

Paul Writes Galatians



When: On 3rd journey [A.D. 52-54]
From Where: Ephesus (Acts 19:10)

Synopsis

- The N.T. epistle of Paul having the *least* amount of direct information re: time & place of writing
- Galatia was a prominent place in all of Paul's journeys (Acts 13-14; 15:41 – 16:6; 18:23)
- Written *after* the "Jerusalem Conference" → Paul refers to this in Gal. 2
- Written *before* the decision was made to gather the collection for the needy saints
 - No mention of the collection, though some from Galatia participated (Acts 20:4)
 - Written *before* 1 & 2 Corinthians and Romans...those letters do make mention of the collection (1 Cor. 16:1; 2 Cor. 8-9; Rom. 15:25-28)
- Somehow, Paul knew the Galatians were departing from Christ (1:6)
 - Two distinct possibilities...
 - 1) Paul observed this himself when passing through Galatia (Acts 18:23)
 - Later, he writes them about his concerns re: what he saw
 - This view doesn't characterize Paul...when he saw something wrong, he did not delay...he dealt with it then (cp. Acts 17:16-17)
 - 2) Someone got word to Paul about the Galatians
 - The only information available was that Paul had promised to return to Ephesus at the close of the 2nd journey (Acts 18:19-21)
 - This news about the Galatians could have come to him during the 3 years he was there (Acts 19:10; 20:31)
 - This would have been plenty of time to receive a report & send a letter
- The letter is *not* addressed to the false teachers, but to the Galatians who were hearing them
- The letter is a warning about the consequences of accepting false teaching (cp. 5:2-3; 6:12-13)
- Noticeably absent at the beginning is a "statement of thanksgiving" for the Galatian Christians (cp. 1 Thess. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:3; 1 Cor. 1:4; Rom. 1:8)
- Paul must also defend himself and his apostleship
 - The Galatian Christians would not listen to a "discredited" Paul
 - He had to prove his message was from God

The Two Treatises

Lesson 46

Outline

Paul defends his right to teach and speak as an apostle of Jesus Christ (1:6 – 2:21)

- He was “amazed” the Galatian saints had already begun turning away (1:6-10)
- No one (not even apostles nor angels) has the right to change the gospel message
- He presents “facts” that prove what he taught them was not from him, but from God
 - His lifestyle before his conversion proves his teaching was not from man (1:11-16)
 - He was not “instructed” by the other apostles, but he learned by revelation (1:17-20)
 - His early efforts in Damascus & Arabia proves he didn’t learn this in Jerusalem (1:21-24)
 - His efforts at the “Jerusalem Conference” were by “revelation” (2:1-10)
 - His rebuke of Peter proved he was not an inferior apostle (2:11-21)

Spiritual blessings for all are based on God’s promises, not works of the Law (3:1 – 4:31)

- Man stands “justified” before God by his faith, not works of a law system (3:1-14)
 - The *kind* of faith Abraham possessed
- God’s promises to save man actually pre-date the Law of Moses (3:15-29)
 - Promises made to Abraham (cp. Gen. 12)
 - Law was “added” because of transgressions...to make sin apparent (v. 19)
 - Law was our “schoolmaster” or “tutor” to lead us to Christ (vv. 23-25)
 - One becomes a child of God through faith in these promises (vv. 26-29)
- These promises free man from bondage...make him a full “son” (4:1-11)
- Paul is perplexed at why they would have changed...be accepting of false teaching (4:12-20)
- An allegory to illustrate what they should do with this false teaching...“*Throw it out!*” (4:21-31)

Exhortations on how those who are “free in Christ” should live (5:1 – 6:18)

- Those “set free” by the Spirit should not return to a system of bondage (5:1-12)
 - Submitting to circumcision obligates one to keep the whole law
 - “Christ profits you nothing” if one returns to the Law
 - A strong statement for the false teachers... “*I would that they cut themselves off!*” (v. 12)
- Those “set free” by the Spirit should not live for the flesh, but for the Spirit (5:13-26)
 - “Works of the flesh” vs. “Fruits of the Spirit”
- Those “set free” by the Spirit have responsibilities toward one another (6:1-10)
 - Restore fallen away brethren
 - Bear each others burdens
 - Share the things of this life...especially with those who teach you
 - Be careful about what you “sow”...that shall you also “reap”
 - Do good to all men...especially to brethren
- A final reminder about the false teachers who were troubling them (6:11-18)
 - They do not keep the Law themselves, and they do not even care for you
 - Paul wanted only to boast in the cross of Christ

