

## *Galatians*

**Purpose:** “An eloquent and vigorous apologetic for the essential NT truth that man is justified by faith in Jesus Christ, and that he is sanctified not by legalistic works, but by the obedience that comes from faith in God’s work in him by the grace and power of Christ and the Holy Spirit.” (edited from NIV Study Bible).

**Outline:** 1:1-2:21 – Personal: Authentication of the Apostle of Freedom and Faith  
3:1-4:31 – Doctrinal: Justification of the Doctrine of Freedom and Faith  
5:1-6:18 – Practical: Practice of the Life of Freedom and Faith

**Author:** Paul

**Date:** 48-49 AD while in Jerusalem following his first missionary journey (cf. Acts 13-14)

### **Highlights:**

Paul is writing to Judaizers – Jewish Christians who believed that a number of the ceremonial practices of the OT were still binding on the NT church. Judaizers argued that Paul was not an authentic apostle and that Gentile converts needed to abide by certain OT rites, especially circumcision.

The focus of this letter is on the saving grace of God rather than on legalistic works and obedience to Mosaic, ceremonial, laws.

It was the rediscovery of the message of Galatians that brought about the Reformation. Galatians is often referred to “Martin Luther’s book” because he relied so strongly on this letter in his writings and arguments. It is incredibly relevant for us, again, in this time.

The Galatians were living as though the “already” were “not yet,” and so Paul emphasizes what has already happened (i.e. the Christ has already come and died on the cross as the final sacrifice for all sins).

These “under-realized” churches are known for their legalism – rules over biblical principles; which keeps people in immaturity. The starting point for growing in faith is to grow in grace. You must realize the truth of the gospel – that you are saved and sanctified by grace and not works. This is more difficult, because it means depending on God’s works and not on your own works.

Try counting the number of times Paul uses the word “grace” in this one letter.

Right away Paul cuts to the heart of the problem – the people have turned from the gospel of grace to a non-gospel of works. Paul defends his apostolic authority via his conversion story (1:11-2:1). Paul then goes on to begin discussing the issue of circumcision and how it relates to the gospel. Note that this was the main topic of conversation at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15).

Peter was called to preach to the Jews, Paul to the Gentiles. The focus and pastoral sensitivity you must have in the ministry environment caused disagreement between the two of them. The main issue was that Peter was “selling out” to the Judaizers.

In Chapter 3 Paul moves the focus on his debate with Peter back to his debate with the Galatians. The focus is the issue between Faith and Grace vs. Works and The Law.

The sinful nature is summed up in 5:17-21, fruit of the spirit is summed up in 5:22-23.

### **Timeline:**

Galatians 1:15 – cf. Acts 9:1-19a (Paul’s Conversion)

Galatians 1:18 – cf. Acts 19b-30 (Paul in Damascus, and then Jerusalem)

Galatians 2:1 – cf. Acts 15 (Council at Jerusalem)