

New Testament Survey—Galatians

Suppose you hear a TV preacher make the following statement, "My friends, we are saved by our faith." Do you agree with his assertion? Analyze that statement. What is the basis of our right standing with God, that is, our justification? Is it our faith? No. According to the Bible, faith is the means, not the basis of our justification. What is the basis of it? Christ's life, substitutionary death, and resurrection.

Now suppose you hear another TV preacher who says, "We are not saved by our faith." Do you agree? Do we need something in addition to faith to be justified? That's what prompted the writing of Galatians.

- **Who wrote the book?**

--Paul

- **When was the book written?**

The date depends on the destination of the letter. There are two views (see map):

1. The North Galatian Theory (see NIV Study Bible) -- this older view says the book was written to churches in north-central Asia Minor where the Gauls had settled in the third century B.C. Paul visited and evangelized this area during his second missionary journey, though Acts does not mention such a visit.

Date: between A.D. 53-57

2. The South Galatian Theory -- The letter was written to the churches in the southern area of the Roman province of Galatia (Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe) which Paul established on his first missionary journey.

Date: Some believe it was written from Syrian Antioch in 48-49 after Paul's first journey and before the Jerusalem council meeting (Acts 15). Others say it was written from Syrian Antioch or Corinth between 51 and 53.

Key: That makes Galatians one of the earliest NT books written.

- **Why was the book written?**

The book deals with an attack on the gospel. The gospel was under attack, not from outside the church, but from within. How so?

Assignment: Take 2 minutes to find these key words in Galatians (see appendix)...

Group #1: Find, count, and record all the references to "justified" (or a form of the word) in the book.

Group #2: Do the same with the word "circumcision."

Group #3: Do the same with the word "law."

Group #4: Do the same with the word "gospel."

Why are these words important? The Judaizers were a group of church members (Jewish) who believed that the ceremonial aspects of OT law were still binding on the NT church. After Paul established the church in Galatia and then left, these Judaizers came along and insisted that the Gentiles converts abide by certain OT rites, namely circumcision.

They said that Paul was compromising the gospel, and trying to make it more appealing to Gentiles by taking out certain aspects of the law. They insisted that the Galatians spiritual condition was deficient, that they were missing something. Were the Judaizers right?

Did Paul say, "Well, okay, to keep everybody happy, go ahead and be circumcised..."? To find out, turn to...

1:6 What did Paul call the message the Judaizers were preaching?

1:7 It was a perverted gospel.

1:8 What should happen to people who preach a different gospel?

1:9 Why does Paul repeat himself?

So whose "gospel" was right, Paul's or the Judaizers? That becomes the point Paul addresses next.

1:11-12 Where did Paul say he got his message?

1:13-14 Was Paul anti-Judaism, anti-law? How does he use his past to prove he wasn't?

Justification is the act of God alone in which He declares a sinner to be righteous, in which He removes the stain of sin from that person, and imputes the righteousness of Christ to that person.

Key Section: 2:15-21

2:15-16 Paul was a Jew. What did the Jews learn the hard way? Can't be just. by law

What is the only way to be justified? Through faith in Christ

2:20 What is the key to experiencing a right relationship with God?

2:21 If we could obtain righteousness from keeping the law, what would be true?

- **What is the outline of the book?**

(from Gromacki, 234)

I. His Biographical argument (chs. 1-2)

II. His Theological argument (chs. 3-4)

III. His Practical argument (chs. 5-6)

- **What is the message of the book in one sentence?**

Galatians teaches that if anyone says we can be right with God other than through faith in Christ alone, he is preaching a different gospel.

- **What contribution does the book make to biblical theology (that is, how does this book relate to the rest of the Bible)?**

1. *Galatians (along with Romans) explains the doctrine of justification.*

See: 2:16

2. *Galatians helps the New Testament Christian have the proper attitude towards the Law.* See: 5:18; 6:2 (the law is good acc. to Rom 7:12)

3. *Galatians teaches us about the fruit of the Spirit.*

See: 5:22-23

Discuss:

1. The first century Judaizers are gone, but are there any modern equivalents of the Judaizers? Sad to say, yes. In what ways is "another gospel" being preached today? What are some examples of teachings being promoted that distort and pervert the wonderful doctrine of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone?

2. Why do many believers not get spiritually involved in the lives of other Christians today, as we are commanded in 6:1?

Appendix: Word Studies: Key words in Galatians...

"*circumcision*" (13 times)

(Gal 2:3) "But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be **circumcised**:"

(Gal 2:7) "But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the **circumcision** was unto Peter;"

(Gal 2:8) "(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the **circumcision**, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)"

(Gal 2:9) "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the **circumcision**."

(Gal 2:12) "For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the **circumcision**."

(Gal 5:2) "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be **circumcised**, Christ shall profit you nothing."

(Gal 5:3) "For I testify again to every man that is **circumcised**, that he is a debtor to do the whole law."

(Gal 5:6) "For in Jesus Christ neither **circumcision** availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."

(Gal 5:11) "And I, brethren, if I yet preach **circumcision**, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased."

(Gal 6:12) "As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be **circumcised**; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ."

(Gal 6:13) "For neither they themselves who are **circumcised** keep the law; but desire to have you **circumcised**, that they may glory in your flesh."

(Gal 6:15) "For in Christ Jesus neither **circumcision** availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

"law" (32 times)

(Gal 2:16) "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the **law**, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the **law**: for by the works of the **law** shall no flesh be justified."

(Gal 2:19) "For I through the **law** am dead to the **law**, that I might live unto God."

(Gal 2:21) "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the **law**, then Christ is dead in vain."

(Gal 3:2) "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the **law**, or by the hearing of faith?"

(Gal 3:5) "He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the **law**, or by the hearing of faith?"

(Gal 3:10) "For as many as are of the works of the **law** are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the **law** to do them."

(Gal 3:11) "But that no man is justified by the **law** in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith."

(Gal 3:12) "And the **law** is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them."

(Gal 3:13) "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the **law**, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:"

(Gal 3:17) "And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the **law**, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect."

(Gal 3:18) "For if the inheritance be of the **law**, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise."

(Gal 3:19) "Wherefore then serveth the **law**? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator."

(Gal 3:21) "Is the **law** then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a **law** given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the **law**."

(Gal 3:23) "But before faith came, we were kept under the **law**, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed."

(Gal 3:24) "Wherefore the **law** was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

(Gal 4:4) "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the **law**,"

(Gal 4:5) "To redeem them that were under the **law**, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

(Gal 4:21) "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the **law**, do ye not hear the **law**?"

(Gal 5:3) "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole **law**."

(Gal 5:4) "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the **law**; ye are fallen from grace."

(Gal 5:14) "For all the **law** is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

(Gal 5:18) "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the **law**."

(Gal 5:23) "Meekness, temperance: against such there is no **law**."

(Gal 6:2) "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the **law** of Christ."

(Gal 6:13) "For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the **law**; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh."

justified (8 times)

(Gal 2:16) "Knowing that a man is not **justified** by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be **justified** by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be **justified**."

(Gal 2:17) "But if, while we seek to be **justified** by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid."

(Gal 3:8) "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would **justify** the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."

(Gal 3:11) "But that no man is **justified** by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith."

(Gal 3:24) "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be **justified** by faith."

(Gal 5:4) "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are **justified** by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

gospel (12 times)

(Gal 1:6) "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another **gospel**:"

(Gal 1:7) "Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the **gospel** of Christ."

(Gal 1:8) "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other **gospel** unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

(Gal 1:9) "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other **gospel** unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

(Gal 1:11) "But I certify you, brethren, that the **gospel** which was preached of me is not after man."

(Gal 2:2) "And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that **gospel** which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain."

(Gal 2:5) "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the **gospel** might continue with you."

(Gal 2:7) "But contrariwise, when they saw that the **gospel** of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the **gospel** of the circumcision was unto Peter;"

(Gal 2:14) "But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the **gospel**, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

(Gal 3:8) "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the **gospel** unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."

(Gal 4:13) "Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the **gospel** unto you at the first."