

Letter to the Galatians

Lesson #12

Galatians 1:1-24

Background

The first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas was initiated by the Holy Spirit while they were preaching and teaching at the church in Syrian Antioch. (Acts 13:1-2) Their journey began at the island of Cyprus then continued through Southern Galatia to the cities of Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. As a result of their teaching, many became new believers. Before they left Galatia, Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in each church and, "with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust." (Acts 14:23) They returned to the home church in Syrian Antioch in the year A.D. 48. Then, within a year, "Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: 'Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.' This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them." (Acts 15:1, 2a) Not only had these "brothers" visited Antioch, but they had also traveled throughout Galatia as well. When word reached Paul, with his emotions close to the surface, he wrote this letter to the churches of Galatia.

Introduction - Galatians 1:1-5

1. It was customary in ancient writing for the author to identify himself at the beginning of a letter. So, this letter begins with Paul's identifying himself as "*Paul, an apostle.*" What does he say about his apostleship? (Galatians 1:1)
2. Who else does Paul include in his introduction as sending this letter? (Galatians 1:2)
3. He addressed this letter "*To the churches in Galatia*" indicating this letter is to be read and passed along to all the churches. What five word blessing does Paul use to begin? (Galatians 1:3a)
4. Whom does Paul ask to extend this blessing? (Galatians 1:3b)
5. What reminder does Paul give the Galatians about Jesus? (Galatians 1:4)

6. His introduction concludes with a typical Jewish blessing (BERAKHĀH) which is a sign of reverence after mentioning the divine name of God. What was Paul's blessing after referring to "Our God and Father?" (Galatians 1:5)

Paul's Defense of the Gospel – Galatians 1:6-10

7. After the introduction Paul begins by saying, "I am astonished!" What was the cause of his distress? (Galatians 1:6)
8. What was Paul's statement about this different gospel that was being preached? (Galatians 1:7a)
9. After an emotional beginning, Paul states the reason he was compelled to write. What does he say that he heard? (Galatians 1:7b)
10. What did Paul say should happen to anyone who preaches a gospel other than that of Jesus Christ? (Galatians 1:8, 9)
11. He was so adamant about this that Paul stated it twice. Then he asks: "Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God?" (Galatians 1:10a) What do you think these "brothers" were accusing Paul of?
12. What was his defensive answer to this question? (Galatians 1:10c)

Defense of his call – Galatians 1:11-24

13. In his defense, Paul gives a brief autobiography. But first, what does he want to make sure that these Galatian brothers (in Christ) know? (Galatians 1:11, 12)

14. To explain what had driven his passion in his *“previous way of life”* in Judaism, Paul said he, *“intensely persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it.”* What was Paul’s self evaluation of that time and what did he say he was *“extremely zealous”* for? (Galatians 1:13, 14)
15. Even though that was the direction he was heading, God had other plans for him. Using Galatians 1:15-16a:
- When did Paul say that God set him apart?
 - How was this zealous persecutor of the church *“called”* by God?
 - What did Paul say that he (God) was pleased to do?
 - Why?
16. When that took place, Paul said he *“did not consult any man.”* What else did he not do? (Galatians 1:17a)
17. What did Paul say that he did after he was called by God? (Galatians 1:17b)
18. This is probably the time when Paul spent time with the resurrected Jesus. (1 Corinthians 9:1 & 15:8) Paul said he remained there for three years. What did Paul say that he did after that? (Galatians 1:18, 19)
19. Before continuing his story, Paul assured his readers, *“I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie.”* Then he said, *“Later he went to Syria and Cilicia.”* What additional information did he add about the churches in Judea? (Galatians 1:22 – 24)