

## Lecture 13 – Galatians: Occasion, Setting, Addressees & Purpose

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us...” Galatians 3:13a

### Key Terms

Saul, Galatia, Judaizers, Pharisaic Judaism

### Objectives

- \*Outline the life of Paul.
- \*Explain the issue that Paul had to address in Galatia.
- \*State the purpose of the letter to the Galatians.
- \*Identify the relation between law and grace.

### Galatians: Occasion, Setting, Addressees & Purpose

#### I. Introduction

- A. Paul now moves to the Gentile world.
- B. Image: Plough
- C. Letters are written to particular churches with particular situations, but they are also God’s Word to us.
- D. Unifying theme in the epistles: \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Question to keep in the back of your mind while reading the epistles: \_\_\_\_\_

#### II. The Occasion, Setting and Addressees

##### A. Introduction to the life of Saul/ Paul

1. Saul’s background
  - a. Hellenistic Jew from Tarsus
  - b. Had been exposed to Greek thought and philosophy
  - c. Moved to Jerusalem at a young age
  - d. Educated under \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. From the school of \_\_\_\_\_, which was a bit more lenient than the Shammai School in applying the Law
  - f. Persecuted the early church
  - g. A member of the Pharisaic party
  - h. Zealous for the one true God
  - i. Said Christians were blasphemous and enemies of God
  - j. Thought he was doing very well in God’s eyes
2. Saul’s conversion
  - a. The resurrected Jesus appears to him.
  - b. Paul realized that everything he said and did was opposed to God.
  - c. The turning point of Paul’s life is the cradle for Paul’s teaching that man can be justified and pleasing before God only by what Christ did.
  - d. Paul realizes: Although I have a lot to boast about from human perspective, I have nothing to boast about before God.
3. Paul’s time of rethinking the Scriptures
  - a. Reflection on purpose of Mosaic law
  - b. Reflection on promise to Abraham
4. Tarsus
  - a. Time of sojourning in Tarsus
  - b. AD 45-46
  - c. Barnabas calls Paul and they minister together in Assyrian Antioch (AD 45-46).

## B. Galatia: Missionary journey

1. Southern part of Roman province of Galatia (now: Turkey), including Lystra, Derbe, Perga
2. Visit of Jewish synagogues
3. Return to Antioch
  - a. Reports arrive from Galatia that there are serious problems in churches in Galatia.
  - b. Letter to Galatians, written around AD 48-49 (before Jerusalem council), is a response to those problems.
  - c. The problem of the Galatians is finally addressed at the Jerusalem council.

## C. Addressees and setting

1. Written to South-Galatians
  - a. Only group of new converts that Paul can address at this early stage
  - b. Letter addresses Jewish issues, and there is very little evidence of a Jewish population in North-Galatia.
2. Particularly addressed to Jewish Christians
3. Warning concerning Judaizers
  - a. They believe that Jesus is the Messiah, but they do not believe that salvation is by grace alone.
  - b. They go from synagogue to synagogue to preach that Paul is rejecting the Law.
4. Paul encourages the Galatians to return to what he taught them.
  - a. He explains that it is not his teaching but God's revelation.
  - b. He asks them why they have turned away from the Gospel so quickly.

## III. The Purpose of the Letter to the Galatians

- A. To call the young Christians away from the Judaizers back to the Gospel of grace, while showing that he wasn't arguing against Mosaic law

## IV. Judaizers and Other Groups

### A. Pharisaic Judaism

1. Taught that man must keep the law of Moses for salvation
2. Question: Was this ever the intention of the OT law?

### B. Judaizers

### C. Peter and Barnabas

1. Peter believed that people are saved by grace alone but had a hard time living it out.
2. See Peter's problem of conduct during table fellowship with Gentiles in Gal. 2:11-16

### E. Paul (*there are several questions/answers throughout this section*)

1. Saved by grace alone, Jew or Gentile, fellowship and live out the Gospel together
2. He argues against Judaizers.
3. He argues against Peter and Barnabas, although that is not his main concern.
4. He argues against Pharisaic Judaism.
  - a. Casuistic understanding of sin
  - b. Parallel with Islam
  - c. They emphasized sinful deeds, rather than sinfulness.
5. We are on the road to perishing (John 3:16), except when God takes us off that road.
6. Paul explains the severity of the human condition so the Galatians understand that they cannot climb out of where they are by their own will and actions.

## Questions & Answers