

Galatians – Part 1 | 9/2/18

- Introduction to Galatians
 - Author and Date
 - The Book of Galatians was inspired by the Holy Spirit and written by the Apostle Paul.
 - He wrote it somewhere between A.D. 48 and 55.
 - Who was it written to?
 - The Book was directed towards various churches in the Galatia region (verse 1) which was a Roman province. This would be in modern day Turkey.
 - These were churches that Paul had previously founded – Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.
 - What is the overall theme or purpose for this letter?
 - While Paul had founded these churches with the truth of Christ, they were being influenced by the false teachings from the Judaizers.
 - They were being given false teachings of what it meant to be saved by saying that they also had to become a Jew and hold to man-made laws and rituals.
 - These churches were primarily made up of Gentiles and the Jewish leaders were telling them that they must become a Jewish proselyte (term for a Gentile who becomes a Jew) before they could be a Christian.
 - **This was in direct conflict with the truth of Justification through faith that was shown to Paul by Jesus.**
 - The letter to the Galatians sought to **defend justification by faith**, that salvation was not of works nor was there any other way other than through Jesus Christ.
 - Galatians Outline
 - Paul defends his apostolic authority and also the true Gospel (Chapters 1-2)
 - The doctrinal or theological defense of justification through faith, that it is available to everyone. (Chapters 3-4)
 - The practical results of one having been justified through faith. (Chapters 5-6)
- Paul's greeting and defense of his credentials of being an apostle of Jesus Christ. | Galatians 1:1-5
 - **Read Galatians 1:1-5**
 - Paul the apostle
 - Paul opens in the first verse telling us of his credentials of being an apostle of Jesus Christ.
 - **An apostle is one who is commissioned and sent out.**
 - The requirements though to be numbered in the original 12 was of course being chosen by Jesus Christ directly.
 - Acts 1:2b
 - "...after he had given commands through the Holy spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen."
 - When the apostles sought to seek a replacement for Judas they found 2 whom had witnessed the resurrected Christ and then asked God to show them His choice.
 - Jesus called the apostles (the 12 + Paul) and commissioned them to be the first missionaries or ambassadors for Christ. To spread and share His truth to the world.
 - Paul was not of the original 12, but he was most certainly called by Jesus Christ as we saw when he met Jesus on the Damascus road.
 - Paul demonstrates he is different than the false teachers that he is refuting.

- As Paul is penning this letter to refute the false teachers and to proclaim the truth of Christ, he is proving that His message comes from the source.
 - Paul was not appointed to share the Gospel by man, he was appointed by Jesus Christ, by God Himself.
 - Salvation through Christ's sacrifice for our sins.
 - Paul's opening brings immediate light to the purpose of Jesus Christ and what He came to do.
 - That it was God's will to go to the cross and be sacrificed for our sins.
 - Throughout the rest of this letter he will be defending how we are justified through faith and not by works.
- There is no other Gospel than the one proclaimed by Jesus Christ through His apostles.
 - **Read Galatians 1:6-7**
 - **The churches of Galatia were quickly turning away from the truth.**
 - After his short introduction Paul immediately got to the point, he didn't write this letter to praise or complement them but instead point out a significant problem.
 - Paul had founded these churches with the truth of Jesus Christ. He had given them the only truth and told them how to be saved.
 - **However, these churches were being influenced by false teachers who were adding to the requirements of salvation.**
 - So even though they knew the truth they were being persuaded by false teaching.
 - 2 Timothy 4:3-4
 - "For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths."
 - Instead of staying grounded in the truth that was given to them, they opened up their hearts and minds to other false teachings and they were letting it lead them astray.
 - Unfortunately, this is still a problem today.
 - People are told and know the truth, yet their sinful nature desires "other things".
 - They give into this and are led astray into lies that Satan uses to turn them from Christ.
 - When Christians are not grounded in their faith and keep to the truth of the Scriptures, they too can be led astray by false teachers.
 - **Do you think this happens today? Do people turn from the truth to false teachings? Do you have those who turn away from church, from listening to the truth? If so why do you think this happens?**
 - **What are key reasons that would cause one who has heard and knows the truth, to quickly turn away to something else?**
 - **Paul said there were those who wanted to "distort" the Gospel of Christ.**
 - To distort the Gospel is one of Satan's tactics that He used against God's church and the lost in the world.
 - If he can twist and change the message of the Gospel to be something else, then he can lead people astray.
 - A twisted version of the Gospel that puts different requirements on salvation can give people false hope.
 - **The false teachers were adding requirements to the Gospel of Christ and were turning salvation from an act of unmerited grace, to one of a works-based righteousness that is "earned".**

- Salvation cannot be earned, there are no works that we can do to earn it.
- Salvation is through our faith in Jesus Christ, it is a gift freely given by God through grace.
- However false teachers were teaching that one must be circumcised, become a Jew (proselyte), perform the ceremonies and keep the OT covenant.
 - Acts 15:1
 - “But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”
 - Acts 15:5
 - “But some believers who belonged to the part of the Pharisees rose up and said, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses.”
- This was a complete distortion of salvation by grace through faith. Paul defended this at the same council
 - Acts 15:6-11
- **Salvation is never what the Bible says AND what man demands. Salvation is what is clearly present to us in the Scriptures.**
- **Peter addressed this same issue as those who “twisted” the Scriptures.**
 - 2 Peter 3:15-16
 - “And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them **that are hard to understand**, which the ignorant and unstable **twist to their own destruction**, as they **do the other Scriptures.**”
- **This same problem of people distorting the Gospel is alive and well in the world today.**
 - While we may not find ourselves dealing with the Pharisees, the world is full of false teachers who seek to lead people astray and distort the Gospel.
 - We see this with those who use the banner of Christianity to teach “a different gospel”
 - False religions like Mormon’s and Jehovah Witnesses.
 - We see this with those who believe that one has to work or earn salvation.
 - We see this with those who “add” to the Gospel by including books that are not Scripture, or that you should pray to something or someone other than Christ.
 - We see this with false teachers who distort the truth of the Gospel and twist its plain meaning.
 - We see this with college professors who have titles of “New Testament Religion” whom are not even Christians that twist the meaning of the Gospel to turn it into something that is unrecognizable.
 - We see this with those who say there are many roads and ways to heaven.
 - We see Satan’s original lie being played out every single day.
 - Genesis 3:1

- “Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “did God actually say, “you shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?”
 - We hear “did God really say...does the Bible really demand...does Jesus really want us to...?”
 - How have you seen the Gospel distorted today? Do you think it is a real problem?
 - What are the implications that you have seen upon Christians or the lost in the world?
 - What can we do to protect not only ourselves but others so that when they encounter those who distort the Gospel that they are not led astray?
 - **You must turn away from anyone who preaches a gospel contrary to the truth, no matter who they are or what credentials they possess. Please God and not man. | Galatians 1:8-10**
 - **Read Galatians 1:8-9**
 - Paul (speaking hypothetically) said that even if angels were to come down and preach a message that was contrary to the one he had given that they must turn away from it.
 - There is NO other Gospel than the one Christ proclaimed Himself and through His chosen apostles.
 - Paul said they would be accursed or bound to destruction. This distortion that turns people from the truth is not of God but of Satan.
 - **We must firmly ground ourselves in the truth of the Scriptures to never open our “itching ears” to hear something new.**
 - We live in a world that is constantly changing and growing.
 - The worlds perception on what used to be “truth” is changing with the winds.
 - What used to be wrong is right and right is wrong.
 - People are always interested in what is new and seem to change their opinions based on the current cultural climate.
 - **We must NOT do this with the Scriptures, with the Gospel.**
 - Christ and His truth will NEVER change.
 - Hebrews 13:8
 - “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”
 - Isaiah 40:8
 - “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.”
 - No matter what new preacher or scholar that may come around says they have a “new” and “revolutionary” way to look at the Scriptures it will NEVER change.
 - God never changes, what was a sin 6000 years ago is still a sin today.
 - God does not take an eraser to what is adherent and evil to Him, regardless of what society may think or say.
 - Paul sought to please God and so should we.
 - **Read Galatians 1:10**
 - Paul makes no apologies that he was now servant of Christ who was not trying to serve man.
 - Paul knew that what he was teaching and preaching would not please the world, and this of course has not changed today.
 - But Paul sought to be obedient and to live his live as a servant of Jesus Christ.
 - We too must live our lives in this way.

- We must not seek to live lives that are “politically correct” that only seek to please the world.
- We must live our lives teaching and living out the life God has called us to regardless if it pleases the world.