

A New Testament Survey:
The Galatians Epistle

Introduction:

Historical Perspective: Galatians was written to a number of churches in Asia Minor, modern day Turkey (1:2).

I. The author:

II. Date and Recipients - debated, although most scholars today prefer the early date of 48 AD.

The debate is referred to as the "North-South Galatia debate." Most Evangelical scholars today favor the "South Galatia" theory and the earliest date. So, although we cannot be absolutely certain of the date, we will assume the earliest date ~48 AD and the South Galatia Theory.

In point of fact, neither the date nor the recipients make a difference to the message, but it is important to inform you of the on-going debate that continues.

III. Purpose: To counter and correct the false teaching that living under the Law was a requirement to be in the Christian faith.

IV. Theme, Characteristics, and Literary Features:

a. Theme: Freedom in Christ; Freedom from the Law.

b. Characteristics: It is a protest letter. The way Paul goes about it is:

- a. To defend his apostleship to support his authority to speak
- b. He explains the truth of justification by grace alone through faith alone
- c. He insists that the grace of God is not a free pass to sin.

c. Literary Features: "Its tone is warlike. It crackles with indignation," says Tenney (1:8: *But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed (2x, V. 9); 5:12: I wish that those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves!*)

V. The Outline:

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. Paul's Personal Vindication | Chs. 1 & 2 |
| a. Gospel not received from apostles | 1: 1-24 |
| b. Gospel accepted by Apostles | 2: 1-9 |
| c. Rebuking of Peter | 2: 10-21 |
| 2. Liberty in Christ | Chs. 3 & 4 |
| a. The argument | 3: 1-4:7 |
| i. What Faith does | 3: 1-14 |
| ii. What Law does | 3: 15-18 |
| iii. What Law is | 3: 19-4:7 |
| b. The Appeal | 4: 8-31 |
| i. To Maturity | 4: 8-11 |
| ii. To Affection | 4: 12-20 |
| iii. To Intellect | 4: 21-31 |
| 3. Practical Application | Ch. 5: 1 – 6:17 |
| a. Greatest Enemy of Liberty – Legalism | 5: 1-12 |
| b. Greatest Error in Liberty – Lawlessness | 5: 13-26 |
| c. Greatest Exercise of Liberty – Love | 6: 1-10 |
| d. The Motive of Liberty: The Cross | 6: 11-16 |
| e. The Price of Liberty: Suffering | 6: 17 |
| 4. Benediction | Ch. 6: 18 |

VI. The Epistle:

1. Personal Vindication, Chapters 1&2

a. Gal. 1:1-24: Gospel not received from apostles:

Paul uses the term "Gospel" in a couple of different ways:

- The facts of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 15),
- The interpretation of those facts (Gal. 1:6-8)

b. Paul's Gospel accepted by Apostles (2: 1-9):

c. Rebuking of Peter (2: 10-21):

- i. It demands unity...there can be no exclusivity.
- ii. It demands humility.

Justification is an all-important concept. It is God's act of removing the guilt and penalty of sin while at the same time declaring a sinner righteous through Christ's atoning sacrifice. In justification, our sin is imputed to Jesus and His righteousness is imputed to us. 2 Corinthians 5:21 This is the heart of the Gospel.

Paul uses the word 3 times in this one verse and he gives us 3 ways to understand it. He reminds Peter that "We Know!"

1. Generally: Not by works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ. Works of the Law are the whole Mosaic Law, i.e. what it requires. This says that works do not contribute to a right standing with God, personally or nationally.
2. Personally: We also have believed in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the Law. Paul is reminding Peter that he and Peter are both justified by faith in Christ and Peter knew by experience that keeping the Law did not prevent him from sin (denying Christ). Justifying faith is a personal faith.
3. Universally: "No One" will be justified by works of the Law.

Then comes one of the most famous of all Scriptures as Paul reminds Peter, (and us): "*I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if Righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.*"

If I can appease God enough to get to heaven by obeying the Law, Jesus died for nothing.

Imputation is used to designate any action or word or thing as accounted to another person. So, (1) the sin of Adam is accounted to all his descendants, i.e., it is considered theirs, and they are dealt with therefore as guilty of Adam's sin; (2) the righteousness of Christ is imputed to them that believe in him, or so attributed to them as to be considered their own; and (3) our sins are imputed to Christ, i.e., he assumed our sin as His and also took the punishment of justice for them..

2. Liberty in Christ, Chs. 3 & 4:

a. The argument - 3: 1 - 4:7

- i. What Faith does - 3: 1-14
- ii. What Law does - 3: 15-23
- iii. What Law is - 3: 24 - 4:7

- b. The Appeal - 4: 8-31: Paul makes a 3-fold appeal to the Galatians:
 - i. To Maturity - 4: 8-11: Look at your past bondage.

 - ii. To Affection - 4: 12-20: Think of the love they have for one another.

 - iii. To Intellect - 4: 21-31: The example of Hagar and Sarah.

- 3. Practical Application: Ch. 5: 1 – 6:17
 - a. Greatest Enemy of Liberty – Legalism - 5: 1-12

 - b. Greatest Error in Liberty – Lawlessness - 5: 13-26

 - c. Greatest Exercise of Liberty – Love - 6: 1-10


 - d. The Motive of Liberty: The Cross - 6: 11-16

 - e. The Price of Liberty: Suffering - 6: 17:

A Good word from Chas. Spurgeon:

If you are pardoned, it is through His blood; if you are justified, it is through His righteousness; if you are sanctified, it is because He is made of God unto you sanctification; if you shall be kept from falling, it will be because you are preserved in Christ Jesus; and if you are perfected at the last, it will be because you are complete in Him. Thus Jesus is magnified--for all is in Him and by Him; thus the inheritance is made certain to us--for it is obtained in Him; thus each blessing is the sweeter, and even heaven itself the brighter, because it is Jesus our Beloved in whom we have obtained all.

GALATIANS:
A NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY

HISTORICAL 
PERSPECTIVE



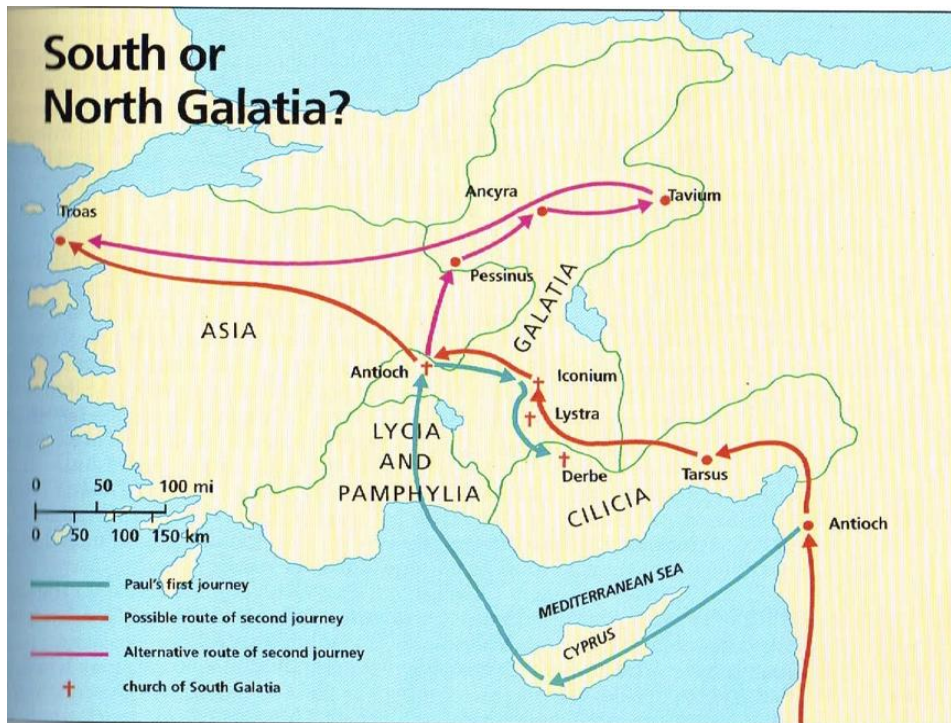
Author: Paul, Undisputed

Date and Recipients: Depends and Debated

North-South Galatia Debate:

North Galatia Churches (2nd Journey, 55 AD)

South Galatia Churches (1st Journey, 48 AD)



Galatians 2:11-14 (ESV)

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹² For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. ¹³ And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. ¹⁴ But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

PURPOSE

To counter and correct the false teaching that living under the Law was a requirement to be in the Christian faith

Marius Victorinus, 303 AD: "The Galatians are going astray because they are adding Judaism to the gospel of faith in Christ...Disturbed by these tendencies Paul writes this letter...in order that they may preserve faith in Christ alone"

Theme, Characteristics, and Literary Features

Theme: Freedom in Christ; Freedom from the Law.

Characteristics: It is a protest letter

Literary Features: “Its tone is warlike. It crackles with indignation,”

The Epistle

1. Paul's Personal Vindication
 - A. Gospel not received from the Apostles

1:15-17: *But when he who **had set me apart apart before I was born**, and who called me by his grace, ¹⁶ was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; ¹⁷ nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus*

SOVEREIGNTY

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him **before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.** In love ⁵**he predestined us for adoption to himself** as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.*

Paul's Gospel

TWO WAYS TO LOOK AT IT:

1) THE FACTS: the death, burial, and resurrection (1 Cor. 15)

2) The **Interpretation** of the facts (Gal. 1)

The message of the Gospel is Freedom from the Law in Christ Jesus

It was received, not conceived...it was of Divine Revelation, not from any human entity.

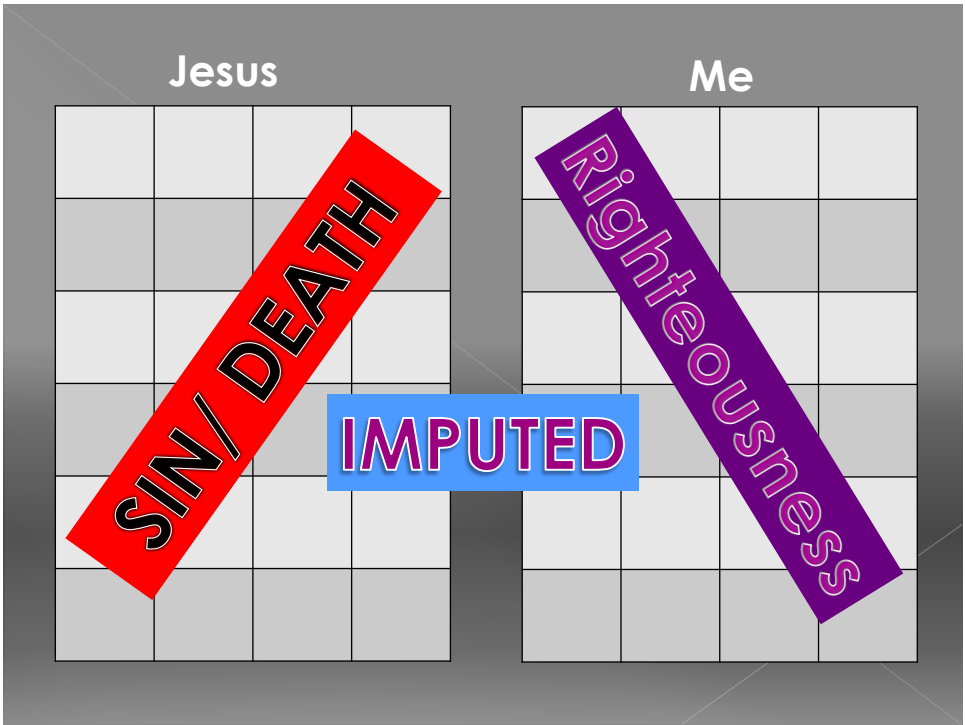
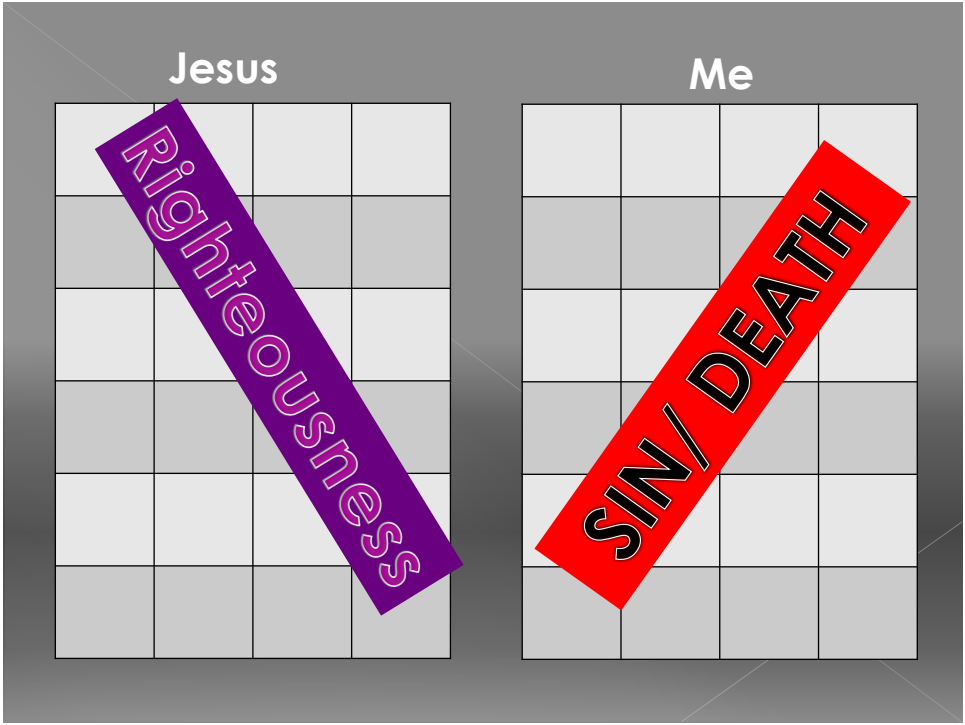
Paul's Gospel accepted by Apostles (2: 1-9)

Gal. 2:7-9: "...when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised ⁸ (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles), ⁹ and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised."

IMPUTATION

The action or word or thing attributed to someone other than the deserving person; So,

- (1) The sin of Adam is put on all his descendants, and they are considered guilty of his sin
- (2) The righteousness of Christ is credited to those who believe in him
- (3) Our sins are put on Christ, i.e., he took on our sin as His and also took our punishment for our sins



Liberty in Christ, Chs. 3 & 4:

A. The argument - 3: 1 - 4:7

a) What Faith does - 3: 1-14

It brings justification before God

⁷ Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." ⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

b) What Law does - 3: 15-23

It brings awareness of sin

The Promise: "I will! I Will! I will!"

The Law: "Thou shalt! Thou shalt!, Thou shalt!"

c) What Law is - 3: 24-4:7

Galatians 3:24-26

²⁴ So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith

The Law was a Tutor...UNTIL?

Jesus came to Redeem us from the power of sin that the Law had made us conscious of

So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God

The Appeal - 4: 8-31

To Maturity - 4: 8-11: Look at your past bondage

To Affection - 4: 12-20: Think of the love we have for each other

To Intellect - 4: 21-31: The example of Hagar and Sarah

Practical Application: Ch. 5: 1 – 6:17

Greatest Enemy of Liberty – Legalism - 5: 1-12

Greatest Error in Liberty – Lawlessness - 5: 13-26

Greatest Exercise of Liberty – Love - 6: 1-10

The Motive of Liberty: The Cross - 6: 11-16

The Price of Liberty: Suffering - 6: 17

Chas. Spurgeon:

- If you are pardoned, it is through His blood;
- If you are justified, it is through His righteousness;
- If you are sanctified, it is because God did it;
- If you shall be kept from falling, it will be because you are preserved in Christ Jesus; and
- if you are perfected at the last, it will be because you are complete in Him.

Thus Jesus is magnified--for all is in Him and by Him,

Thus the inheritance is made certain to us--for it is obtained in Him,

Thus each blessing is the sweeter,

Even heaven itself the brighter, because it is Jesus in whom we have obtained it all !!!