

The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians

The goal of this Bible Class is to give the students a working knowledge of the whole book of Galatians. It is based on an expository approach to teaching the Bible, with an emphasis in preparing the students for the worship of our Savior. The various lessons are to be viewed by the teacher as thematic suggestions to help with preparation. While the lessons are not intended to be read to the class word for word, the main ideas should be the substance of what is taught.

The teacher, in preparation for the class, should consider reading through the whole curriculum before beginning the class, as well as the book of Galatians several times. This will provide the instructor with a broad and comprehensive understanding of Galatians as it is being taught. At the end of the course, the class will be concluded with a Bible Knowledge Evaluation. The instructor should be sure to review the material sufficiently that the students are able to correctly answer the questions on the evaluation at the end of the course.

It is important that the instructor be not only knowledgeable about the material, but also able to teach it with enthusiasm and conviction. Students best learn from teachers that are themselves excited about the scriptures. The use of maps, diagrams, white boards etc. is extremely helpful. Some of these have been provided in the curriculum. It is suggested that the class be conducted in an interactive manner. This can be accomplished by having them read short portions of the scripture texts, asking them questions, and wholeheartedly encouraging them to ask questions. All students should be encouraged to bring a Bible to class.

The inclusion of the Westminster Shorter Catechism as part of the curriculum is designed to help the students acquire a broad understanding of Christian doctrine along with the specific Bible teaching. The Elders of the church will coordinate the specific questions and answers to be used in the class.

It will become evident to the teacher that this course curriculum, while not dealing with every verse and concept in the book of Galatians, is comprehensive and deeply theological. It is designed to help the students understand the book of Galatians in its wider biblical context, with emphasis on its place in the redemptive history of God's covenant people. The students will be confronted with and asked to understand and remember fairly difficult concepts. It should be remembered that children are able to comprehend much more than we often give them credit

for. While this class will be a challenge for both the teacher and the students, the rewards for the efforts of those in the class will be surprising and exciting.

In preparation for these lessons, the following works were used with benefit:

Reformation Covenant Church Bible Class Curriculum for the book of Acts:
<http://www.reformationcovenant.org/ss/default.asp?folder=Acts>

Bruce, F. F., *Commentary on Galatians*

Calvin, John, *Calvin's Commentaries Volume XXI*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 1989).

Dictionary of Paul and His Letters (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1993)

Gallant, Tim, What Saint Paul Should have said: Is Galatians a polemic against legalism? <http://www.rabbisaul.com/articles/shouldhave.php>

Lusk, Rich, THE GALATIAN HERESY: WHY WE NEED TO GET IT RIGHT
<http://www.hornes.org/theologia/rich-lusk/getting-the-galatian-heresy-right>

Ridderbos, Herman N., *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975).

Ridderbos, Herman N., *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1953).

Rushdoony, R.J., *Romans & Galatians*, (Ross House Books, 1997)

Wallace, Daniel B., <http://bible.org/seriespage/galatians-introduction-argument-and-outline>

Wright, N.T., *Justification: Paul's Plan & Paul's Vision*

Wright, N.T., *Paul for Everyone: Galatians and Thessalonians*

The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians

Lesson 1 – Paul: A Biographical and Theological Introduction

Objective – To introduce the students to the life, ministry and Epistles of the Apostle Paul. Paul is one of the most significant persons in all of Church history. Because he wrote more of the New Testament than anyone else it is very useful to understand him and his letters better.

❖ **Greetings** – Pray with the students for the Lord’s blessing on their class this term

❖ **Attendance and Accountability**

Introduce yourself, and your substitute teacher

Make sure all class members know each other’s **names**

Requirements – Writing utensils, Bibles, a good night’s sleep

Tests on the outlines of the books and some other material at the end of the course

❖ **Memory verses for Galatians: Galatians 3:26-28:**

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

❖ **Westminster Shorter Catechism** – Briefly go over the question(s) and answer(s) for this quarter.

The Background and Conversion of Paul

Everything we know with certainty about Paul is found in the New Testament. There are extra biblical historical references and Church traditions related to Paul, but we will confine our study of Paul to what the Scriptures say about him. Fortunately, much of what we know about him comes from Paul himself in his Epistles, or from Luke, Paul’s companion and author of the book of Acts.

[Teacher: You may want have a student read some of the following passages and briefly discuss with the students what is learned about Paul as an example to be imitated – 1 Cor. 11:1]

Phil. 3:1-6

1. Israelite
2. tribe of Benjamin
3. Pharisee

Acts 7:57-8:1 Stoning of Stephen by Saul/Paul

Acts 9:1-30 - 30 AD – Probably the same year as the death and resurrection of Jesus and Pentecost

[Gal. 1:16-2:3 – Spiritual autobiography. Gal. 1:16-17, Paul didn't go to Jerusalem at first. Gal. 1:18 says 3 years later (after Paul's conversion in AD 30) he went to Jerusalem for 15 days in AD 33. Gal. 2:1 says 14 years later (after Paul's conversion in AD 30) he went to Jerusalem (Acts 11:30, 12:25). While Paul was in Jerusalem, Herod died in AD 44. If Paul went to Jerusalem in AD 44, which was after 14 years he was converted, it was the same year Jesus was killed, resurrected, ascended, Pentecost, etc.]

1. Saul was a active persecutor “The Way,” asking for authority to do more
2. Jesus spoke to Saul directly – Blinded him demonstrating his blindness
3. Saul healed, filled with the Spirit and baptized. It was at this point that Jesus personally commissioned Paul to be an Apostle (literally, a “Sent One”) to the Gentiles.
4. Preached Christ immediately in Damascus [Briefly go through the Handout: Paul The Apostle to the Gentiles: A Biographical and Theological Introduction]
5. Went to Jerusalem, Caesarea and then Tarsus

Acts 22:1-21 – Paul addressing Jews in Jerusalem (cf. 21:37-39)

1. From Tarsus – an important Roman city (21:39)
2. Brought up in Jerusalem, taught by Gamaliel in strict Phariseeism.
3. Persecuted the Way (Christians) as commissioned by the Jewish Council
4. Went to Damascus to persecute Christians – Converted on the journey – Commission by Jesus to be a witness to the Gentiles
5. vv. 22-29 – Born a Roman citizen

Acts 26:4-23 – Paul addressing King (Herod) Agrippa

1. Nothing significantly new than above

2 Cor. 11:22-12:13

1. Paul now persecuted, primarily by Jews

2. Paul's heavenly vision – Thorn in the flesh (?)
3. Paul THE APOSTLE

I. The Itinerate Ministry of Paul

Most of the book of Acts is about the ministry of Paul as he traveled throughout the Roman Empire as a witness to the Gentiles (Acts 1:8; 9:15). It was his custom to begin, where ever he went, by preaching to the Jews in the synagogues and then to preach to the Gentiles. In addition to generally preaching and being a witness of Christ to the Gentiles, Paul was a Church planter. Wherever he went and people were converted to Christ, Paul established churches.

Notes for each section (A-F below) are found on the map handouts. [Teacher: Very briefly discuss the general features of each section below from the handouts]

A. The 1st Missionary Journey of Paul (Acts 13:4-14:28)

In Acts 10 Peter was shown by the Lord that the Gentiles would be saved through the preaching of gospel, just as the Jews had been. By faith in Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, and both would be members together in the household of faith.

Paul, in Acts 13-14, went on his first missionary journey and was used by the Lord Jesus to preach the gospel and establish churches.

Acts 15 – The Jerusalem Council – This will be covered in more detail next week.

After the 1st missionary journey through region of Galatia, Acts 15 tells us that that some Jewish Christians came from Judea (Jerusalem and the “Mother Church”) and insisted that all Gentile believers in Jesus need to become Jews by being circumcised in order to be saved (15:1). Paul and Barnabas disputed with them, until it was determined that they should go to Jerusalem to consult with the Apostles and Elders about the question. After much dispute it was determined by the Church that Gentiles should not be compelled to become Jews by circumcision and a letter was sent by Paul, Barnabas and Silas to be delivered to the church in Antioch and taught everywhere. As we will see next week, the problem did not go away and this is the very problem Paul addressed with the Christians in the letter to the Galatian churches.

B. Paul and Silas on the 2nd Missionary Journey (Acts 16:1-18:22)

C. Paul's Third Missionary Journey (Acts 19:1-21:14)

D. Paul In Jerusalem (Acts 21:15-23:22)

E. Paul In Caesarea (Acts 23:23-26:32)

F. Paul In Rome (Acts 27-28)

II. The Epistles of Paul

As we said before, Paul planted churches wherever he went. After he left the churches he continued to concern himself with their welfare and growth. He maintained communication with them by sending people to them for various purposes, and often sent letters/epistles to them. Of the twenty-one epistles in the New Testament, thirteen were written by Paul. Some of these epistles were written to specifically named people (i.e. Timothy, Titus, Philemon), others were written to the churches in specific cities (e.g. to the Christians in Churches in Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, the Thessalonians or regions (i.e. the churches in Galatia). Some scholars have believed that Paul also wrote the book of Hebrews, but the authorship is unknown.

The thirteen epistles of Paul are often arranged together into three groups:

1. Church Epistles: 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Romans
2. Prison Epistles: Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians
3. Pastoral Epistles: 1 Timothy, Titus & 2 Timothy

Paul's epistles generally have a similar structural pattern:

- Opening – Greeting: Written, from Paul, wish of good-will
- Thanksgiving or Blessing
- Body
 - Body opening: Introducing the main topic
 - Body middle: Discussion/argument of the main topic
 - Body conclusion: Restatement & application of the main topic (usually relational) – Often the beginning of commands/imperative verbs
- Closing – Greetings (a closing blessing, a signature, the mention of a scribe, specific greetings from Paul, instructions about the reading of the letter, etc.)

The thirteen letters included in the New Testament canon are the only inspired letters of Paul. We know that he wrote other letters that were not included in the New Testament and are now lost to us. These inspired letters were initially used by

God to establish the Church of Christ throughout the known world, and continue to be a significant blessing to the church.

The Apostle Peter commended the epistles of Paul in 2 Peter 3:15-16:

14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; 15 and consider *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures.

Much of what Paul wrote is difficult to understand (as Peter mentioned), and is even more difficult now that we are 2000 years removed from their composition. However, studying and understanding the epistles of Paul are essential to having a truly biblical faith. There have been times in Church history when people have neglected the epistles of Paul, which resulted in error and heresy.

It is very important to remember that although these epistles are written to specific people with specific purposes in mind; those purposes form a theological foundation for all Christians of all ages. Most of the issues that Paul addresses involve conflicts between the Jews, the Judaizers (Christian Jews claiming that Gentiles need to be under the Law of Moses) and the Gentiles. Paul's epistles are generally written to explain that Jews and Gentiles are now brought together into one body of believers by faith in Jesus, being united to Him by the Holy Spirit.

This is the particular problem that Paul deals with in the Galatian churches, as we will see next week.

Homework assignment: Read the whole book of Galatians. Come prepared to discuss the main argument of the book – Why did Paul write the book of Galatians?

The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians

Lesson 1 – Paul: A Biographical and Theological Introduction

Objective – To introduce the students to the life, ministry and Epistles of the Apostle Paul. Paul is one of the most significant persons in all of Church history. Because he wrote more of the New Testament than anyone else it is very important to understand him, his letters and his theology.

Requirements – Writing utensils, Bibles, a good night’s sleep

There will be **tests** on the outlines of the books and some other material

Memory verses for Galatians: Galatians 3:26-28:

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Attendance will be taken each week and students will be asked accountability questions as well. For the next few weeks, the question will be, “**Have you gotten a good night’s sleep, brought your Bible and writing materials, worked on your memorization, and done any other assigned homework?**”

❖ **Westminster Shorter Catechism** – Briefly go over the question(s) and answer(s) for this quarter.

I. The Background and Conversion of Paul

Phil. 3:1-6

Acts 7:57-8:1 Stoning of Stephen by Saul

9:1-30 – Paul’s Conversion (30 AD, same year as Pentecost) – Given 3 times (Act 9, 22 & 26)

Acts 22:1-21 – Paul addressing Jews in Jerusalem (cf. 21:37-39)

Acts 26:4-23 – Paul addressing King (Herod) Agrippa

2 Cor. 11:22-12:13

II. The Itinerate Ministry of Paul

Notes for each section (A-F below) are found on the map handouts.

A. The 1st Missionary Journey of Paul (Acts 13:4-14:28)

Acts 15 – The Jerusalem Council

B. Paul and Silas on the 2nd Missionary Journey (Acts 16:1-18:22)

C. Paul's Third Missionary Journey (Acts 19:1-21:14)

D. Paul In Jerusalem (Acts 21:15-23:22)

E. Paul In Caesarea (Acts 23:23-26:32)

F. Paul In Rome (Acts 27-28)

III. The Epistles of Paul

The thirteen epistles of Paul are often group together in three groups:

1. Church Epistles: 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Romans
2. Prison Epistles: Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians
3. Pastoral Epistles: 1 Timothy, Titus & 2 Timothy

Common Literary Structure/outline

- Opening – Greeting: Written, from Paul, wish of good-will
- Thanksgiving or Blessing
- Body
 - Body opening: Introducing the main topic
 - Body middle: Discussion/argument of the main topic
 - Body conclusion: Restatement & application of the main topic (usually relational)
– Often the beginning of commands/imperative verbs
- Closing – Greetings (a closing blessing, a signature, the mention of a scribe, specific greetings from Paul, instructions about the reading of the letter, etc.)

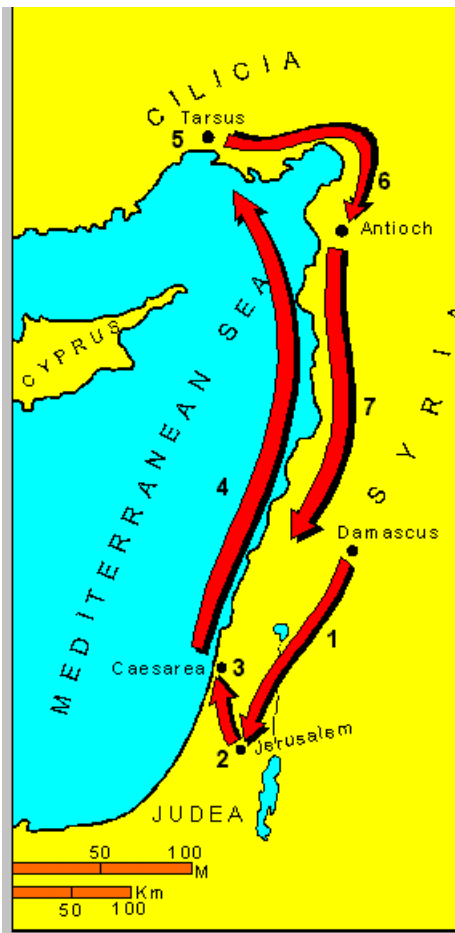
2 Peter 3:15-16

Homework assignment: Read the whole book of Galatians. Come prepared to discuss the main argument of the book – Why did Paul write the book of Galatians?

The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians

Lesson 1 – Paul The Apostle to the Gentiles: A Biographical and Theological Introduction

Saul was converted in AD 30, the same year that all of Acts 1-8 took place.



- 1 During the three years after his conversion (AD 30), Saul preached Christ in Damascus, and was forced to escape from the Jews of Damascus in a basket (Acts 9:20-25).
- 2 After three years (AD 33), Saul went to Jerusalem to see Peter. The believers still suspected him, but Barnabas introduced him to them. He talked with Peter and met James. But after only 2 weeks he had to be smuggled out because of opposition from some Jews (Acts 9:26-30; Galatians 1:18-20).
- 3 Saul was taken to Caesarea.
- 4 From there he left for his home city of Tarsus (Acts 9:30).
- 5 He spent 10 years in Tarsus. During this time he visited places in Cilicia and Syria. He was still unknown personally to believers in Judea (Galatians 1:21-24).
- 6 Barnabas (who had been sent to work in the church in Antioch) went to find Saul in Tarsus. He brought him back to Antioch (AD 43-44), and they taught together for 1 year (Acts 11:25-26).
- 7 Saul, Barnabas, and Titus went to Jerusalem with famine relief money for Judea (AD 44). They met privately with the church leaders. Despite some disagreements, the leaders recognized Saul's ministry to the Gentiles (Acts 11:27-30; 12:25; Galatians 2:1-10).

Paul's 1st Missionary Journey

- 1 The church in **Antioch (Syria)** sent out Paul and Barnabas, with John Mark (Acts 13:1-3, 5).
- 2 They sailed to the island of **Cyprus** and preached to the Jews in **Salamis**. In the city of **Paphos** they encountered Bar-Jesus, false prophet and friend of the governor. Bar-Jesus was struck blind, and the governor believed (Acts 13:4-12).



3 They sailed to **Perga** and John Mark left to go back to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13).

4 Paul preached to Jews and Gentiles in **Antioch Pisidia**. The Jews were jealous and stirred up opposition (Acts 13:14-50).

5 They went to **Iconium** and stayed a long time. Many Jews and Gentiles became believers. Both Jews and Gentiles plotted to stone them, and they fled on to **Lystra** and **Derbe** (Acts 13:50-14:7).

6 In **Lystra** Paul healed a cripple. They were hailed as gods. Jews arrived from

Antioch Pisidia and Iconium and stoned Paul (Acts 14:8-20).

- 7 Many more disciples were made in **Derbe**. They returned to **Antioch** the way they came, encouraging the young churches and appointing Elders to lead the churches (Acts 14:21-26).
- 8 They reported everything to the church in **Antioch**, and how God had “opened the door of faith to the Gentiles”(Acts 14:27-28).

Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey

- 1 Paul and Barnabas agreed to revisit the churches in **Galatia**. But they disagree about taking John Mark who had left them on their earlier mission (Acts 15:36-38).
- 2 After an argument, Barnabas took John Mark to Cyprus (Acts 15:39).
- 3 Paul took Silas. At **Lystra** Paul asked Timothy to join them (Acts 16:1-3).
- 4 They revisit the towns, telling the believers the decisions of the Jerusalem Council about Gentile converts (Acts 16:4-5).
- 5 Paul tried to go into **Bithynia**, but is blocked by the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:6-7).
- 6 At night, Paul has a vision. A Macedonian urges him to come across to help. They decide to sail for **Macedonia** (Acts 16:8-10). At this point Luke (author of Acts) joins them.
- 7 In **Philippi** Paul delivered a slave girl fortune-teller from an evil spirit. The girl's owners protest and a crowd attacks Paul and Silas. Flogged and imprisoned, they are freed by an earthquake. Their jailer believes (Acts 16:11-40).

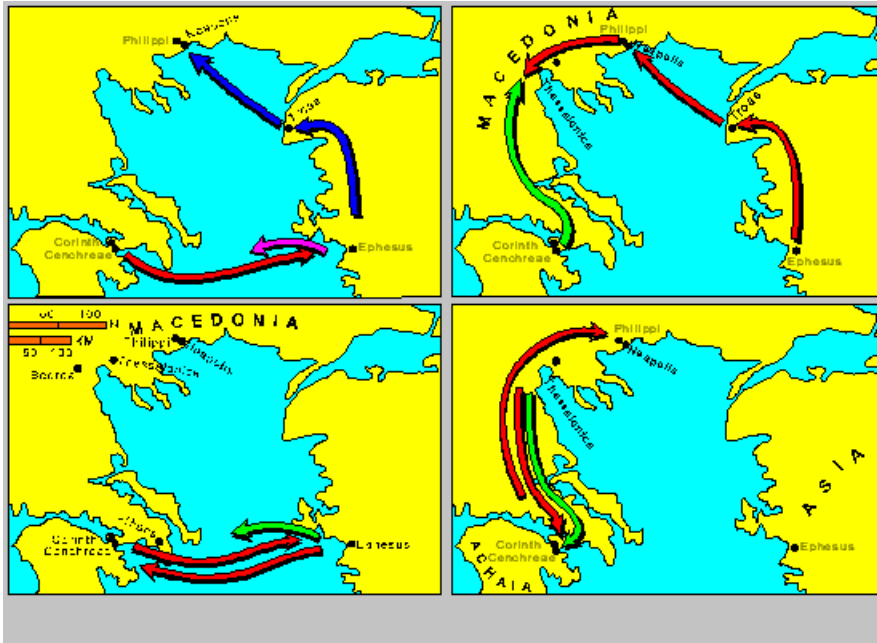


- 8 Paul convinces both Jews and Greeks in **Thessalonica**. Some Jews stir up a riot—Paul leaves secretly (Acts 17:1-9).

- 9 Paul receives a better reception in **Berea**, but people from Thessalonica stir up a mob. Paul leaves, but Silas and Timothy stay behind (Acts 17:10-15).
- 10 Paul went to **Athens, Greece** and spoke to the court of the Areopagus which met to consider new religions. His mention of the resurrection divides his audience: some mocked and some believed (Acts 17:16-34).
- 11 Paul went on to **Corinth**. Silas and Timothy arrive with news of Thessalonica. Paul writes 1 and 2 Thessalonians, encouraging that church in its difficulties. They spend almost 2 years here, building up the church. Despite Jewish opposition, they are able to stay (Acts 18:1-17).
- 12 They stop briefly in **Ephesus**—Paul had been forbidden earlier by the Spirit to preach in Asia. He debates with the Jews who want him to stay longer (Acts 18:18-21).
- 13 They travel back to **Antioch**, via Caesarea and Jerusalem (Acts 18:22).

Paul's Third Missionary Journey

- 1 Paul made **Ephesus** the base for his mission work for 3 years. Disciples of Apollos received the Holy Spirit and a church was founded (Acts 19:1-7). The gospel spread in Asia (Acts 19:8-20).
- 2 Paul planned to go to **Macedonia**. He sent Timothy and Erastus ahead (Acts 19:21-22). They also visited **Corinth** (1 Corinthians 16:10-11). Paul was worried about immorality at the church there.
- 3 Three members of the Corinthian church brought a letter to Paul (1 Corinthians 16:17-18). It was full of questions that revealed the problems to be far greater than Paul had thought.

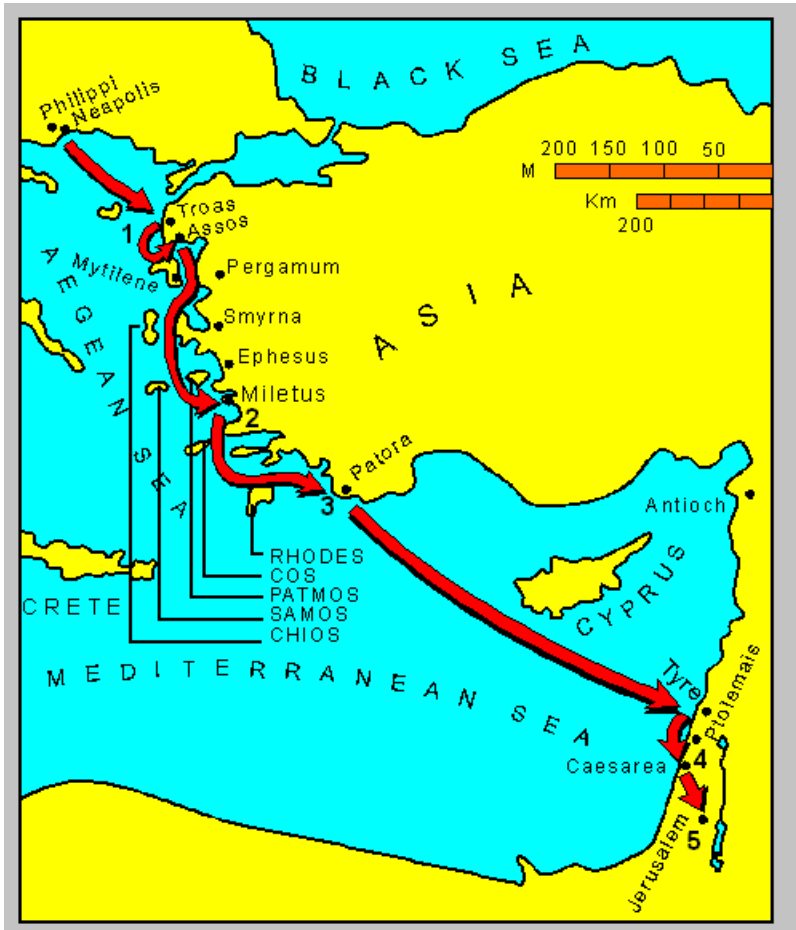


- 4 Paul wrote and sent 1 Corinthians, dealing with the problems.
- 5 Paul heard bad news about the church in Corinth, possibly from Timothy.
- 6 He hurried to Corinth (implied by the intended *third* visit of (2 Corinthians 12:14). The visit was extremely painful for everyone. Paul had to be severe.
- 7 He returned to **Ephesus**. Here he wrote a 'painful letter' to them (2 Corinthians 2:4). Titus took the letter to Corinth. Paul

- arranged to meet Titus again at Troas urgently, to get news of the situation.
- 8 Paul was the center of a riot in Ephesus. His message threatened the sale of statues of the Ephesian goddess (Acts 19:23-41).
- 9 Paul went to **Troas**. The work went well, but Paul was worried about his 'painful letter.' Was it too harsh? Titus did not appear as planned (2 Corinthians 2:12-13).
- 10 Paul entered **Macedonia** in search of Titus. By doing this he broke an arrangement he made with the Corinthians—he was going to go to them by sea before visiting Macedonia, which he explained in 2 Corinthians 1:15 (He didn't want another painful visit).
- 11 He encouraged the churches (Acts 20:1-2) and collected money for the Jerusalem church (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).
- 12 Paul and Titus finally met. Titus brought good news—the 'painful letter' was received as Paul intended (2 Corinthians 7:5-16).
- 13 Paul wrote 2 Corinthians—full of joy. He encouraged them to complete their promised giving for the Jerusalem church (2 Corinthians 8:10-15).
- 14 Titus took the letter ahead of Paul to prepare the church for Paul's third visit (2 Corinthians 8:16-24).
- 15 Paul stayed in Achaia 3 months, probably in Corinth. Here he wrote the letter to the Romans.
- 16 He planned to travel to Jerusalem by sea via Syria. A plot by his enemies forced him to return through Macedonia (Acts 20:2-6).

To Jerusalem

Paul was anxious to be in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost, 7 weeks away (Acts 20:6, Feast of Unleavened bread 7 weeks previous to Pentecost).



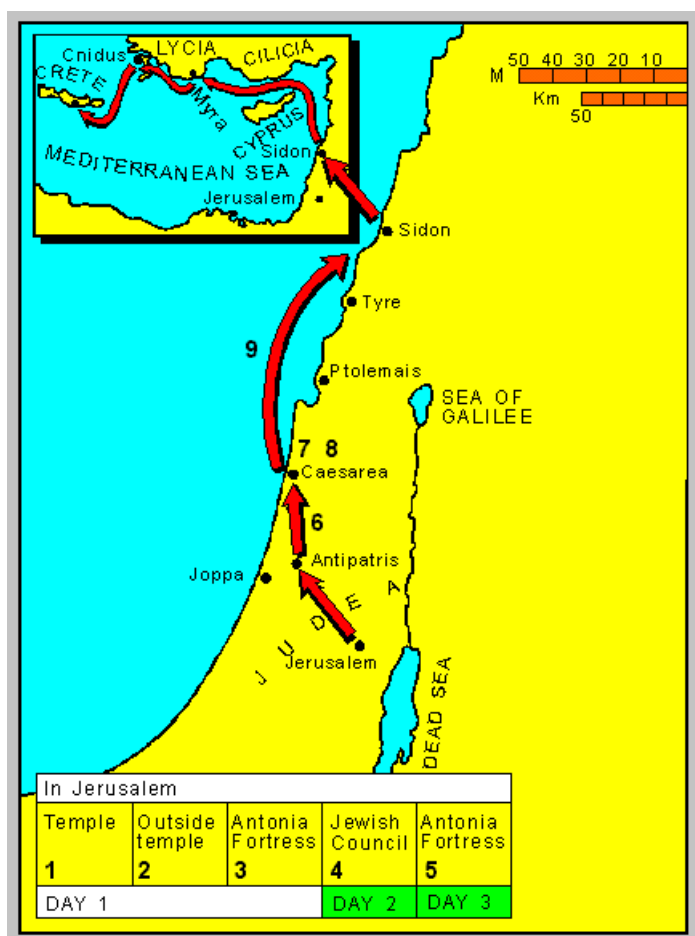
- 1 Paul arrived at **Troas** from **Philippi**. While he preached on till midnight, Eutychus went to sleep and fell out of a 3 story window. Paul raised him from death (Acts 20:7-12).
- 2 Elders from the church in **Ephesus** met Paul in Miletus, who gave a farewell speech. He said they would never see him again. Paul left with great emotion (Acts 20:17-38).
- 3 At **Patara** they changed ships (Acts 21:1-3).
- 4 They stayed at Philip the Evangelist's house in Caesarea. Agabus the prophet told Paul he would be bound by Jews in Jerusalem and handed over to Gentiles. Paul was determined to go on, despite warnings and

pleas (Acts 21:4-14).

- 5 At **Jerusalem** Paul was welcomed by the church.

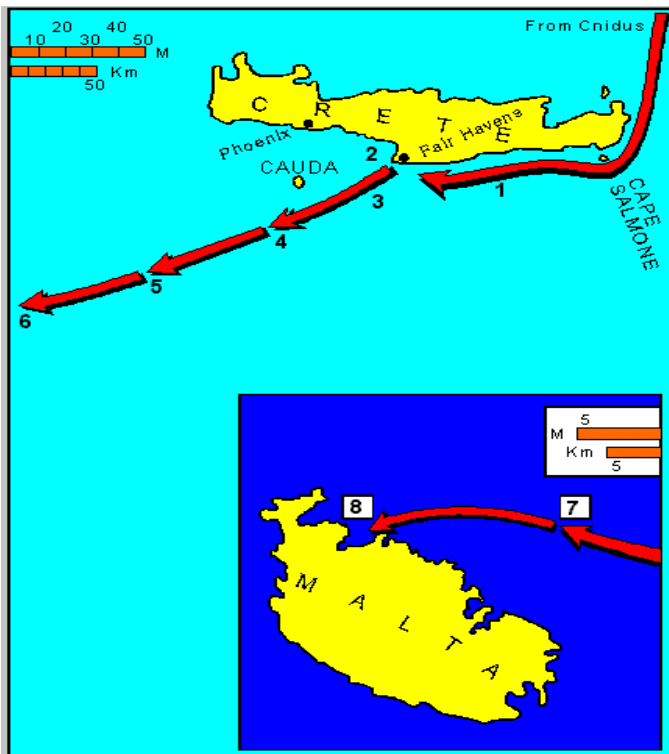
Paul in Jerusalem and Caesarea

- 1 Paul was recognized by Jews from Asia in the **Jerusalem** temple. A mob dragged him outside and tried to kill him (Acts 21:15-25; 26-31).
- 2 Roman troops arrested (and rescued) Paul. He was allowed to speak to the rioters. His words incited them to more violence (Acts 21:31-22:23).
- 3 Paul was taken into the Roman Fortress (Acts 22:24-29).
- 4 Next day, Paul defends himself before the Jewish Council. Again the arguments turn to violence. Paul is taken back to the Fortress (Acts 22:30-23:10).
- 5 Over forty men plot to kill Paul (Acts 23:11-15).
- 6 The Roman commander heard of the plot. That night he sent Paul under armed escort to the governor Felix in **Caesarea** (Acts 23:16-24).



- 7 Paul's case was heard by Felix, but he deferred a decision. Two years later Festus replaces Felix. Paul still imprisoned (Acts 23:25-24:27).
- 8 Festus heard Paul's case. He seemed unfavorable, so Paul appealed to have his case heard by the emperor. He waited to go to Rome and presented his story to King Agrippa II (25:1-26:32).
- 9 Paul and companions (including Luke) leave for **Rome**, Paul under armed guard (Acts 27-28).

On the Way To Rome



1 In bad weather Paul's ship reached **Fair Havens on the Island of Crete.**

2 They sheltered there until early October — the end of the safe sailing season. They decide to winter in the better harbor at Phoenix.

3 On route to Phoenix they were blown out to sea.

4 South of Cauda they pull the boat on board, lower the sail, and let the ship run.

5 The next day they threw the ship's cargo overboard.

6 The next day they threw the ship's equipment overboard.

7 Inset: Night 14 of the storm, the island of **Malta** is near. Sailors tried to escape but failed. After eating, they lightened the ship.

8 The ship hit a sandbank in a bay and began to break up. All hands were saved.

1 On **Malta**, Paul recovered from a snake bite and healed many other sick people. They stayed months, until the bad weather has passed.

2 At **Syracuse** they stopped for 3 days.

3 They reach **Puteoli**, one of the great ports of the empire. Paul and friends stayed with the local believers for a week.

4 Then they set out on the 100 mile journey to Rome. Paul was worried and apprehensive, but was encouraged when believers from **Rome** come out to welcome him.

5 Paul was kept under house arrest in Rome, awaiting his trial. For 2 years he rented a house and had considerable freedom to preach.



The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians

Lesson 2 – Paul’s Opposition to the Troublers of the Galatians – 1:1-2:10

Objective – To understand that part of Paul’s purpose of writing to the Galatian Christians was to demonstrate that the gospel (good news) he preached to them when he first met them is from God, and the teachers they have been listening to and believing are leading them away from Jesus. Faithfulness to Jesus requires faithfulness to the message of the gospel.

There will be a test on the outline of the book, the memory verses and some other material from the class.

❖ Memory verses for Galatians: Galatians 3:26-28:

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

❖ Westminster Shorter Catechism – Briefly go over the question(s) and answer(s) for this quarter.

❖ Review of the Life and Ministry of Paul

- 1) Saul was converted in about what year? [30 AD]
- 2) How many missionary journeys did Paul go on? [3]
- 3) How many New Testament letters, Epistles were written by Paul? [13]

The thirteen epistles of Paul are often arranged together into three groups:

Church Epistles: 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Romans

Prison Epistles: Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians

Pastoral Epistles: 1 Timothy, Titus & 2 Timothy

I. The Background and Purpose of the Book of Galatians

Galatians is known to be a very difficult book to understand. It was written to the churches he visited on his first missionary journey, and was intended to be circulated among the churches (see map from last week). Clearly, there are things that are going on in the Galatian churches that Paul was concerned about, but the background to these concerns is not clearly given to us. We need to piece together a possible background story to make sense of Paul’s important argument in this book.

Galatians was written before the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:6-29), or Paul almost certainly would have appealed to it in his argument against the Judaizers in Galatians. But the situation described in Acts 15 sheds light on the kind of problems and pressures the Galatian church was facing. [Have various students read all of Acts 15 to understand the importance of this text, if there is time.]

[“Although several sequences are mentioned in [Acts 15:1-2](#), the specific time when Paul wrote this [Galatians] letter is not. It is quite possible (in our view, probable) to see the following sequence of events: (1) Judaizers arrive in Antioch and begin teaching their doctrines ([Acts 15:1](#)); (2) Paul and Barnabas get into heated debates with them over the nature of the gospel ([Acts 15:2](#)); (3) Paul gets word that the Judaizers had infiltrated into the Galatian churches; (4) Paul writes the Galatians—while the debate is going on in Antioch; (5) the Antioch church appoints Paul and Barnabas to go up to Jerusalem to settle the issue officially...Thus, our conclusion is that Paul wrote Galatians before he was appointed to go to Jerusalem, though after the Judaizers came to Antioch and engaged in debate with him.” (Daniel B. Wallace: <http://bible.org/seriespage/galatians-introduction-argument-and-outline>)]

“From Acts 15:1 we learn that certain Jewish Christians were claiming that “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” “Circumcision, of course, was not the only issue (Gal. 4:10), but it stood as the most prominent and most distinctive mark of Judaism. The entire debate revolves around whether or not Gentiles as such can be admitted to full membership in the covenant. Peter’s speech (Acts 15:6-11) declares that salvation has come to the Gentiles apart from Torah observance. The Spirit did not come upon only those who possessed the Torah of Moses, but the Gentiles as well. God made “no distinction” between the circumcised and the uncircumcised. Therefore, the Gentiles should not be made to submit to the Law of Moses – they should not be brought under the regulations and customs of the Old Covenant because in their case the Spirit brought them directly into the New Covenant. If they were already members of the Christian covenant apart from Jewish customs, how could such customs be imposed on them as necessary for full covenant membership? When Peter says salvation has come in the same manner to Jews and Gentiles (15:11), his point is not merely that salvation comes by faith in Jesus, but that it comes apart from Jewishness” (Lusk). Summary: The Jerusalem Counsel determined that the Jewish believers should not trouble Gentiles nor impose circumcision or Jewish works of the law on them. They sent a letter to the Gentile congregations in Antioch and other places, to be delivered by Paul, Barnabas and Silas.

Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians to demonstrate that the good news he preached to them when he first met them is from God, and the teachers they have been listening to and believing are leading them away from Jesus – as would be later determined and pronounced at the Jerusalem council.

Outline of the book of Galatians:

- A. Introduction (1:1-10)
- B. Defense of Paul's Apostleship (1:11–2:10)
- C. Defense of Justification by Faith apart from the law (2:11–4:31)
- D. Defense of Christian Liberty (5:1–6:10)
- E. Conclusion (6:11-18)

II. Introduction: Paul and the Troublers of the Galatian Christians 1:1-12

Apparently, after Paul left the Christians in the Galatian churches that he established while on his first missionary journey, some Jewish Christians (sometimes called Judaizers = those seeking to cause Gentiles to become Jews who believe in the Jesus) came to the Galatians and taught that Paul had only taught part of the gospel (i.e. good news). These (false, as we will see) teachers said that they had come from Jerusalem (the Mother Church and the place from which the Apostles began their ministry after Pentecost) and would teach them the gospel in its fullness. From what Paul wrote in this letter, it is safe to say that these “troublers” or “agitators” (1:7) said that Paul was not an Apostle, and did not have as much authority as the Apostles in Jerusalem, and were not as well informed as themselves, who were taught properly by the Apostles.

Paul began his letter by asserting clearly that he was an Apostle, and his apostolic authority and message did not come from men, but from Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead (1:1). At the end of this section he asserts the same thing, claiming that his understanding of and preaching of the gospel was not according to man, but he received it by revelation from Jesus Christ Himself (1:11-12; 1 Cor. 15:1-3; Eph. 3:3-8). He is truly an Apostle by the appointment of Christ Himself, and preaches the true gospel of Christ, as revealed to him by Christ Himself.

What concerned Paul is given to us in vv. 6-7:

I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

He was astonished by the fact that so soon after he preached them (probably just a few months) that they were allowing themselves to be persuaded by another teaching than what he preached to them. He describes the troublers as having presented a “different gospel”, and wanting to “pervert the gospel” about Christ so that they were actually *turning away from Christ*. The Galatians, Paul says, are rejecting Jesus as the one who gave them the grace of salvation.

In vv. 8-9 Paul boldly said that if anyone, including an angel or even himself, preaches anything other than what he taught them before – he should be considered to be cursed by God. In fact, Paul seems to be cursing them himself.

Paul’s opponents appear to have accused Paul of preaching the gospel he did just to talk them into becoming believers in Jesus – but left out part of what is necessary to be true believers in Jesus. “Presumably they imagined Paul’s failure to have the Gentile converts circumcised was just a trick to please people, giving them the gospel on the cheap” (Wright, *Paul for Everyone*, p. 7) so that they will like Paul and support his teaching. As the letter progresses we will get a better understanding of what these troublers taught. What is clear (in v. 10) is that Paul wants them to understand that he preached the gospel to them not merely to be persuasive, or to please men – but to please God. Otherwise, he would not be a servant of Christ because being a servant of Christ meant persecution (at the hands of Jews primarily). Rather, he preached the gospel given to him by Jesus Christ (vv. 11-12).

Thus, Paul’s purpose of in writing to the Galatians is to oppose the troublers, and to reestablish in their minds the true gospel of Christ. This true gospel Paul received by revelation from Jesus Christ Himself.

III. Paul and His True Gospel 1:13-2:10

In the following section Paul describes his past history before becoming an Apostle, how he came to preach the true gospel, his initial independence from the Apostles in Jerusalem, and finally their approval of his preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles.

If Paul still wanted to be a pleaser of men (1:10), especially respected by his fellow Jews (who were now persecuting him), he would have continued to be a persecutor of the Church of God (1:13-14). Paul reminded the Galatians of what they had heard of him in his former way of life as one who actively tried to destroy the church and the Christians. As a young Pharisee he advanced rapidly through the ranks of the prominent Jews because he was exceedingly zealous in his adherence to and imposition of the Pharisaical traditions of the Jewish fathers.

But God had a different plan for Paul. From birth it pleased God to prepare and set Paul aside by His grace (1:15) to reveal in and through him His Son among the Gentiles. When God called Paul by His grace to preach about His Son to the Gentiles, he did not immediately consult with any man (“flesh and blood,” vv. 11-12, 16). In fact, Acts 9:20-22 tells us that after he was converted and called by Jesus to be His Apostle to the Gentiles, he “Immediately preached the Christ in the synagogues...” and was soon after persecuted by the Jews (Acts 9:23-25). V. 17 goes on to say that not only did he not consult with anyone, neither did he go to Jerusalem to learn from those who had been appointed by Jesus to be Apostles *before* Him. Notice here that he asserts that he was an Apostle after them, as he said in v.1 (cf. 2:8). Instead he went to Arabia before he returned to Damascus. The Arabia referred to here may be where Mt. Sinai is, and he may have gone there, like Moses and Elijah before him to be alone to study and reflect on the matter of his calling and to prepare himself for his ministry.

Three years after his conversion and calling by God to be an Apostle, after he preached in Damascus, went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus – Paul finally went to Jerusalem (1:18-19). While in Jerusalem, for only fifteen days, Paul only spent time with Peter and James (the brother of Jesus, who was not a disciple until after Jesus’ death and resurrection), and none of the other Apostles. The verse does not indicate that Paul went to confer/consult with them to learn from them (v. 16), but the word used in v. 18 “to see” means to visit or meet someone. By writing the way he is, asserting his independence from the other Apostles, the Galatians may have been tempted to think he was not telling the truth. But Paul in v. 20 basically takes an oath that he is telling the truth about what happened in his early ministry. He did this because the troublers of the Galatians had probably told them that Paul had turned away from what he had been taught by the Jerusalem Apostles, and was twisting the truth of the gospel. He will go on to show that what he teaches was approved by the Apostles, even though he did not receive it from them. After Paul met with Peter and James he went north to other regions and preached, and was not personally known by the churches in Judea except by reputation, as one who formerly persecuted the Christians but now preaches the faith he tried to destroy. In fact, those Judean Christians that did not know Paul personally glorified God because of what He was doing through Paul (1:21-24)

We learn in 2:1-5 that after fourteen years Paul went to Jerusalem again, this time with Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37; 9:27; 10:22; 11:25, 30; 12:25; 13:2ff) and the Gentile Christian, Titus (2 Cor. 2:13, 7:6; 2 Tim. 4:10; Tit. 1:4). This time he did consult with the Apostles in Jerusalem because it was revealed to him that he should go to communicate what he had been preaching to the Gentiles. Presumably, Paul had been preaching that the Gentiles did not need to be circumcised to be saved, i.e.

they did not need to become Jews nor were they bound by the Law of Moses. He met privately with the men known to be the leaders of the Church so that he could make sure that he and the Jerusalem leaders were teaching the same thing about the Gentiles. He did not want to be running the race (i.e. conducting his ministry) in vain, or without the truth. At this point he has likely been in dispute with some that improperly taught what we discussed earlier (Acts 15:1-5), that “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” In Gal. 1:1-5 Paul said that as a result of his communication with the Apostles, not even Titus was compelled to be circumcised, although there was some kind of conspiracy to bring the Gentiles and the message of Paul into bondage to the law. But Paul and Titus resisted this attempt to take away their liberty/freedom in Christ from the law.

Finally, Paul said that the Apostles gave their hearty approval to Paul’s gospel (2:6-10). So strong was this approval, in fact, that Paul later felt the freedom to rebuke the chief of the Jerusalem Apostles, Peter himself, when the two were in Antioch (2:11-21). We will look at this in more detail next week.

What is clear from our text today is that the troublers of the Galatian Christians are preaching a false gospel. Paul’s preaching to the Gentiles was revealed to him directly by Jesus, and both his Apostleship and preaching were approved by the Apostles in Jerusalem. Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians to demonstrate that the good news he preached to them when he first met them is from God, and the teachers they have been listening to and believing are leading them away from Jesus.

Applications of this lesson: There are matters so important to the gospel that leaders of the church must oppose those who trouble believers with false teaching. Failure to challenge and correct some false teaching enables people to be drawn away from the truth of the scriptures and turn away from Christ Himself. Sometimes important issues appear to be merely disagreements over non-essential doctrines, but are in reality truths that are at the core of the Christian faith. We can know these truths with certainty because we have the whole word of God, and have inherited from the Holy Spirit the creeds and confessions given to the Church. Anyone who denies or perverts the truth must be confronted; such error is a great sin. Paul has provided for us an example of how to deal directly and seriously with a perversion of the faith once delivered to the saints.

Additionally, it is important, for the sake of the gospel and the well being of the church, for leaders to defend themselves and their ministry from attack. This means at times asserting their authority as Pastors, Elders and Deacons, even defending their position in the church as having been given to them by calling,

ordination and installation. Moreover, now that we are historically beyond the apostolic era, it proper and very good to know the background of people that want to be teachers in the church.

Homework assignment: Read the whole book of Galatians. Come prepared to discuss the importance of table fellowship in the message of Galatians.

The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians

Lesson 2 – Paul’s Opposition to the Troublers of the Galatians – 1:1-2:10

Objective – To understand that part of Paul’s purpose of writing to the Galatian Christians was to demonstrate that the gospel (good news) he preached to them when he first met them is from God, and the teachers they have been listening to and believing are leading them away from Jesus. Faithfulness to Jesus requires faithfulness to the message of the gospel.

❖ **Memory verses for Galatians:** Galatians 3:26-28:

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

❖ **Review**

- 1) Saul was converted in about what year?
- 2) How many missionary journeys did Paul go on?
- 3) How many New Testament letters, Epistles were written by Paul?

I. The Background and Purpose of the Book of Galatians

Acts 15

Outline of the book of Galatians:

- A. Introduction (1:1-10)
- B. Defense of Paul’s Apostleship (1:11–2:10)
- C. Defense of Justification by Faith apart from the law (2:11–4:31)
- D. Defense of Christian Liberty (5:1–6:10)
- E. Conclusion (6:11-18)

II. Introduction: Paul and the Troublers of the Galatian Christians 1:1-12

III. Paul and His True Gospel 1:13-2:10

Homework assignment: Read the whole book of Galatians. Come prepared to discuss the importance of table fellowship in the message of Galatians.

The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians

Lesson 3 – Table Fellowship and the truth of Gospel 2:11-21

Objective – To understand the main purpose of Paul’s writing to the Galatian Christians: Through the gospel of Jesus Christ, all people, both Jews and Gentiles, are saved by faith in Jesus, and are made members of God’s family.

❖ **Westminster Shorter Catechism** – Briefly go over the question(s) and answer(s) for this quarter.

❖ **Memory verses for Galatians:** Galatians 3:26-28:

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

❖ **Outline of the book of Galatians:**

- A. Introduction (1:1-10)
- B. Defense of Paul’s Apostleship (1:11–2:10)
- C. Defense of Justification by Faith apart from the law (2:11–4:31)
- D. Defense of Christian Liberty (5:1–6:10)
- E. Conclusion (6:11-18)

❖ **Review:**

1) What controversy did the Jerusalem Counsel decide upon?

[It was determined by the Jerusalem Church that Gentiles should not be compelled to become Jews by circumcision or keep the Jewish works of the law and a letter was sent by Paul, Barnabas and Silas to be delivered to the church in Antioch and taught everywhere.]

2) Was the book of Galatians written before or after the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15? [After, or Paul would most likely mentioned it]

3) What did Paul call the gospel that the “troublers” of the Galatians taught?

[Theirs was a “different gospel” and they were wanting to “pervert the gospel”]

4) Why did Paul defend his Apostleship?

[The false teachers questioned his Apostolic authority and teaching, which led the Galatians to turn for Christ and the gospel]

5) Did Paul receive his gospel for the other Apostles in Jerusalem?

[No – he received it by revelation. The Apostles later confirmed that he preached the true gospel.]

Table Fellowship and the truth of Gospel 2:11-21

After declaring to the Galatians that he truly was an Apostle, having come to understand the good news about Jesus by revelation from God, apart from being taught by men, and finally after fourteen years received nothing from the leaders in Jerusalem to add to his understanding of the gospel (including his teaching that the Gentiles do not need to be circumcised) – Paul goes on to show that, at least in one case, he brought correction to the Apostles themselves.

A. Background to Paul’s Rebuke of Peter

In 2:11-21 Paul described an incident that happened in Antioch, which was one of the great cities of the early Church, and was first place where followers of “The Way” (i.e. believers in Jesus) were called Christians (Acts 11:26). Initially, when Christians in Judea were persecuted by Saul many fled to other places, including Antioch, and preached to the Jews only wherever they went (Acts 11:19).

In Acts 10 Peter was taught, by direct revelation, that the Gentiles were to be included by faith in Jesus in the Church established on the day of Pentecost by the filling of the Holy Spirit. In his vision he was told to kill and eat unclean animals, which in the Old Testament was forbidden as a means of teaching Israel to remain holy and different than the nations (Note: It may be useful to have the students read Lev. 11:24-44; 20:24-26; Deut. 14:2, 21). He refused to eat them because they were unclean, but God declared that Peter should not call common what He has made clean. Because of these food laws the Jews at that time believed (improperly) that they should have nothing to do with Gentiles because they were unclean. You would certainly not, as a good Jew, enter a Gentile’s house or eat with him because you may become unclean by doing so.

Peter was immediately summoned to the house of Cornelius, a Gentile, and witnessed the faith, conversion and filling by the Holy Spirit of someone that he would have normally considered unclean. This was probably very difficult for Peter to understand because at this time he would have thought that the only ones that would be saved by faith in Jesus, and be filled with the Holy Spirit would be those who became Jews and were circumcised. But by this means God showed Peter that the Gentiles were to be included by grace through faith into the household of God. Cornelius, his relatives and close friends were all baptized, and Peter stayed with them a few days, and presumably ate with them. Many Jews (“those of the circumcision” 10:45f) were astonished that God would included the Gentiles. This became a matter of great contention in the church, and Peter was

being accused of associating with and “eating with uncircumcised men.” (Acts 11:1-18). He explained to them what had happened, and concluded by saying:

And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?” When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life” (Acts 11:15-18).

Notice that baptism of the Holy Spirit was the key indicator of faith and repentance unto life. About this same time Barnabas was sent to Antioch and eventually brought Saul (Paul) to minister there for a year. It was possible that it was during this time that the events described by Paul in Gal. 2:11-21 happened.

B. Peter’s Hypocrisy about the Gentiles before the Jews 2:11-14

With this background in mind we can better understand what Paul is trying to communicate in Gal. 2:11f. V. 11 begins with the word “but,” signifying a continuation and contrast with what he had just said them: that he had not learned his teaching and the gospel he preached from men, but by the Lord, and that those who had the reputation of being leaders in Jerusalem confirmed that Paul’s gospel preached to the Gentiles was true. The “truth of the gospel” (2:5, 14) that Paul preached is that Gentiles are saved by grace through faith in Jesus, apart from the works of the Law. Although he was independent initially from the other Apostles, they were in agreement with him about the Gentiles.

But when Peter came to Antioch, he did not act properly toward the Gentiles when Jewish Christians from Jerusalem were watching. Prior to the arrival of people from James Peter had eaten with uncircumcised Gentile Christians, just as he has with Cornelius. He made no distinction between Jewish and Gentile Christians. There seems to be no question that Peter considered the Gentiles to be true Christians, truly believed in Jesus as the crucified and risen Lord and were truly baptized with water and the Holy Spirit. But when Jewish men came from Jerusalem, Peter separated himself the Gentiles for fear of his reputation with them because he knew they would not approve. By his example the rest of the Jews, including Barnabas, hypocritically (putting on a false face) withdrew themselves from fellowship with the Gentiles.

Hypocrisy is a terrible thing in the Church. It is a dishonest lifestyle that splits our lives into at least two different things. Too often people have a one part of them that looks good to people in the church (saying and doing the right things so that they are approved by those whom they want respect from), while living another way in private. Sometimes people (including ourselves) need to be rebuked for this, either publically or privately. God wants us to live honestly and consistently.

By separating from the Gentiles, Peter was saying, in effect, that if the Gentile Christians was to be part of the real family of God, you are going to have to become Jewish. Peter, by his hypocritical refusal to eat with Gentiles, had become just what the agitators of the Galatians were: a Judaizer, i.e. compelling them to live under the Old Covenant Law of God, and the traditions and customs of the Jews. This is what Paul confronted Peter about publically, because he was not being honest and straight forward with either the Jews or the Gentiles about “the truth of the Gospel” (2:5, 14). Before them all Paul said to Peter that, although he is a Jew, he has been living like the Gentiles (eating with them), not like the Jews would have expected him to. Since this is so, Peter, “Why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?” What follows in 2:15-21 is what Paul said to correct Peter before them.

C. Not justified by the works of the Law, but by faith 2:15-21

Paul begins (v. 15) by identifying himself with Peter as “Jews by nature,” but then talks like typical Jew, who was to distinguish himself from “Gentile sinners,” as the Jews thought of the Gentiles. “sinners of the Gentiles” is sort of a technical term for those who are not Jews by birth, or Jews by circumcision, without the law. He is talking about Jewishness, Jewish ethnical identity as distinct from and better than all non-Jews, Gentiles. What he goes on to show is that this distinction between Jew and Gentile has been entirely done away with in Jesus. Things from the Old Covenant law that separated Jew from Gentile no longer matter.

V. 16 completes the sentence, with Paul saying to Peter that they both know that a man is not justified by works of the law (the Torah, OT Jewish law), but by faith in Jesus Christ. What are the works of the law? The context shows us that “works of the law” means “living like a Jew” in 2:14, as separating from Gentile sinners (2:15); the things that divide Jew from Gentile, and believing that Jews do not eat with or have fellowship with Gentiles. [This text is not specifically talking about “good works” in general, but the Jewish understanding of the Law as a means of maintaining their status as the covenant people of God, the chosen ones.] These distinctions to not justify you and secure you as part of the covenant people of God. Rather, Paul says, one is justified by faith in Jesus the Messiah (Christ). We are all, Jews and Gentiles, identified as part of God’s people now by believing in Jesus. We are justified (i.e. considered/declared by God to be His people) because we are associated with Jesus the Messiah by faith. In fact, Paul goes on to say that “no flesh will be justified” by works of the law. [It could be that this may be a reference to circumcision: no cutting off of the flesh in circumcision can justify you.] Paul says the same thing in Rom. 3:19-20, and adds that the law brings knowledge of sin. It is the purpose of the law to reveal sin, not to justify. No one

can keep the law perfectly, and therefore no one can be considered justified on the basis of trying.

In vv. 17-18 Paul asks, in contrast to being justified by works of the law, “If we Jews (Peter and Paul), while seeking to be justified *by Messiah* (declared to be God’s people) we are found to be sinners (just like the Gentile sinners), does that make Messiah a minister of sin? Certainly not.” If the wall erected by the Torah between Jew and Gentile is torn down in Christ – Jews will find themselves to be sinners like the Gentiles are sinners. Then in v. 18 Paul begins to speak just of himself, saying in effect, ‘If, after pulling down the wall of division between the Jews and Gentiles because it has been abolished by Christ, I then build up the wall of division again by separating myself from the Gentiles – all I end up doing is showing myself to be breaker of the Torah. In Peter’s case he was a breaker of the law & Jewish custom by “living like a Gentile, not like a Jew” (2:14)

Paul concluded his rebuke of Peter in vv. 19-21. Continuing from vv. 14-18, Paul said “For/therefore” as a Jew I died to the law so that I might live to God. Those who are justified by faith in Jesus the Messiah died to the idea that their identity is defined by the Torah (as separating from the Gentiles), and are given a new identity defined by Christ Himself. The Son of God, Jesus, loved Paul (and the Jews and Gentiles that believe in Jesus) and gave Himself on the cross for those who believe in Him. By His death and resurrection, He was the faithful Messiah who tore down the distinction between Jew and Gentile. We are united to Him and His death and resurrection by faith.

The climax, in v. 21, means that if we set aside the grace of God through Jesus’ death by saying that righteousness comes through the law – the Messiah died in vain. If Torah could make anyone righteous, if merely doing the Jewish works of the law and keeping the Jewish customs are all that it takes to be justified – there was no need for Messiah to come or to die. In light of this we can now understand why Paul said that the Galatians were turning away from God who called them into the grace of Christ (1:6). By preferring to live under Torah – the Jews were turning the good news of Jesus into no news at all! And Peter, by refusing to stand up to this perversion of the gospel, was supporting and condoning a perversion of the truth of the gospel (2:5, 14, 21). His failure to continue table fellowship with the Gentile Christians was no less than racism (preferring Jews and Jewishness above other races of non-Jews) justified as a spiritual virtue. In point of fact, as Paul writes here, it is a denial of the truth of the gospel and making Christ’s death on the cross worthless.

D. Jesus' Eating with "Sinners"

Early in Jesus' ministry he had similar confrontations with the Jewish leaders, centered around table fellowship. Luke 5:27-32 tells us that when Jesus called Levi (Matthew) the tax collector to be his disciple, Jesus ate and drank at a great feast with him and other "sinners." It was at this fellowship meal with sinners that we see His first great conflict with the religious leaders of Israel.

And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, "Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance." (vv. 30-32).

The word "sinners" here is the same as in Gal. 2:15, 17. It is used as a term to describe anyone that is objectionable to the Jews and to be avoided. They were unwilling to fellowship with, eat with or have any contact with such people. Throughout Jesus' ministry He ate and drank with people that were unacceptable to good Jews. **[If there is time have the students read Luke 5:29-35; 7:36f; 15:1-2; 19:1-7]** It was at these table fellowship times that Jesus revealed the truth of the gospel. Now, Peter in Antioch, was acting just like the Scribes and Pharisees that confronted Jesus. Paul was right to confront Peter so strongly because we see that, at table fellowship, the truth of the gospel was the proclamation that all sinners (both Jews and Gentiles) are justified by faith in Jesus, and declared righteous by God. Both Jewish and Gentiles sinners can now, in Christ, eat and fellowship together in the Kingdom of God as full members together in the Church of God.

Reformation Covenant Church Distinctive:

The Lord's Supper is the great fellowship meal of the Church. By eating bread and drinking wine ritually in the Supper we show forth that we are one in Christ. As we will see next week, Paul says in Gal. 3:26-28 (the memory verses for this class) that "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

For this reason, the Reformation Covenant Church Confessional Statement says: "Communion We believe that all baptized professors of faith in Jesus Christ, and their baptized children, are invited by Christ to partake of His supper. However, those who show that they are covenant-despisers or blasphemous rejecters of God and His Law are to be barred from the table."

All who are baptized, including the children, are invited and expected to partake of the Lord Supper. The only exception to this is if someone has demonstrated a refusal to confess or repent of their sin they would be "excommunicated," or denied access to the table of fellowship in the Church, the Lord's Supper.

We need to follow the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus and the Apostle Paul by welcoming into fellowship all who believe in Jesus and trust in Him for their salvation.

Homework assignment: Read the whole book of Galatians. Come prepared to discuss the importance of Abraham to Paul's argument in the book of Galatians.

The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians

Lesson 3 – Table Fellowship and the truth of Gospel 2:11-21

Objective – To understand the main purpose of Paul’s writing to the Galatian Christians: Through the gospel of Jesus Christ, all people, both Jews and Gentiles, are saved by faith in Jesus, and are made members of God’s family.

❖ **Westminster Shorter Catechism**

❖ **Memory verses for Galatians:** Galatians 3:26-28:

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

❖ **Outline of the book of Galatians:**

- A. Introduction (1:1-10)
- B. Defense of Paul’s Apostleship (1:11–2:10)
- C. Defense of Justification by Faith apart from the law (2:11–4:31)
- D. Defense of Christian Liberty (5:1–6:10)
- E. Conclusion (6:11-18)

❖ **Review:**

- 1) What controversy did the Jerusalem Counsel decide upon?
- 2) Was the book of Galatians written before or after the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15?
- 3) What did Paul call the gospel that the “troublers” of the Galatians taught?
- 4) Why did Paul defend his Apostleship?
- 5) Did Paul receive his gospel for the other Apostles in Jerusalem?

Table Fellowship and the truth of the Gospel 2:11-21

A. Background to Paul’s Rebuke of Peter Acts 10-11

Acts 10-11

OT food laws to teach Israel to remain holy and different than the nations - Lev. 11:24-44; 20:24-26; Deut. 14:2, 21

B. Peter’s Hypocrisy about the Gentiles before the Jews 2:11-14a

C. Not justified by the works of the Law, but by faith 2:15-21

D. Jesus' Eating with "Sinners"

Luke 5:27-32

Luke 7:29-35; 7:36f; 15:1-2; 19:1-7

Reformation Covenant Church Distinctive:

The Lord's Supper is the great fellowship meal of the Church. By eating bread and drinking wine ritually in the Supper we show forth that we are one in Christ. As we will see next week, Paul says in Gal. 3:26-28 (the memory verses for this class) that "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

For this reason, the Reformation Covenant Church Confessional Statement says: "Communion We believe that all baptized professors of faith in Jesus Christ, and their baptized children, are invited by Christ to partake of His supper. However, those who show that they are covenant-despisers or blasphemous rejecters of God and His Law are to be barred from the table."

All who are baptized, including the children, are invited and expected to partake of the Lord Supper. The only exception to this is if someone has demonstrated a refusal to confess or repent of their sin they would be "excommunicated," or denied access to the table of fellowship in the Church, the Lord's Supper.

Homework assignment: Read the whole book of Galatians. Come prepared to discuss the importance of Abraham to Paul's argument in the book of Galatians.

The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians

Lesson 4 – Justification by Faith, Not by the Works of the Law 3:1-4:30

Objective – Since the first century Jews prided themselves as being children of Abraham, it was important that the Church understand what the relationship Gentile Christians had to Abraham. This lesson will see that all who are in Christ by faith are children of Abraham.

❖ **Westminster Shorter Catechism**

❖ **Memory verses for Galatians: Galatians 3:26-28:**

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

❖ **Outline of the book of Galatians:**

- A. Introduction (1:1-10)
- B. Defense of Paul's Apostleship (1:11–2:10)
- C. Defense of Justification by Faith apart from the law (2:11–4:31)
- D. Defense of Christian Liberty (5:1–6:10)
- E. Conclusion (6:11-18)

❖ **Review:**

In Galatians 1:6-10 Paul said that he marveled/was surprised at the fact that the Galatians were so soon (after he was with them) turning away from God (who called them by the grace of Christ, who died for them) by believing the false teachers who taught a false and different gospel – which is no good news at all.

1) What did the troublers of the Galatians teach that was so wrong? [They taught that in order to be saved the Gentiles needed to keep the Old Testament Jewish Law.]

2) What did the false teachers say that the Gentiles needed to do in order to be saved? [They needed to be circumcised and keep the Jewish traditions about separation from Gentiles.]

3) Did the Jerusalem Apostles (e.g. Peter, James and John) tell Paul that his teaching of the gospel to the Gentiles apart from circumcision was wrong? [No, they said that God had given grace to Paul to preach to the Gentiles the gospel he taught.]

4) What happened between Peter and Paul in Antioch? [Paul publically rebuked Peter for not eating with Gentiles when Jews were present because it was a denial and perversion of the gospel that both Jews and Gentiles are saved by faith, not by works of the law.]

From Galatians 1:10-2:21 Paul did not write as if he was speaking directly to the Galatians, but generally defended what he had taught them as the Apostolic proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He defended himself against the false teachers from Jerusalem.

A. The Blessing of Abraham to Gentiles In Christ 3:1-29

1. Receiving the Holy Spirit – 3:1-5

Now, beginning in 3:1, Paul directed his attention back to the Galatians, whom he now calls “foolish Galatians” (also in v.3) that have turned away (cf. 1:6) from obeying the truth (cf. 2:5, 14; 5:7). In 1:6 Paul said they turned away from Him (God the Father), and now he said they had been so bewitched (deceived by words) that they were rejecting Jesus as the one crucified for them.

As we saw last week, the whole controversy he is having with the Galatians and the deceivers and troublers of the Church is over table fellowship. We also saw that Peter himself learned the truth of Gentile inclusion in the Church by the fact that the Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius and his house just as he had the Jews. Peter:

And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?” When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life” (Acts 11:15-18).

Now Paul argues the same way in Gal. 3:1-14. In what way, he wants to learn from them, did they receive the Holy Spirit? By doing the works of the law, or by hearing and believing? They were foolish because they were trying to be made perfect by the flesh (by being circumcised in the flesh, thinking that becoming Jewish in their flesh will make them perfect in faith) instead of by the Holy Spirit, as they began to be Christians. He asked them in v. 4 if their suffering (presumably from the Jews and other unbelievers) was in vain, now that they are ready to be circumcised (to avoid Jewish persecution). He asked them in v 5 if the Holy Spirit and the miracles they experienced came as a result of the works of the law or by hearing and believing (cf. v. 2).

2. Justifying the Nations by Faith – 3:6-9

In 3:6 Paul begins to talk about where the Galatians are in the plan of God throughout history. The Jews and Judaizers claimed to be children of Abraham, and heirs of the promises made to him. They believed that Gentiles were not part of the family of Abraham, and unable to inherit the blessings of Abraham without first becoming Jews (by keeping the works of the law, especially circumcision). This section begins in v. 6-7 and ends in v. 29.

A summary of Paul's message in Gal. 3:6-29: Abraham believed God and his faith was counted as faithfulness to God (v. 6) → Only those who believe (like Abraham did) are sons of Abraham (v. 7), as the Old Testament Scripture/Law itself declared (v.8) → Abraham's blessings come to Gentiles who are in Christ Jesus (vv. 9, 14) → All who are in Christ Jesus are sons of God (v. 26) Therefore → Those who are in Christ (i.e. belong to Christ by faith) are Abraham's seed (children) and will inherit the promise (v. 29).

What were the promises of God to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3? (1) Land, (2) a great family/nation and (3) to be a blessing to the families/nations of the earth. It is important to remember that Genesis 10 provides a genealogy of the 70 nations on the earth, and which are shown to be in rebellion to God in Genesis 11. The question Moses seems to raise in his readers mind is: How will the nations of the world be saved? The answer is through Abraham and his family ("seed"). The promises to Abraham are meant to be the means by which God will save the world.

In Genesis 15 God made a covenant with Abraham based on these promises. Paul in Galatians 3:6 quotes Gen. 15:6 to say that Abraham believed the promise of God and was counted as righteous. It was not until *later* in Genesis 17 that God gave him the covenant sign of circumcision. Abraham's faith in God's faithfulness to keep His promises preceded the sign of the covenant – circumcision. Thus, Paul is saying that the Judaizers do not understand the plan of God as laid out in the Old Testament Scriptures. It is wrong for them to claim, on the basis of the Abrahamic covenant, that it is circumcision that includes people in the covenant promises of God.

It has always been God's plan to bless the entire world through the family of Abraham – including the Gentiles, by faith, in God's covenant with Abraham. God's plan has always been to form one worldwide family of God, by faith in Jesus the Messiah. Paul was assuring the Galatians that they are indeed children of Abraham by faith, as the Jews themselves should have been well aware because it was what the Scriptures declared in advance. Israel had become unfaithful to God by rejecting the nations as the recipients of God blessings. Instead of being a blessing to the nations – the Jews tried to keep the blessings of God restricted to themselves.

3. The Curse of the Law & Justification by Faith – 3:10-29

Beginning with v. 10 Paul explains why the works of the law have become such a big issue among the early Church. He does so by again using the Old Testament Scriptures to explain what being those who are "of the works of the law" means: He first quotes in vv. 10-13 from Deut. 27:29, Hab. 2:4, Lev. 18:5, Deut. 21:23. What Paul intended to say by stringing together these verse is that those who are

basing their confidence in doing the works of the law are, in reality, ignoring what the law intended to teach. Failure to keep the law results in covenant cursing – even exile from the promises of God. No one is justified i.e. counted as righteous (see also the same root word for justify/righteousness in 2:16, 18; 3:6, 8, 11, 24) by the law in God’s sight. Rather, it is by faith that those who are justified will live. The law that God gave His people is holy, just and good (Rom. 7:12), but it was never designed to justify anyone in His eyes. The problem for Israel was that the law got in the way (while it did its job of revealing sin and condemning the sinful) of the promises to Abraham. Since everyone sins, including Israel/the Jews, everyone is under the curse of the law. The curse that condemns law-breakers in Deuteronomy was laid upon one person for the sake Israel and the world. Jesus the Christ, as Israel’s Messiah and representative, was hung on the tree of the cross, taking the weight of Israel’s curse upon Himself.

Paul wrote in vv. 13-14 that Israel (“we”) was redeemed from the curse that was upon it through the death of Jesus the Christ/Messiah so that the blessing of Abraham could come upon the Gentiles along with believing Jews – enabling the Galatians and the entire world to receive the promise of the Spirit by faith. Those who think that they are justified by doing the works of the law have also rejected/set aside the grace of God by rejecting the death of Christ (cf. Gal. 2:17-21).

Anyone who thinks they can be righteous in the eyes of God by simply living a good life, without believing in or submitting to Jesus remain under the curse of God. The righteous/justified ones are only those who live by faith in Jesus who died for their sins so that they can receive the promise of God’s Spirit.

Galatians 3 goes on in vv. 15-29 to explain further how Jesus is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise to make his family great. In vv. 15-18 Paul said that the promises were made to Abraham and his Seed (family or descendants – Here he quotes Genesis 12:3 in v. 16). The promise was not to many seeds/families – but specifically referred to the one descendent of Abraham: Christ. God promised Abraham one family (not two: Jew and Gentile families) in Christ. But the Law, which came 430 years later, was used by the Jews as a means of dividing God’s family between Jews and Gentiles – as if to annul or cancel the promise made to Abraham. But God’s covenant promise to make one family of the earth in Christ cannot be annulled. The Law cannot provide the inheritance promised (a united humanity blessed by God throughout the world). The Law gets in the way of the promise to Abraham, first because Israel sinned and was under the curse of the Law (3:10-14), and because it threatened to divide the 70 nations of the world from God into two families (3:15-18). But God would in due time send Jesus, the Messiah, to deal with both of these problems.

Gal. 3:19-29 concludes this section by indicating that the purpose of the law, which was important between the giving of the promise and its fulfillment. The Law was given to reveal to God's people Israel who God is and how He is to be related in the time between the promise and the time when the Seed (Jesus the Messiah) would come. It was given because God's people need to understand sin and what it is to transgress the law. It was a means of keeping Israel safely under guard so that when faith came (the fulfillment revealed at the coming of Jesus), they would be taught/tutored to be able to believe in Christ in due time so that they could be justified by faith (3:21-24). But once Christ came – the law no longer serves that function (3:25).

The point that Paul is making is that the Law cannot justify (3:11) and cannot make anyone righteous (3:21) – It is only by faith in Jesus Christ that the promise could be fulfilled. All who put their faith in Jesus, even those who were not under the works of the Law (Gentiles), would inherit the promises of Abraham. There is one family in Christ. All previous distinctions that were important to distinguish between various parts of the human family are gone (i.e. Jew, Greek, slave, free, male, female). Now, all those who are in Christ by baptism are equally sons of God and part of Abraham's family by faith (3:26-29). Abraham's true family now is not determined by the Torah/Law, but by faith in Jesus the Messiah.

This is a very important truth for the Church today. Apart from the issue of faith in Jesus, there should be no divisions within the Church that separates Christians from one another. Racial and cultural (even denominational) barriers need to be removed; Paul's gospel is a motivation to real unity in the Church.

B. We Are Children Of Promise – 4:1-30

1. The Son and the Spirit - 4:1-7

In chapter for Paul continues with the theme of receiving the inheritance that was promised to Abraham. 3:29 said that if you are in Christ, then you are a son of God (v. 26) and a son of Abraham – therefore, you are an heir to the promised inheritance. The Jews, before the coming of Jesus, were like children under guardian tutors, and in that respect, were also like slaves directed in every way by the fundamental elements of the world (4:2-3, cf. v. 9). For them, the Law/Torah was a form of bondage demanding that they do certain things that they are released from when Jesus came. He was born (of a woman) as a Jew under the Law – so that he could redeem (buy out of slavery) those who were under the Law so that they could become mature sons. In these verses we see the Trinity working together to make sons of God: Jesus the Son of God the Father redeemed and adopted us as sons so that by the Spirit we can call God our Father (cf. 3:1-5). For that reason – We are not slaves, but heirs of the promises of God through Christ.

2. The True God and False Gods – 4:8-11

The Jews were in slavery and idolatry in Egypt, and then redeemed by God from their bondage. But God put them under a form of tutoring under the Law/Torah that was also a form of bondage until Christ came. Now Paul turns his attention back to the Galatians in 4:8-11 to say that they too were redeemed from their idolatry and service to false gods (which by nature were not gods at all). But now they are turning back to a form of slavery by submitting to the Law – bondage to the weak and worthless elements of the Law (observing the days, months, seasons and years of the sabbatical laws of the Old Testament) (vv. 9-10, cf. 4:3). For this reason, Paul is afraid that he has labored in vain among them. By coming under the bondage of the Law which Christ freed even the Jews from they are in danger of rejecting God altogether (1:6; 3:1-5).

3. Paul's Appeal to His Children – 4:12-20

Paul in vv. 12-20 seems to stop saddening to speak to them on a less theological level, and more on a personal level – pastorally. Paul said to them: Become like me! – Because I became like you! When he came to them he was in poor physical health (we do not know what that was – maybe it had something to do with his eyes, 4:15; 6:11), but they welcomed him as if he were an angel or even Christ Jesus Himself. What happened between then and now to the joyful blessing they received from him? They would have done anything for him – now they are turning away from not only Paul but also his teaching. The reasons is that other false teachers have come zealously courting them that the Galatians would be zealously for them. Paul considers the Galatians his children in Christ – and he is writing in such a stern tone because he desires to see Christ formed in them – that they would be like Christ.

4. Abraham's Two Sons – 4:21-31

Paul concludes his teaching section of the letter by challenging them to understand the Law correctly – since they desire to be under the Law. Abraham had two sons (Gen. 16-18): Ishmael (born of Hagar the bondwoman according to the flesh) and Isaac (born of Sarah the freewoman according to promise). He used this historic fact as a symbol of being under two different covenants (Paul quotes Is. 54:1; Gen. 21:10, 12), 1) Hagar represents the bondage of the Mosaic covenant and the Jews from Jerusalem (1:17-18; 2:1f); and the true Jerusalem which is from above is where the Galatians should see themselves from. The free woman that is now our mother is the new Jerusalem Church from above by the Spirit – Therefore we are sons, free from the bondage of the Law. In the remaining two chapters Paul explains what it means to live in the freedom of being sons of God.

Homework assignment: Read the whole book of Galatians. In Ch. 5-6, Notice the prominence of the word liberty or freedom. Also notice the shift in the verbs to more commands and how we should live our lives.

The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians

Lesson 4 – Justification by Faith, Not by the Works of the Law 3:1-4:30

Objective – Since the first century Jews prided themselves as being children of Abraham, it was important that the Church understand what the relationship Gentile Christians had to Abraham. This lesson will see that all who are in Christ by faith are children of Abraham.

❖ **Westminster Shorter Catechism**

❖ **Memory verses for Galatians: Galatians 3:26-28:**

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

❖ **Outline of the book of Galatians:**

- A. Introduction (1:1-10)
- B. Defense of Paul's Apostleship (1:11–2:10)
- C. Defense of Justification by Faith apart from the law (2:11–4:31)
- D. Defense of Christian Liberty (5:1–6:10)
- E. Conclusion (6:11-18)

❖ **Review:**

- 1) What did the troublers of the Galatians teach that was so wrong?
- 2) What did the false teachers say that the Gentiles needed to do in order to be saved?
- 3) Did the Jerusalem Apostles (e.g. Peter and John) tell Paul that his teaching of the gospel to the Gentiles apart from circumcision was wrong?
- 4) What happened between Peter and Paul in Antioch?

A. The Blessing of Abraham to Gentiles In Christ 3:1-29

1. Receiving the Holy Spirit – 3:1-5

Acts 11:15-18

2. Justifying the Nations by Faith – 3:6-9

The Abrahamic Covenant: Genesis 12; 15:6; 17

3. The Curse of the Law & Justification by Faith – 3:10-29

Deut. 27:29, Hab. 2:4, Lev. 18:5, Deut. 21:23

Gen. 12:3

B. We Are Children Of Promise – 4:1-30

1. The Son and the Spirit - 4:1-7

2. The True God and False Gods – 4:8-11

3. Paul’s Appeal to His Children – 4:12-20

4. Abraham’s Two Sons – 4:21-31

Genesis 16-18; Is. 54:1; Gen. 21:10, 12

Homework assignment: Read the whole book of Galatians. In Ch. 5-6, Notice the prominence of the word liberty or freedom. Also notice the shift in the verbs to more commands and how we should live our lives.

The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians

Lesson 5 – Christian Liberty and Life in the Spirit 5:1-6:18

Objective – To understand the importance and implications of receiving and walking in the Holy Spirit.

NOTE: This is the last lesson in Galatians. There may be enough time at the end for the students to complete the Student Evaluation. If not, it can be sent home and returned as a summary of the class.

❖ **Westminster Shorter Catechism**

❖ **Memory verses for Galatians:** Galatians 3:26-28:

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

❖ **Outline of the book of Galatians:**

- A. Introduction (1:1-10)
- B. Defense of Paul's Apostleship (1:11–2:10)
- C. Defense of Justification by Faith apart from the law (2:11–4:31)
- D. Defense of Christian Liberty (5:1–6:10)
- E. Conclusion (6:11-18)

❖ **Review:**

In the first four chapters Paul forcefully and authoritatively wrote to the Galatians not to be deceived by the false teachers by insisting that people are justified before God by faith apart from the works of the law.

- 1) What were the promises of God to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3? [(1) Land, (2) a great family/nation and (3) to be a blessing to the families/nations of the earth.]
- 2) How did the troublers of the Galatians think that someone became a child of Abraham, one who would receive the blessing of Abraham? [By doing works of the Mosaic Law, e.g. circumcision, Sabbath-keeping, food laws, etc.]
- 3) What did Paul say was the way to become a child of Abraham and inherit the blessing of Abraham? Does it only include the Jews? [3:14, both Jews and Gentiles through faith receive the Abrahamic blessings by the promise of the Spirit.]
- 4) Why was the law given? [It was given because God's people need to understand sin and what it is to transgress the law (3:19). It was a means of keeping Israel safely under guard so that when faith came (the fulfillment revealed at the coming of Jesus), they would be taught/tutored to be able to believe in Christ in due time so that they could be justified by faith (3:21-24). But once Christ came – the law no longer serves that function (3:25).]
- 5) The Jews were in bondage to the law, and the Gentiles were in bondage to idols (4:3-10). What was Paul afraid of for them? [That they were rejecting the gospel given and received when he first preached to them.]

A. Liberty In Christ – Faith Working through Love by the Spirit 5:1-26

In the previous chapter Paul argued, using the biblical illustration of the stories of Isaac and Ishmael and their mothers Sarah and Hagar, that the Law of Moses was given to enslave the Israelites until the coming of the Messiah (4:21-30). The troublers of the Galatians claimed to have authority from Jerusalem, but Paul argued that they are from the Jerusalem that corresponds to bondage and slavery to the Law (corresponding in his illustration to Hagar and Ishmael and the Mosaic covenant). All who believe in Jesus are from the Jerusalem that comes from above, which is the new mother of us all (corresponding in his illustration to Isaac, the son of promise) so that we all are children of Promise, not of bondage and law. We are brothers together, not as children of the bondswoman (Hagar, the present Jerusalem), but children of the free woman (i.e. Sarah, the Jerusalem from above).

Now in chapter 5 Paul goes on to say that the Galatians must remain firm in their liberty/freedom by which Christ has made us all free. As with all of Paul's letters, he begins to give them specific commandments about how to live in light of all that he has previously said in the book. He encouraged them to not become entangled in the yoke of bondage of the Jewish law-keeping (5:1). Since circumcision means absolutely nothing any more to God, for the Galatians to become circumcised would mean that they would be preferring circumcision and law over Christ. Christ would mean nothing to them; Christ would profit them nothing (5:2). In fact, in addition to becoming obligated to keep the whole law (which no one can do perfectly, cf. 2:17; 3:10f), they will have become estranged from Christ and fallen from grace. They would not be adding the law to Christ – they would be adding law and losing Christ. Anyone that seeks to be justified before God by anything instead of or in addition to Christ – in the end lose Christ altogether because we are saved by grace through faith (5:3-4).

Through the Holy Spirit we are given the hope of righteousness by faith. We wait eagerly, through the Spirit, for the time in the future when God will finally and completely declare us righteous before His and all the world. What matters in Christ is faith working through love. This is what it means to be free in Christ. Christian liberty means we are freed from the works of the law as a means of being justified, and by faith we do works of love (5:5-6).

In vv. 7-15 Paul continues by explaining how love works in the Christian community. The Galatians began well in the faith, but someone has hindered them from continuing in the faith by persuasive teaching; false teaching that does not come from God (cf. 1:6). In v. 9 he used the illustration of a little leaven being added to dough going through and turning the whole lump into leaven – So too, by doing just this one thing – being circumcised – the Galatians will have given

themselves over to the whole law, thereby rejecting Christ altogether. He said that he has confidence that they will come to agree with him, but the troubler of the church will be judged.

In 5:13-15 Paul warned them that this controversy is something that is causing division amount them. He said that they have been called to liberty in Christ (vv. 8, 13), but they should not use their freedom as an opportunity for the flesh. Rather, they are to use their freedom to serve one another through love. They are free not only from their pagan past, but also free from the works of the law. Throughout this letter Paul has been using the word flesh to refer often to circumcision or being born as a physical descendent of Abraham (2:16; 3:3; 4:23, 29). If some of the Galatians submit to the false teachers and emphasize circumcision of the flesh – flesh is what they will get. They will not love one another – instead, they will do the works that the flesh produces, namely biting, devouring and consuming one another in division and strife. If they emphasize the flesh by getting circumcised they will be moving away from Christ and becoming slaves again like the pagans around them, and like the Jews who are trying to put them under the Law. The law itself is fulfilled in one word, Paul said by quoting Lev. 19:18: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Therefore, live by faith working through love, and you will not be using your freedom in Christ for the flesh.

The alternative to submitting to the slavery of the law, or reverting back to living like the pagans around them Paul said in 5:16-31 is to “Walk in the Spirit.” The same Holy Spirit that gives us hope that we will finally be declared righteous by God at the end of time (5:5) is the One that will also enable us to not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

In vv. 17-23 Paul contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit. The lusts of the flesh and the Spirit are against one another (v. 17). If you walk by the leading of the Holy Spirit you are not under the law, nor are you walking as the pagans walk (v. 18).

5:19-21	5:22-23
<p>Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told <i>you</i> in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.</p>	<p>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.</p>

There is no indication that the Galatians were engaged in the “works of the flesh” listed here. The point is that if they are willing to trade the Spirit of Christ for the Law – what is likely to be found in them is not holiness but the works of the flesh. The law itself cannot cleanse the passions and desires (5:24); only by being led by the Spirit, and walking and living in the Spirit can the flesh be crucified. Instead of having lives characterized by faith working in love through the Spirit, those who trade their liberty in Christ for bondage to the law will fulfill the lusts of the flesh because it is flesh they trust in. They will become like the pagans around them. And be assured – those who practice the lusts of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God (v. 21) and the blessings of the Abrahamic promises.

Rather, only those who are led by the Spirit will have the fruit of the Spirit manifested in their lives. If you want to obey the central command of the Law to love your neighbor as yourself you must walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh (v. 16). True freedom in Christ, Christian liberty, do not mean that since you believe in Jesus you can do whatever you like. The flesh and the Spirit are at war against one another. What matters is that you are a child of God by faith, without needing the Jewish law (particularly the requirement of circumcision as a sign of your membership in the family of God), and that you are now free (by the power and leading of the Spirit) from bondage to the law and the idolatry and wickedness of paganism to love God and on another. Free from the law and free from paganism – but freed for God to love one another.

Everyone starts out in the condition Paul call “flesh.” We are all born to human families, both Jewish and Gentile. We all are born within us all kinds of desires which will become the “works of the flesh” listed in vv. 19-21. This is what the kingdoms of this world are like. But in the announcement of the gospel people receive by faith that God is creating a new people in a new kingdom by His Spirit. The result of the Spirit’s work in us is that we begin to live differently than if we were without Christ and His Spirit. Because we are Christ’s, the flesh, in all of its manifestations (Jewish and Gentile/pagan), has been crucified (v. 24). The list of the fruit of the Spirit is not the *Nine Things We Can Do* if we try hard enough. We must have the Spirit within us to do these things. When the Spirit is at work in us, these things will happen because we are new creature in Christ (cf. 6:15). But we must live by the Spirit to see them in our lives. We have to set our minds and intentions to do them, which is why Paul said in v. 25 we must walk in the Spirit. When these qualities appear in our lives, it is the fruit of the Spirit’s work in us as new people, new creations in Christ. When the Spirit is at work we become the kind of people that fulfill the law – loving one another. If we live according to the Spirit, the Jewish law will have no condemnation for us (v. 23). There would be no need for the disruptive effects in the Galatian church that the false teachers had

created among them. Division, strife, jealousy, anger, envy and all such works of the flesh are ruled out for us. This is the kind of life the gospel produces among God's children.

B. Spiritual Life in the New Israel of God – Gal. 6:1-18

The letter concludes with some very practical commands from Paul about how to live together by the Spirit.

Sin in the Church – 6:1-5: Although the Spirit wars against the works of the flesh and produces fruit in us, there are times that brothers among us sin. We who are spiritual (which means being led by the Spirit) must restore such a one in gentleness. In this way we bear on another's burdens – just as Christ bore the burden of our sins on the cross. We need to be careful that we are not also tempted to sin as we restore them (either by doing what they are doing or by falling into the sin of pride while we help them). When it comes to my brother I must be sure to remain humble when I offer help. When it comes to myself I must recognize my own responsibility for my actions.

Support for Teachers in the Church – 6:6-10: In this section Paul gives a clear command: Those who are taught the gospel and the Bible must provide financial support for their teachers. Neglect of this commandment has always been a problem with severe consequences for the church. He used a farming illustration to make his point. If you sow only a little seed you will get a small harvest. If you sow bad seed you will get a bad harvest. If church members sow to the Spirit by giving practical support to the teachers of the church they will have a good harvest in time. They will receive good teaching over a long period of time for them to eat and be nourished on – even to everlasting life. The ministry of the word builds up people and the Christian community that will endure even beyond the grave. However, if they “sow according to the flesh” they will receive a bad harvest of corruption of teaching over time. Christians should “do good to everyone,” especially those who are in the family of God – the household of faith. Our money is to be used for not only our own wellbeing, but also for others. But our money is given to us by God, and thus, He sets the priorities of how it is to be used: first to believers, then to others outside of the church. Paul's point about how to use money may also refer to sowing to the flesh in terms of what he said in vv. 19-21 – those who use their money on the lusts of the flesh (sinfully) will not only harvest corruption in their lives, but will also keep them from doing good to all with their money.

Glory in the cross – 6:11-18: In the final section Paul summarized his argument against the false teachers by saying that their goal is to boast and take glory in the flesh of the Galatians. If the Galatians can be made to become circumcised, the

false teachers can take pride before the Jews in their accomplishment of bringing Gentiles under the Law of Moses. But Paul only glories in the cross of Jesus, and that he is now dead to the world. He does not crave the glory of the Jews and opinions of men. There is now nothing about circumcision that matters any more. What matters is that in Christ all things are being made new. As new creations in Christ, what matters now is faith working through love (cf. 5:6).

We too should be careful about what we glory in. Do we set aside the truth of God for the praise of men? Do we care more about being a new and different kind of people than we do about being accepted and praised by the ungodly? May God, by His Spirit, give us the ability to glory only in Christ and Him crucified.

Paul concludes with a blessing to all who have this attitude of glorying in Christ: that they would receive peace and mercy from God. Interestingly he says that all such people are “The Israel of God.” Whether Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female – all are one in Christ by faith in Christ and by baptism (cf. 3:27-28) and all receive the blessing of Abraham, and are therefore “The Israel of God.”

Homework assignment: Read Acts 18-19 in preparation for beginning to study the book of Ephesians.

The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians

Lesson 5 – Christian Liberty and Life in the Spirit 5:1-6:18

Objective – To understand the importance and implications of receiving and walking in the Holy Spirit

❖ **Westminster Shorter Catechism**

❖ **Memory verses for Galatians:** Galatians 3:26-28:

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

❖ **Outline of the book of Galatians:**

- A. Introduction (1:1-10)
- B. Defense of Paul's Apostleship (1:11–2:10)
- C. Defense of Justification by Faith apart from the law (2:11–4:31)
- D. Defense of Christian Liberty (5:1–6:10)
- E. Conclusion (6:11-18)

❖ **Review:**

In the first four chapters Paul forcefully and authoritatively wrote to the Galatians not to be deceived by the false teachers by insisting that people are justified before God by faith apart from the works of the law.

- 1) What were the promises of God to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3?
- 2) How did the troublers of the Galatians think that someone became a child of Abraham, one who would receive the blessing of Abraham?
- 3) What did Paul say was the way to become a child of Abraham and inherit the blessing of Abraham? Does it only include the Jews?
- 4) Why was the law given?
- 5) The Jews were in bondage to the law, and the Gentiles were in bondage to idols (4:3-10). What was Paul afraid of for them?

A. Liberty In Christ – Faith Working through Love by the Spirit 5:1-26

Liberty in Christ

Faith working through love

Lev. 19:18

Walking in the Spirit

5:19-21	5:22-23
Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told <i>you</i> in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.	But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

B. Spiritual Life in the New Israel of God – Gal. 6:1-18

Sin in the Church – 6:1-5

Support for Teachers in the Church – 6:6-10

Glory in the cross – 6:11-18

Whether Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female – all are one in Christ by faith in Christ and by baptism (cf. 3:27-28) and all receive the blessing of Abraham, and are therefore “The Israel of God.”

Homework assignment: Read Acts 18-19 in preparation for beginning to study the book of Ephesians.

Galatians Student Evaluation

Name _____ Date _____ [_____ out of **40 Points**]

1) Saul was converted in about what year? _____

2) How many missionary journeys did Paul go on? _____

3) List the thirteen epistles of Paul are often arranged together into three groups:

A. Church Epistles:

1 & 2 _____,

1 & 2 _____

B. Prison Epistles:

_____, _____, _____,

C. Pastoral Epistles:

1 _____ & 2 _____

4) Paul's primary conflict in the book of Acts and in his Epistles were with the Romans. True or False _____

5) The Outline of Galatians:

A. Introduction (1:1-10)

B. Defense of Paul's _____ (1:11-2:10)

C. Defense of _____ by _____ apart from the law (2:11-4:31)

D. Defense of _____ (5:1-6:10)

E. Conclusion (6:11-18)

6) Write out the memory verses, Galatians 3:27-28:

7) Was the book of Galatians written before or after the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 that declared that Gentiles? _____

8) Why did Paul defend his Apostleship? _____

- a) He was proud of being an Apostle
- b) Paul wanted the Galatians to remain loyal to him
- c) It was important to know that the gospel He preach was reliable

9) What happened between Peter and Paul in Antioch? _____

- a) Paul had good fellowship with Peter and the Gentile Christians
- b) Paul rebuked Peter for not eating with Gentiles when Jews were present
- c) Peter taught the Galatians the truth about the gospel

10) Both Jews and Gentiles are justified by works of the law and by faith. True or false? _____

11) What were the promises of God to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3?

12) How did Paul say someone became a child of Abraham and inherit the blessing of Abraham? Does it only include the Jews? _____

- a) By being circumcised, keeping the Sabbath & doing the works of the Law
- b) Through faith by the promise of the Spirit
- c) By showing kindness to all, especially those in the household of faith

13) How does someone avoid the lusts/works of the flesh?

Galatians Student Evaluation

Name _____ Date _____ [_____ out of 35 Points]

- 1) Saul was converted in about what year? 30 AD
- 2) How many missionary journeys did Paul go on? Three
- 3) List the thirteen epistles of Paul are often arranged together into three groups:
 - A. Church Epistles:
1 & 2 Thessalonians
1 & 2 Corinthians
Galatians, Romans
 - B. Prison Epistles: Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians
 - C. Pastoral Epistles: 1 Timothy, Titus & 2 Timothy
- 4) Paul's primary conflict in the book of Acts and in his Epistles were with the Romans. True or False False
- 5) The Outline of Galatians:
 - A. Introduction (1:1-10)
 - B. Defense of Paul's Apostleship (1:11–2:10)
 - C. Defense of Justification by Faith apart from the law (2:11–4:31)
 - D. Defense of Christian Liberty (5:1–6:10)
 - E. Conclusion (6:11-18)

6) Write out the memory verses, Galatians 3:27-28 (5 points):

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

7) Was the book of Galatians written before or after the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 that declared that Gentiles? **After**

8) Why did Paul defend his Apostleship? **C**

- a) He was proud of being an Apostle
- b) Paul wanted the Galatians to remain loyal to him
- c) It was important to know that the gospel He preach was reliable

9) What happened between Peter and Paul in Antioch? **B**

- a) Paul had good fellowship with Peter and the Gentile Christians
- b) Paul rebuked Peter for not eating with Gentiles when Jews were present
- c) Peter taught the Galatians the truth about the gospel

10) Both Jews and Gentiles are justified by works of the law and by faith. True or false? **False**

11) What were the promises of God to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3?

Promised Land **Seed – Great Nation** **Blessing to the nations**

12) How did Paul say someone became a child of Abraham and inherit the blessing of Abraham? Does it only include the Jews? **B**

- a) By being circumcised, keeping the Sabbath & doing the works of the Law
- b) Through faith by the promise of the Spirit
- c) By showing kindness to all, especially those in the household of faith

13) How does someone avoid the lusts/works of the flesh?

By walking in the Spirit