

Book of Galatians

No other gospel



Book of Galatians

A journalistic approach to Gal. 2:1-10



Book of Galatians 2:1-10

The best way for me to teach this sections is to use my professional training: I ask questions for a living. (That's not all I do, but if I don't get that part right, it's hard to do anything else.)

After asking questions, I look for context.

And finally, I seek out practical application.

Let's start with a prayer that I present well and that you're open to learn and contribute based on what God's word has to teach.

“This letter ... has given both life-transforming instruction and heartfelt admonition to the church for nearly two millennia.”



- Scott McKnight, The NIV Application Commentary

Book of Galatians 2:1-10

Let's read the passage (NIV):

Paul Accepted by the Apostles

Then after 14 years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in response to a revelation and, meeting privately with those esteemed leaders, I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I wanted to be sure I was not running and hand not been running my race in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with

me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was Greek. This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the true gospel might be preserved for you.

As for those who were held in high esteem – whatever they were makes no difference to me, God does not show favoritism – they added nothing to my message.

Book of Galatians 2:1-10

On the contrary, they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised. For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles.

James, Peter and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me.

They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised.

All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.

Book of Galatians 2:1-10 – WHO?

- Paul
- Barnabas
- Titus
- Cephas (Peter)
- James
- John
- Judiazers
- False teachers
- People of Galatia

Book of Galatians 2:1-10 – WHAT?

This an “epistle,” a letter to a church. And Paul is discussing the gospel, starting with his right to preach it.

John Stott says in a commentary, “The Message of the Galatians”:

“The bane of Paul’s life and ministry was the insidious activity of false teachers. Wherever he went, they dogged his footsteps.”

- Does this still happen today? How?
- Can we connect this to Stew’s lesson last week?
- What is Paul saying?
- Why is circumcision such a big deal?

Tim Keller in a sermon equates much of this section (Gal. 2:4, especially) with freedom.

- Fish story
- What freedoms do we have in Christ? .

Book of Galatians 2:1-10 – WHEN?

- Scholars believe the Epistle to the Galatians was the earliest of Paul's letters, written about AD 48 or 49.
- Since his first visit to Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe, "the churches had been troubled by false teachers (who) had mounted a powerful attack on Paul's authority and gospel ... insisting that for salvation more than faith in Christ was needed" –Stott

Christ died and was resurrected in AD 30 or 33, meaning Galatians was written less than 20 years later.

- Let's imagine the world at that time. Put yourself in the sandals of a Galation.
- What might have been the motivation of false teachers?
- What might have motivated Paul?

Book of Galatians 2:1-10 – WHERE?

- Where is Galatia?
North central Turkey

- What do we know about Galatia?
Ethnic Galatians were known to be fickle and superstitious, according to Tyndale House Cambridge.
Archaeological findings show a people who liberally adopted the worship of the gods of their neighbors, observing strict rituals.

- Does this help explain their speedy desertion of the gospel? (Grace. Not works.)

There's also an argument that this was written to the provincial Galatians. (Phrygians, Pisidians and Lycaonians.)

- Would this significantly change your understanding of the text?

For me, no.

Book of Galatians 2:1-10 – WHY?

We've discussed why Paul might have felt compelled to write this letter, but that was in an ancient context.

It was written "to" the ancient Galatians, but it was written "for" us in modern times.

- Why is this letter important today?
- Using Gal. 2:4, what false teachings are modern Christians susceptible to? (Prosperity gospel? Earning salvation?)

We know that Paul wasn't opposed to compromise. (Circumcising Timothy, Acts 16:1-3; food in 1 Corinthians 10.) But he drew a line in Gal. 2:5.

- Why? (Vince Lombardi from Eugene H. Patterson, "Traveling Light." Pages 34, 35)
- What compromises are we OK to make when it comes to the gospel?
- Where should we draw lines where we refuse to bend?

Book of Galatians 2:1-10 – HOW?

Just curious Does anyone know how this letter was written?

- Did Paul type it? Did he use a Bic? Loose leaf?

How was it transmitted?

- Email? Fax? Pony Express?

How as it preserved?

- Where there ancient libraries? Data centers?

We don't need to have answers for the purposes of this discussion, but this is an example of the sorts of things Greg thinks about and wonders whether anyone else thinks the same things.

Book of Galatians 2:1-10 – HOW?

OK, seriously Stott says, speaking of verse 2, “It was not, we may be sure, that (Paul) had any personal doubts or misgivings about his gospel and needed the reassurance of the other Jerusalem apostles, for he had been preaching it for 14 years; but rather his ministry, past and present, should be rendered fruitless by the Judaizers. It was to overthrow their influence, not to strengthen his own conviction, that he laid his gospel before the Jerusalem apostles.”

- Assuming Stott is correct, how could Paul have been so sure?
- Do you have similar confidence in Paul? In his message? Why? How can you be sure?
- Can you use Gal. 2:2-4 in your answer?
- That’s three sources. Ethical journalism goes back to biblical times. (If your moms says she loves you ...)

Galatians 2:1-10—SO WHAT? WHAT'S NEXT?

Two of my favorite questions to ask are these: “So what?” And “what’s next?”

In Galatians 2: 1-10, Paul expands on his authority to teach and to correct, bringing in the acceptance of other leaders (Peter, James and John) and the conclusion of their conversations about the matter of salvation.

He’s saying, basically, that since you guys trust and respect them, you can trust and respect me.

- Can you use a similar approach to teaching others about what you believe about Christ?
- How might you apply Paul’s method?
- Can you use Gal. 2: 1-10 in your own presentation of the gospel of salvation?
- Two major themes of this book are freedom and unity. Explain how this section hits those topics.

Galatians 2:1-10—SO WHAT? WHAT'S NEXT?

As for “what’s next?”

Starting in Galatians 2: 11, Paul explains how he told off Peter. (And Peter cut a dude’s ear off. You don’t challenge a guy like that unless you know you’re right.)

From there, he’s going to explain where the Galatians have gone wrong and how they should get back on track.

- If you haven’t already done so, I’d urge you to read Galatians in full before next class. (It’s a short book.)
- Ask yourself as you’re reading, what am I learning about God from this? What am I learning about how I should live?

**The most important
takeaway:** The true
gospel leads to
freedom and unity for
believers.