

Paul's Epistle to Galatia

The Gospel and the Law of Moses

Prepared for:
54th Ave Church of Christ
Des Moines, IA

Introduction

Key Verse:

Gal 2:16, 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.

Theme

Paul's letter to Galatia has one main theme: to instruct the Galatians on the nature of the Gospel of Jesus. It is Steadfast, that it does not include the Law of Moses. Paul develops this doctrine in Gal 1:6-5:12, asserting the Gospel of Jesus in Gal 2:16-21, 5:1-12, and again as he closes the epistle in Gal 6:12-13. The frequency and detail given this doctrine, show it is the primary theme of the entire letter. This is the very topic of Acts 15 where Paul and Barnabas travel to Jerusalem and meet with the Apostles and Elders of the church there. We find the Christian "Jews" (Or Judaizers), are prominent well into the Christian age, though the epistle generated from Acts 15 taught against the Gentiles holding to the Law of Moses. We find that they are prominent in the Jerusalem church in Acts 21:18-21. They were so passionate about Judaism that they followed Paul around to other cities during his missionary Journeys. They were converted, were baptized, were Christians; teaching that circumcision was required to be a Christian. They are shown to be very militant. Their teachings infiltrated the churches in Galatia in spite of Paul's previous teachings (Gal 5:3) and the epistle from all the Apostles (Acts 15). Paul exposes these issues in this epistle.

Aside from this primary theme, there are a couple of sub themes that Paul teaches in this epistle:

- 1) 1:10 - 2:21, the Gospel originates with God, therefore it cannot be changed. That he, Paul, is an Apostle of Jesus, selected by Jesus. He was not taught by another apostle but was equal to them; (same theme as Acts 9-28), nor was he taught by the church in Judea.

Paul's confirmation that he was not a student but an Apostle, receiving revelation directly from God, is a critical point for the Galatians and all who look to Jesus. Paul's credibility was threatened. Did he learn it wrong; did he forget part of it or leave something out; did he teach it wrong; did he corrupt it in some way; all questions or charges that could have been laid against him and his teachings. Paul asserts that he was not taught the Gospel by men (Gal 1:11). He was an authorized apostle; he received the Gospel from God. The Galatians should take heed to all his teachings (about the Law of Moses and any other), just as they should every other apostle. Paul speaks with the authority of God.

- 2) 5:13-6:10, Love and Serve One Another

5:13-25, War of the Flesh and Spirit

Paul's teachings about the war between the Flesh and Spirit are a significant doctrine of the New Testament. The religious mindset of the day was that a good deed showed/proved Godliness. Reference Mt 5:20, 6:1-18, Mt 23:23. In Mt 23:23 Jesus calls out the Pharisees for performing works of the law but missing the heart of the matter, the weightier matters. Paul teaches that a Christian with the wrong heart will not be saved, Gal 5:21. The Hebrew writer presents a similar concept in Heb 5:11-6:3, where he references moving past the basic doctrines unto completeness. I believe this passage here in Galatians 5 is an example of the completeness that is instructed in Heb 6.

5:26-6:10, Serve for One Another

Paul's teaching about serving one another is also a common teaching throughout the New Testament. There is a contrast in the gospels over what the Apostle perceived their work and position to be, and Jesus' example. Jesus chastised his apostles for seeking superiority over one another, he instructed them to be a servant just as he was, Mk 9:33-41, Lk 22:24-30. Jesus, our Lord and King, showed us how we are to serve one another. It is the essence of all who seek to be servants of God and workers in the kingdom. We are to have the mind of a servant.

Paragraphs

1:1–5, Greeting

1:6–5:12, The Gospel of Jesus Christ

1:6-9, Is Steadfast

1:10–2:14, Revealed by Paul

2:15-21, Justification through Jesus Alone

3:1–3:29, Superior to the Law of Moses

4:1–20, Allegory of Bondage and Freedom

5:1–12, Consequences of Leaving

5:13–6:10, By Love Serve One Another

5:13–15, Warning of Quarreling

5:16–25, Carnal vs. Spirit led life

5:26–6:10, Serving One Another

6:11–18, Conclusion

Background

Writer

1:1, Paul an Apostle of Jesus and God the Father
6:11, wrote the epistle himself

Date

Post Acts 15:

- ❖ Gal 2:1-10 seems to refer to Paul and Barnabas' trip to Jerusalem to discuss the topic of circumcision.
 - Here Paul seems to recount his visit to Jerusalem (Acts 15)
- ❖ Gal 5:3, For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.
 - This statement could very well reference the occasion when Paul delivered the epistle of Acts 15 to them as stated in Acts 16:4.

Shortly after one of his visits, Gal 1:6:

- ❖ vs. 6 reads "so soon". This is a subjective term, but it would seem it would not include years. This would lead us to believe it was written shortly after the 2nd (Acts 16:1-6) or the 3rd (Acts 18:23) missionary journeys he made.

Before his bondage in Acts 21:

- ❖ Paul makes no reference to him being imprisoned as in other prison Epistles he wrote. This is not an absolute condition but is a valid consideration.

An Illness is mentioned during one of his visits, Gal 4:13

- ❖ 2 Cor 12 could be a reference to this event

Apostolic Work in Galatia

Paul's 1st Missionary Journey

- ❖ Antioch of Pisidia, Acts 13:14-51
- ❖ Iconium, Acts 14:1-5
- ❖ Lystra, Acts 14:6-20
- ❖ Derbe, Acts 14:20-21

Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey

- ❖ Acts 15:36-41, Paul Determined to return to churches
- ❖ Acts 16:1-6, Derbe/Lystra, went throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia

Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey

- ❖ Acts 18:22-23, Paul traveled over the country of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening the Churches.

Epistle of Acts 15 Delivered to them

- ❖ Acts 16:4

I Cor 16:1, instructions given to the Corinthians which had also been given to Galatian's

Peter's 1st & 2nd Epistles Addressed to these churches

- ❖ 1 Pet 1:1, ... to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia
- ❖ 2 Pet 3:1, this is the 2nd epistle written to you

Persecutions Paul endured in the region

- ❖ II Tim 3:10-11, But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.
 - Antioch of Pisidia, Acts 13:14-51
 - Acts 13:42-51, Jews jealous because Gentiles; Whole city came together to hear him the 2nd Sabbath he was there
 - Acts 13:50-51, Dissension lead by the Leaders of the Jews
 - He and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet when leaving
 - Iconium, Acts 14:1-5, unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil against the brethren
 - Lystra, Acts 14:6-20, Gentiles tried to worship Paul and Barnabas when they healed the lame man.
 - Vs. 19, Jews from Antioch and Iconium, persuaded the people, stoned Paul, and drug him out of the city presuming him dead

Judaizers

Judaizers – Christians professing the Law of Moses was binding on the gentile Christians, in particular Circumcision.

A serious problem in the early church

- ❖ Acts 15:1-5, Jewish Christians (Judaizers) in Antioch of Syria were demanding they be circumcised and keep all the law.
- ❖ Acts 21:18-21, thousands of Jews believe AND are zealous of the Law.

Greek

JFB, ...The inhabitants (Gallo-graeci, contracted into Galati, another form of the name Celts) were Gauls in origin, the latter having overrun Asia Minor after they had pillaged Delphi, about 280 b.c. and at last permanently settled in the central parts, thence called Gallo-graecia or Galatia. Their character, as shown in this Epistle, is in entire consonance with that ascribed to the Gallic race by all writers. Caesar [Commentaries on the Gallic War, 4, 5], "The infirmity of the Gauls is that they are fickle in their resolves and fond of change, and not to be trusted." So, Thierry (quoted by Alford), "Frank, impetuous, impressible, eminently intelligent, but at the same time extremely changeable, inconstant, fond of show, perpetually quarrelling, the fruit of excessive vanity."

Audience of the Epistle

Jews in the church

- ❖ Judaizers seemed to be addressed in 3rd person throughout the book
- ❖ Galatian Christians in 2nd person
- ❖ A few lines of argumentation that are very Jewish in nature
 - Gal 2:14-21, directed a Jews, argumentation as a Jew
 - Gal 3:1-29, contrasting the Law of Moses and Jesus
 - Gal 4:21-31, analogy of Ishmael and Isaac
- ❖ This shows a primary objective was to convince the Jew.
 - Jew's were having to convert from their family religion
 - Gentile had no reason to hold to the Law of Moses.

Lesson 1 – Greeting

Key Verse:

Gal 1:1, Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)

Reading:

Gal 1:1-5, 2:1-10, Acts 15

Questions

- 1) To whom was the letter written to, Gal 1:2.
- 2) How many of Paul's missionary journeys did he visit the region of Galatia?
- 3) What is Paul's title and who gave it to him, Gal 1:1?
- 4) Define the term "apostle."
- 5) Was Paul merely a preacher from Tarsus?
- 6) How does this salutation differ from other greetings in other epistles?
- 7) Thought Question: Are there any reasons Paul's Apostleship would be questioned?

Lesson 2 – The Gospel of Jesus Christ Is Steadfast

Key Verse:

Gal 1:6, I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.

Reading:

Gal 1:6-9, Deut 13:1-4, Deut 18:18-22

Questions

- 1) What surprised Paul?
- 2) Does this imply that the gospel lacks power or Paul's preaching was deficient?
- 3) Discuss implications of Paul's statement "quickly removing."
- 4) Who called them and by what method?
- 5) What were they removed from and who did it?
- 6) Who can change the gospel of Jesus?
- 7) What did Moses teach in Deuteronomy about those who sought to change the Law?
- 8) Is denominationalism wrong, can we be a denomination?
- 9) Study and discuss the different ways teachers or error are handled in the New Testament writings.

Lesson 3 – The Gospel of Jesus Christ Revealed by Paul

Key Verse:

Gal 1:11-12, But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Outline of this Paragraph

- ❖ 1:10-16a, Paul's Gospel Was From Jesus
- ❖ 1:16b-19, Paul's Gospel Was Independent Of The Other Apostles.
- ❖ 1:20-24, Paul's Gospel Was Independent Of The Church Of Judea.
- ❖ 2:1-10, Paul's Gospel Was Equal To Those Who Taught To The Circumcision.
- ❖ 2:11-14, Paul's Rebuke Of Other Apostles Who Did Not Properly Handle The New Gospel

Reading:

Gal 1:10-2:14

Questions

- 1) How did Paul receive the Gospel he preached?
- 2) Who called Paul?
- 3) Who was Paul called to preach to?
- 4) What points does he make to show he was not a student?
- 5) How many years elapsed before he arrived at Jerusalem? What is his point?
- 6) Read Acts 15 and note the similarities with Gal 2:1-10.
- 7) What does Acts 22:17-21 reveal about Paul's time in Jerusalem (Acts 9)?
- 8) What is the implication of Paul and Barnabas receiving the right hand of fellowship?
- 9) What is Paul's point in referencing his rebuke of Peter and Barnabas?

Lesson 4 – The Gospel of Jesus Christ

Justification through Jesus Alone

Key Verse:

Gal 2:16, 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.

Reading:

Gal 2:15-21, Rom 7:1-9

Questions

- 1) How is man justified by faith in Jesus Christ?
- 2) What did Paul destroy and How?
- 3) What analogy does Paul teach the Romans about marriage and law (Rom 7:1-9)?
- 4) What are the consequences if justification came under the Law of Moses?

Lesson 5 – The Gospel of Jesus Christ Superior to the Law of Moses

Key Verse:

Gal 3:10-11, For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.¹¹ But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith

Outline of this Paragraph

- ❖ 3:2-5, Where did the Holy Spirit come?
- ❖ 3:6-9, Abraham was Justified by Faith, Without the Law
- ❖ 3:10-13, The Law Brought a Curse
- ❖ 3:15-18, Law Could not Change the Promise to Abraham
- ❖ 3:19-25, So What was the Purpose of the Law?
 - 3:19-22, Because of Transgressions
 - 3:23-25, School Master
- ❖ 3:26-29, They are Now Adopted Children

Reading:

Gal 3:1–29

Questions

- 1) What does Paul say happened that allowed the Galatians to follow another Gospel?
- 2) Which covenant of God brought gifts of the Holy Spirit?
- 3) How was Abraham justified without the Law of Moses?
- 4) Can we be descendants of Abraham today, Why not or Why and How?
- 5) Define Redemption:
- 6) How was Jesus made a curse for us?
- 7) Did the Law of Moses, annul the covenant with Abraham, vs. 16-17?
- 8) What was the purpose of the Law of Moses, vs. 19-24?
- 9) How are we the children of God, vs. 26? What are the implications of this relationship?
- 10) What did the Gospel abolish, vs 28-29?

Lesson 6 – The Gospel of Jesus Christ

Allegory of Bondage and Freedom

Key Verse:

Gal 4:4-5, But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,⁵ To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Outline of this Paragraph

- ❖ 4:1-11, Bondage of a Young Child (schoolmaster)
 - 4:1-3, A Young Child is Under Tutors and Governors
 - 4:4-7, They are of Age and Released from Bondage
 - 4:8-11, Fear that They Would Return to Bondage
- ❖ 4:12-20, Exhortations
- ❖ 4:21-23, Isaac & Ishmael
- ❖ 4:24-27, Covenant of Sinai & Jerusalem Above
- ❖ 4:28-31, They are Children of Promise and Free

Reading:

Gal 4:1-31, Rom 9

Questions

- 1) What are the implications of being a child by birth verses adoption?
- 2) Who do Christians represent, a child by adoption or birth?
- 3) Who did the Jews believe they represented, a child by adoption or by birth?
- 4) Why was Paul concerned that his labor was in vain, vs. 9-11?
- 5) How did Paul show concern for their response, vs. 16?
- 6) What point is Paul making in vs. 17?
- 7) How can Christ be formed in a Christian, vs. 19?
- 8) Who and what does Paul relate the Christians to in this allegory, vs. 28-31?
- 9) What happened to the bondwoman and her son (Hagar & Ishmael), vs. 30?

Lesson 7 – The Gospel of Jesus Christ

Consequences of Leaving

Key Verse:

Gal 5:1, Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Reading:

Gal 5:1-12

Questions

- 1) What is the yoke of bondage?

- 2) What affect does Jesus have if you seek justification from the Law of Moses?

- 3) Can one ordinance of the Law of Moses be followed for justification?

- 4) What is the state of the one who seeks to be justified by the Law of Moses?

- 5) What is the source of the Gospel that includes circumcision, vs. 8?

- 6) What does the Proverb “a little leaven leavens the whole lump” mean in this context?

- 7) Who troubled them, vs. 10?

Lesson 8 – By Love Serve One Another

Warning of Quarreling

Key Verse:

Gal 5:13, For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

Outline of this Paragraph

- ❖ 5:13–15, Warning of Quarreling
- ❖ 5:16–25, Flesh vs. Spirit led life
- ❖ 5:26–6:10, Serving One Another

Reading:

Gal 5:13-15

Questions

- 1) What is the Liberty they are called to?

- 2) What is the essence of the law?

- 3) What is Paul's warning here to the Galatian Christians?

- 4) How would this section of scripture be seen considering the conflict they had been enduring over the Law of Moses?

- 5) Thought Question: How else is the phrase bite and devour used in scripture?

Lesson 9 – By Love Serve One Another

Carnal vs. Spirit Led Life

Works of Flesh

Key Verse:

Gal 5:16, This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Reading:

Gal 5:16-21, Rom 7:14-25

Questions

- 1) Can the flesh and spirit co-exist?
- 2) How does walking in the Spirit prevent one from fulfilling the lust of the flesh?
- 3) Define the following words (for each identify if it is a behavior or attitude):
 - a. Sins Against One's Self
 - Adultery:
 - Fornication:
 - Uncleanness:
 - Lasciviousness:
 - b. Sins Against God
 - Idolatry:
 - Witchcraft:

c. Sins Against Fellow Man

Hatred:

Variance

Emulations:

Wrath:

Strife:

Seditious:

Heresies:

Envyings:

d. Sins of Reveling

Drunkenness:

Reveling:

Such Like:

4) What is included in the last phrase "such like"?

Anticipate discussing each attitude in greater detail in class.

Lesson 10 – By Love Serve One Another

Carnal vs. Spirit Led Life

Fruit of Spirit

Key Verse:

Gal 5:25, If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Reading:

Gal 5:22-25

Questions

- 1) How does one produce the Fruit of the Spirit?

- 2) Define the following words (for each identify if it is a behavior or attitude):
 - a. Internal Expressions of Godly Attitudes
 - Love:

 - Joy:

 - Peace:
 - b. External Expression of Godly Attitudes
 - Longsuffering:

 - Gentleness:

 - Goodness:
 - c. Godly Approaches to Life
 - Faithfulness:

 - Meekness:

 - Temperance:

- 3) Thought Question: Can one live in the spirit and not walk in the spirit?

Lesson 11 – By Love Serve One Another

Serving One Another

Key Verse:

Gal 6:9, and let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Outline of this Paragraph

- ❖ 5:26, Be Humble
- ❖ 6:1, Help the Fallen
- ❖ 6:2, Help those with Burdens
- ❖ 6:3-5, Warning about Pride
- ❖ 6:6, Help the Teacher
- ❖ 6:7-9, Sowing to the Spirit
- ❖ 6:10, Help the Destitute

Reading:

Gal 5:26-6:10

Questions

- 1) What is the product of glory seeking?
- 2) What are the qualifications for helping the fallen?
- 3) What does Paul warn the one who seeks to help the fallen?
- 4) Define Burdens?
- 5) What are the dangers of Pride?
- 6) What is the meaning of the proverb: “whatsoever a man sows he shall also reap” in this context?
- 7) What would cause one who is engaged in doing good to be wearied?
- 8) What good can we do for mankind?

Lesson 12 – Conclusion

Key Verse:

Gal 6:15, For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

Outline of this Paragraph

Vs. 11, Paul's Signature

Vs. 12-14, Hypocrisy of the Judaizer

Vs. 15-16, Jesus Brings Transformation

Vs. 17, Let this Issue be Settled

Vs. 18, Farewell

Reading:

Gal 6:11-18

Questions

- 1) Who was the scribe for this epistle?
- 2) Did the Judaizer keep the whole law?
- 3) What does Paul say about the Judaizer who wanted Christians circumcised?
- 4) What is this new creature Paul references?
- 5) Who are the Israel of God?
- 6) Upon whom does Paul pray for peace and mercy?
- 7) Why would Paul have been troubled?
- 8) Why would he call an end to troubling him?
- 9) What tone does Paul end the letter with?

Lesson 13 – Review

Key Verse:

Reading:

Questions

1)