

Reading Galatians

This week, we will begin reading the book of Galatians. Galatians is a powerful and interesting book.

- Scholars have struggled with dating it. Does he write it before or after the Thessalonian letters? Does he write it shortly after the Jerusalem conference in Acts 15? Could this be the first inspired letter penned by Paul?
- Paul cared about these brethren. These are the churches that Paul planted in Lystra, Derbe, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13-14).
- The temperature is hot! Paul is mad at these brethren because false teachers are deceiving them. This letter doesn't begin with words of encouragement and commendation. Paul is upset that they are believing a false gospel.
- It is about the true gospel. This letter is about contrasting the real gospel with the phony gospels that are promoted.

What are we reminded of in Galatians?

We are reminded that there is only one gospel.

- The one gospel must not be tampered with and distorted (Galatians 1:6-12). The gospel comes from God.
- Paul wasn't taught it by the other apostles. The Holy Spirit revealed the gospel to Paul. He was just as authentic as the other apostles.
- Why do we need to be reminded of this?
 - We need to avoid being deceived by false gospels from the outside. This would include things like the Book of Mormon and the gnostic gospels.
 - We need to avoid being deceived by false gospels from the inside. Paul warns us against brethren who pervert the gospel by adding to it. They attempt to bind things where God allows personal judgment. Some even promote strange things about worship, morality, and the second coming of Jesus.

We are reminded of the truth about salvation.

- False teachers among the Galatians were teaching a combination of Judaism and the gospel. Their doctrine suggested that it wasn't enough to obey the gospel; one must also become a Jew to please God. One must also be circumcised and keep the Jewish feast days and the Ten Commandments.
- Paul exposes this false teaching in Galatians (Galatians 2:15-16, 21; 3:10-11, 23-25; 5:1-5). While the Law came from God, it is not binding upon people seeking a relationship with God under the New Covenant. Justification is not found in the Law or works of merit. It is found in having faith in Christ!

We are reminded of the truth about ourselves.

- Christians are heirs and recipients of great promises from God (Galatians 3:26-29).
- Under the Old Law, slaves, Gentiles, and women would not inherit. They can inherit God's blessings under the New Covenant!
- In the next chapter, Paul uses an allegory to talk more about this (Galatians 4). It has always been God's will for Gentiles to have access into His family.
- Throughout the Old Testament, God was working, scheming, and ensuring that we could become His children and adopted into Abraham's family.

We are reminded of the need to live righteously.

- We are to live and walk by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16, 18, 22, 25). We do this when we apply the teachings of the Spirit revealed in the word of God.

- ☐ We must abstain from the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21).
- ☐ We must practice the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).
- ☐ We must seek to restore erring brethren (Galatians 6:1).
- ☐ We must bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).
- ☐ We must avoid losing heart while doing the will of God (Galatians 6:9).
- ☐ We must seek to do good towards all people (Galatians 6:10).

Conclusion:

Are you part of God's family?

- Shawn Jeffries