

# Book of Galatians

## Synopsis



## Introduction

Book No	48
Name	Galatians
Written By	Paul
Testament	New
Category	Epistles
Date Written	Approx. 49 A.D
Place Written	Antioch
Audience	Church in Galatia
Purpose	To refute the Judaizers (who taught that Gentile believers must obey the Jewish law in order to be saved), and to call Christians to faith and freedom in Christ
History Covered	NA
Chapters	6
Verses	149
Key Verse	Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (5:1)
Key People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Paul</li> <li>❖ Peter</li> <li>❖ Barnabas</li> <li>❖ Titus</li> <li>❖ Abraham</li> </ul>
Key Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Galatia</li> </ul>

## Purpose of the Book

The book of Galatians is the charter of Christian freedom. In this profound letter, Paul proclaims the reality of our liberty in Christ—freedom from the law and the power of sin, and freedom to serve our living Lord.

Most of the first converts and early leaders in the church were Jewish Christians who proclaimed Jesus as their Messiah. As Jewish Christians, they struggled with a dual identity: Their Jewishness constrained them to be strict followers of the law; their newfound faith in Christ invited them to celebrate a holy liberty. They wondered how Gentiles (non-Jews) could be part of the Kingdom of Heaven.

This controversy tore the early church. Judaizers—an extremist Jewish faction within the church—taught that Gentile Christians had to submit to Jewish laws and traditions in addition to believing in Christ. As a missionary to the Gentiles, Paul had to confront this issue many times.

Galatians was written, therefore, to refute the Judaizers and to call believers back to the pure gospel. The Good News is for all people—Jews and Gentiles alike. Salvation is by God’s grace through faith in Christ Jesus and nothing else. Faith in Christ means true freedom.

After a brief introduction (1:1-5), Paul addresses those who were accepting the Judaizers’ perverted gospel (1:6-9). He summarizes the controversy, including his personal confrontation with Peter and other church leaders (1:10–2:16). He then demonstrates that salvation is by faith alone by alluding to his conversion (2:17-21), appealing to his readers’ own experience of the gospel (3:1-5), and showing how the Old Testament teaches about grace (3:6-20). Next, he explains the purpose of God’s laws and the relationship between law, God’s promises, and Christ (3:21–4:31).

Having laid the foundation, Paul builds his case for Christian liberty. We are saved by faith, not by keeping the law (5:1-12); our freedom means that we are free to love and serve one another, not to do wrong (5:13-26); and Christians should carry each other’s burdens and be kind to each other (6:1-10). In 6:11-18, Paul takes the pen into his own hand and shares his final thoughts.

The same perversion of the gospel that Paul combats in this letter keeps appearing in various forms. Legalism, which teaches that justification or sanctification depends upon a person’s own efforts, thus denying the sufficiency of the Cross, is the most

persistent enemy of the gospel of grace. Circumcision and other requirements of the Mosaic Law may no longer be issues pertaining to salvation, but oftentimes the observance of certain rules, regulations, or religious rites is made coordinate with faith in Christ as the condition of Christian maturity. Galatians clearly declares the perils of legalism and establishes the essential truth of salvation by faith alone.

As you read Galatians, try to understand this first-century conflict between grace and law, or faith and deeds, but also be aware of modern parallels. Like Paul, defend the truth of the gospel and reject all those who would add to or twist this truth. You are free in Christ—step into the light and celebrate!

### Overview

- ❖ 48<sup>th</sup> book of the BIBLE, 9<sup>th</sup> in the New Testament, 4<sup>th</sup> of the 21 epistles and 4<sup>th</sup> of the 14 epistles written by Paul
- ❖ The Book of Galatians has been called
  - The Magna Carta of Christian liberty.”
  - The Christian’s Declaration of Independence.”
- ❖ It is believed that Paul wrote Galatians with his own hand rather than having dictated it to a secretary. 5:2; 6:11
- ❖ Paul wrote the Galatian letter in response to a report that the Galatian congregations were being taken over by the false teaching of some Judaizing teachers who professed Jesus, but at the same time sought to place Gentile converts under the requirements of the Mosaic Law.
- ❖ The term “Galatia” was used in two senses:
  - Ethnographic - Referred to the central part of Asia Minor.
  - Political (or provincial) - Referred to including territory to the south that was not originally considered a part of Galatia (Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, etc.)
- ❖ Paul had to correct Peter in a matter at Antioch in Syria. 2:11-12
- ❖ In the Book of Galatians, Paul shows the superiority of Christianity over the Law of Moses.
  - Words frequently used in the Book of Galatians:
    - The law” - 31 times
    - “Flesh” - 18 times
    - “Spirit” - 15 times

- “Faith” - 21 times
  - “The promise” - 10 times
  - “Bondage” (and related words) - 11 times
  - “The Cross.” - 6 times
- ❖ In Christ we now have:
    - Freedom from sin.
    - Freedom from the Law of Moses.
    - Freedom from the doctrines of men.
  - ❖ This was Martin Luther’s favorite epistle and it was the masthead of the Reformation.
  - ❖ The book contains the greatest contrast between the fruit of the flesh and that of the Spirit in all the Bible (see 5:19-23).
  - ❖ For its size Galatians has more to say regarding the Law than any other biblical book.
  - ❖ Galatians records the second of two references regarding the role angels had in the giving of the Law (Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19).
  - ❖ It is the only New Testament reference to Hagar, Abraham’s second wife (4:24, 25).
  - ❖ Some believe Paul’s statement in 6:11 may have indicated his thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7) was related to a serious eye affliction.

## Hebrew Names of GOD used in Galatians

NA

## Revelation of JESUS CHRIST

Paul teaches that Jesus places those who have faith in Him (2:16; 3:26) in a position of liberty (2:4; 5:1), freeing them from bondage to legalism and to license. The apostle’s main emphasis is on the crucifixion of Christ as the basis for the believer’s deliverance from the curse of sin (1:4; 6:14), self (2:20; see 5:24), and Law (3:12; 4:5). Paul also describes a dynamic faith-union with Christ (2:20), visibly portrayed in baptism (3:27), which relates all believers to each other as brothers and sisters (3:28). Concerning the Person of Christ, Paul declares both His deity (1:1, 3, 16) and His humanity (3:16; 4:4). Jesus is the substance of the gospel (1:7), which He Himself revealed to Paul (1:12).

## Work of THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Judaizers were as wrong about the means of sanctification as they were about the way of justification. A key passage is 3:2, 3, in which Paul asks the Galatians, who would readily admit that they had begun their Christian life by the Spirit, why they were seeking spiritual maturity by performing works of the Law. The intimation is that the same Spirit who regenerated them causes their new life to grow.

In 3:5 Paul asks a similar question concerning the Holy Spirit. The language he uses indicates an experience of the Spirit that extended beyond the Galatians' initial reception. The verb "supplies" suggests a continual supplying in bountiful measure, while "works" indicates that God was continuing to perform miracles in their midst through Spirit-filled believers who had not slipped into legalism.

The word "miracles" refers to the charismatic manifestations of the Spirit evidenced by outward signs, such as those described in 1 Corinthians 12–14. The phrase "the promise of the Spirit" in 3:14 was also used by Peter to explain the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:33).

These verses teach that we receive the Spirit by faith and that the Spirit continues to manifest Himself in power as we walk in faith.

In 5:16–25 Paul graphically describes a fierce and constant conflict between the flesh, our lower nature prone to sin, and the indwelling Spirit. Only the Holy Spirit, when we submit to His control and actively walk in Him, can enable us to die to the flesh (vv. 16, 17), deliver us from the tyranny of the Law (v. 18), and cause the fruit of holiness to grow in our lives (vv. 22, 23).

This section (5:16–25) is a part of Paul's exhortation concerning the proper use of Christian liberty. Apart from the controlling, sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, liberty is certain to degenerate into license.

## Mega Themes of Galatians

### LAW

A group of Jewish teachers insisted that non-Jewish believers must obey Jewish law and traditional rules. They believed a person was saved by following the law of Moses (with emphasis on circumcision, the sign of the covenant), in addition to faith in Christ. Paul opposed them by showing that the law can't save anyone.

We can't be saved by keeping the Old Testament law, even the Ten Commandments. The law served as a guide to point out our need to be forgiven. Christ fulfilled the obligations of the law for us. We must turn to him to be saved. He alone can make us right with God.

### FAITH

We are saved from God's judgment and penalty for sin by God's gracious gift to us. We receive salvation by faith—trusting in him—not in anything else. Becoming a Christian is in no way based on our initiative, wise choice, or good character. We can be right with God only by believing in him.

Your acceptance with God comes by believing in Christ alone. You must never add to or twist this truth. We are saved by faith, not by the good that we do. Have you placed your whole trust and confidence in Christ? He alone can forgive you and bring you into a relationship with God.

### FREEDOM

Galatians is our charter of Christian freedom. We are not under the jurisdiction of Jewish laws and traditions nor under the authority of Jerusalem. Faith in Christ brings true freedom from sin and from the futile attempt to be right with God by keeping the law.

We are free in Christ, and yet freedom is a privilege. We are not free to disobey Christ or practice immorality, but we are free to serve the risen Christ. Let us use our freedom to love and to serve, not to do wrong.

### HOLY SPIRIT

We become Christians through the work of the Holy Spirit. He brings new life; even our faith to believe is a gift from him. The Holy Spirit instructs, guides, leads, and gives us power. He ends our bondage to evil desires, and he creates in us love, joy, peace, and many other wonderful changes.

When the Holy Spirit leads us, he produces his fruit in us. Just as we are saved by faith, not deeds, we also grow by faith. By believing, we can have the Holy Spirit within us, helping us live for Christ. Obey Christ by following the Holy Spirit's leading.

## Life Lessons in Galatians

<b>Truth</b>	<b>Lesson</b>
<p><b>Growing in Godliness</b></p> <p>Godliness results from Jesus Christ's living through you by the Holy Spirit. It is not achieved by observing some external code. Any attempt to achieve righteousness through a list of external dos and don'ts is fruitless. God calls us to love others and serve others just as Jesus did, by the power of the same Holy Spirit and in the same gracious freedom.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Let the life of Jesus Christ cover you as clothing. Let Christ live freely through you.</li> <li>❖ Concern yourself with God's Word becoming incarnate in you. Consider yourself "under construction" with Christ's likeness as your objective.</li> <li>❖ Walk in the freedom that Christ purchased. Do not submit to legalist rules regardless of how right arguments in their favor may seem.</li> <li>❖ Cherish the grace of God. Do not attempt to earn what can only be received as a gift. Love others freely as an act of obedient faith.</li> <li>❖ Remember the "law of sowing and reaping" applies to everyone. Sow only those things you desire to reap. God guarantees that harvest will come.</li> <li>❖ Do "good" to others when you have opportunity.</li> <li>❖ Be especially responsive to your brothers and sisters in Christ.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cultivating Dynamic Devotion</b></p> <p>The Holy Spirit is the key to dynamic devotion and to living under God's grace. Only the indwelling Holy Spirit can fulfill the Law through us,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Understand that you receive "the promise of the Spirit" (Acts 2:38, 39) the same way you receive salvation through Christ.</li> <li>❖ Live under the Holy Spirit's control. Obey every leading of the Holy Spirit. Believe</li> </ul>

<p>reproduce the dynamic life of Christ in us, and truly free us from the Law.</p>	<p>that this will result in Jesus' life being reproduced in you.</p>
<p><b>Pursuing Holiness</b></p> <p>We must not allow our freedom from the Law to become an occasion for fleshly activity. Remember that being part of God's family includes mutual encouragement and accountability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Be free from the controlling influence of sin.</li> <li>❖ Do not use the liberty you have in Christ to sin against your brother or sister in Christ. Recognize that the outcome of liberty should be loving service to others.</li> <li>❖ Seek to restore a brother or sister who has fallen into sin. Be ready to follow the Holy Spirit as He reveals what you are to do to restore that person. Do so gently, knowing that we are all subject to temptation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The Walk of Faith</b></p> <p>Faith accepts God's testimony in a trusting, childlike manner, and salvation as a free gift. The Law was given to lead us to Christ; thus, any use of the Law as a means of earning our salvation is a distortion. By nature mankind presumes to seek salvation by works. It seems offensive to the flesh to believe we cannot. But God's Word says it is an offense to Him to believe we can.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Do not change, amend, distort, or add to the gospel.</li> <li>❖ Understand that justification through observing the Law or a code is impossible. Receive God's gift of justification through faith.</li> <li>❖ Understand that you died with Christ so that Christ can live through you.</li> <li>❖ Understand that it is just as impossible to maintain your relationship with God through works as it was to earn it in the first place.</li> <li>❖ Understand that God intended the Law to lead His people to Christ.</li> <li>❖ Continually walk in faith. Recognize and believe in the certainty of victory for those who "endure to the end."</li> </ul>

<p><b>One Step in Developing Humility</b></p> <p>If we believe we are too spiritually mature to fall, we should beware! The Bible portrays the sins of past spiritual leaders as a warning to us to remain humble and open to correction. We each need to reassess our personal walk with God in honesty before Him.</p> <p>Each of us will be held responsible for our actions and attitudes.</p>	<p>❖ Be sober in your self-assessment. Employ only Jesus' life and teachings as your standard for judgment, not the performance of others.</p>
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### Praise Points in Galatians

- ❖ His power to change the life of the most hardened sinner (1:1)
- ❖ His desire to rescue us (1:4)
- ❖ His revelation of himself, so that we might know him (1:11-12; 2:2)
- ❖ His willingness to cleanse us, even when we fail (1:13-16; 2:11-14; 6:1)
- ❖ The holy spirit, who works among and within us (3:5; 4:6).
- ❖ Christ, who lives in us (2:20) and sets us free from slavery to sin and the law (5:1)

### Worship Insights in Galatians

- ❖ True teachers of God's Word seek the approval of God, not people (1:10-12).
- ❖ Our response to anyone's conversion should be praise to God (1:23-24).
- ❖ Well-rounded worship manifests itself in caring for people in need (2:10; 6:10).
- ❖ Legalism alienates us from Christ (5:4) as well as from other Christians (2:12-14; 6:13).

### An Outline of Galatians

- I. The Man and His Message: [Gal\\_1:1-24](#)
  - A. Paul's Greeting: [Gal\\_1:1-5](#)
  - B. Paul's Disappointment: [Gal\\_1:6-10](#)
  - C. Paul's Commission as an Apostle: [Gal\\_1:11-17](#)

**D. Paul's Establishment of His Cause: Gal\_1:18-24**

**II. Paul Stakes His Claim: Gal\_2:1-21**

**A. Clarifying and Defending the Gospel: Gal\_2:1-5**

**B. The Gospel's Relevance to All: Gal\_2:6-10**

**C. Inconsistency and Conflict: Gal\_2:11-14**

**D. The Futility of the Law for Salvation: Gal\_2:15-16**

**E. All in Grace: Gal\_2:17-21**

**III. Justification by Faith: Gal\_3:1-29**

**A. Jesus Christ: Crucified and Risen: Gal\_3:1-5**

**B. Abraham: The Prototype of the True Believer: Gal\_3:6-9**

**C. Redeemed from the Curse by the Cross: Gal\_3:10-14**

**D. The Changeless Promise: Gal\_3:15-18**

**E. The Law: Our Custodian: Gal\_3:19-25**

**F. Baptized into Christ: Gal\_3:26-29**

**IV. Sons and Heirs of God: Gal\_4:1-31**

**A. Not a Servant But a Son: Gal\_4:1-7**

**B. Substituting Gods for God: Gal\_4:8-10**

**C. The Power of the Person and the Personal: Gal\_4:11-20**

**D. Two Covenants: Gal\_4:21-31**

**V. Practical Implications of the Gospel: Gal\_5:1-26**

**A. Participation and Anticipation in Christ's Freedom: Gal\_5:1-6**

**B. Another Personal Appeal: Gal\_5:7-12**

**C. Responsible Freedom: Gal\_5:13-15**

**D. Walking in the Spirit: Gal\_5:16-26**

**VI. The Shared Life of the People of God: Gal\_6:1-18**

**A. Bearing and Sharing Burdens: Gal\_6:1-6**

**B. The Law of the Harvest: Gal\_6:7-10**

**C. Glory Only in the Cross: Gal\_6:11-15**

**D. A Blessing and a Plea: Gal\_6:16-18**