**Galatians**

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| **Justification by Faith Freedom from the Law? Christian Liberty?** | | | | | | |
| **Judaizer Attack #1**  **“Paul teaches this doctrine by his own authority!”** | | **Judaizer Attack #2**  **“This is a new teaching contrary to the OT!”** | | **Judaizer Attack #3**  **“Teaching faith alone will encourage a sinful lifestyle!”** | | |
| **Paul’s Defense:**  **“God called me and the 12 apostles affirmed this”** | | **Paul’s Defense:**  **“Salvation has always been by faith–even in the OT”** | | **Paul’s Defense:**  **“No, justification by faith naturally leads to godly living”** | | |
| **Biographical** | | **Theological** | | **Practical** | | |
| **Chapters 1–2** | | **Chapters 3–4** | | **Chapters 5–6** | | |
| **Upholds**  **Apostleship** | | **Upholds**  **Justification by Faith** | | **Upholds**  **Responsibilities** | | |
| **Rebuke** | **Relationships** | **Affirmed** | **Illustrated** | **Balance** | **Service** | **Warnings** |
| **1:1-9** | **1:10–2:21** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6:1-10** | **6:11-18** |
| **Antioch of Syria** | | | | | | |
| **Fall AD 49 (after first missionary journey)** | | | | | | |

**Key Word: Justification**

**Key Verse: *“****Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”* **(Galatians 2:16).**

**Summary Satement: The reason we cannot be saved by obeying the Law is because Paul’s call, theology and practice all uphold *justification by faith*.**

**Application:**

**Do you add *any* other requirements for salvation except faith in Christ—baptism, tongues, good works, or any other good deed?**

**The logical result of justi fication by faith is godliness.**

**Galatians**

**I. Title** The Greek title of the letter (*To the Galatians*) follows the standard form of naming Paul's writings after their recipients.

**II. Authorship**

A. External Evidence: The traditional view is that the Apostle Paul wrote Galatians.

1. This finds early support by Polycarp (3:3; 5:1; cf. Kümmel, 198). Marcion also placed the epistle at the top of his list of genuine Pauline epistles (Harrison, 255).

2. Paul as author of Galatians has been mostly uncontested even among the 19th century German critics in the Tübingen school.

B. Internal Evidence: The Book of Galatians explicitly mentions Paul as its author (1:1; 5:2). In fact, Paul probably departed from his usual practice of dictating his letters to a secretary by actually penning the epistle himself (6:11; cf. “Characteristics” section below). Most of chapters 1 and 2 are autobiographical (e.g., 1:11f.) and several Pauline themes are evident (e.g., grace, law).

**III. Circumstances**

A. Date: The issue of date closely relates to the destination of the letter (Bruce, 43-56). The two theories of destination are the North Galatian Theory (adopting the later date) and the South Galatian Theory (generally suggesting an earlier date):

1. External evidence from Marcion suggests that Paul wrote from Ephesus shortly before writing 1 Corinthians (approx. AD 55), thus supporting the later date.

2. Internal evidence shows that the Galatians deserted Paul's teaching just after his first visit (1:6f.), lending more credence to the South Galatian Theory. If the second visit of 4:13 is the one in Acts 16:6, then the epistle is post-Jerusalem Council (AD 53-56; Harrison, 260; Kümmel, 197-198; Betz, 9-12).

3. Conclusion: Arguments for both dates are inconclusive, but the best evidence supports the South Galatian Theory (see below) and the earlier date of about fall AD 49.

B. Origin: The origin of the book of Galatians is not specifically stated and depends upon the identity of the recipients as to whether they lived in North or South Galatia:

1. The Northern Theory says Paul wrote to North Galatia from Ephesus, Corinth, Macedonia, or Rome (Betz, 12).

2. The Southern Theory says that Paul wrote to South Galatia from Antioch or somewhere en route from Antioch to Jerusalem for the Jerusalem Council (Harrison, 260).

C. Recipients: The epistle addressed “the churches of Galatia” (1:2). This is the only Pauline letter to a group of churches. Evidently Paul did not have enough time to write each church individually, so a circular letter was sent (Hiebert, 2:71).

However, the internal evidence favors the southern view. While the southern view has chronological difficulties, the northern view has the problem of attributing the “again” of Galatians 2:1 to a third (not second) visit. Therefore, the weight of the evidence supports the Southern Galatian Theory.

D. Occasion: The Galatians accepted the gospel eagerly at first (3:1-5; 4:13-14) but this ended (4:15) due to opposition from Jewish false teachers (Judaizers) who had spread their teaching in the churches after Paul established them (1:7b; 4:13-14; 5:7). They proclaimed “another gospel” (1:6-9) associated with the Jewish Torah and circumcision (2:15-21; 3:2-5; 4:21; 5:2-12; 6:12-17). Paul had confronted these Judaizers already in Jerusalem (2:4-5) but this letter was written before the Jerusalem leaders officially disapproved of them at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:19-21, 24). Since no official word had yet come from Jerusalem, Paul wrote the churches immediately to combat this false teaching by defending his apostleship (Gal 1–2) and the true gospel of justification by faith alone (Gal 3–4), which produces a unique lifestyle based upon freedom in Christ (Gal 5–6).

**IV. Characteristics**

A. Literary Characteristics:

1. Structure: Its threefold structure is explained in the occasion section above.

2. Mood: Even the first verse shows a severe tone as it lacks the customary salutation

3. Unity: Paul vindicates his authority repeatedly (1:1, 11-16; 6:11-16) and defends justification by faith (1:6-10; 2:4, 14; 3:1–5:12), so the unity of the letter has gone virtually unchallenged.

B. The Jerusalem visit (2:1-10) has been seen as either Paul's famine trip to aid the depressed church (cf. Acts 11:27-30) or Paul's attendance at the Jerusalem Council (cf. Acts 15:1-29).

C. Galatians is the only Pauline letter written to a group of churches.

D. This is the first letter of Paul that has been included in the New Testament.

**V. Distinctive Points and Other Remarks**

DISTINCTIVE POINTS

1. The Magna Carta of Spiritual Emancipation

2. You will find no stronger statement in the Bible about the gospel than in Galatians 1:6-10.

anathema—accursed (damned to hell forever)

3. Not one praise or commendation is made to these people in the book

OTHER REMARKS

Martin Luther’s favorite book “It is my epistle. I have betrothed myself to it. It is my wife.”

10 Great Passages from Galatians

1. 2:16—“No justification in the law”

2. 2:20—“I am crucified with Christ”

3. 3:11—“Just shall live by faith” (Hab 2:4)

4. 3:23-4:3—“Temporary nature of the law”

5. 4:4-5—“The fullness of the Time”

6. 4:16—“Enemy because I tell you the truth”

7. 5:19-25—“Works of Flesh and Fruit of Spirit”

8. 6:1-5—“”Helping the weak”

(restore is a medical term)

9. 6:7-8—“Sowing and Reaping”

10. 6:14—“I am crucified unto the world”

**Argument**

Galatians is often called “the Magna Carta of Christian Liberty” since it emphasizes the believer's freedom in Christ. However, it is evident that Paul's purpose was threefold: to defend his apostleship against the Judaizers (Gal 1–2), to defend the essence of the gospel based in justification by faith alone (Gal 3–4), and to give practical exhortations in light of the believer's freedom in Christ (Gal 5–6).

Therefore, Paul's purpose in writing is to convince the Galatians that since they were saved by grace, they are free from the Law. As a result, Judaizers who sought to impose upon them a legalistic system based upon the Law should not lead them away from their moorings in Christ.