

# Galatians

## Introduction:

During the years of AD 45 – 48 the apostle Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel in Galatia establishing churches in the cities of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. The next two years proved trying for the Galatians' faith. Judaizers (men who accepted Christ yet held to the Mosaic system as binding) began invading these four cities and teaching that the Christians should add to their faith circumcision and Mosaic Law keeping in general (cf. Acts 15:1-5). Rather than rejecting these teachers and their doctrines, the Galatians apparently received them and many were thereby led astray (cf. Gal. 5:1ff). The apostle Paul hastily combats the Judaizers false teaching with an inspired epistle to the Galatian brethren. This lesson shall examine the epistle written to the Galatians and make application to our lives today.

## I. Sequence of events:

- A. Judaizer's syncretist (the attempt or tendency to reconcile differing beliefs) doctrine (cf. Acts 15:5).
  1. Their doctrine (Gal. 1:6-7): Christians must be circumcised and keep the Mosaic Law (cf. Gal. 5:2-4).
  2. Their motivation for said teaching: peace with all (Gal. 6:12) and to gain the glory of men (Gal. 6:13) (the more proselytes they made the more glorious they were in the eyes of the Jews).
  3. Their assault on Paul's character and his teaching (argumentum ad hominem):
    - a. The Judaizers claimed that Paul was preaching to gain the "*favor of men*" (Gal. 1:10).
    - b. They said that Paul "*lied*" about being an apostle (Gal. 1:20).
    - c. If Paul is not an apostle, then his teachings are not inspired of God (Gal. 2:2-10).
    - d. The Judaizers charged Paul with inconsistencies on his teaching of Circumcision (Gal. 5:11).
- B. The response on the part of the Galatians to this "*different doctrine*:"
  1. Due to the fact that Paul states that they had been "*removed from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel*" (Gal. 1:6), been "*bewitched*" (Gal. 3:1) and "*fallen away from grace*" (Gal. 5:4) it is apparent that many of the Galatians gave these Judaizers an ear to listen to their doctrines and the right hand of fellowship.
  2. At one time the Galatians considered it a blessing to hear the purity of the gospel (Gal. 4:15). Paul said, "*Ye were running well*;" what happened? (Gal. 5:7). Unfortunately, many of the Galatians now viewed Paul as their "enemy" because he was telling them the truth as opposed to lies (Gal. 4:16).
- C. Paul responds to the crises in Galatia (cf. Gal. 4:11):
  1. Paul answers the charges against his character:
    - a. Paul was an inspired apostle (Gal. 1:15; 2:7-9).
    - b. Paul did not preach to gain the "*favor of men*," his preaching was done that both he and those who heard him would be justified of their sins (Gal. 3:7-8; 6:17).
  2. Paul answers the charges against his teaching (cf. Gal. 1:11-12).
  3. Paul puts the false teachers in their place in the minds of the Galatians:
    - a. They had "*perverted the gospel of Christ*" and so they were cursed of God (Gal. 1:7-8).

- b. They were termed “*false brethren*” (Gal. 2:4).
- c. With their doctrines they “*bewitched*” the Galatians (Gal. 3:1).
- d. They “*zealously seek you in no good way*” (Gal. 4:17).
- e. The Judaizers “*hindered*” the Galatians with their “*persuasive*” doctrines (Gal. 5:7).
- f. These teachers “*troubled*” the Galatian brethren (Gal. 1:7; 5:10).
- g. They “*unsettled*” the faithful brethren (Gal. 5:12).

**II. The Remedy for the Galatian’s fallen state:**

- A. Paul demands that the Galatians test the doctrines put before them rather than receiving every man and teaching that comes along (Gal. 1:8-9; cf. I Jn. 4:1ff).
- B. Secondly, Paul enlightened the Galatians regarding the consequences of following only parts of the Mosaic system (cf. Gal. 3:10; 5:3).
- C. Thirdly, Paul reiterates the process whereby man is truly justified of sins (a subject that he must have preached to the Galatians on his first visit). Man is justified by an obedient faith (Gal. 3:13-14):
  - 1. The faith of Abraham is examined (Gal. 3:6-8). Abraham’s faith was reckoned unto him for righteousness because he was obedient (cf. Gen. 18:19; 22:18; 26:3-5).
  - 2. Our faith is not a simple confession in Jesus but it is an obedient faith (consider Jn. 3:16, 36).
- D. Fourth, Paul reveals the right way of life verses the wrong way (Gal. 5:16-26).
- E. Fifthly, Paul explains that persecutions are a way of life when walking by the Spirit (Gal. 4:29).
- F. Sixthly, Paul instructs the Galatians to “*cast out*” any men or doctrines that do not represent truth lest they trouble, hinder, unsettle, and persuade members of the body of Christ away from the one truth (Gal. 4:30).
- G. Lastly, if one falls in sin let him be restored (Gal. 6:1ff).

**III. Application of Galatians for today:**

- A. Let us recognize truth and guard it with all our might (Gal. 1:11-12; I Tim. 6:20; II Jn. 9).
- B. Let us put to the test (using divine revelation as our standard) any and all doctrines and men that come our way rather than foolishly receiving them (I Jn. 4:1ff).
- C. Let us not be swayed by beloved brethren who begin to teach error. Let us put them in the place they belong rather than trying to protect their character and reputation (souls are at stake!). So Paul called these men who brought different doctrines perverters of the truth, troublemakers, those who unsettle you, and zealously seek you in no good way. Let us not be taken by a man because he is a great speaker, likeable, and generally popular (cf. Gal. 2:6; 5:10).
- D. Let us not seek peace at the expense of Christ doctrine and our souls (Gal. 6:12; Jude 3).
- E. Let us live faithfully in Christ Jesus after the pattern of Abraham and let us crucify the fleshly desires of our life (2:20).
- F. Let us withdraw, reject, and avoid those who persistently teach and promote error (Rom. 16:17ff; Titus 3:9-11; II Jn. 9-11).
- G. Let us know that persecutions will come (II Tim. 3:12) and that this is our lot in life (I Thess. 3:3) because Jesus said it would be so (Jn. 15:17-21).
- H. Lastly, let us be restored and give effort to restore others when sin invades our lives (Isa. 57:15; II Cor. 7:10).