

Galatians

**BACKGROUND:**

Galatia (modern Turkey) originally referred to Celtic people who had migrated to that region from Gaul (modern France). In 25 B.C. when the Romans made the area a province, they included areas not occupied by ethnic Galatians. Paul writes to churches he had established in Galatia on his second missionary journey. It is the only Pauline letter specifically addressed to a number of churches. The most widely accepted date for his letter is about 49 A.D., making it one of the earliest writings of the N.T.

This letter has been called "The Charter of Christian Liberty." Its key theme is justification by faith and the liberty it produces. He writes to a people, some of whom are willing to give up the priceless liberty they have in Christ. Certain Jewish legalists have influenced them to trade their freedom in Christ for bondage to the Law. Paul refutes this false gospel of works and demonstrates the superiority of justification by faith.

One indication of how seriously Paul took this problem is that Galatians is the only epistle that does not contain a commendation for its readers. Another is that he refers to the teaching of legalism as "another gospel." It is certainly not the one that Paul knew, which was all of grace.

This letter should make you appreciate what you possess in Christ . . . liberty.

A brief outline of Galatians:

I. Gospel of Grace Defended (1:1-2:21).

A. Paul's Apostleship (1:1-1:24).

B. Paul's Authority (2:1-2:21).

II. Gospel of Grace Explained (3:1-4:31).

A. Justification by Faith, Not Works (3:1-3:9).

B. Justification by Faith, Not the Law (3:10-4:20).

- C. Law and Grace Cannot Coexist (3:21-4:31).
- III. Gospel of Grace Applied (5:1-6:18).
  - A. The Position and Practice of Liberty (5:11-5:15).
  - B. The Power for Liberty (5:16-5:26).
  - C. The Practical Application of Liberty (6:1-6:18).

**HELPS:** Before turning to these, read prayerfully the Word of God, praying that the Holy Spirit will guide you and instruct you.

If you don't own a Bible dictionary, encyclopedia, atlas, or reference search, don't worry. They are all available on the link below.

[http://www.preceptaustin.org/2\\_corinthians\\_commentaries\\_3.htm](http://www.preceptaustin.org/2_corinthians_commentaries_3.htm)

This excellent website is full of helps including commentaries. You will find John MacArthur, Ray Stedman and John Piper along with Charles Spurgeon and the Intervarsity Press Commentary (Navigators) as well as Matthew Henry's Commentary.