

Galatians

Chapter One

Introduction:

1. The apostle Paul wrote this letter, not to a church, but to the churches of Galatia.
 - Galatia was a region in central Asia Minor (modern Turkey.)
2. Paul had planted these churches on his first missionary journey and he loved these people dearly. 4:13-14, 19 (They were his spiritual children.)
3. Paul's heart was aching because false teachers had crept into these churches and were corrupting the doctrines of grace that Paul had taught.
 - Paul uses some of his strongest language in this letter. 1:8, 5:7-9,12
 - These believers had been rejoicing in God's grace and walking in faith in Christ until false teachers had infiltrated the church.
 - These false teachers were attempting to bring the Galatians back under the bondage of the O.T. law, convincing them that righteousness can be gained through law-keeping. 2:4 cf. **Rom 10:3-4** - this led to a loss of joy. 4:15,17
4. The battle lines were clearly drawn and in this letter Paul doesn't back down an inch. He boldly stands for the truths of grace. What a divinely inspired spiritual masterpiece defending the gospel of the grace of Christ.

Verse 1

1. Right away, Paul establishes his credentials as a God-called apostle of Jesus Christ.
2. We all know that Christ chose twelve to be apostles during His earthly ministry to Israel. Judas fell and was replaced by Matthias in Acts 1.
 - They were all filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 and evangelized the nation of Israel, basing themselves out of Jerusalem. **Acts 8:1**
 - Their ministry was confined to Israel, seeking to bring the nation and its leaders to repentance.
3. In Acts 9, Jesus appeared to Paul (known as Saul) on the road to Damascus and Paul was gloriously saved. God made it clear from the beginning that He had a unique message and mission for Paul to fulfill. **Acts 26:15-18, 22:17-18, 21**
 - Paul would be the one to take the gospel of grace to the Gentile nations and would later refer to himself as the apostle of the Gentiles. **Rom. 11:13**
 - Paul was not appointed by the twelve, did not travel or preach with the twelve, did not learn the truths of grace for this church age from the twelve and had a completely different mission than the twelve. 2:9
 - Paul's apostleship and ministry were separate and unique from the twelve. **1 Cor.15:4-10**
 - The twelve had a Jewish ministry, and Paul's was primarily a Gentile ministry. **Rom. 11:13, Eph. 3:8, 1 Tim. 2:7, 2 Tim. 4:17** – Paul is said to be our apostle, our minister, our teacher, and a pattern for other believers in this age of grace. **1 Tim.1:16**

- Because Paul's apostleship was not originated or sanctioned by the twelve, many of the Jewish legalists would undermine Paul and raise doubts in the churches concerning Paul's apostleship and authority.
 - What a shame that Paul had to spend time defending his credentials as a God-called apostle - all because of wicked mouths that were running. The root of it was envy and jealousy, the same sins that led them to demand Christ's crucifixion.
 - 2000 years later, these same sins will destroy a church.
4. So, Paul makes it clear in the first verse of this letter that his apostleship was not of man, but a divine calling from Jesus Christ Himself.

Verse 2

1. This letter is unique, as it is the only letter written by Paul to a group of churches.
2. All his other epistles were written either to individuals or to individual churches. But his letter to Galatia was an encyclical letter to be passed on to several churches in the region of Galatia.
3. These were churches Paul founded on his first missionary journey.
 - When Paul left these converts, they were happy and rejoicing in the liberty and grace of Jesus Christ.
 - They were walking by faith in a relationship with Jesus Christ.
4. Jewish false teachers came in and questioned Paul's apostleship, repudiated Paul's message of grace, and began to lay down rules and laws that they said the Galatians had to keep if they wanted to be saved and right with God.
 - It was sort of a saved-by-grace, but kept-by-works false doctrine.
5. Paul is writing to these churches to defend his ministry and his message of grace.