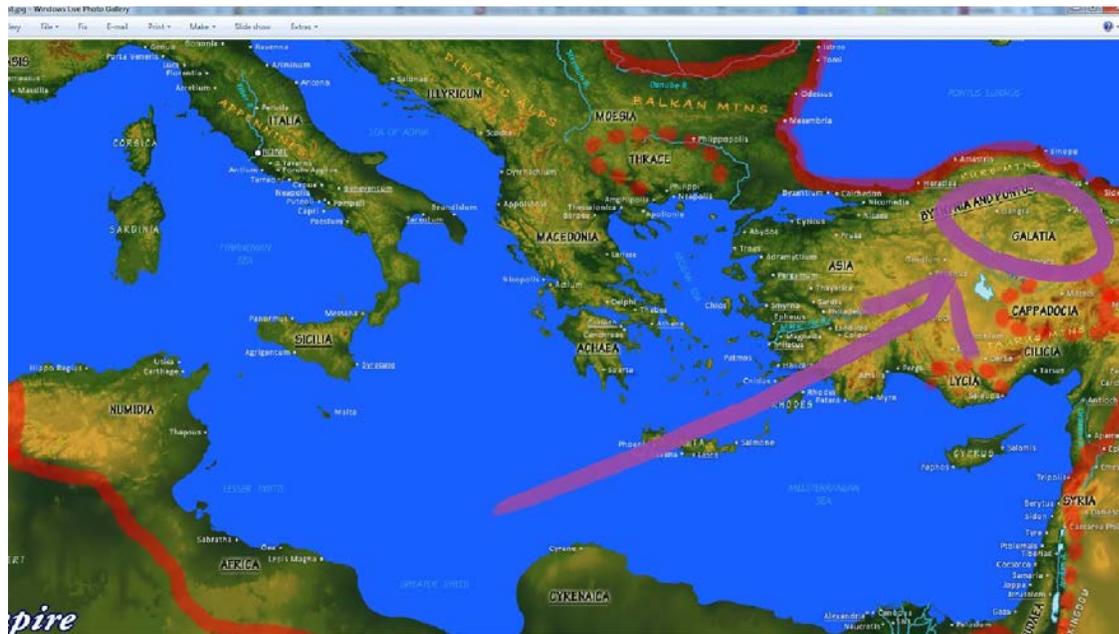


## Galatians 1 The Bible vs. American Christianity/Religion



### The Council at Jerusalem

**15** Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." **2** This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. **3** The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad. **4** When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

**5** Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses."

**6** The apostles and elders met to consider this question. **7** After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. **8** God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. **9** He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. **10** Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our

**ancestors have been able to bear? 11 No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."**

12 The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. 13 When they finished, James spoke up. "Brothers," he said, "listen to me. 14 Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. 15 The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

16 "'After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent.

Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, 17 that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things'—18 things known from long ago.

19 **"It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. 20 Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.** 21 For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath."

## **The Council's Letter to Gentile Believers**

22 Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, men who were leaders among the believers. 23 With them they sent the following letter:

**The apostles and elders, your brothers, To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia: Greetings.**

24 **We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. 25 So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul— 26 men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. 28 It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: 29 You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell.**

30 So the men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. 31 **The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message.** 32 **Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers.** 33 After spending some time there, they were sent off by the believers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them. [34] 35 But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

## **Disagreement Between Paul and Barnabas**

36 Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." 37 Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, 38 but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. 39 They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, 40 but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. 41 He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

## **Timothy Joins Paul and Silas**

**16 Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. 2 The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. 3 Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. 4 As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. 5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.**

**1. This is in Galatia - Timothy was a Galatian.**

**2. Paul circumcised him!?**

**3. The message of the apostles was to be obeyed - and doing so strengthened their faith and caused them to grow!**

## **Paul's Vision of the Man of Macedonia**

**6 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. 7 When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. 8 So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. 9 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.**

Quite probably one of the best pictures in the Bible of what it looks like to be led by the Spirit. They were commissioned for ministry, and they went out and did it. They did NOT WAIT to be told where to go - they went and were LED BY THE SPIRIT.

At some point after this first trip (or the second in Acts 18 - or perhaps even before the council happened at all!) The Judaizers reached the Galatian churches and began to teach on the necessity of circumcision for salvation. Something plus Jesus equals everything. No, says Paul - Jesus = everything. Something plus Jesus equals nothing. That is Galatians in a tight nutshell.

Step 1 - Fly through Galatians for the major themes:

Step 2 - Fly through Galatians 1, skipping the MAIN point for a moment.

Step 3 - Focus on the most important thing.

Major themes of Galatians - What is it all about?

Great themes of Galatians:

1. Gospel vs works
2. Fear of Man vs Fear of God (called by God vs. called by man)
3. Circumcision vs Faith
4. God's calling vs man's recognition
5. Faith vs works of the law
6. Sonship vs slavery The son of the slave woman will not inherit with the son of the free woman. SO STARK - Ishmael - a child of Abraham's striving and flesh vs Isaac a child of grace. Isaac is the heir.
7. Flesh vs Spirit
8. Eternal life vs. destruction
9. Accursed vs. Blessed
10. Jesus is accursed so that we can be blessed.

What is in common? Adversarial!

**Galatians 1:1** *Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— 2 and all the brothers and sisters with me,*

*To the churches in Galatia:*

*3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

### **No Other Gospel**

*6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel — 7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.*

A. Normally Paul's letters are emotional, warm, friendly. Galatians is different. It is alarming. Emotional. Intense. Almost angry. Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the...**I AM ASTONISHED THAT YOU ARE SO QUICKLY DESERTING THE ONE WHO CALLED YOU!"**

B. Pervert = The Greek verb means to transmute, to turn into something entirely different. Acts 2:20 -

<b>Act 2:20</b>	The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.
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The Gospel is like water - beautiful, clear, pure, refreshing. Able to be perverted so easily. Sergio Scataglini - Cup of water with 2 percent toilet water. Sam's illustration.

*8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! 9 As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse!*

A. Consider this - if an angel came here, we would be overwhelmed by its majesty. Even so - we would do well to shield our eyes and run it out of the building if it preached a false gospel. Somebody tell Joseph Smith that!

***10 Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.***

A. Vs 10 - stands on its own.

### ***Paul Called by God***

***11 I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. 12 I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.***

***13 For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. 14 I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. 15 But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased***

Side note: The very definition of predestination: Gal 1:15 I personally am glad for predestination. I feel like if God had gotten a good chance to know me, He might reconsider. Wakka Wakka.

***16 to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was not to consult any human being. 17 I did not go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went into Arabia. Later I returned to Damascus. 18 Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days. 19 I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother. 20 I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie. 21 Then I went to Syria and Cilicia. 22 I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. 23 They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." 24 And they praised God because of me.***

A. Paul was a zealous enemy of God, a fiery and passionate and determined persecutor of Christians. When he was transformed, he became a zealous, tireless, passionate, fervent follower of Jesus. God created Paul zealous. We know people - children, enemies, difficult people that we work with, people who seem to work tirelessly at being thorns in your side, or just being jerks in general. These people were created fervent and zealous. Maybe they are the next passionate, tireless workers for Jesus. Don't give up on them - don't shun them! Jesus picks an odd assortment of people for His team.

**Great theme of chapter 1 - To lose the true and full Gospel of Jesus is to lose Jesus:** Galatians 1:6 ***6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel.***

- The most dangerous, most insidious type of false teaching is not the kind that denies Jesus, but the kind that seeks to put something on top of Jesus. Mormons, Jehovah's witnesses, Christian Science, anything that seeks to add to the message of the Bible or the good news of Jesus is dangerous to the extreme.
- We are not justified by works of the law, but by faith in Christ. Almost everybody in Birmingham, pretty much, claims to be a Christian. Many will respond to questions about faith with words like, "I'm trying" and "I'm doing my best." Clearly, this is not a person that is a follower of Jesus - but how to answer that? Well - Galatians points us to the way. People who are "trying" or "doing my best" are BELIEVING A FALSE GOSPEL and are ACCURSED. We need to be blunt (loving) but BLUNT with this. This needs to be a bitter, challenging pill that puts you in danger of being punched in the face when you share it, but those who are trusting a mixture of good works/deeds and belief in God are trusting an accursed gospel. This is so STARK that later on in Galatians, Paul records...IN SCRIPTURE FOREVER...that he wished that people would GO THE WHOLE WAY and CUT THEIR man parts off. (Galatians 5)

Sometimes strong language is not only permissible, but it is good, necessary and anointed by God. There is a time for civility and a time for stunning words that

are eye opening. Like a cup of hot, bitter coffee in the morning is a stinging word of truth spoken by a trustworthy friend.

Be warned though - don't use strong language for every situation. If you do, you will lose the power of your words. Use strong language for ultimate situations not everyday situations. "I wish that referee would swallow a bag of rusty forks" - Not an ultimate thing. "HOW CAN THAT NOT BE OFFSIDES" I began to holler at the ref yesterday. (You don't want to be that guy, do you?) That guy was standing right behind me. He was a goober.

We're actually going to spend a bit of time discussing that verse. Paul said that about people who were adding works to faith to equal salvation. In this case, the work was circumcision...but the equation is equally damning for any other work. YOU CANNOT ADD WORKS TO FAITH.

Paul also says that if you trust in circumcision AND Jesus to save us, then we are SEVERED from Christ. (you see what he did there?)

<a href="#">Mar 9:43</a>	If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. <sup>fn</sup>
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Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)

vss. 8-9 - Paul's double curse on those who bring a different gospel than the biblical one. Joel Osteen - rebukes Peter and Paul.

**Joel Osteen Rebukes Apostles Paul, Peter, and John According to Joel Osteen – Pastor of Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas, these first century apostles are wrong and outdated and he has come out boldly to infer indirectly that Apostles Paul, Peter, and John whom wrote much of the New Testament were wrong and need to be corrected and rebuked.**

RUN SCREAMING away from pastors, teachers, writers, etc - who do not point you to Jesus and to His good news. And in particular, RUN from those teachers and ideas that try to mix anything in with Jesus.

Through Jesus you can be Nacah - Accepted. You are cutting, suicidal, abused, tormented. Can't measure up. Lonely, heart broken. You've abused. You've robbed. You've gotten away with it...whatever, whoever you are - you can be accepted by God through Jesus and Jesus alone. Trust in ANYTHING ELSE plus JESUS - and you are cut off from Him.

Close: What Jesus did. He became a curse for us. Galatians 3:13 *13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole*

**Galatians 3:10 - 10 For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."**

“The gospel of justifying faith means that while Christians are, in themselves still sinful and sinning, yet in Christ, in God’s sight, they are accepted and righteous. So we can say that we are more wicked than we ever dared believe, but more loved and accepted in Christ than we ever dared hope — at the very same time.”

Trust Jesus alone. POINT people to trust in Jesus alone.