



EPISODE 2: GALATIANS
JAN 17/18
GALATIANS 1-6

- I. Context (From the ESV Study Bible)**
- a. Galatia was originally a Celtic region in north central Asia Minor (modern Turkey).
 - b. Paul's letter to the Galatians was likely written to the churches he had established during his first missionary journey (Acts 13:1–14:28). He probably wrote the letter from his home church in Antioch in Syria, sometime before the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:1–31).

Book	Author	Date	Recipients	Place of Writing
Galatians	Paul	48	South Galatian churches	Syrian Antioch

- II. Purpose:**
- a. To address a theological challenge emerging within the Galatian Christian community. Certain individuals, often referred to as Judaizers, were promoting the idea that Gentile converts needed to follow Jewish laws and rituals, particularly circumcision, to be fully accepted in the Christian community.
 - b. Paul's purpose was to defend the concept of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone, without the need for adherence to the Mosaic law. He wanted to counteract legalism and emphasize the freedom believers have in Christ. The letter addresses theological issues, emphasizing the centrality of faith and the sufficiency of Christ's work for salvation.
- III. Personal**
- a. In Galatians 1:11-24, he provides a brief autobiographical account, defending the authenticity of his apostleship and emphasizing that his knowledge of the gospel came directly from a revelation of Jesus Christ. Paul also recounts his past as a zealous Pharisee who persecuted the church before his conversion.
 - b. **His Authority Questioned**

- i. Galatians 1:1–2 (MSG): My authority for writing to you does not come from any popular vote of the people, nor does it come through the appointment of some human higher-up. It comes directly from Jesus the Messiah and God the Father, who raised him from the dead. I’m God-commissioned.
 - ii. Galatians 1:11–12 (MSG): Know this—I am most emphatic here, friends—this great message I delivered to you is not mere human optimism. I didn’t receive it through the traditions, and I wasn’t taught it in some school. I got it straight from God, received the Message directly from Jesus Christ.
 - c. **His Motives Questioned**
 - i. Galatians 1:10 (MSG): Do you think I speak this strongly in order to manipulate crowds? Or curry favor with God? Or get popular applause? If my goal was popularity, I wouldn’t bother being Christ’s slave.
 - d. **His Past Record. 1:13-24**
 - e. **The Integrity of His Message Challenged and Confirmed**
 - i. By Outside Judaizers 2:1-5
 - ii. By the so-called “leaders” of the church. 2:6-10
 - f. **Personal dispute with Peter. 2:11-14**
 - g. **Paul’s Identity in Christ. 2:19–21**
 - i. Galatians 2:19–21 (MSG): What actually took place is this: I tried keeping rules and working my head off to please God, and it didn’t work. So I quit being a “law man” so that I could be God’s man. Christ’s life showed me how, and enabled me to do it. **I identified myself completely with him.** Indeed, I have been crucified with Christ. My ego is no longer central. It is no longer important that I appear righteous before you or have your good opinion, and I am no longer driven to impress God. Christ lives in me. The life you see me living is not “mine,” but it is lived by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I am not going to go back on that.
 - h. **Ailment / Physical Exhaustion: 4:12-20**
- IV. **Profound / Powerful (Doctrine)**
 - a. **Sola Gratia— Grace Alone**
 - i. Galatians 3:2 (MSG): Let me put this question to you: How did your new life begin? Was it by working your heads off to please God? Or was it by responding to God’s Message to you?
 - b. **Key Themes (From the ESV Study Bible)**
 - i. In his sin-bearing death, Christ is a substitute for all Christians, whom he brings into a new realm of freedom and life. 1:4; 2:20; 3:13
 - ii. This gospel of Christ is for humanity, but there is no sense in which it has its origin in humanity: it comes only from God. Paul is himself an illustration of this: his conversion to Christ and his apostleship were not through human consultation but through the direct revelation of Christ. 1:1, 11–12, 15–20
 - iii. The gospel is appropriated not by works of law but by faith, which is the route to justification. 2:16
 - iv. To require circumcision and other Mosaic ceremonies such as dietary laws and Jewish holidays as a supplement to faith is to fall back from the realm

of grace, faith, and freedom, and to come under the whole law and its curse, since comprehensive observance of the law is impossible. 2:12–14, 16; 3:10; 4:10; 5:3

- v. OT Scripture itself testifies to the truth of justification by faith, both in the life of Abraham and in the prophecy of Habakkuk. Gen. 15:6; Hab. 2:4
 - 1. Abraham: Galatians 3:6–10
 - 2. Habakkuk: Galatians 3:11–12
- vi. The Christian life has its source in the believer having died with Christ to sin, and thereby having renounced the flesh. 5:24; 6:14
- vii. The Spirit is the source of power and guidance in the Christian life, and the work of the Spirit produces love and faith. 5:6, 16, 18, 25
- viii. The Christian life consists not in pleasing people but in pleasing Christ our master and being willing to suffer persecution for the sake of his cross. 1:10; 6:12, 14
- c. “In one way or another, everything in the epistle is related to Paul’s defense of justification by faith alone.” (ESV Study Bible)

V. **Problematic: Faith or Works**

- a. No Other Gospel: Galatians 1:6–9 (ESV): 6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are *turning to a different gospel*.
- b. Faith and Works: What is the meaning of “works of the Law?”
 - i. One of the main controversial aspects in the book of Galatians revolves around the theological tension between faith and works for salvation. The Judaizers argued for the necessity of following Jewish laws and traditions, such as circumcision, to be justified before God. In response, Paul vehemently asserted the doctrine of justification by faith, emphasizing that faith in Christ, not adherence to the law, is the means of salvation.
- c. Is Paul a “real” Apostle (did he get his doctrine from Jesus or second-hand)

VI. **Poetic (The Rhetorician)**

- a. The Law as Guardian until Christ Comes. Galatians 3:23–27
- b. Heirs in the Family of God. Galatians 3:25–4:7
- c. Galatians 3:6 (ESV): just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?
- d. Hagar and Sarah—Isaac and Ishmael. Galatians 4:21–31
- e. Leaven and the Loaf. Galatians 5:9 (ESV): 9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.
- f. The Works of the Flesh and the Fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:17–23 (ESV)
 - i. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
- g. Galatians 6:1–2 (ESV): 2 Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

VII. **Practical**

- a. In Galatians 5:13-26, he provides practical guidance on living in the freedom of Christ. He emphasizes the importance of walking in the Spirit, bearing the fruits of the Spirit, and treating others with love, kindness, and self-control. Additionally, he addresses issues like restoring someone caught in a sin with a spirit of gentleness (Galatians 6:1-2).
- b. So, within the broader theological discussions, Paul does offer practical advice for Christian living in the context of the freedom found in Christ.

VIII. Prayerful

- a. Galatians 6:18 (ESV): The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.
 - i. Galatians 6:18 (MSG): May what our Master Jesus Christ gives freely be deeply and personally yours, my friends. Oh, yes!

IX. Pastoral Summary

- a. In the letter to the Galatians, Paul exhibits pastoral qualities as he passionately cares for the spiritual well-being of the believers. He combines strong doctrinal teaching with heartfelt concern. Paul acts as a spiritual guide, addressing theological challenges while expressing deep affection for the Galatian Christians.
 - i. Galatians 4:18–20 (MSG): It is a good thing to be ardent in doing good, but not just when I am in your presence. Can't you continue the same concern for both my person and my message when I am away from you that you had when I was with you? Do you know how I feel right now, and will feel until Christ's life becomes visible in your lives? Like a mother in the pain of childbirth. Oh, I keep wishing that I was with you. Then I wouldn't be reduced to this blunt, letter-writing language out of sheer frustration.
- b. Paul is more critical of his audience here than in any other letter, and he chastises the Galatians for being foolish (3:1) and provides numerous reasons why they should return to the truth. His pastoral approach involves correction and encouragement. He corrects misunderstandings about salvation and the role of the law while encouraging the believers to stand firm in their faith. Paul's concern for their spiritual health is evident, reflecting a pastoral heart that desires the best for the congregation.
 - i. Galatians 5:13–15 (MSG): It is absolutely clear that God has called you to a free life. Just make sure that you don't use this freedom as an excuse to do whatever you want to do and destroy your freedom. Rather, use your freedom to serve one another in love; that's how freedom grows. For everything we know about God's Word is summed up in a single sentence: Love others as you love yourself.
 - ii. 7–8 Don't be misled: No one makes a fool of God. What a person plants, he will harvest. The person who plants selfishness, ignoring the needs of others—ignoring God!—harvests a crop of weeds. All he'll have to show for his life is weeds! But the one who plants in response to God, letting God's Spirit do the growth work in him, harvests a crop of real life, eternal life.
 - iii. 9–10 So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good.
- c. His Ultimate Pastoral Word

- i. Galatians 6:14–16 (MSG): For my part, I am going to boast about nothing but the Cross of our Master, Jesus Christ. Because of that Cross, I have been crucified in relation to the world, set free from the stifling atmosphere of pleasing others and fitting into the little patterns that they dictate. **Can't you see the central issue in all this?** It is not what you and I do—submit to circumcision, reject circumcision. It is what God is doing, and he is creating something totally new, a free life! All who walk by this standard are the true Israel of God—his chosen people. Peace and mercy on them!