

***Cover to Cover: From Genesis to Maps***  
**Sermon # 48 – “Galatians”**  
**February 22, 2009**

***Galatians: Some Background Information***

**The Audience:** This letter of Paul was written to “the churches in Galatia” (1:2). The word “Galatia” comes from the Gauls, a Celtic people. The believers in Galatia had come to Christ through the ministry of Paul but later were infected by legalistic Judaizers who insisted that Christians must be circumcised according to the Law of Moses.

**The Galatian Debate:** There are 2 views as to exactly where the recipients of the letter lived. Their location impacts the dating of the letter. Some interpreters believe the letter was written to Christians living in southern Galatia in about A.D. 48, during Paul’s first missionary journey (Acts 13-14). Other scholars believe the letter was written to believers living in northern Galatia in about A.D. 55, during Paul’s second missionary journey (Acts 15:30-17:34).

**The Question regarding Galatians 2:1:** Paul made a total of 3 visits to Jerusalem after his conversion to Christ (Acts 9:26, 11:30, 15:2-29). The first of those visits is clearly referred to in Galatians 1:18. Some scholars believe Galatians 2:1 refers to visit # 2 (“the famine visit”) while others believe it refers to visit # 3 (“the council visit”).

**The Purpose of the Letter:** (1) To refute legalism and teach justification by faith alone; (2) To declare the believer’s freedom from the law; and (3) To defend his own apostleship to the Gentiles.

**The Theme of the Letter:** Freedom in Christ. Galatians has been referred to as “*The Magna Charta of Christian Liberty.*”

**Unique Characteristics:** Galatians is considered a “little Romans” but has a sharper, more negative tone than the Book of Romans. Because of its tone, the introduction to the letter is brief and it contains no words of commendation.

***Galatians: An Outline***

**1. Introduction. 1:1-10**

- Words of Salutation. 1:1-5
- Words of Denunciation: The Galatian Christians were deserting the Gospel. 1:6-10

**2. Personal: A Defense of Paul's Authority. 1:11-2:21**

- Divine revelation: Paul receives the Gospel independently of the apostles. 1:11-24
- Human affirmation: Paul's divine calling is recognized by the apostles. 2:1-10
- Personal confrontation: Paul boldly rebukes a chief apostle. 2:11-21

**3. Doctrinal: A Defense of Justification by Faith. Chapters 3-4**

- Salvation in Christ is by faith, not works. 3:1-14
- Salvation in Christ is through promise, not law. 3:15-22
- Those who trust in Christ are sons, not slaves. 3:23-4:7
- A personal plea: Paul's concern for the Galatians. 4:8-20
- A biblical illustration: Hagar and Sarah. 4:21-31

**4. Practical: A Defense of Christian Liberty. 5:1-6:10**

- A life apart from the law. 5:1-12
- A life apart from license. 5:13-15
- A life according to the Spirit. 5:16-26
- A life of service. 6:1-10

**5. Conclusion. 6:11-18**

- Paul's autograph. 6:11
- Paul's adversaries. 6:12-13
- Paul's boast. 6:14-16
- Paul's benediction. 6:17-18