galatian theory
      - 1) Traditional until the 18th century used it in the geographical and as ethnic race.
      - 2) To the cities of Pessimus, Ancyra and Tavium.
    - b. Southern Galatian theory used it as the political Roman province.
      - 1) It was proposed by J.J. Schmidt in 1748.
      - 2) It came to view in 1899 by Sir William M. Ramsay.
      - 3) To the churches of Pisidia, Iconium, Antioch, Lystra and Durbe.
- C. The record of Acts is important.
1. We know that Paul in his first missionary journey established churches in the area of South Galatia. Acts 13-14
    - a. It was there that both Paul and Barnabas were taken for gods as they were in Lystra and a lame man was healed. (Barnabas-Jupiter, Paul-Mercury)

- b. Paul was also stoned by them. Acts 14:19
  - c. Returned in the same circuit to confirm and exhort the brethren. Acts 14:21-23
2. Second missionary journey was brought about by Paul's desire to visit again the brethren in every city they had preached and see how they were doing. Acts 15:36
    - a. Contention between Paul and Barnabas because of John Mark. Acts 15:39
    - b. Acts tells us that they went through the regions of Galatia as well as Phamphilia and then were forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach in Asia. Acts 16:6
    - c. They were called to Macedonia by a vision. Acts 16:9
    - d. Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth and Ephesus. Acts 17-18
  3. Third missionary journey in Acts 18:23 tells us that Paul went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order to strengthen all the disciples and remained Ephesus. Acts 19:1
    - a. So we know that Paul was both in the North as well as the South, yet Luke's account in Acts focuses in the Southern region.

- b. It was the more flourishing with sea ports, cities, trade routes, etc.
- c. It's the only epistle addressed to a group of churches though we know that some were circulatory letters, such as Ephesians. Gal. 1:2
- d. Not only that, but when Paul used the term Galatians, he used it as the political province of Rome. 1Cor. 16:1; 2Tim. 4:15; 1Pet 1:1
- e. Most important we must try to harmonize the epistles with the book of Acts as best we can, otherwise anyone's theory is as valid.

*The Galatians were an interesting people!*

### **III. The problem in the Galatian church was the preaching of another gospel.**

- A. Paul identifies it as a different gospel.
  1. The word different “heteros” means different and distinct in kind. Gal. 1:6
  2. The word another “allos” means of the same kind. it is not the same. Gal. 1:7a
  3. The word pervert means to twist around, reverse and distort. Gal. 1:7b
  4. The letter is polemic in nature, defending the faith.
  5. Paul was constantly concerned and caring for the churches. 2Cor. 11:28

- B. The deceivers were Judaizers who were trying to bring the Gentile under the law of Moses in order to be saved.
  1. He calls them false brethren. Gal. 2:4
  2. He identifies them as “certain came from James”. Gal. 2:12
  3. He declared they were teaching the law versus faith. Gal. 3:5
  4. He says they focus on the observance of days, months, seasons, legalism. Gal. 4:10, 21
  5. He points out their emphasis on circumcision. Gal. 5:3,12
  6. He deals with their motives. Gal. 4:17, 6:12-13
  7. He says they were attacking Paul's apostleship and gospel as authentic and equal to those in Jerusalem. Gal. 1:1, 2, 6, 9,11

- C. The deceived were converts of Paul, mostly Gentiles.
  1. Paul had established the church due to an infirmity. Gal. 1:8, 11; 4:13, 14, 19-20
  2. Paul remained long enough to see that they were well on their way. Gal. 5:7
  3. Paul's language is stern, severe and without any praise except for the words “brethren” and “My little children”. Gal. 1:11; 3:15; 4:12, 28; 5:11; 6:1, 18; 4:19

4. Paul declares they were uncircumcised. Gal. 5:2; 6:12
5. Paul used Jewish much of the Old Testament, due to the fact that the Judeaizer were attempting to make the Gentile a sect of Judaism but it could also be evidence of small minority of Jews? Gal. 3:7-9, 10-12; 4:21-31
6. Paul used many contrasts to show the incompatibility of the false teaching.
  - a. Law and faith.
  - b. Spirit and flesh.
  - c. Circumcision and new creation.
  - d. Cross and world.
  - e. Freedom and bondage.
  - f. Material and spiritual.
  - g. Christ and Moses.

#### D. The message of Galatians.

1. All who preach another gospel are to be accursed. Gal. 1:8
2. Faith in Jesus Christ is what justifies a man or woman. Gal. 2:16
3. The life of Christ is a crucified life. Gal. 2:20, 6:14, 17
4. Any attempt to finish in the flesh what is begun in the Spirit is foolishness. Gal. 3:3
5. The Law condemns man. Gal. 3:10
6. The Law as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. Gal. 3:24

7. All are sons of God through Jesus Christ. Gal. 3:26, 4:7
8. A person is free from all bondage in the liberty of Christ. Gal. 5:1
9. The flesh and the Spirit are contrary to one another, it is a warfare. Gal. 5:17
10. Love is the mark of the believer. Gal. 5:22, 6:1
11. Whoever sow will reap. Gal. 6:7-8
12. A new creation is what God honors. Gal. 6:15

#### E. Some key words.

1. Gospel. Gal. 1:6, 7, 11; 2:2, 5, 7, 14
2. Preach. Gal. 1:8(2x's), 17; 3:8, 11, 16, 23; 4:13
3. Justified. Gal. 2:16(3x's), 17; 3:8, 11, 24; 5:4
4. Law. 31 times.
5. Faith. Gal. 3:2, 14, 22, 23(2x's) 24, 25, 26; 5:5, 6, 22; 6:10
6. Promise. 3:14, 16, 17, 18(2x's) 21, 22, 29, 4:23, 28
7. Grace. Gal. 1:3, 6, 15; 2:9, 21; 5:4; 6:18
8. Sons. Gal. 1:16; 2:20; 3:7, 26; 4:4, 6, 7, 22, 30(3x's)

#### F. Some key verses.

1. Gal. 1:8
2. Gal. 2:20
3. Gal. 3:3

4. Gal. 4:7
5. Gal. 5:1
6. Gal. 5:16
7. Gal. 6:7-8

**The problem in the Galatian church was the preaching of another gospel!**

#### **IV. Outline.**

##### **I. The personal :The Gospel of Grace:**

**Authenticity. Gal. 1:1-2:21**

\* Conversion and consternation!

- A. Salutation and greeting. Gal. 1:1-5
- B. Theme, gospel of grace. Gal. 1:6-9
- C. Gospel revealed to Paul by Jesus Christ. Gal. 1:10-24
- D. Gospel recognized by the other apostles. Gal. 2:1-10
- E. Gospel used to rebuke Peter. Gal. 2:11-21

##### **II. The doctrinal: The Doctrine of Grace:**

**Justification by Faith. Gal. 3:1;4:31**

\* Clarification and consecration!

- A. Salvation by faith, not works. Gal. 3:1-14
- B. Salvation is by promise, not law. Gal. 3:15-21
- C. Purpose of the Law. Gal. 3:22-29
- D. Heirs of promise are sons of God. Gal. 4:1-7

E. Slaves vs. Sons. Gal. 4:8-29

F. Bondage vs. Freedom. Gal. 4:30-31

##### **III. The practical: The Practice of Grace: Freedom to Love. Gal. 5:1-6:10**

\* Celebration and confrontation!

- A. Liberty and legalism. Gal. 5:1-12
- B. Liberty must not be abused. Gal. 5:13-26
- C. Liberty should be used to serve. Gal. 6:1-10

##### **IV. The closing remarks. Gal. 6:11-18**

- A. Paul's personal authenticity. Gal. 6:11
- B. Paul's boast is in the cross of Christ. Gal. 6:12-15
- C. Paul's commendation to God's peace and mercy. Gal. 6:16
- D. Paul's marks of persecution. Gal. 6:17
- E. Paul's commendation to God's grace. Gal. 6:18

*This is the outline!*