

*Paul's Letter to the*

# Galatians



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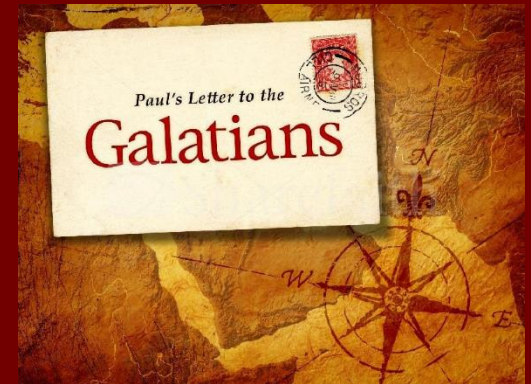


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# Background

## ■ Author, Date & Location

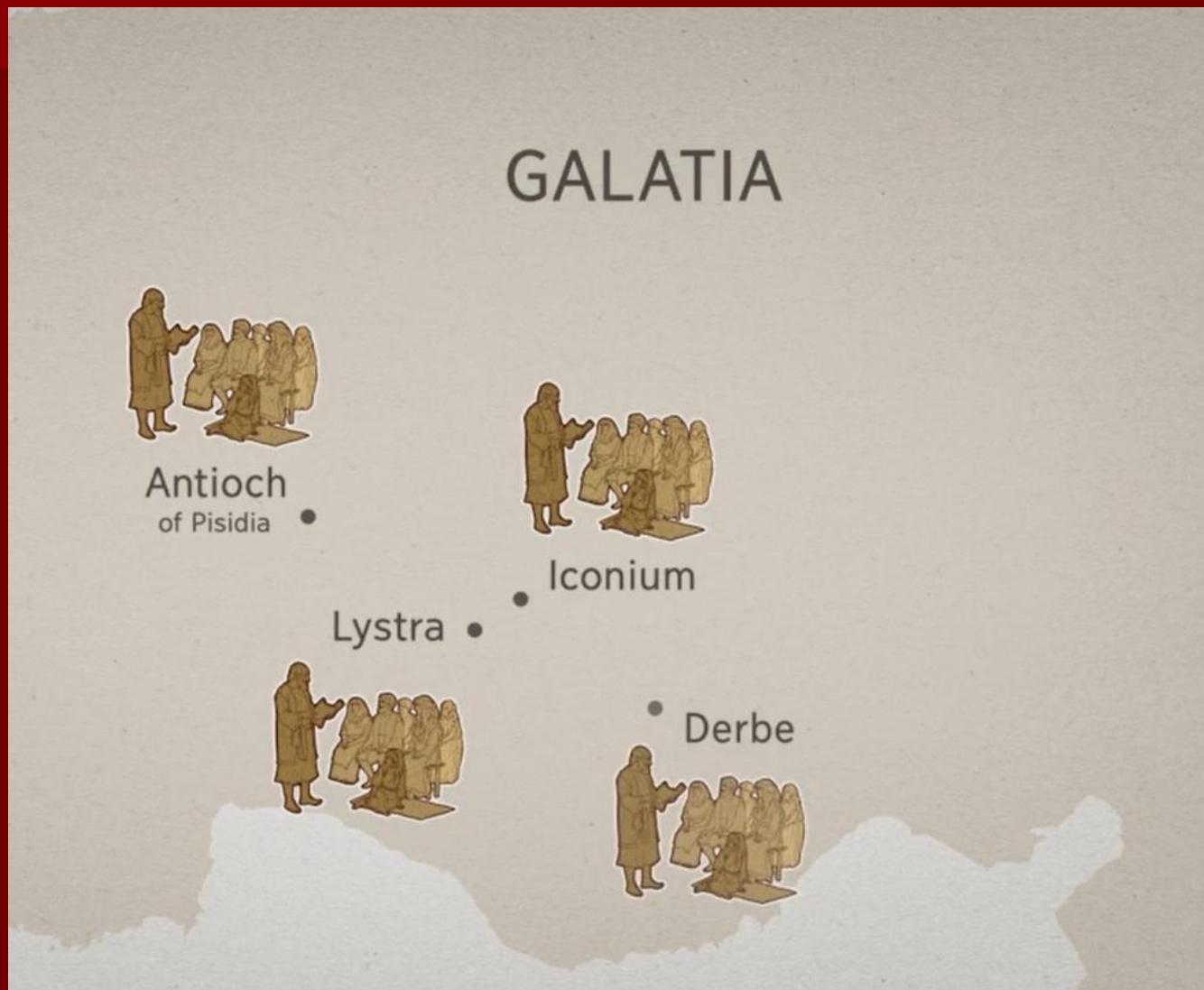
- The author identifies himself, as the Apostle Paul (1:1).
- Galatians 1:2 indicates that this letter was intended to be read to multiple churches in Galatia, an area in Asia Minor, or modern-day Turkey.
- Its date of composition is difficult to determine, though it was likely written some time after 49 – 52 CE / AD.



# Background



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# Background

## ■ Noteworthy Facts

- Paul makes reference to the conference in Acts 15 where circumcision of Gentile converts was discussed and decided, by the church.
- False teachers were troubling these predominantly Gentile churches with teaching contrary to the conference of Acts 15, primarily saying the Gentiles needed to be circumcised in order to be saved.



# Background

## ■ Noteworthy Facts

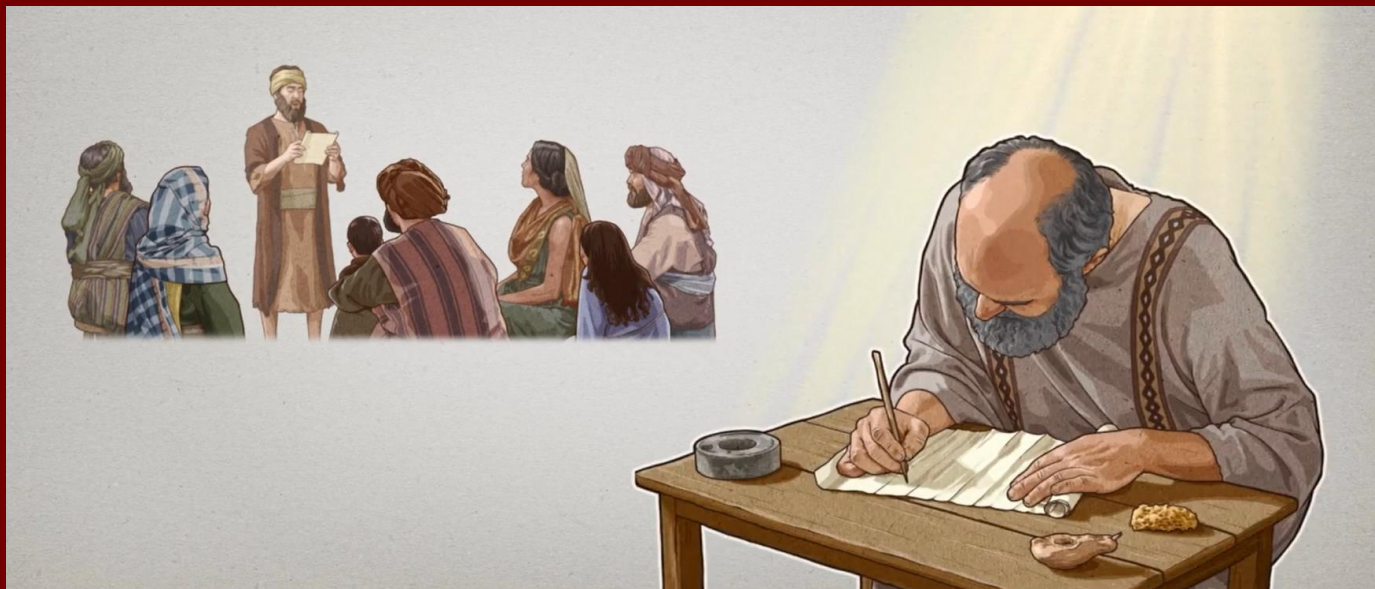
- They were also calling into question Paul's credentials while misrepresenting Paul's teachings. He recounts his conversion process.



# Background

## ■ Noteworthy Facts

- They were also calling into question Paul's credentials while misrepresenting Paul's teachings. He reveals that he received his instruction by revelation from Jesus Christ.



# Background

## ■ Noteworthy Facts

- They were also calling into question Paul's credentials while misrepresenting Paul's teachings. He gives the analogy of the Law being a guardian leading us to Jesus Christ.





# Background

## ■ Noteworthy Facts

- Paul is concerned, after having sampled the freedom they have found in their new faith, that they are so willing to go back into a type of spiritual slavery.
- The spiritual slavery of the false teachers is the viewpoint held by Rabbinical Judaism; the Law of God is inclusive of the Mishna, Talmud and Gemara; placing the oral in primacy to the written law.



# Background

## ■ Noteworthy Facts

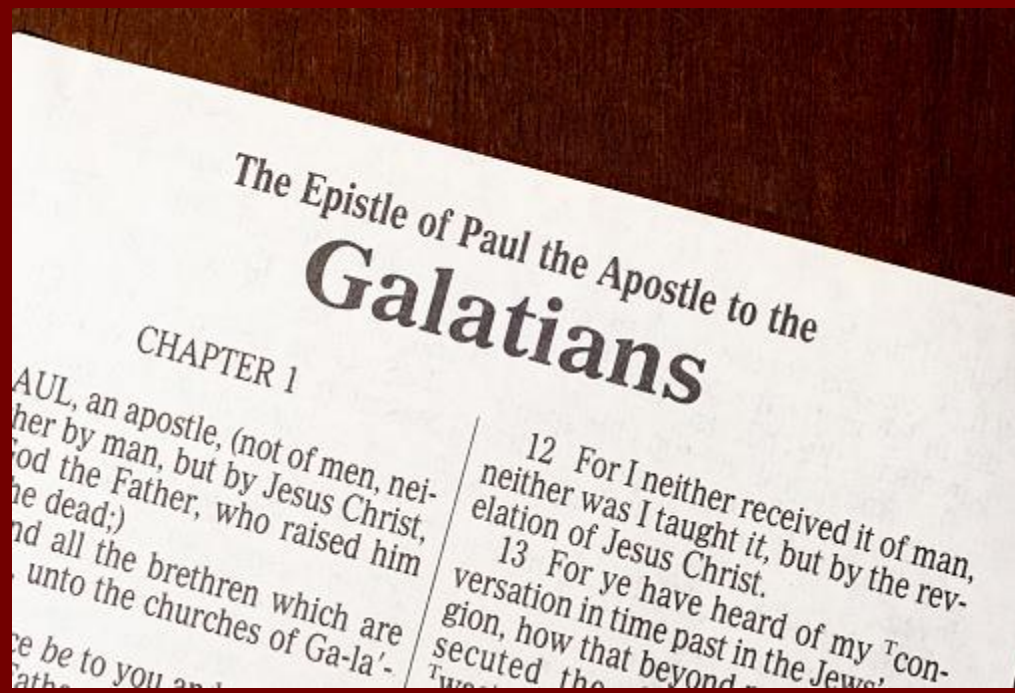
- Paul makes a number of often misunderstood complex arguments about what he calls “the truth of the gospel”. We must remain contextual from a historical and textual view, in our study of Galatians to understand the message to these troubled past churches and to us, today.
- II Peter 3:14-18



# Outline of Content

## INTRODUCTION

- Paul's introductory greeting ([1:1-5](#))
- Warning against a distorted form of good news ([1:6-9](#))
- God chooses Paul to be an apostle; Paul's early activity ([1:10-24](#))



# Galatians 1

## ■ Chapter 1

- **Verses 1 – 3:** Paul's greeting is formal compared to the greetings in most of his writings, indicating his deep displeasure with what is going on in the Galatian churches (note the plural). He begins by affirming his apostleship, the validity of which his enemies were questioning.
- **Verse 4:** God's will is for us to be delivered from this evil world. That's a comfort to all of us.

# Galatians 1

## ■ Chapter 1

- **Verses 6 – 9:** There are perverted and therefore false gospels out there, and the Galatians got diverted into a false gospel early on.
- **Verses 8 and 9** deliver a double curse on the purveyors of false gospels.
- **Verse 10:** A true servant of God cannot preach only smooth things to please men and at the same time be a teacher of the true gospel.

# Galatians 1

## ■ Chapter 1

- **Verses 12 – 24:** Paul here gives his own testimony of what he did during the immediate years following his conversion. Note that years passed before he preached to others. He spent three wilderness years in Arabia (verses 17 & 18), that he was not beholden to the other apostles, that his job was to preach the gospel to the heathen. It has been speculated that Jesus may have instructed him personally during those three years. Verse 20 (“I lie not”) seems to be an indication that someone had been slandering Paul in order to discredit his reputation

# Group Discussion



# Outline of Content

## PAUL DEFENDS HIS APOSTLESHIP

- Paul meets with the apostles in Jerusalem ([2:1-10](#))
- Paul relates how he corrected Cephas (Peter) in Syrian Antioch ([2:11-14](#))

## A PERSON IS DECLARED RIGHTEOUS ONLY THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST, NOT THROUGH WORKS OF LAW

- If righteousness is through works of law, Christ died for nothing ([2:15-21](#))





# Galatians 2

## ■ Chapter 2

- **Verses 1 – 3:** One of Paul's prime purposes with this epistle is to address the circumcision question.
- **Verse 4:** The false brethren were trying to steal their liberty – to bring them back into bondage. The gospel is about freedom, not bondage.
- **Verses 6 – 10:** Paul once again reminds them that his ministry is independent from that of the other apostles, but not in competition with them.
- **Verses 11 – 14:** Some things are so egregious that they need to be confronted immediately.

# Galatians 2

## ■ Chapter 2

- **Verse 15 - 17:** It seems to be an explanation of a concept to the Gentiles. He is explaining that the law has its limits. The law cannot forgive sin. The law can define sin, but something else is needed to forgive sin. Verse 17 tells us that the Messiah justifies us (justify = made righteous) and therefore we are not counted as sinners if we accept that gift from God.

# Galatians 2

## ■ Chapter 2

- **Verse 19 – 21:** This is not saying that the law is bad. It's saying the law no longer has power over me, that it no longer condemns me to death, that it no longer has me imprisoned for my transgressions. Jesus paid the price for my sins.
  - **Verse 21** in the Holman Christian Standard Bible: "I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ dies for nothing."

# Group Discussion

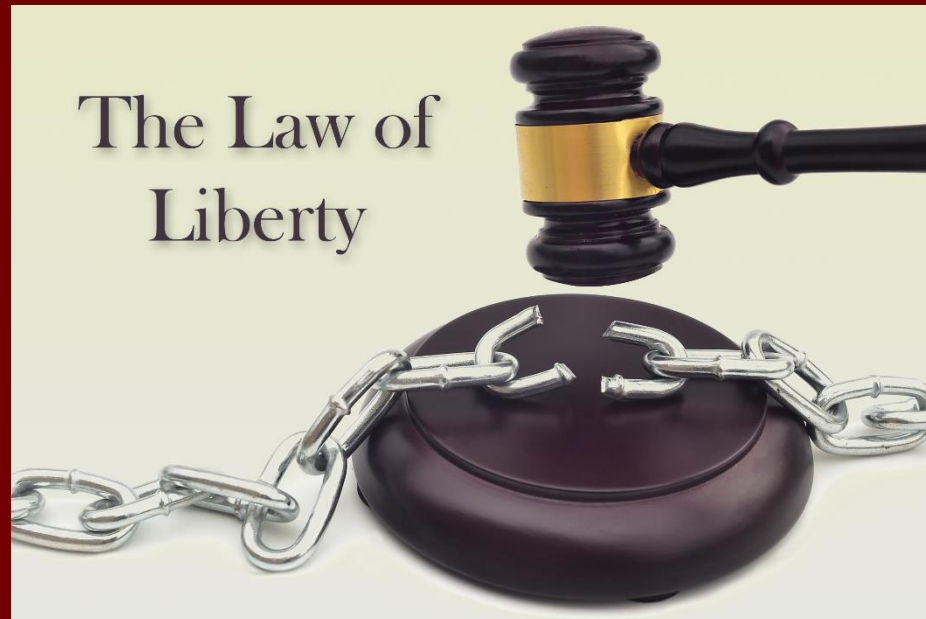


# Outline of Content

## A PERSON IS DECLARED RIGHTEOUS ONLY THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST, NOT THROUGH WORKS OF LAW



- Works of law versus faith (3:1-14)
- The promises to Abraham did not come through the Law (3:15-18)
- Purpose of the Mosaic Law (3:19-25)
- No longer slaves but sons of God (3:26–4:7)



# Galatians 3

## ■ Chapter 3

- **Not Relying on Law for Justification**
- **Verse 1** – “Bewitched” means “casting an evil spell on”. This verse has a similar message to that which we see in 5:7. They were under a spell so that they could no longer think clearly according to reason. “Obey the truth”. Most modern translations drop this phrase in 3:1, but retain it in 5:7.
- **Verses 2 – 3:** “You were made whole through God’s grace, not by any actions in your past. What makes you think that different rituals will make you more righteous?”

# Galatians 3

## ■ Chapter 3

- **Not Relying on Law for Justification**
- **Verses 6 - 7:** Abraham was declared righteous because he believed and he trusted God.
- **Verse 9 – 10:** The law brings curses if we don't live by it, but it does not forgive sins if we do live by it. Forgiveness of our transgressions can only happen through God's grace.
- **Verse 11:** Paul here makes a clear declaration, that the law justifies no one. While it defines sin and points to God's way of life, it cannot forgive sins. It wasn't established for that purpose.

# Galatians 3

## ■ Chapter 3

- **Not Relying on Law for Justification**
- **Verse 12:** Paul acknowledges that we should still live by the law. The law defines sin (I John 3:4).
- **Verses 13 - 14:** Note that Christ redeemed us from the “curse of the law”, not from the law itself. The curse of the law is the penalty the law exacts from violating it. Jesus took the penalty for us on the cross. It is through his sacrifice that even the Gentiles can receive the Holy Spirit even though they are not under the covenant God made with Israel.



# Galatians 3

## ■ Chapter 3

- **Not Relying on Law for Justification**
- **Verses 16 - 18:** The covenant that was 430 years after Abraham is apparently the Sinai covenant, which is distinct from the covenant made with Abraham. That covenant made with the nation of Israel does not override the covenant made with Abraham. Paul is pointing out that the covenant with Abraham promised that all nations would be blessed through Abraham's seed.

# Galatians 3

## ■ Chapter 3

- **Not Relying on Law for Justification**
- **Verse 19:** Here “the law” could refer at least in part to the sacrificial system, which would act as a mark of repentance following violation of the covenant, something inevitable given the people’s humanity. These added ordinances would last until “the seed” came and made that part of the covenant obsolete, given that “the seed” would become the perfect sacrifice.
- **Verses 20 – 21:** The law could not bring righteousness. In the case of the sacrificial system, it was merely a forerunner of the sacrifice of Christ. Nor can the law as a whole bring righteousness. It merely defines what righteousness and sin are. No law can give life. Life is a free gift from God. (Romans 6:23)

# Galatians 3

## ■ Chapter 3

- **Not Relying on Law for Justification**
- **Verses 24 – 25:** “Schoolmaster” in the KJV is better translated “guardian”. In Greek culture this guardian was a slave (Greek: paidagogos) who would take children to and from school to keep them safe from harm and corruption. This is different from the “tutors and governors” of Galatians 4:2. This slave did not teach. This slave only protected. Once maturity was reached, this slave was no longer needed.
- **Verses 26 – 29:** We are all children of the same God, whether we are Jews or Gentiles, bond or free. Therefore, we all can come under the same covenant ratified by the death and resurrection of Jesus, the covenant that promises eternal life and redemption, promises that are not possible through keeping the law and were not promised in the Sinai covenant.

# Group Discussion

