

Both written by Saul of Tarsus (Paul) to church in Asia Minor (Turkey)

Galatians

Recipients: Probably a circular letter to the churches in the Roman province of Galatia: Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Pisidia, Antioche – South-Central Turkey today - Gaelic people (Gaths) from Ireland, Scotland, and the Isle of Man settled in this region about 275 BC – the Romans conquered them in 25 BC – similar to Texas, mix between Gaths and Romans – Paul founded these churches on his 1st missionary journey (Acts 13:14-14:24) – he revisited them on his second (Acts 16:1-6) and third missionary journey

Date: 55-58 AD from Ephesus – 1:17-18; 2:1 indicate it had been at least 17 years since his conversion

Occasion: Judaizing teachers had been teaching the Christians that they needed to be circumcised and keep the entire Mosaic Law in order to achieve justification (3:3) – the issue was whether Christianity was a Jewish sect or a standalone religion

Theme: “Declaration of Independence,” “Emancipation Proclamation,” “Magna Carta” (5:1)

1:1-5 Introduction – contains salutation (1:1-5) but no thanksgiving as do most of Paul’s letters

1:6-10 The Problem

1:6-7 Paul is amazed that the Galatian Christians have deserted the true gospel of Christ and embraced another/different/perverted gospel

1:8-9 Paul pronounces a curse twice on the people who have preached this false gospel

1:10 Paul is not a people pleaser but a servant of Christ

1:11-2:14 Paul’s defense of his Apostolic authority – New biographical data

1:11-12 Paul received the gospel by direct revelation from Christ not from human origin

1:13-14 Paul’s earlier Jewish life – he had been a zealous Jewish elder, and he had engaged in violent persecution of Christians so as to destroy the church

1:15-16 Paul feels like Jeremiah, as if he was set apart before birth to be a prophet to the Gentiles (Jeremiah 1:5) – as a boy he had been sent to study under Gamaliel, the famed Jewish rabbi who taught that the Jews were to missionize the Gentiles (Acts 22:3; 5:34-39)

1:17-24 After his conversion Paul went to Arabia, then to Damascus; after 3 years he went to Jerusalem and met with Peter and James, Jesus’ brother, and offered his services; he then did missionary work on his own in Syria and Cilicia

2:1-10 Refers to the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-30) which occurred 14 years later – Paul, Barnabas and Titus – the acknowledged leaders of the church in Jerusalem, James, Peter and John, authorize Paul to continue his mission to the Gentile world without requiring circumcision of them (2:9) – the only thing they requested was a periodic offering for the poor in Jerusalem (2:10)

2:11-14 Paul’s public confrontation with Peter for his hypocrisy in Antioch – evidently Peter was vacillating from his earlier experience with Cornelius (Acts 10:1-48) and commitment at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:7-11)

2:15-21 The difference between the Law and the Gospel – “a person is justified (pronounced “not guilty” by God) not by the works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ (2:16) – Paul’s testimony of his faith: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (2:19b-20)

3:1-5 Paul’s rebuke that the Galatians have been “bewitched” (3:1) – they received the Holy Spirit by faith not by works (3:1) – why change horses now, abandoning Spirit for flesh? (3:3)

3:6-18 Illustration of Abraham: the person these false teachers proudly claim as proof of their gospel. Serves as an example of one who obtained righteousness by faith (3:6-9; Gen. 15:6) – even the Law that the false teachers taught explicitly says, “The just shall live by faith” (3:11; Hab. 2:4)

3:19-29 The Law was not given to nullify the promise of righteousness by faith made to Abraham – it was given to teach people their need for a Savior (3:23-29; Rom. 3:20) – when we are baptized - the Law was

- intended as a “guardian” and “tutor” until Christ came (3:23-24) and we are no longer bound by the Law
- 4:1-7 Believers are sons/daughters through adoption not slaves of God (Rom. 8:14-17)
- 4:8-20 Previously the Galatians had been pagans, enslaved to the elemental spirits – how could they return to something less than the Gospel? (4:8-9) Specifically he is referring to ceremonial Judaism (4:10) which requires physical circumcision – Is Paul’s thorn in the flesh (II Cor. 12:7b-9) an eye problem? (4:13-15) – Paul’s desire is for Christ to be “formed” in believers (4:19)
- 4:21-31 Illustrations of Hagar and Sarah, Ishmael and Isaac – Paul often uses allegory, a popular teaching method in the ancient world – He argues that persons who attempt to receive God’s blessings by keeping the Law who did not receive it; where as those who have faith in Jesus are like Isaac who received the promise
- 5:1-12 A call to remain free
- 5:1-4 Paul appeals to the Galatians to maintain their freedom from the Law and not to submit to circumcision and legal observances in the vain hope that it will enhance their salvation
- 5:5-6 Righteousness comes by faith, and faith expresses itself in a life of love
- 5:7-12 Paul wishes those who were unsettling the Galatians “would castrate themselves” (5:12)
- 5:13-25 Faith is not a license to sin (5:13), for love compels us to serve one another and thus fulfills the Law (5:13-14) – evident is bad (5:19-21) – if we allow God’s Spirit to work in us the character of Christ is formed as fruit (5:22)
- 6:1-10 The call to do good to others
- 6:1-5 How to restore those who are fallen – verses 2 and 5 are not contradictory
- 6:6 Support your teachers
- 6:7-10 Sowing and reaping
- 6:11-18 Conclusion – Has Paul received the stigmata? (6:17)

Ephesians

Recipient: The church in Ephesus – Western Turkey today – Capital of a Roman province – large port city – The Temple of Diana, one of the 7 wonders of the Ancient World, was there – it had 127 marble columns given by 127 different Kings – Ephesus boasted a stadium which seated 50,000 – the Roman ruins in Ephesus are fantastic: Paul founded the church on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:19-21) and visited it on his third journey (Acts 19-20) – John and Mary the Mother of Jesus were said to live there –

Date: 64 AD from Rome while a prisoner (3:1; 4:1; 6:20)

Occasion: Tychicus was making a trip to Ephesus (6:21) – Paul took the opportunity to send along a letter

Theme: The supremacy of Christ – sometimes called “the queen of the epistles” – it is a mosaic of Pauline Theology

Characteristics: (1) Emphasis on the Trinity (1:5, 12, 13; 2:18-20; 3:14, 16-17; 4:4-6); (2) Parallelism to Colossians – 78 of 155 verses are virtually the same; (3) Does not deal with any church problem and does not give specific greetings to anyone – it could have been a circular letter – some of the oldest manuscripts do not contain the word “Ephesus” (1:1)

1:1-2 Introduction

1:3-14 The believers position in Christ – this is the longest sentence of the Bible – READ – we are: blessed, chosen, predestined, adopted, accepted, redeemed, forgiven, enlightened, heirs, sealed, and assured

1:15-23 Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians – he prays for wisdom and knowledge for the church so that they know: (1) “The hope of his calling” and (2) the “greatness of his power” – the church is the body of Christ (1:22-23)

2:1-22 The benefits of grace –

2:1-3 We were once the living dead – followers of Satan (2:2), “children of wrath” (2:3)

2:4-10 We have been raised from the dead and are seated with Christ in heavenly places (2:6) – saved by grace through faith (2:8) – created for good works that were predestined (2:10)

2:11-12 As Gentiles we were once (strangers to the covenant of promise” (2:12)

2:13-19a But we are reconciled to God – in the death of Jesus the dividing wall was broken down (2:14), the Law abolished (2:15), and we were made citizens of God’s Kingdom (2:19a)

- 2:19b-22 The church is God's building – the foundation is the apostles and the prophets, Jesus is the chief cornerstone, and we are the bricks which are being built together into God's Holy Temple
- 3:1-13 Paul's ministry and message
- 3:1-7 God appointed Paul as a missionary to the Gentiles so that they might be "fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise" (3:6)
- 3:8-13 Every believer has instant access to the Father through faith
- 3:14-21 Paul's prayer for the church – READ / PRAY
- 4:1-16 The believers responsibility – shift from doctrinal to practical
- 4:1-6 Pursue unity with diligence – "make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (4:3) – "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God..." (4:5-6)
- 4:7-16 Spiritual gifts are given to the body of Christ in order to mature believers – the goal is "the measure of the full stature of Christ" (4:13), "to grow up in every way unto him who is the head, into Christ" (4:15) – this is accomplished through love (4:15, 16) – believers are to be "equipped" (4:12, 16)
- 4:17-5:20 The believers purity
- 4:17-24 Believers should reprogram their former pagan thinking and be renewed mentally, to realize they are a "new self" which is righteous and holy
- 4:25-5:2 Rules for the new life – READ
- 5:3-20 Renounce your former pagan ways – "live as children of light" (5:8) – contrast between being "drunk with wine" and being "filled with the Spirit (5:18)
- 5:21-6:9 The believers Family
- 5:21 Mutual submission
- 5:22-33 Husband-Wife relationship – the bottom line: "Each of you should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband" (5:33) – some take the submission passages and make them subChristian (Mk. 10:42-45)
- 6:1-4 Parent-Child relationship
- 6:5-9 Slave-Master relationship – we are in submission to Christ (6:6)
- 6:10-20 The believer's spiritual warfare – evil days (5:16; 6:12-13; Mk. 8:38) – a wrestling match (6:12) – defensive armor (6:11, 13-17) – prayer (6:18-20)
- 6:21-24 Conclusion and Benediction

Next week: Philippians and Colossians

Schedule of Daily readings:

	<u>Option One</u>	<u>Option Two</u>
Thursday	Philippians 1	1
Friday	Philippians 2	2
Saturday	Philippians 3	3
Sunday	Philippians 4	4
Monday	Colossians 1:1-2:7	1
Tuesday	Colossians 2:8-3:7	2
Wednesday	Colossians 3:18-4:18	3