

Survey of Galatians

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Introduction

1. It is universally accepted that the apostle Paul was the writer to the churches of Galatia (1:1-2). He probably wrote the letter about 47 AD prior to the Jerusalem counsel in Acts 15.
2. Galatia was a huge Roman province extending almost from coast to coast through the mountain and plains of what is now central Turkey. In Acts 13-14 we have the record of Paul in this area founding the churches of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe on his first missionary journey. He made follow-up visits later to the same region (Acts 16:6; 18:23).
3. The letter to the Galatians was written to respond to the Judaizing teachers who had been seeking to persuade the Galatians that (see 1:6; 3:1; 6:12-13):
 - 1) Jewish laws and traditions were binding upon Christians
 - 2) Jesus was the messiah but that salvation was obtained by Christians doing works of the law
 - 3) All Gentiles should be circumcised
 - 4) Paul is not one of the original 12 apostles and thus has no binding authority in his teaching
4. The purpose of the letter was to root out the above errors by strongly expounding the doctrinal theme of Justification by Faith in Christ alone. In the same way that Paul opposed the Judaizers we must oppose all those who proclaim eternal hope where faith in Christ is not the central focus.

Outline

The Apostolic Gospel (1-2)

Introduction & no other gospel (1:1-10)
The gospel divinely revealed (1:11-17)
Human approval unsought (1:18-24)
The priority of gospel authority (2:1-10)
Paul rebukes Peter at Antioch (2:11-14)
Christ or the Law? (2:15-21)

The Authoritative Gospel of grace over works (3-4)

Appeal to history, experience, and Abraham (3:1-9)
The law curses but faith makes alive (3:10-14)
Law cannot annul promise (3:15-18)
The custodial function of the law (3:19-29)
Analogy of the heir (4:1-7)
The bondage of custom and tradition (4:8-11)
Appeal to first love (4:12-20)
Allegory of Sarah and Hagar (4:21-31)

The Applicable Gospel (5-6)

The freedom of faith (5:1-15)
Antagonism between flesh and Spirit (5:16-26)
Ethical responsibility; sowing and reaping (6:1-10)
Conclusion (6:11-18)

Main Points and Application

1. What is unique about Paul's introduction to the Galatians (1:1-6)?
2. In 1:8-9, whom does Paul say should be cursed?
3. What is the gospel Paul would expect us to preach? See 2:15-16 and 1 Cor. 15:1-6. Christian Scientist's preach a system taught by Mary Baker Eddy (think Tom Cruise). The Seven Day Adventist preaches a healthy way of life taught by Helen White (think Angus T. Jones, Ben Carson). The Muslims preach another god. The Jehovah Witnesses preach a salvation by works (Prince was a JW). The Mormons (Mitt Romney and Glen Beck) teach a salvation by works. Here is a brief understanding of what the Mormons teach from Craig Branch of Apologetic Resource Center:

Doctrinally, historically, theirs is a different God, a different Jesus, a different Holy Spirit, and a different gospel. For most of their history they did not claim to be Christians. Their doctrine explicitly states that God told their founder, Joseph Smith, that all of our creeds and adherents are an abomination in God's sight – that the true Christian church was lost after the death of the apostles and that God restored the church through Joseph Smith and the latter day doctrines, church structure and authority. The existing church is labeled the "whore of Babylon." The LDS Church has always aggressively proselytized Christian Church members because they believe all others are false churches.

Their God was once a mortal man who became a God just like all heavenly fathers have done in the past. The true Jesus, according to LDS teaching, is a second God who became a God and was the spirit brother of Lucifer in the preexistence. He was begotten by God the Father who had sex with Mary (his own spirit daughter) in some mysterious way through a third God – the Holy Ghost (incest? orgy? virgin birth?). Salvation or eternal life and Godhood is achieved by a man's perfect obedience to all the laws and ordinances of the (fallible) Bible plus three other infallible LDS books of Scripture (plus ongoing teachings of their Prophets-Presidents).
4. From 2:16, what is the key ingredient of the gospel of Christ?
5. From 2:11-14, what was Peter's problem? Is this problem apparent today in any parts of the church? What is the solution (2:20-21)?
6. What is meant by 3:10?
7. According to 3:19-24, what is the purpose of the law of God?
8. From 5:1 explain "Christian Liberty."
9. From 6:7-8 explain the phrase, "we reap what we sow."