

Galatians: Study in Grace

Introduction

The Region of Galatia



Info on the Region

- The Galatian district sat in the highlands, several thousand feet above sea level.
- Settled by the Gauls.
- The cities visited by Paul stretched across southern Galatia. They were Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Pisidion, and Antioch of Pisidia.
- Known for passionate, fickle, superstitious and ritualistic people (Acts 13,14) 1st Journey

Background

- Written by Paul – 1st letter?
- Date and location are unsure
 - Early date – Southern Galatia, before Acts 15 (48-49)
 - Later date – Northern Galatia, after 2nd MJ (53-57)
- Occasion of writing:
 - Paul's apostleship was being questioned (1,2)
 - To counter the Judaizer message/new gospel (3,4)
 - To warn of lawless living (5,6)

Things of Note:

- The Epistle is sharp and focused
 - No side-line arguments
 - No personal greetings, names of people
 - Paul's pain and passion are clearly seen
 - Mix of Jewish/Gentile thinking
 - Content that finds fuller treatment in Romans
 - Main focus is on LIFE IN HIS SPIRIT OF FREEDOM
 - Some well known verses... 2:20; 5:22ff (fruits of HS)

Outline:

- Intro 1:1-5
- Message and Messenger 1:6-2:21 (Biography)
- Choices by Faith 3:1-5:1 (Theology)
- New Life and Walk 5:2-6:10 (Practice)
- Closing 6:11-18

Intro: 1:1-5

- Right from the start we feel Paul's heart...
- Paul, an apostle (note: no mention of slave here)
 - What is an Apostle? (*apostolos*)
 - Delegate, ambassador, messenger, sent one...(Jn 17)
 - Specific of those called to Jesus...
 - Paul's past as a persecutor required a different call
 - He had spent years preparing his character/heart
 - His call was being questioned to destroy his message
 - Do Gentiles need to become/follow Jewish laws?
 - Do they need to follow Jewish rituals/ceremonies?

His Source – God!

- Paul focuses on the call of God
 - Jesus and the Father
 - Raised Him from the dead... Acts 1 requirement
 - Paul had a unique encounter with Jesus (Acts 9)
 - 1Co 9:1; 15:8
 - 1st of several confirmations of Paul's ministry
- The brethren with me (2)
 - Not just friends, brothers (*adelphos*)
 - Not named or referred to... but they affirmed him
 - Agreed with the content of the letter
 - Were they known already to the hearers? 1st MJ?
 - Barnabas, Titus, John Mark?

Churches of Galatia

- No specific city named... would have helped!
- Circular letter to be read and passed on to others
 - A good thought for all of us, no?
 - There is no mention of any individuals/places
- Grace & Peace to you (*charis, eirēnē*)
 - Often used by Paul – 1&2 Co; 1&2 Thess; etc...
 - NOTE: even with the tough tone/message
 - Can we wish this for people, even if we are about to correct them? Is this our goal for all?
- God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

The Gospel in a verse... (4)

- Gave Himself – aorist active (*didomai*)
 - No man took Jesus' life, He offered it!
- For our sins (each and every one!)
 - God has seen all we will do and does “much more”
 - He has provided for all our fears, failures, sins
- He might deliver (*exaireō*) to pluck out, rescue
 - Keynote of this letter – “The gospel is a rescue, an emancipation from a state of bondage” (Lightfoot).
- Present evil age – (*aion poneros*)
 - “out of the age the existing one being evil.”
 - The rule of sin corruption rebellion self