



**By Grace Alone through
Faith Alone in Christ Alone**

The image features three dark wooden crosses standing on a rocky, uneven terrain. The crosses are silhouetted against a vibrant, colorful sky transitioning from purple and blue at the top to pink and orange near the horizon, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The foreground is dominated by dark, textured rock formations that frame the scene. The overall mood is solemn and reflective.

An Introduction to the Book of Galatians

The Importance of the Epistle

- Galatians has been called “the Magna Charta of Christian liberty.” Its message is as relevant today as it was then. The erroneous religion of man has always emphasized salvation by human effort. In no uncertain terms Galatians communicates to us that salvation from the penalty and power of sin does not come by works, but only by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.



The Importance of the Epistle

- It is significant to note that both Romans and Galatians teach justification by faith alone. Because of this Romans might be considered to be an expansion of Galatians, and Galatians might be referred to as “a shortened Romans.”



Who Were the Enemies?

- They were the Judaizers. To “Judaize” means “to adopt the customs, beliefs, or character of a Jew” (*Meriam-Webster Online Dictionary*). These “Judaizers” were outsiders from the Galatian church (not local “converts”). They were Jewish “converts” (false ones to be sure) to Christianity, perhaps from Jerusalem. There were more than one of them (1:7; 4:17; 5:12; and 6:12-13). They taught that Gentile Christians needed to observe certain OT ceremonies, and to accept justification on the basis of works. Strangely, these false teachers seemed to have mingled in some libertine tendencies which are difficult to harmonize with OT teaching. Homer Kent: “The ‘trappings’ of religious worship are appealing to the sensual mind, and perhaps this could explain the seemingly contradictory attitudes in the congregations of Galatia.”

Author

- Paul.



Recipients

- This is a more difficult question than you might imagine. Although the simple answer is “the Galatians,” we still need to answer the question, “Which Galatians?” How we answer this question will also influence *when* we believe this epistle was written as well as our interpretation of chapter 2:1-10.



At the time Paul wrote this epistle the term “Galatia” had acquired a couple of meanings:

- An ethnographical or cultural sense. This is what we see on our map as “North Galatia.” The Celts immigrated there about 278 B.C. from Greece, Macedonia, and Thrace. They were divided into three tribes, and established three cities: Tavium, Ancyra, and Pessinus. They were called Galli (Gauls, warriors) and Galatae (Galatians, nobility).

At the time Paul wrote this epistle the term “Galatia” had acquired a couple of meanings:

- A political division of land. In 25 B.C. the entire area on the map became a Roman province, and territory was added to the south. This southern part included cities which Paul had founded during his first missionary journey: Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

Why I Believe Paul wrote to South Galatia:

- At this time, none of the main roads even passed through North Galatia. The chief land routes were through South Galatia. Paul's evangelistic strategy to concentrate on the main roads and centers of communication in the Roman Empire would have caused him to concentrate on the main roads.



Black Sea

BITHYNIA and PONTUS

NORTH GALATIA

PHRYGIA

GALATIA

SOUTH GALATIA

Ephesus

Hierapolis

Laodicea

Colosse

Iconium

Derbe

Lystra

Perge

PAMPHYLIA

CILICIA

Tarsus

LYCIA

Attalia

Antioch

Paphos

CYPRUS



BLACK SEA

BITHYNIA AND PONTUS

*Roman provinces,
cities, and major
highways*

Troas

Dorylaeum

Ancyra

Tavium

Pessinus

ASIA

Galatia
Phrygia

CAPPADOCIA

Ephesus

Apamea

Antioch

Lycaonia

Laodicea

Colosse

Pisidia

Lystra

Iconium

PAMPHYLIA

Derbe

Tarsus

LYCIA

SYRIA

Antioch

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Why I Believe Paul wrote to South Galatia:

- Acts only mentions Paul's church plants in South Galatia. There is complete silence as to any activity in North Galatia.
- The Judaizers, who came from the south, were not likely to bypass the southern cities for the northern cities.

Why We Believe Paul wrote to South Galatia:

- Representatives of South Galatia accompanied the offering for the poor in Jerusalem. No one from North Galatia was part of the delegation.

Why We Believe Paul wrote to South Galatia:

- Barnabas, who is mentioned without introduction in Galatians, would have been known to the South Galatians (since he accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey), but would not have been familiar to the North Galatians.
- Paul's practice was to use Roman provincial titles.

Date and Place of Writing

- Based on what we have seen this epistle was probably written from Antioch of Syria late summer/fall AD 48, just before the Jerusalem council of Acts 15. This would make Galatians Paul's earliest biblical epistle.



Date and Place of Writing

- Donald K. Campbell wrote, “After the first missionary journey Paul and Barnabus returned to Antioch. Peter came down from Jerusalem to visit them, fellowshiped with them, and then withdrew from the Gentile Christians only to be publicly rebuked by Paul for his inconsistent behavior. Meanwhile, Judaizing false teachers had infiltrated the churches in Galatia, denying Paul’s authority as an apostle and teaching that circumcision was necessary for salvation. Reacting quickly and vigorously to Peter’s actions and the threatened lapse of the Galatians into legalism, Paul wrote this strong letter prior to attending the Jerusalem Council.”

Purpose

- To call the Galatian Christians back from legalism to faith alone.
- 5:13: “For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”



Purpose

- As Kent writes, “...those who have comprehended the truth that believers are free from the law are cautioned not to go to the opposite extreme and throw off all restraints. The thrust of the epistle...may be seen as directed basically to one group, who needed instruction as well as cautioning against leaving the path of truth for either extreme.”



Key Verse

- 2:16 – “...nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.”



Theme

- Justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.



Outline (Abridged) by Donald K. Campbell

- I. Introduction (1:1-10)
- II. Personal: A Defense of Paul's Authority (1:11 – 2:21)
 - A. He Was Independent of the Apostles (1:11-24)
 - B. He Was Recognized by the Apostles (2:1-10)
 - C. He Rebuked the Reputed Chief of the Apostles (2:11-21)
- III. Doctrinal: A Defense of Justification by Faith (Chaps. 3-4)
 - A. Vindication of the Doctrine (Chap. 3)
 - B. Illustration of the Doctrine (Chap. 4)

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IV. Practical: A Defense of Christian Liberty (5:1 – 6:10)

- A. A Life Apart from the Law (5:1-12)**
- B. A Life Apart from License (5:13-15)**
- C. A Life According to the Spirit (5:16-26)**
- D. A Life of Service (6:1-10)**

V. Conclusion (6:11-18)

- A. Paul's Autograph (6:11)**
- B. Paul's Adversaries (6:12-13)**
- C. Paul's Boast (6:14-16)**
- D. Paul's Benediction (6:17-18)**