

FAITH & FREEDOM

GALATIANS

REGULAR BAPTIST PRESS
3715 N. Ventura Drive
Arlington Heights, IL 60004-7678

The Doctrinal Basis of Our Curriculum

A more detailed statement with references is available upon request.

- The verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures
- Only one true God
- The Trinity of the Godhead
- The Holy Spirit and His ministry
- The personality of Satan
- The Genesis account of creation
- Original sin and the fall of man
- The virgin birth of Christ
- Salvation through faith in the shed blood of Christ
- The bodily resurrection and priesthood of Christ
- Grace and the new birth
- Justification by faith
- Sanctification of the believer
- The security of the believer
- The church
- The ordinances of the local church: baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper
- Biblical separation—ecclesiastical and personal
- Obedience to civil government
- The place of Israel
- The pretribulation rapture of the church
- The premillennial return of Christ
- The millennial reign of Christ
- Eternal glory in Heaven for the righteous
- Eternal torment in Hell for the wicked

Alex Bauman, editor

Faith & Freedom: Galatians

Adult Bible Study Student Book

Vol. 68 • No. 2

© 2019 • Regular Baptist Press

www.regularbaptistpress.org • 1-800-727-4440

Printed in U.S.A.

All rights reserved

RBP0221 • ISBN: 978-1-62940-454-4

Contents



Lesson 1	No Substitute for the Gospel	7
Lesson 2	Genuine Good News	15
Lesson 3	The Same Gospel for All People	23
Lesson 4	Confronting Performance Christianity	31
Lesson 5	Lost under the Law	41
Lesson 6	God Keeps His Promises	49
Lesson 7	From Servant to Son	57
Lesson 8	Follow Me to Freedom	65
Lesson 9	Set Free!	73
Lesson 10	Free to Serve	81
Lesson 11	Walk in the Spirit	89
Lesson 12	Love Makes Burdens Light	97
Lesson 13	The Life That Makes a Difference	105



Preface

How can I be free from bondage to sin? The apostle Paul addressed Galatian churches that asked that question. They had become enslaved to religious legalism and needed to be restored to the freedom of the gospel. Christ's work on the cross provides the only way to freedom.

The cover art shows an unlocked padlock hanging on a door to symbolize that Christ has already provided freedom for us through His death on the cross. We have neither a "lock" to pick nor a "key" to discover. Christ gives us liberty for victory over sin so we might walk pleasing to God.

Deepen your reliance upon and faith in Christ as you study the book of Galatians. Learn to live free in Christ!



No Substitute for the Gospel

► Scripture Focus

Galatians 1:1–10

Theme

Salvation by grace makes up the heart of the gospel.

Memory Verse

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8).

GETTING STARTED

In 1985, Coke changed its formula to mimic Pepsi. They came out with New Coke, but the public soundly rejected it. As the original formula began to disappear, people bought it up like it was gold. Before long, Coke brought the original formula back as Coca-Cola Classic. Eventually, the company dropped “classic” from their original cola. In the end, Coke fans became even more ardent and loyal to the old, familiar formula.

1. What new product or products have you tried that you found to be inferior to the original?
2. What requirements for salvation have you known people to add to the gospel?

Galatians begins with Paul's strict warning about those who try to tweak the gospel. His warning should deepen your loyalty to the true gospel of Christ.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Religious people throughout history have devised all sorts of ways to try to please God apart from trusting in Christ as Savior. However, the Bible emphatically teaches that only one road leads to Heaven. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

3. Why do so many people refuse to come to the Father through Jesus Christ?

It seems that Paul wrote the book of Galatians in a hurry. Instead of taking time to dictate it to a secretary, he wrote it by hand (Gal. 6:11). Likely he was preparing to leave for the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) when he heard a disappointing report concerning the churches in Galatia. Since he couldn't go to Galatia to deal with the problem, he did the next best thing—he wrote to the Galatian churches.

Paul and Barnabas founded the churches in Galatia (Acts 14). Later Paul returned to the region with Silas to strengthen and encourage the believers there (Acts 16:1–8). He could not ignore the report that they were detouring into disaster. He understood that the spread of legalism would destroy the churches if he failed to oppose it.

Paul's Credentials

Bible commentators often call the false teachers in Galatia "Judaizers" because they advocated living the Christian life in submission to the Old Testament law. The Judaizers rejected Paul's message about salvation by grace through faith in Christ. Therefore, they tried to undermine Paul's authority by charging that he was not an apostle.

The word "apostle" means "a sent one." To qualify as an official apostle, an individual must have been one of Jesus' original disciples; he must have seen the risen Christ; and he must have received a commission from

Christ. The twelve disciples, except for Judas Iscariot, became the apostles. Matthias replaced Judas (Acts 1:20–26).

Paul's opponents charged that he had not witnessed Jesus' earthly ministry, so he was inferior to the official apostles. Furthermore, the original group of the apostles had not appointed him. Given these issues, the Judaizers concluded Paul was a fake apostle with a false message.

Paul understood his credentials were in question. So, he presented his credentials starting with verse one. Christ appeared to him and specially called him to be an apostle (Gal. 1:1; Acts 9). Paul could indeed speak authoritatively as an apostle of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:6–11).

The validity of Paul's apostleship provided the foundation for his instructions to the Galatian churches. The apostle did not express his personal opinions or ideas but proclaimed God's message under God's direction and authority. Those who rejected Paul's God-given message rejected God.

Although Paul had not received his apostolic credentials from any human source, he concurred with all who taught the truth. As he addressed the churches in Galatia, he mentioned that other Christians were with him (Gal. 1:2). Their endorsement affirmed the truth that Paul was preaching the same gospel cherished by the other Christians.

Paul's Powerful Message

Paul immediately introduced his theme: The gospel declares salvation by grace (1:3). Greek-speaking people typically used the word "grace" when they began letters or met a friend. "Peace" was the customary greeting in the Hebrew language. These two words took on a deeper significance in the New Testament. "Grace" refers to God's free, undeserved kindness toward sinners. It points especially to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

4. What significance do you see in the fact that "grace" precedes "peace" in Paul's greeting?

"Peace" identifies a state of well-being or wholeness, a restored relationship. Sin produced a state of hostility between the holy God and an unholy human race. Jesus died in our place, enduring God's wrath

against sin. Because Jesus shed His blood for our sins, we can have peace with God (Col. 1:19–22).

Paul’s mention of the Lord Jesus Christ in Galatians 1:3 launched his description of the extent of God’s salvation of sinners.

5. Read Galatians 1:4, 5. What key word demonstrates that salvation cannot be by works?

Paul presented three facts about the good news in verse 4. First, Christ “gave himself for our sins.” We all have a sin nature from the time of conception. In addition, we all repeatedly commit acts of sin. As sinners, we deserve death, meaning eternal separation from God and His goodness (Rom. 6:23). Christ gave Himself on the cross as our substitute.

6. If salvation could be attained by works, then why would Jesus go to the cross?

Second, Paul stated that the purpose of Christ’s substitutionary death was to “deliver us from this present evil world [age]” (Gal. 1:4). Satan blankets the minds of human beings in spiritual darkness (2 Cor. 4:4) and exercises control over their lives in this present age (1 John 5:19). Believers do not live under the domination of sin, as they did before salvation. Christ has rescued believers from spiritual bondage.

Third, this deliverance was “according to the will of God and our Father.” Paul didn’t invent the gospel of grace; God did. It was God’s purpose from eternity past to save sinners. Therefore, Paul exclaimed that God deserves glory forever and ever (Gal. 1:5).

7. Read Ephesians 2:8, 9. What did Paul say people would do if their good works earned salvation?

8. How should we respond to the fact that God saves sinners entirely by His grace?

In his other letters, Paul complimented his readers on their faith in the Lord or their love for one another. In Galatians he criticized his readers. He loved them deeply and sincerely (Gal. 4:19, 20), but his concern for their spiritual well-being caused him to address their spiritual failure head-on.

Paul Called the New Gospel Perverted

Even though false teachers had lured the Galatians away from the gospel, Paul held the Galatians responsible for abandoning the gospel. In place of the good news (gospel) of grace, the Galatian believers turned to a totally different kind of “gospel” that taught salvation by works instead of grace.

9. Read Galatians 1:6. What are some practical ramifications of trying to earn God’s grace for salvation?

The false teachers in Galatia believed they had figured out the true gospel, but Paul charged that their new ideas based on an old law weren’t the gospel, or good news, at all (1:7). The Judaizers promoted a system of religion that demanded people keep the Jewish law for salvation. That belief sends people to Hell. Obviously, that’s not good news!

10. Against what contaminations must believers defend the gospel?

When teachers pervert the gospel, they disrupt the church. The false teachers in Galatia were turning the gospel of Christ upside down. What they taught was not Christianity but a fraudulent gospel of their own design. Their perversion of the gospel confused the Galatian churches and pushed them toward an outright rejection of the truth.

11. What are the usual missions of today's theologically liberal, gospel-abandoning churches?

As in Paul's day, churches that pervert the gospel only make the road to Hell a little more pleasant.

Paul Commanded New Gospels Be Prohibited

Paul condemned the false teacher's heresy in the strongest terms: "Let him be accursed," meaning "set aside for destruction" (1:8). The accursed person would come under the judgment of God. The Judaizers' teaching contradicted the gospel of grace and therefore merited God's punishment.

When Paul first introduced the good news of the gospel to the Galatians, he preached Christ to them. Only the message of Christ truly represented the salvation that God had provided by His grace. Any other "gospel" was spurious and deserved to be rejected. Paul urged the Galatians to look beyond the persuasive personalities of the Judaizers, see the error in their message, and reject it. Even if Paul himself or an angel from Heaven were to preach another message, the Galatians were to reject it.

12. Read Galatians 1:8, 9. Why might people invent new gospels?

Paul Communicated the Gospel Preacher's Purpose

Paul continued his counterattack on the false teachers in verse 10 by asking in effect, "Who am I trying to please?" There were only two alternatives: he could seek to please people or God. If he had been trying to please people, he certainly would not have written as harshly as he had in the previous verse.

Paul's claim to please God rather than people was not a self-righteous boast. When he wrote, "If I yet pleased men," he admitted that before becoming a Christian, he lived to impress others. In those days his ambitious commitment to Judaism had put him on a fast track to success in

the Jewish community (Gal. 1:14).

The Judaizers were messengers of another gospel. They changed God's truth to please people. Therefore, they did not serve the Lord; they served their own interests.

13. If the Galatian believers had continued to follow the messengers of another gospel, what would have been some repercussions?

14. Read Matthew 23:25–28. How does Christ's condemnation of the Pharisees relate to Paul's statement, "I . . . pleased men" (Gal. 1:10)?

Paul warned the Galatians not to dilute the gospel to make it appealing to people. No one can improve the gospel, because it is a perfect message, having originated with God. It points sinners to Christ, magnifies the grace of God, and causes Christians to glorify their Heavenly Father.

15. As you share the gospel, what are the necessary components to include?

MAKING IT PERSONAL

16. Finish the following sentence: I am grateful for the gospel because . . .

17. What precautions could your church take to make sure the gospel will always be taught and preached in your church?

18. How would you defend the gospel to a critic who insists it is too exclusive?