



Galatians

Paul hears that some in the Galatian churches believe that salvation comes from the Law of Moses, and writes a short letter telling them where the false teachers have erred, explaining the beauty of justification by faith. Here Paul is very anti legalism.

Author: Paul

In Galatians – Jesus is our Liberty

"But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

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TEACHER: 6 CHAPTERS

Take a look of the map and see what Biblical places you recognize.

The Epistle (or letter) to the Galatians was actually written before the letter to the Romans that we have recently studied. Most scholars put the chronology as 1 & 2 Thessalonians, then 1 Corinthians and Galatians at the same time, then 2 Corinthians a year later, and Romans. Paul starts his letter to the Galatians by authenticating his Apostleship. He wasn't anointed by Peter or the other disciples, but was called to apostleship by Christ in person on the road to Damascus.

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STUDENT:

From Paul, whose call to be an apostle did not come from human beings or by human means, but from Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from death. ² All the believers who are here join me in sending greetings to the churches of Galatia:

³ May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

⁴ In order to set us free from this present evil age, Christ gave himself for our sins, in obedience to the will of our God and Father. ⁵ To God be the glory forever and ever! Amen. (GNT)

TEACHER:

Paul says *"in order to set us free from this present evil age."* The blood of Jesus isn't just for eternity, it's for today as well, this verse is also often quoted when referencing evidence for a pre-trib rapture.

We find out quickly why Paul wrote this letter. People were turning their hearts away from the Gospel of salvation by faith in Christ alone, to salvation by the law, or a combination of faith and law.

STUDENT:

⁶ I am surprised at you! In no time at all you are deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ, and are accepting another gospel. ⁷ Actually, there is no "other gospel," but I say this because there are some people who are upsetting you and trying to change the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel that is different from the one we preached to you, may he be condemned to hell! ⁹ We have said it before, and now I say it again: if anyone preaches to you a gospel that is different from the one you accepted, may he be condemned to hell! (GNT)

TEACHER:

That is strong language. He is saying the Gospel of Jesus Christ is more important than the soul of an angel. Not only that, it is more important than my soul. Let's be careful what we preach. Sobering.

Paul then reiterates his place of apostleship and the authenticity of the Gospel he preaches by stating he did not learn it from people, but from Jesus Christ Himself.

STUDENT:

¹¹ Let me tell you, my friends, that the gospel I preach is not of human origin. ¹² I did not receive it from any human being, nor did anyone teach it to me. It was Jesus Christ himself who revealed it to me. (GNT)

TEACHER:

Paul then shares some of the timeline details of his calling and discipleship under Christ. That his Gospel message wasn't diluted by human influences but by Christ.

STUDENT:

¹⁵ But God in his grace chose me even before I was born, and called me to serve him. And when he decided ¹⁶ to reveal his Son to me, so that I might preach the Good News about him to the Gentiles, I did not go to anyone for advice, ¹⁷ nor did I go to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before me. Instead, I went at once to Arabia, and then I returned to Damascus. ¹⁸ It was three years later that I went to Jerusalem to obtain information from Peter, and I stayed with him for two weeks. ¹⁹ I did not see any other apostle except James, the Lord's brother.

²⁰ What I write is true. God knows that I am not lying! (GNT)

TEACHER:

Fast forward 14 years, to chapter 2

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STUDENT:

CH. 2

Fourteen years later I went back to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. ² I went because God revealed to me that I should go. In a private meeting with the leaders I explained the gospel message that I preach to the Gentiles. I did not want my work in the past or in the present to be a failure. ³ My companion Titus, even though he is Greek, was not forced to be circumcised, ⁴ although some wanted it done. Pretending to be believers, these men slipped into our group as spies, in order to find out about the freedom we have through our union with Christ Jesus. They wanted to make slaves of us, ⁵ but in order to keep the truth of the gospel safe for you, we did not give in to them for a minute. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

He tells of meeting Peter, James and John.

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STUDENT:

Those leaders, I say, made no new suggestions to me. ⁷ On the contrary, they saw that God had given me the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as he had given Peter the task of preaching the gospel to the Jews. ⁸ For by God's power I was made an apostle to the Gentiles, just as Peter was made an apostle to the Jews. ⁹ James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be the leaders, recognized that God had given me this special task; so they shook hands with Barnabas and me, as a sign that we were all partners. We agreed that Barnabas and I would work among the Gentiles and they among the Jews. ¹⁰ All they asked was that we should remember the needy in their group, which is the very thing I have been eager to do. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Later, Peter visits some of Paul's churches and Paul confronts him about some hypocrisy he notices.

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STUDENT:

¹¹ But when Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him in public, because he was clearly wrong. ¹² Before some men who had been sent by James arrived there, Peter had been eating with the Gentile believers. But after these men arrived, he drew back and would not eat with the Gentiles, because he was afraid of those who were in favor of circumcising them. ¹³ The other Jewish believers also started acting like cowards along with Peter; and even Barnabas was swept along by their cowardly action. ¹⁴ When I saw that they were not walking a straight path in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you have been living like a Gentile, not like a Jew. How, then, can you try to force Gentiles to live like Jews?" (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Paul then turns his argument with Peter into a lesson for the Galatians.

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STUDENT:

¹⁵ Indeed, we are Jews by birth and not “Gentile sinners,” as they are called. ¹⁶ Yet we know that a person is put right with God only through faith in Jesus Christ, never by doing what the Law requires. We, too, have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be put right with God through our faith in Christ, and not by doing what the Law requires. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

¹⁹ So far as the Law is concerned, however, I am dead—killed by the Law itself—in order that I might live for God. I have been put to death with Christ on his cross, ²⁰ so that it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. This life that I live now, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave his life for me. ²¹ I refuse to reject the grace of God. But if a person is put right with God through the Law, it means that Christ died for nothing! (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Moving on to chapter 3 Paul uses father Abraham to support the position of salvation by faith.

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CH. 3

STUDENT:

⁵ Does God give you the Spirit and work miracles among you because you do what the Law requires or because you hear the gospel and believe it? ⁶ Consider the experience of Abraham; as the scripture says, “He believed God, and because of his faith God accepted him as righteous.” ⁷ You should realize, then, that the real descendants of Abraham are the people who have faith. ⁸ The scripture predicted that God would put the Gentiles right with himself through faith. And so the scripture announced the Good News to Abraham: “Through you God will bless all people.” ⁹ Abraham believed and was blessed; so all who believe are blessed as he was. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Our faith in Christ also makes us a descendent of Abraham according to verse 7 that was just read, “the real descendants of Abraham.”

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STUDENT:

¹³ But by becoming a curse for us Christ has redeemed us from the curse that the Law brings; for the scripture says, “Anyone who is hanged on a tree is under God’s curse.” ¹⁴ Christ did this in order that the blessing which God promised to Abraham might be given to the Gentiles by means of Christ Jesus, so that through faith we might receive the Spirit promised by God. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

And finally Paul talks of the unity of our faith in Christ.

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STUDENT:

²⁴ And so the Law was in charge of us until Christ came, in order that we might then be put right with God through faith. ²⁵ Now that the time for faith is here, the Law is no longer in charge of us. ²⁶ It is through faith that all of you are God’s children in union with Christ Jesus. ²⁷ You were baptized into union with Christ, and now you are clothed, so to speak, with the life of Christ himself. ²⁸ So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free people, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are the descendants of Abraham and will receive what God has promised. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

All of this as a result of our faith in Christ. All Christians are on equal standing.

In chapter 4 Paul reminds them where they came from, and how they got where they are.

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STUDENT:

CH. 4

⁸ In the past you did not know God, and so you were slaves of beings who are not gods. ⁹ But now that you know God—or, I should say, now that God knows you—how is it that you want to turn back to those weak and pitiful ruling spirits? Why do you want to become their slaves all over again? ¹⁰ You pay special attention to certain days, months, seasons, and years. ¹¹ I am worried about you! Can it be that all my work for you has been for nothing? (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Another nail in the OSAS (once saved always saved) doctrine. Those being saved, and turning back to serve the law makes Paul's work of no effect, a waste of time.

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STUDENT:

¹⁷ Those other people show a deep interest in you, but their intentions are not good. All they want is to separate you from me, so that you will have the same interest in them as they have in you. ¹⁸ Now, it is good to have such a deep interest if the purpose is good—this is true always, and not merely when I am with you. ¹⁹ My dear children! Once again, just like a mother in childbirth, I feel the same kind of pain for you until Christ's nature is formed in you. ²⁰ How I wish I were with you now, so that I could take a different attitude toward you. I am so worried about you! (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Paul finishes the chapter with Hagar and Sarah as an example of the difference between the law and grace. In chapter 5 he tells of our freedom in Christ.

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CH. 5

STUDENT:

Freedom is what we have—Christ has set us free! Stand, then, as free people, and do not allow yourselves to become slaves again....

⁷ You were doing so well! Who made you stop obeying the truth? How did he persuade you? ⁸ It was not done by God, who calls you. ⁹ "It takes only a little yeast to make the whole batch of dough rise," as they say. ¹⁰ But I still feel confident about you. Our life in union with the Lord makes me confident that you will not take a different view and that whoever is upsetting you will be punished by God. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Paul then talks of following the Spirit and not the flesh.

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STUDENT:

¹⁶ What I say is this: let the Spirit direct your lives, and you will not satisfy the desires of the human nature. ¹⁷ For what our human nature wants is opposed to what the Spirit wants, and what the Spirit wants is opposed to what our human nature wants. These two are enemies, and this means that you cannot do what you want to do. ¹⁸ If the Spirit leads you, then you are not subject to the Law. (GNT)

TEACHER:

Paul continues with quite the list.

STUDENT:

¹⁹ What human nature does is quite plain. It shows itself in immoral, filthy, and indecent actions; ²⁰ in worship of idols and witchcraft. People become enemies and they fight; they become jealous, angry, and ambitious. They separate into parties and groups; ²¹ they are envious, get drunk, have orgies, and do other things like these. I warn you now as I have before: those who do these things will not possess the Kingdom of God. (GNT)

TEACHER:

If Paul was writing that list today, in the current social climate, that list would be even worse.

STUDENT:

²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. ²⁵ Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another. (NLT)

TEACHER: Now that I will list.

The Fruit of the Spirit

Love

Joy

Peace

Patience

Kindness

Goodness

Faithfulness

Gentleness

Self-control

Paul closes the letter.

CH. 6

STUDENT:

My friends, if someone is caught in any kind of wrongdoing, those of you who are spiritual should set him right; but you must do it in a gentle way. And keep an eye on yourselves, so that you will not be tempted, too. ² Help carry one another's burdens, and in this way you will obey the law of Christ. ³ If you think you are something when you really are nothing, you are only deceiving yourself. ⁴ You should each judge your own conduct. If it is good, then you can be proud of what you yourself have done, without having to compare it with what someone else has done. ⁵ For each of you have to carry your own load. (GNT)

STUDENT:

⁶If you are being taught the Christian message, you should share all the good things you have with your teacher.
⁷Do not deceive yourselves; no one makes a fool of God. You will reap exactly what you plant. ⁸If you plant in the field of your natural desires, from it you will gather the harvest of death; if you plant in the field of the Spirit, from the Spirit you will gather the harvest of eternal life. ⁹So let us not become tired of doing good; for if we do not give up, the time will come when we will reap the harvest. ¹⁰So then, as often as we have the chance, we should do good to everyone, and especially to those who belong to our family in the faith. (GNT)

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NEXT LESSON EPHESIANS.

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*"I have been crucified with Christ: and I myself no longer live,
but Christ lives in me." Galatians 2:20*

Ancient Galatian Ruins





