

The Book of Galatians

Chapter 1

Background

- Written by Paul possibly as early as A.D. 49. Many believe this to be the oldest of his letters in the New Testament.
- It is written to the believers in the region of Galatia in Asia Minor (modern Turkey).
- This area is named from Gallic people who settled there around 300 B.C.
- Paul visited southern Galatia in Acts 13-14.
- The purpose of this letter is to counter the spread of false doctrines concerning salvation, especially the false teaching that believers must keep the Law for salvation.
- Outline
 - Defense of the Gospel – Chapters 1-4
 - Application of the Gospel – Chapters 5-6

Chapter 1

I. Introduction – vs. 1-5

- vs. 1 – note that Paul is already countering accusations against his authority
- Apostle – “a person sent by another; a messenger; envoy” (Easton’s Bible Dictionary)

II. A False Gospel – vs 6-9

- “Persons distorting the gospel (1:7) were disturbing the churches of Galatia. These preachers were attempting to convince the Galatian believers that it was necessary to embrace the Old Testament Law with its ritual regulations in order to achieve perfection or justification (3:3).” – AMG Concise Bible Survey
- These individuals seem to have promoted their own authority while attacking Paul’s.
- vs. 8-9 – accursed, *anathema* – set aside for destruction, cast out of the church

III. Paul’s Personal Defense – vs. 10-24

- Paul here defends the validity of the Gospel he preached by attesting that its source was not human but rather Divine.
- This section (which continues into Chapter 2) is largely biographical, and we can compare the parallel account Acts.
- vs. 13 – Paul, the persecutor – Acts 8:3, 9:1-2
- vs. 14 – Paul, the Pharisee – Acts 22:3, 26:5, Philippians 3:4-6
- vs. 15-16 – Paul, the Predestined – Acts 9-1:18

- also compare to Jeremiah 1:5
- vs. 16-17 – Paul, the Pilgrim – around Acts 9:20(?)
 - Paul's time in Arabia is not covered in Acts and is subject to much speculation. B.H. Carroll believed he went to Sinai. Wherever it was, it appears he spent this time contemplating the Gospel he would preach.
- vs. 18 – Paul's first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion – Acts 9:26-29
 - Paul is emphasizing that he did not receive his doctrine from Jerusalem
 1. He went to Jerusalem three years after his conversion
 2. He was preaching before meeting any Apostle or being approved by them
 3. He only saw the Apostle Peter and Pastor James during a 15-day visit
- vs. 19 – James – not the brother of John, but the James of Acts 15:13 and the author of the Book of James.
- Paul skips a visit to Jerusalem mentioned in Acts 11:27-30 and 12:25. That visit was to deliver relief money to the saints there. There was heavy persecution during this time and the visit appears brief.
- vs. 20 – Antioch was in Syria and Tarsus was in Cilicia.
- vs. 22 – Paul, the Reputation
 - Paul would not be back in Jerusalem for 14 more years (2:1). However, his name, story, and reputation were quite well known.
- ...to be continued in Chapter 2