

One Bible One Year Galatians

Gn	Ex	Lv	Nu	Dt															
Js	Ju	Ru	Sa ^{1,2}	Ki ^{1,2}	Ch ^{1,2}	Ez	Ne	Es											
Jb	Ps	Pr	Ec	So															
Is	Je	La	Ek	Da	Ho	Jl	Am	Ob	Jo	Mi									
					Na	Hk	Zp	Ha	Zc	ML									
Mt	Mk	Lk	Jn	Ac															
Ro	Co ^{1,2}	Ga																	

Summary

Galatians was written around 50AD to the churches in the Roman Colony of Galatia in central Asia Minor, modern day Turkey. Paul had visited the region to preach about Jesus and plant churches during his first missionary journey 5 years earlier.

At this time the people of Galatia, were a diverse racial group with also a large variation of cultural influences. This area of the Roman Empire shaped by Roman culture, but also very much influenced by Hellenisation as well as the culture of the Gauls, who occupied the North of the region.

Very evident in Paul's letter is that teachers had entered into the Galatian churches with a message contrary to the gospel. Known as 'Judaizers', they were teaching the necessity of circumcision and obedience to the law for salvation. Paul even writes of a confrontation he had with the apostle Peter, who had been the first to see the salvation of the Gentiles in Acts 10, but when these new teachers entered in, turned away from his freedom and even began to distance himself from Gentiles by not eating with them.

Outline

- I. Introduction (1:1-10)
 - A. Greetings (1:1-5)
 - B. Denunciation (1:6-10)
- II. Personal: Authentication of the Apostle of Liberty and Faith (1:11-2:21)
 - A. Paul's Gospel Was Received by Special Revelation (1:11-12)
 - B. Paul's Gospel Was Independent of the Jerusalem Apostles and the Judean Churches (1:13-2:21)
 1. Evidenced by his early activities as a Christian (1:13-17)
 2. Evidenced by his first post-Christian visit to Jerusalem (1:18-24)
 3. Evidenced by his second post-Christian visit to Jerusalem (2:1-10)
 4. Evidenced by his rebuke of Peter at Antioch (2:11-21)
- III. Doctrinal: Justification of the Doctrine of Liberty and Faith (chs. 3-4)
 - A. The Galatians' Experience of the Gospel (3:1-5)
 - B. The Experience of Abraham (3:6-9)
 - C. The Curse of the Law (3:10-14)
 - D. The Priority of the Promise (3:15-18)
 - E. The Purpose of the Law (3:19-25)
 - F. Sons, Not Slaves (3:26-4:7)
 - G. The Danger of Turning Back (4:8-11)
 - H. Appeal to Embrace the Freedom of God's Children (4:12-20)
 - I. God's Children Are Children of the Free Woman (4:21-31)
- IV. Practical: Practice of the Life of Liberty and Faith (5:1-6:10)
 - A. Exhortation to Freedom (5:1-12)
 - B. Life by the Spirit, Not by the Flesh (5:13-26)
 - C. Call for Mutual Help (6:1-10)
- V. Conclusion and Benediction (6:11-18)

Themes

The Central theme running through Galatians is Paul arguing for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone. As R. Alan Cole says: *"This obligation to keep the whole law implied that salvation was to be attained by obedience to the Law, not, as he had initially preached to them, by simple faith in Christ (3:2). That was what made it 'no gospel', an utter apostasy from Christ (5:4). To Paul, this move was therefore an abandonment of Christian liberty in exchange for the old slavery under the Law from which they had escaped (5:1), and a rejection of the gift of the 'spirit of freedom' which to him was the fulfilment of the great promise made by God to Abraham (3:14)"*

Paul also has to respond to his critics in regards to holiness and obedience, as John Stott explains: *"The Judaizers caricatured Paul's gospel that justification was by grace alone; they hinted that in this case good words did not matter and you could evidently live as you please. Paul denies this too. He agrees that Christians are 'free' and urges them to 'stand fast' in the freedom with which Christ has set them free (5:1)... Christian liberty is not licence. Christians have been freed from the bondage of the law in a sense that they have been delivered from the law as a way of salvation. But this does not mean they are free to break the law. On the contrary, we are to 'fulfil the law' by loving and serving one another (5:13-14)"*

Galatians teaches us to break off the burden of religiosity and take hold of freedom in Christ who alone brings us salvation and new life. As Paul writes in chapter 5:

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

Further thinking

Read chapter 3

Paul goes back to Abraham to prove that faith and not law is the way to salvation. Why Abraham?

What is the significance of law if Abraham was declare righteous even before the law was given?

Read chapter 5

If we are free from having to satisfy the legal requirements of the law, how should we practice the law (see v13)?

What ways should the fruit of the Spirit (v22-23) be displayed in our lives? How could this fruit be displayed more by us?