

# Galatians 1

-Written by Paul about 45 A.D.

-written to the churches in Galatia that Paul started on his first missionary journey

-the churches have started to fall back into legalism so Paul needs to correct them

Vs.1

-Paul explains who he is

-he is a genuine apostle of Jesus Christ, not sent out by man, but by God

-there are people today who claim they are apostles

-by listening to them, it sounds like they think their office is the same as Paul's was

-Although the bible speaks of the spiritual gift of being an apostle, I don't believe it is in the same category as the originals

-the original apostles had one thing in common:

-they all saw Jesus in the flesh

-**1Co 15:6** After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;

**1Co 15:7** then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;

**1Co 15:8** and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

**1Co 15:9** For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

V.2

-he is not speaking to one particular city or church

-these churches were probably located in Iconium, Lystra, Derbe...

-these are places that are very dear to his heart

-he almost gave his life to start these churches

-at Iconium, he was stoned and left for dead

V.3-5

-Paul is dealing with a group of people who once were solid in their faith but now have begun to slide and distort the gospel

-he starts off his letter to them by reminding them of the most basic element of their faith

-if a church doesn't have a solid biblical foundation they will eventually be swayed from the

truth

-usually not in one big step, but many small steps

-it is done in the name of progress, growth and expansion

-the problem is that without the proper foundation, soon the driving force behind the church is to expand, grow and install more programs

- the spreading of the gospel and the maturing of the flock is no longer the priority

#### V.6-7

-what this tells me is that the leader of this church was not grounded in the truth

-Paul says:

**Eph 6:13** Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

**Eph 6:14** Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,

**Eph 6:15** and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE;

**Eph 6:16** in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil *one*.

**Eph 6:17** And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

-in order to stand firm in the faith, we need truth (the bible), righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, belief in our salvation, and the Word of God

-of all the armor Paul says we should have, the only offensive weapon is the Word of God

-you can know how to use all the defensive weapons, but you can only hold off the enemy for so long without an offensive weapon

-if you send a soldier into battle with a lot of protection, but no weapon, he has no chance of victory

-he may be able to survive for a time, but he has no chance of defeating the enemy

-without the sword of the spirit (the Word of God), we stand no chance of having victory over our enemy

-without a firm foundation in the bible, a church will quickly go astray and start preaching about things that are more palatable to keep the people coming

-the truth becomes more and more watered down as to not offend those who come

-the emphasis is no longer on saving people's souls, but rather on trying to attract more people

-Satan's plan in destroying a church isn't usually bringing in some satanic, cult-like doctrine into the church

-what usually happens is that people will come in with plans and programs that sound good on the surface

-these plans often aren't bad because of what they teach, but because what they leave out

-offensive topics like God's wrath, sin, hell, judgment, repentance, suffering and the deity of Christ are often left out

#### V.8-9

-This is a very powerful couple of verses.

-with this, so much confusion can be eliminated

-so many false religions, cults, and false prophets can be weeded out

-Joseph Smith

-started the Mormon church after receiving visions from an angel named Meroni

-Todd Bently

-claims to have had visions from Jesus, Paul, and an angel named Emma

-Ellen G. White

-received heavenly visions and started the Seventh Day Adventist Church

-William Miller,

-claimed that he had visions which became the foundational theories of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

- Felix Manalo,
  - claimed that he is the angel of Revelation 7:2-3 who shouted to the four angels to stop inflicting destruction on earth.
- Many people are easily misled because they don't spend much time in the word themselves
  - they rely on others to feed them spiritually
  - false prophets know this and feed on it
- the bible says you will know them by their fruits
  - so many of the false prophets get caught up in sinful lifestyles
  - usually sexual immorality, financial problems, or drug/alcohol abuse

#### V.10

- this verse spoke to me a few years ago
  - it is pretty clear that you can't do both
  - Luk 6:26** "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way."
    - so many Christians, churches and church leaders want to be a friend to the world
    - we want to get more people into our church so we come up with different ways to attract them
    - we try not to be offensive
    - we come up with programs that will entertain rather than convict
- we are not to go and make trouble with the world but the bible makes it very clear that genuine believers will be at odds with the world
  - Jas 4:4** You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
    - it would be wise to use this verse to examine our Christian life regularly

#### V.11-12

- Paul was the greatest evangelist who ever lived
  - yet he was not taught the gospel in seminary
  - we seem to have trouble with this today
  - the masses think that someone with no formal education from bible college or seminary has no credibility as a spiritual leader
    - I think that is completely wrong
    - I am not at all opposed to bible school and seminary but to say that that is a requirement for ministry is not biblical
    - I have talked to several people who have been to seminary who said that they now have to unlearn what they learned there
      - if you go, make sure you have a firm understanding of what you believe before you go
      - if not, you will not know if what you are being taught is the whole truth
      - there is no substitute for studying the word of God to grow in your faith
      - that can be done with nothing more than the bible and the Holy Spirit
- Rom 10:17** So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

#### V.13-14

- Paul didn't persecute the church because he didn't like God, he thought he was doing a service for God
  - that is the same view that the extreme Muslims have
  - they believe God is pleased that they are killing infidels
  - Satan is very clever

- he doesn't come right out and say "follow me and become a Satanist"
- his schemes can be very subtle
- if you're not careful, he will mislead you while you think you are serving the Lord
- after studying mankind for thousands of years, he knows our weaknesses
- he doesn't care if he gets you into drugs, adultery, lying, pornography, chasing wealth, witchcraft, laziness, or a false religion
- his only goal is to separate as many people from God as he can

#### V.15-17

-don't get the idea that Paul was only able to do these great things for God because God had set him apart

-Peter says to all believers:

**1Pe 2:9** But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

-although Paul was a great man, God has a calling on all of us as well

-Paul was convinced his calling was from God

-he didn't go and set up meetings and consultations with his spiritual advisory team

-he is confident that his calling to preach the gospel to the gentiles is from God

**Pro 3:26** For the LORD will be your confidence And will keep your foot from being caught.

-I believe many churches today have hindered their ability to be lead by the spirit

-they have put so many teams, committees and programs in place that no decisions can be made without being funneled and reviewed by the proper channels

-nothing can happen spontaneously in most churches

-even baptism doesn't happen until people go through the right classes and wait for the appointed day

-church services are so structured and routine that everyone knows what to expect and what time they will be done

#### V.18-20

-for three years after becoming a believer, Paul stays in Arabia and Damascus preaching to the gentiles

-Although he knew that Peter and James and the other disciple knew Jesus personally, it was more important to him to preach the gospel than to go and get acquainted with them

-Paul had his priorities right and didn't really seem to be impressed by other people's status or fame

**Gal 2:6** But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)--well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me

-It's very common for prominent people in the church to start believing that they are the elite

-they almost have the same attitude of the old testament priests, thinking that they are standing between us and God

-after the curtain was torn in two in the temple, we all now have the same access to the Holy of Holies

-we have no need of priests interceding for us

-we are all brothers and sisters of the same priesthood

V.21-23

- it wasn't easy for to convince Christians that he was a believer
    - they knew who Paul was and were naturally suspicious of him
    - this wouldn't be much different than someone like Osama bin Laden getting converted
    - people would have had a hard time believing it because he was well known for his hatred for the Christians
    - like Paul, he believed that he was doing God a service by destroying Christians
- Joh 16:2** "They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God.

Vs. 24

- he is not saying that they were glorified God because he was so great
  - Paul's conversion was a genuine miracle
  - once the believers knew that he was genuine, they couldn't help but glorify God because they knew who he had been before
- Paul is the perfect example of his verse:

**2Co 5:17** Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.