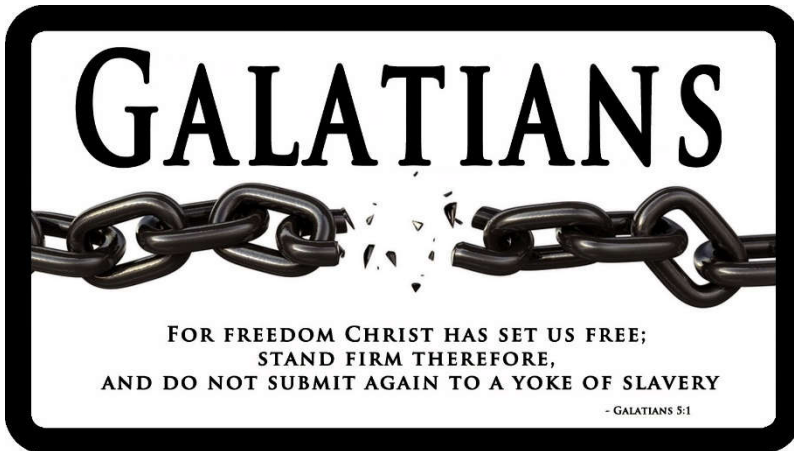


### 1. Introduction to Galatians



#### *Background of Galatians*

Just what does it mean to be saved? Saved from what? If we look at our lives and ask, where will we be in ten thousand years? Will we cease to exist? We will live in heaven or hell? What is our future, what is our hope? In this world, it is easy to be sidetracked from the most important questions we can ever ask, who are we? What is our purpose? And where are we going? There are so many ways to be distracted from these most important

questions, social media, internet, movies, news, sports, entertainment, you name it, distractions exist.

Distractions to eternity are not new, they have been present since the fall of man, and aspects of our fallen nature blind us to the reality of our eternity. We somehow think we are in control and have the ability to control our destiny. According to the Bible we are all condemned already, humanity on its own account is lost, for this reason, God needed to intervene in humanity to rescue us from our lost state.

Joh 3:16-18 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (17) For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (18) Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

From the time we are born we are fallen, born into a fallen world, Jesus Christ died that he might "Save"

us from the judgement. Jesus has freed us from the judgment we deserve, he took the judgment upon Himself, choosing to die on the cross in our place. After His resurrection Jesus commissioned the Apostles and in general the church to deliver the message of this "Good News" the Gospel to the nations.

#### *The Commission of the Church*

Jesus has transferred his authority to the apostles and the church. Since Jesus conquered death, he took back the authority lost by Adam's fall, he therefore commissioned the "Church" with his

authority to deliver the Good News, the Gospel to the nations and take authority in His name.

Mat 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (19) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

This authority would operate under the power of the Holy Spirit, promised by the Father. Before Jesus ascended into Heaven he told the Apostles to remain in Jerusalem until they receive this Holy Spirit power. The Spirit would give them the ability to accomplish the commission of advancing the Kingdom of God.



Act 1:7-8 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. (8) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

The mission was to advance from Jerusalem and expand to the ends of the earth, the same mission we have today, our job and purpose is to bring the message of the Gospel to the nations, starting from our Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria to the ends of the earth. Soon after the Holy Spirit descends on the apostles in the upper room we see a scared Peter rise to bold leadership, under the power of the Holy Spirit we see thousands come to the faith. (Acts 2:41 3,000, Acts 4:4 5,000)

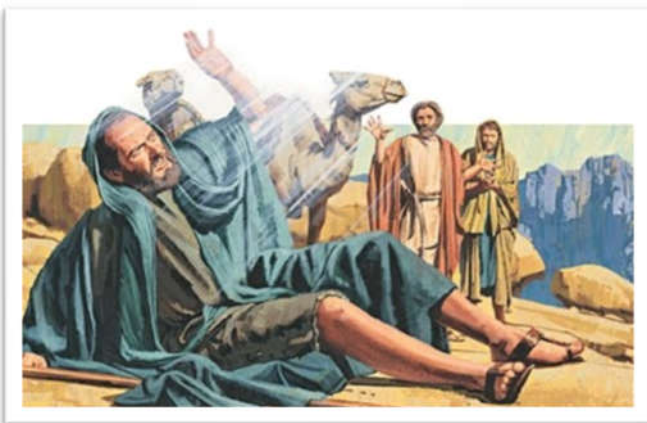
Satan's goal on the other hand is to stop the advance of the Gospel, to keep the world in darkness. He has many tools and methods at his disposal, he prowls like a lion seeking to devour souls.

**1Pe 5:8** Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

### *Saul the Orthodox Rabbi*

Paul, known as Saul was an orthodox Rabbi, his goal was to stop the advance of the Gospel, he was there when Stephen was stoned by the crowd. Saul was authorized by the high priest to hunt and track down members of this growing cult.

**Act 8:1-3** And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. (2) Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. (3) But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.



His search extended to Damascus hunting for the leaders trying to snuff out light of this group. God would choose an enemy of the Gospel to be its greatest and most vocal representative. On the road to Damascus, Jesus commissioned Saul, a murder of saints, an opponent of the Gospel, to be His Apostle to the nations.

Act 9:3-7 Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. (4) And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" (5) And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. (6) But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." (7) The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. Act 9:15-16 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. (16) For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."

Saul was the most unlikely person to deliver the Gospel, he was an enemy of Jesus and a killer of the saints, how could Jesus use someone like him? Saul later known as Paul demonstrated the power of the Gospel in three ways.

1. He demonstrated the **grace** of the Gospel: An enemy of Christ chosen by Him
2. He demonstrated the **mercy** of the Gospel: A murder of saints, would be forgiven and elevated
3. He demonstrated the **power** of the Gospel: The greatest enemy could be the greatest advocate

Paul's life would become of the living demonstration of the Gospel, a template for future believers to model their own lives and ministry after.

Paul was blinded by Jesus on the road to Damascus, Jesus told him in Damascus he would find a man named Ananias, who would pray for him to regain his sight. When that happened, Paul immediately went into the synagogues of Damascus and proclaimed Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel, to

the astonishment of both believers and non-believers. The one who persecuted the church was now proclaiming it. Paul quickly became an object of wrath by the Jewish opposition in the city. Paul had to be let down from the city in a basket at night to escape an assassination plot on his life. He returned to Jerusalem where he again proclaimed Jesus to Jews, again causing the enemies of Jesus to want to kill him.



Act 9:26-29 And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. (27) But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. (28) So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. (29) And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to kill him.

Paul later settled in Tarsus, later Barnabas would seek Paul out and brought him to Antioch. There the two teamed up and began to teaching ministry, building the Church through discipleship.

Act 11:25-26 So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, (26) and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.

### *The First Missionary Journey*

From Antioch, Paul and Barnabas would be sent out by the Holy Spirit on

the *First missionary* journey, from Antioch they went to the island Cyprus, then to Asia Minor and into the area known as Galatia, the southern part. In the Galatian cities of Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe they proclaimed the Gospel in the synagogues with both Jews and Greeks believing on Jesus. Opposition rose up also to the Gospel forcing Paul and Barnabas to flee to neighboring cities. In Acts 14, a man crippled from birth is healed by Paul, the Greeks at first want to proclaim them as gods visiting men, later the same people want to stone them.

Act 14:1-19 Now at Iconium they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. (2) But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. (3) So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. (4) But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles. (5) When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, (6) they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country, (7) and there they continued to preach the gospel. (8) Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked. (9) He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, (10) said in a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he sprang up and began walking. (11) And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" (12)



### Galatia<sup>1</sup>

Has been called the "Gallia" of the East, Roman writers calling its inhabitants Galli. They were an intermixture of Gauls and Greeks, and hence were called Gallo-Graeci, and the country Gallo-Graecia. The Galatians were in their origin a part of that great Celtic migration which invaded Macedonia about 280 B.C.. They

were invited by the king of Bithynia to cross over into Asia Minor to assist him in his wars. There they ultimately settled, and being strengthened by fresh accessions of the same clan from Europe, they overran Bithynia, and supported themselves by plundering neighboring countries. They were great warriors, and hired themselves out as mercenary soldiers, sometimes fighting on both sides in the great battles of the times. They were at length brought under the power of Rome in 189 B.C., and Galatia became a Roman province B.C. 25.

This province of Galatia, within the limits of which these Celtic tribes were confined, was the central region of Asia Minor.

During his second missionary journey Paul, accompanied by Silas and Timothy ([Act 16:6](#)), visited the "region of Galatia," where he was detained by sickness ([Gal 4:13](#)), and had thus the longer opportunity of preaching to them the gospel. On his third journey he went over "all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order" ([Act 18:23](#)). Crescens was sent thither by Paul toward the close of his life ([2Ti 4:10](#)).

Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. (13) And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds. (14) But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, (15) "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. (16) In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. (17) Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness." (18) Even with these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them. (19) But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.

Regardless of the opposition churches were established by believers in the region of Galatia. Elders were selected for these new groups of believers, before Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch.

[Act 14:27-28](#) And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. (28) And they remained no little time with the disciples.

### The Jerusalem Council

| Timeline for Acts and Paul         |                           |                                                               |                              |                                            |                                            |                                                    |                                 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 33-43                              | 44-47                     | 48-50                                                         | 51                           | 52-53                                      | 54-57                                      | 58-62                                              | 63-67                           |
| The Early Church<br>Acts 1.1-11.18 |                           | The Growth of the Church through Missions<br>Acts 11.19-28.31 |                              |                                            |                                            |                                                    | After Roman Imprisonment        |
| Jerusalem<br>Acts 1.1-8.3          | Samaria<br>Acts 8.4-11.18 | 1st Missionary Journey<br>Acts 11.19-14.28                    | Jerusalem Council<br>Acts 15 | 2nd Missionary Journey<br>Acts 15.36-18.23 | 3rd Missionary Journey<br>Acts 18.24-21.17 | Missionary Journey to Rome<br>Acts 21.18-28.31     |                                 |
|                                    |                           |                                                               |                              | Galatians 1 & 2<br>Thessalonians           | Corinthians 1 & 2<br>Romans                | Colossians<br>Philemon<br>Ephesians<br>Philippians | 1 Timothy<br>Titus<br>2 Timothy |

Gentiles becoming believers might not seem radical to us today, but to the early church largely made up of Jewish believers it caused some serious questions. How could these Gentiles be incorporated into the Mosaic covenant, were they to keep the laws and ordinances that Jewish believers were keeping? This issue caused a rift, so the church decided a council at Jerusalem needed to be called to discuss and make a firm declaration on the issues.

[Act 15:1-5](#) But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

(2) And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to

Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question. (3) So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and

<sup>1</sup> Easton Bible Dictionary

brought great joy to all the brothers. (4) When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them. (5) But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the Law of Moses."

The decision was unanimous from the disciples, including Peter and James, the gentiles were not to be burdened with ordinances of the Mosaic covenant, including circumcision, a sign of the Mosaic Law. The declaration was made and witnessed, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch to declare to the decision by the Jerusalem Council. Among the witness of the decision was Silas

**Act 15:30-32** So when they were sent off, they went down to Antioch, and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. (31) And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement. (32) And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words.



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey

After this letter, Paul would return to the cities of Galatia and the churches established in the First Missionary journey. This time Barnabas did not join Paul, because of a dispute of John Mark (Author of the Gospel of Mark). This time he was accompanied by Silas and later by Timothy of Lystra, his mother being Jewish and father Greek.

**Act 16:1-5** Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. (2) He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. (3) Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him,

and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. (4) As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. (5) So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.

## Date of Galatians

The dating of the book depends on a couple of issues, one when were the churches in Galatia established? The first or second missionary journey? Did it include Northern Galatia or Southern? On the First Missionary Journey Paul establishes the church in the southern areas of Galatia. This included the

cities of Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. These cities were also visited on the Second Missionary journey, so if the Epistle was addressed to these churches the writing could have preceded the Jerusalem council and been as early as A.D. 48. On the other hand, if the letter was to the churches established on the Second missionary journey, (Acts 16:6) then the letter could have been written around A.D. 52.

### *Purpose of the Epistle*

After these churches in Galatia were established by Paul, others followed. Jewish believers in Christ began to teach them the Galatians that in addition to the Gospel, they needed to keep the Laws of Moses, especially circumcision to be “Saved”. They need to add “Works” to their faith if they hoped to be accepted before God.

Paul wrote this epistle to counter this perversion of the Gospel, these young believers had been seduced into another Gospel. The seducers were a group known as Judaizers, Jewish believers who taught that salvation required both faith in Jesus as well as following the Laws of Moses.

### *Theology of Galatians*

Paul goal is to establish the Gospel, he wants to make the Gospel clear to the reader by eliminating the confusion of and danger of a works based “salvation”. The idea that our obedience to the Law added to our salvation was abhorrent to Paul.

**Gal 3:10** For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."

The only way for salvation was “Justification” through faith in Jesus Christ, any addition to the work of Christ was a repudiation of the Cross.

**Gal 2:16** yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

Justification comes from a Greek legal term, *Dikaioo* meaning to be declared “righteous”, under what circumstances is one declared righteous with God? Following the law will not cause justification, but faith in Christ alone.

### *Paul's Authority*

Who was Paul? What right did he have in proclaiming his “Version” of the Gospel? This was another important aspect of Galatians. The Judaizers questioned Paul’s authority, Paul responds to their charges, showing his authority is directly from Jesus, not through men.

**Gal 1:1** Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—

**Gal 1:11-12** For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man’s gospel. **(12)** For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.



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