

GALATIANS: THE ONE TRUE GOSPEL



INTRODUCTION & GAL 1:1-5 – GOD’S GOSPEL

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Introduction to Galatians

Key Facts

- Author:** Apostle Paul
- Date:** 48-49 or 50-57
- Provenance:** 1) Antioch, Jerusalem, the route between the two cities or
2) from Macedonia, Achaia, or Corinth
- Destination:** Galatian province (modern Turkey) – This is the only Pauline epistle specifically addressed to churches in more than one city
- Situation:** False teaching (Judaizing heresy)
- Purpose:** Defense of the one true gospel
- Theme:** Jews and Gentiles are saved through faith in Jesus, not by works of the law
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Major Theological Themes

- God's Gospel
 - Justification by Faith
 - The Purpose of the Law
 - Substitutionary Atonement
 - "New Creation" / Transformation of a Believer's Life
 - Divine Christology
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Purpose of the Book

Paul reminded the Galatian churches of the one true gospel of faith, as opposed to works of the law, in order to warn them against the dangers of following a false gospel.

Gospel Opponents

The Judaizers

- The term comes from the Greek verb *Ioudaizō*, which means “to live as a Jew.”
- Judaizers continued to practice circumcision, food laws, the Sabbath, and other Jewish rituals alongside their faith in Christ.
- These people believed salvation was only intended for the Jews. Therefore, a person had to become Jewish (and embrace practices such as circumcision) in order to receive salvation through Jesus.
- They were wrong.

Endorsements for the Letter

Martin Luther

The Epistle to the Galatians is my epistle. To it I am as it were in wedlock. It is my Katherine.

The Three Guys

We love this book!



Two Theories: North or South?

The Southern Galatian Theory in a Nutshell

Date: 48-49

Provenance: Likely Antioch, Jerusalem, or the route between them

Destination: Southern churches of Galatia visited during Paul's first missionary journey

- Places the letter before the events of Acts 15:1-35 (The Jerusalem Council)
- The events of Acts 11:27-30/12:25 and Gal 2:1-10 record a separate meeting that took place before The Jerusalem Council
 - *And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had completed their service, bringing with them John, whose other name was Mark. – Acts 12:25*

The Northern Galatian Theory in a Nutshell

Date: 50-57

Provenance: Likely from Macedonia, Achaia, or Corinth

Destination: Northern churches such as Ancyra, Pessinus, and Tavium

- Places the letter after The Jerusalem Council – the events of Acts 15:1-35 and Gal 2:1-10 record the same meeting from a different perspective
- Written after passing through “Galatia and Phrygia” on his third missionary journey (Acts 18:23)

Proponents

- Southern: Popularized by W. Ramsay in 1899, championed by F.F. Bruce and R. Longenecker (modern scholarship approved)
- Northern: Early church fathers, medieval commentators, and protestant reformers
- Hybrid: John MacArthur (Gal 2:1-10 = Acts 15:1-35, but to a southern audience)

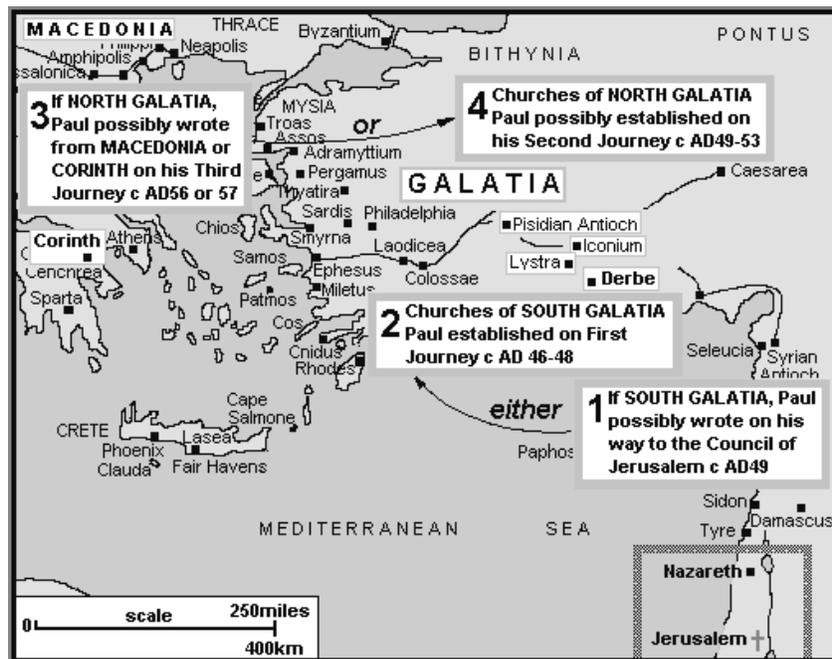
Why is the discussion important?

- Determines the date, provenance, and destination of the letter.

Why is the discussion not important?

- *Identifying the recipients of Galatians is important for Pauline chronology and history, but it is not determinative for the interpretation of the letter, and the meaning of the letter does not change dramatically whether we opt for a north or south Galatian hypothesis. (Schreiner)*

Theories Map



Outline

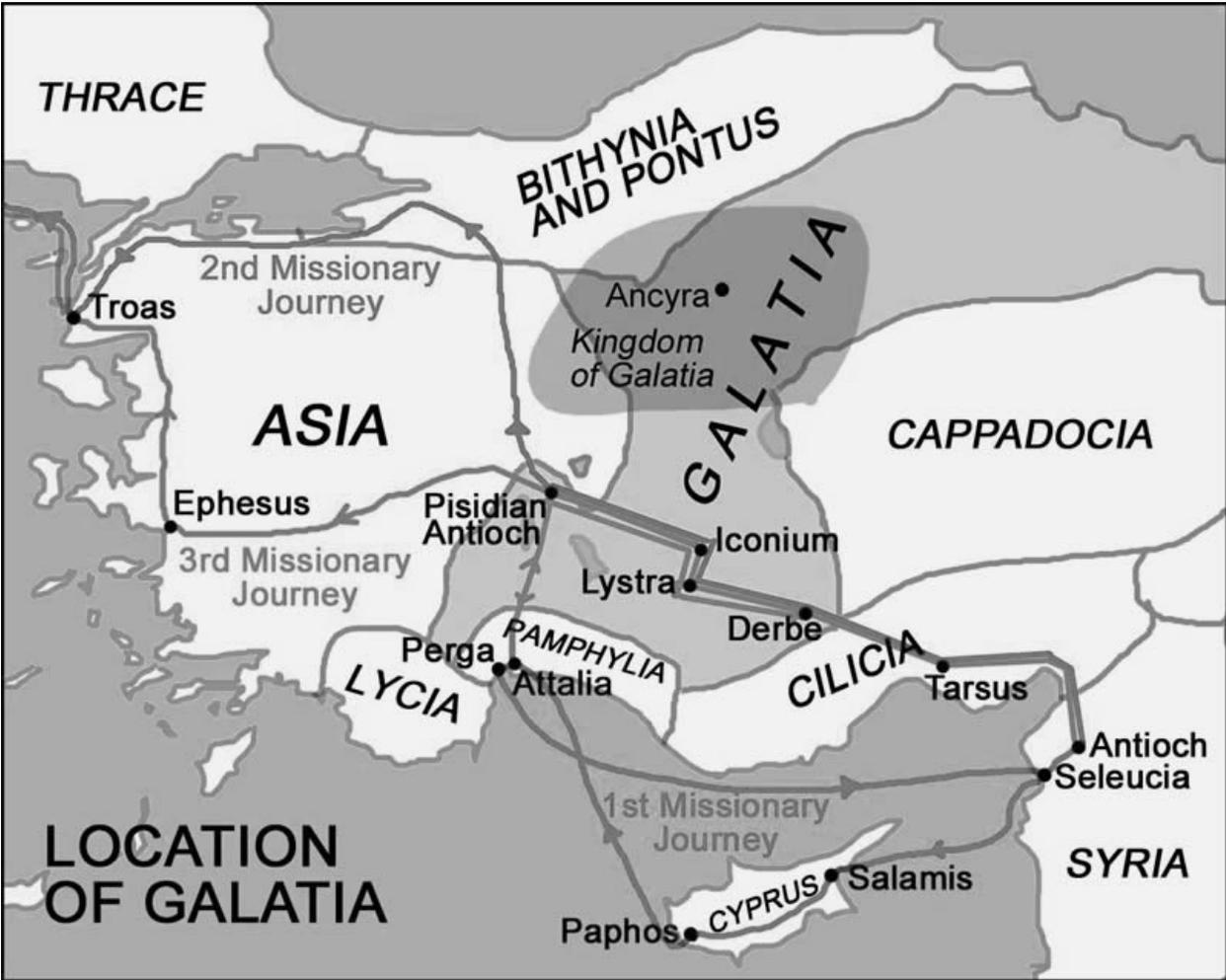
The Letter to the Galatians

- I. Prologue (1:1-10)
 - A. Salutation: God's Gospel (1:1-5)
 - B. Desertion from the One True Gospel (1:6-10)

- II. Body: Paul's Defense, Explanation, and Application of the Gospel (1:11-6:10)
 - A. Paul's Gospel is God's Gospel (1:11-2:21)
 - 1. Revelation from God (1:11-12)
 - 2. Support for Paul's Claim (1:13-2:21)
 - a. His Pre-Converted Life (1:13-14)
 - b. His Conversion (1:15-17)
 - c. His Obscurity (1:18-24)
 - d. His Approval by the Jerusalem Apostles (2:1-10)
 - e. His Authority in the Rebuke of Peter (2:11-21)
 - 1) Paul's Confrontation of Peter (2:11-13)
 - 2) Paul's Correction of Peter (2:14-21)
 - B. Paul's Explanation of the Gospel (3:1-4:11)
 - 1. The Experience of the Galatians (3:1-5)
 - 2. The Example of Abraham (3:6-9)
 - 3. The Curse of the Law (3:10-14)
 - 4. The Law and the Abrahamic Covenant (3:15-4:11)
 - C. Paul's Application of the Gospel (4:12-6:10)
 - 1. The Plea not to Return to Bondage (4:12-31)
 - 2. The Appeal to Stand Firm in Freedom (5:1)
 - 3. The Call to Freedom (5:2-6:10)
 - a. Freedom through Resistance to Circumcision (5:2-12)
 - b. Freedom through Walking by the Holy Spirit (5:13-26)
 - c. Freedom through Bearing and Sharing with Others (6:1-10)

- III. Epilogue (6:11-18)
 - A. Paul's Personal Touch (6:11)
 - B. Paul's Summation of What Matters (6:12-17)
 - C. Paul's Benediction of Christ's Grace (6:18)

Map of the Galatian Province



Galatians 1:1-5 – God’s Gospel

The Text

Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead—and all the brothers who are with me,

To the churches of Galatia:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Introduction

- This is a frustrated letter, written out of necessity. It is the only Pauline epistle that opens with a defensive tone.
 - Paul wastes no time getting to the heart of the matter. He is a man burdened by holy love and righteous anger.
 - God’s gospel is being abandoned for a lie. Something has to be done about it.
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Principal Proposition

Paul reminds the Galatian churches that the gospel he proclaims comes from God (as well as his apostolic authority). Therefore, the gospel he teaches is God’s gospel and worthy of full acceptance.

Literary Context

- I. Prologue (1:1-10)
 - A. Salutation: God’s Gospel (1:1-5)

Literary Structure

God's Gospel (v. 1-5)

God's Man (v. 1-2)

God's Message (v. 3-4)

God's Majesty (v. 5)

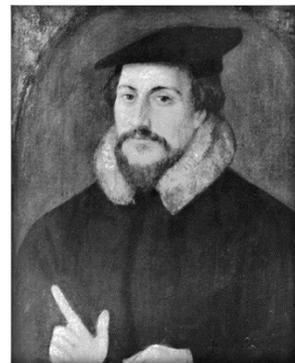
Interpretive Comments

God's Man

v. 1 Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead—

➤ “Paul, an apostle”

- Paul immediately introduces himself as one with apostolic authority.
- *The Apostles (as they that were chosen by our Lord Jesus Christ to bear abroad His gospel, and to preach it through the whole world) were well worthy to have been revered everywhere, and to have been of such renown and authority, as the things that proceeded from them should have been [thoroughly] received. (Calvin)*
- *For their calling was lawful: it was [well] known that they did not thrust in themselves of their own heads, but that the son of God had chosen and appointed them by His own mouth, yea and made them as it were new creatures: being silly souls and ignorant folk, they were so changed, as it appeared well that their doctrine came altogether of heavenly miracle. (Calvin)*



➤ “not from men nor through man”

- Paul's apostleship was appointed by God.

- The same can be said for his message. He received it directly through divine revelation. It was not invented by man, nor delivered by man.
 - This defensive statement indicates that Paul’s apostolic authority was being questioned. He will continually defend his apostolic authority for the first two chapters of this letter.
- “through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead”
- Paul does not mention the resurrection in any other introduction.
 - The resurrection confirms the arrival of a new age in human history (Isa 26:19; Ezek 37:1-14).
 - After sitting down to write, Paul cannot even catch his breath before diving into essential gospel truth.
- v. 2 and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:
- “all the brothers who are with me”
- This letter does not come from Paul alone.
 - The believers who are with him subscribe to the same gospel he does.
- “To the churches of Galatia”
- This is the only Pauline epistle specifically addressed to multiple churches in more than one city.

God’s Message

- v. 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,
- “Grace to you”
- This is particularly important for the Galatians because they are being attacked with a false gospel that denies God’s grace.

- “and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”
 - God’s peace can only result from His grace.
 - *Grace is positional, peace is practical, and together they flow from God our Father through His Son and our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. (MacArthur)*

- v. 4 who gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,
 - “who gave Himself for our sins”
 - Christ’s atonement is the heart of the gospel.
 - His sacrifice was substitutionary and complete (2 Cor 5:21).
 - To turn towards works of righteousness for salvation is to lose sight of the significance of the cross.

 - “to deliver us from the present evil age”
 - Our deliverance is the purpose of the gospel.
 - The Greek word for deliver (*exairō*) carries the connotation of “rescuing from danger.”
 - A believer is rescued from the evil system of this fallen world once they become a Christian.
 - We are in the world but not of it (John 17:11, 14-18; Phlm 3:20-21; 1 John 5:5); residents, but not citizens (Eph 2:19; Phil 3:20).

 - “according to the will of our God and Father”
 - The Father’s will is the source of the gospel.
 - It was His will to send His Son (John 3:16).
 - It was His will not to remove the cup of Christ’s sacrifice (Luke 22:42).

- Salvation is not established in the will of man, but the sovereign decree of God.
- This is particularly important for the Galatians because they are being confronted with a false gospel that promotes man's will to accomplish salvation.

God's Majesty

v. 5 to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

➤ “to whom be the glory forever and ever”

- The believer's natural response to God's gospel is praise.
- *Indeed, God will be praised forever because of His saving work in Christ.*
(Schreiner)

➤ “Amen”

- This concludes Paul's salutations and his prayer for the Galatians.
- It's time for Paul to drop the hammer...

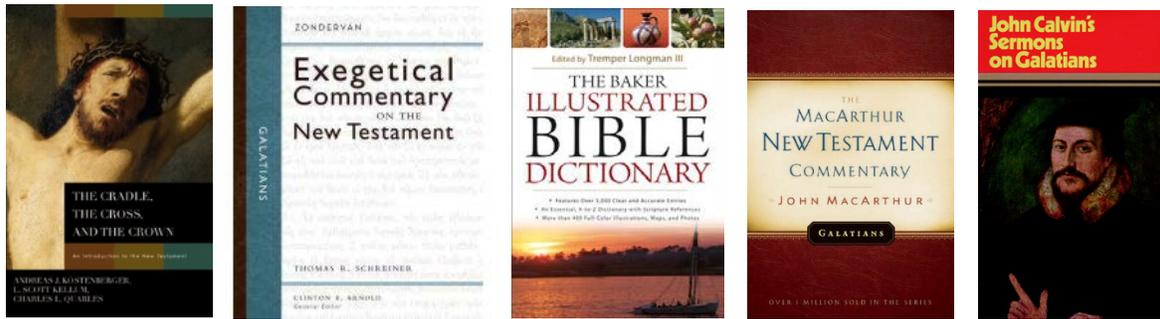
Discussion Questions

- What is an apostle?
- Why would anyone question Paul's apostolic authority?
- Why is Paul's apostolic authority important?
- Can you clearly articulate God's gospel?

Concise Prayers

- Lord, thank you for entrusting your truth to faithful men (v. 1-2)
- May we know your peace that comes through your grace (v. 3)
- Thank you for delivering us with your sacrifice on the cross (v. 4)
- Eternity is not long enough to sing your praises (v. 5)

Sources and Resources



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All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version.