

## THE BIG READ (9)

### Jesus in Galatians

#### A. Introduction

1. Every book of the Bible has one dominating theme – Jesus is the Christ.

“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’”  
(Luke 24:45-47)

Jesus is the Christ who will suffer and die.

Jesus is the Christ who will rise from the dead on the third day.

Jesus is the Christ who will forgive the sins of all who repent.

Jesus is the Christ who will be preached to the nations.

2. After the four Gospels that tell the story of Jesus’ earthly life, and Acts which traces the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome, the remainder of the New Testament is made up of epistles or letters that were sent to individual Christians or churches.

These letters address specific situations in the lives of believers and through them we are taught how to live as God’s people.

3. Galatians is probably the earliest New Testament letter written by the apostle Paul.

It was written to the local churches in the Roman province of Galatia (South-East Turkey).

During his first missionary journey, Paul visited and planted churches in four cities, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe (Acts 13:13-14:23).

4. It was written probably around AD47/48 as the letter seems to precede the Jerusalem Council recorded in Acts 15.

Paul makes no mention of the verdict of the council in the letter.

5. Galatians is a direct letter – Paul waste no time getting to the point.

“I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel – which is really no gospel at all.” (Galatians 1:6-7)

#### B. Why did Paul write this letter?

1. Not long after Paul left the region, a group of false teachers, called Judaizers, arrived in Galatia.

“Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.” (Galatians 1:7)

“As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!”  
(Galatians 5:12)

2. These Judaizers were teaches that for someone to be saved they needed to trust in Christ and observe the law.

In other words, to be a real Christian you had to become a Jew.



Paul wants the churches to be clear that the message he had been preaching was not something he had made up, but had been given to him by Jesus.

"I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ." (Galatians 1:11-12)

He reminds them that it wasn't until three years after his conversion that he met the church leaders in Jerusalem.

"But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus. Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days." (Galatians 1:15-18)

The leaders in Jerusalem recognised and approved of the gospel Paul preached and his mission to the Gentiles.

"On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews. For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews." (Galatians 2:7-9)

It was these Judaizers who had wandered from the gospel, not Paul.

#### 4. In Galatians 3-4 we that the Gospel is Justification by Faith in Christ.

Paul clarifies what the gospel is – justification is not by obedience to the law but by faith in Christ.

In order to be justified by keeping the law, we have to obey the law perfectly. No-one can do, and as result everyone is under the curse of the law.

"All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." (Galatians 3:10-11)

Jesus took the curse we deserve when He died on the cross.

"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 tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit." (Galatians 3:13-14)

The purpose of the law was never to save, but to show us our need for Jesus so that we would trust in Him.

"So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith." (Galatians 3:24)

Everyone who believes in Christ has been adopted into God's family.

"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:26-29)

"But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir." (Galatians 4:4-7)

5. Finally in Galatians 5-6 we see that the Gospel changes us.

Paul closes his letter by showing that faith in the gospel will be seen in our everyday lives.

We have been set free to live a life that pleases God and have been given the Spirit to help us.

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." (Galatians 5:1)

"So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature." (Galatians 5:16)

The result is that we should love and serve one another.

"You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love." (Galatians 5:13)

"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." (Galatians 6:10)

We should show the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)

We should fight against sin.

"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires." (Galatians 5:24)

#### **D. Jesus in Galatians**

1. Jesus is the One who sets us free.

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." (Galatians 5:1)

We were slaves to the law.

We could not set ourselves free from this slavery.

Christ has completely and permanently set us free.

So we mustn't go back to a life of slavery by trying to save yourself by keeping the law.

2. Jesus is the One who bears our curse.

"All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." 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 tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit." (Galatians 3:10-14)

"But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons." (Galatians 4:4-5)

Christ has set us free by taking the curse of the law we deserve for our failure to keep it.

Through faith in Christ we receive the Spirit and receive the blessing of being adopted into God's family.