

## **BOOK OF GALATIANS**

1. The foundation of the Gospel and the Church was laid in the book of Romans. The precept of Justification by Faith was clearly established in the book of Romans. The book of Romans gave the example of Abraham. See Romans 1:16-17. “Sola Fide” is the basis for Salvation, i.e. believe by faith alone, justified by faith alone!
2. Yet, in the books of 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians, we saw a messed-up Corinthian church. In reality, in a sin-cursed world with Satan around, we should not expect the Church to be perfect even with a good foundation of Christ being the perfect chief cornerstone and with us being sanctified as living stones! There will be practical problems in churches like in the Corinthian church of the New Testament.
3. In this book of Galatians, we see doctrinal problems again (like in the book of Romans) versus the practical problems in Corinthians. Satan attacks the Galatian churches. Paul used a strong language to curse the false teachers to “go to hell”. Therefore, the problem becomes serious if it messes around with the foundation as it can destroy whole building!

### History of Galatian Church

1. Galatia is a district in Turkey. Paul went there and started a few churches (e.g. Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe). They were made up mainly of Gentile converts. See Acts 16:6, Galatians 1:6, 4:13, 4:19.
2. Some Jewish “believers” entered into Galatia and claimed that Paul did not preach the full gospel! They insisted that the Gentile converts must obey the Jewish Laws e.g. circumcision, food laws, observation of Sabbath and festivals etc. The Jews had 613 laws but the focus was on circumcision! This means that they were insisting that one cannot just believe in Jesus by faith but need to obey the Jewish laws.
3. Unfortunately, the Galatians swallowed these false teachings and accepted them.
4. Why did the Galatians swallow these false teachings so easily when Paul, in founding the churches there, established the doctrine of Sola Fide?
  - a) Because the Gospel is teaching something so different. We have always been taught that, if you want something, you have to work for it, be it good results, good job, etc. and that nothing in life is free. This is not true. Sunshine is free, air is free and the rain is free! As long as these three elements, of sunshine, air and rain, are present, plants will grow and we will have food! God gave us the most important things in our life for free, including John 3:16!
  - b) But men foolishly believe in works to please God and hope to get the passing grade when they will never know their grades nor what the standard mark of passing is. All other religions are just hopeless fear!
  - c) Our pride questions, “You mean I cannot work for it?” We are all programmed to think that our successes are due to our hard work. Therefore, rich men tend to be proud because they really think they did it on their own (e.g. King Nebuchadnezzar) and they believed it.

- d) The Galatians were falsely led to believe that Paul only preached half-truths and they also attacked Paul as a person. They said he did not look like an apostle as he was just a tentmaker, like a manual worker! They also said he was not a scholar and hence did not know the Gospel. We believe in brains more than we believe in hands. Will you be offended if your pastor is a labourer? Peter was a fisherman and Jesus was a carpenter!
5. So, Paul wrote this book of Galatians to defend his apostleship and to attack the false teachings!

### Chapter 1

1. Galatians 1:6. Paul was surprised that the Galatians turned away from the Gospel he preached, so quickly, to another gospel! There is only one Gospel about the perfect work done by Christ. If your faith is on anything else other than the Cross, it is not the true Gospel! There is NO fuller gospel. "It is finished", BUT many things will result from this true Gospel once you believe in it.
2. Galatians 1:9. Paul accused the false teachers and told them to "go to hell!"
3. Galatians 1:10-11. Paul said that if he were to please men, he would not be receiving Christ. Think about it. Is it easy for you or easy for Christ to go on the Cross? Therefore, do not say such a thing as "Wow, it is so easy to just accept by faith". For example, if a child thinks that it is easy for a mother to carry the baby in her womb for 9 months and then to deliver the baby, the child should ask his mother whether it was really easy and for whom was it easy?
4. This Gospel is not from men! Who would dare to tell God to send His Son to die for us?

### Chapter 2

1. Galatians 2:3. Paul said that Titus was not forced to be circumcised by the Jerusalem Council even though Titus was a Gentile! (See Acts 15)
2. Galatians 2:11-16. Earlier, Paul went to Jerusalem regarding the issue of circumcision. Now Peter came to Antioch on a return visit, and he ate with the Gentiles but stopped eating with them when the Jews arrived! Paul stood up against Peter for his action. Paul reiterated that only faith in Christ can save, not works! Even Peter, who used to be fearless, gave in to peer pressure!
3. Galatians 2:20 says, "Live by faith alone!" Sanctification is by Faith in the Son of God who lives in you after justification has taken place. Sanctification is not by works! Sanctification is not achieved by your own energy! (See Habakkuk 2:4). Our Gospel is about a God-centric faith, so stop looking at yourself even for sanctification. We need a lot of grace from God to live in a way to please Him.

### Chapter 3

1. Galatians 3:1-3. We Christians are perfected by faith; we do not just begin by faith. Why do you shift your eyes from the Cross to yourself? Follow Him every day, fix your eyes on Him only!
2. We see the most common misconception of the believers here.
  - a) They start with Christ, then try to obey the Law and find it so tiring! Of course, it is tiring because the flesh is weak and it will fail us! Sanctification is NOT achieved by doing good works after believing.
  - b) They even believe that if they messed up after believing, they lose their salvation! They believe in “saved by faith and then doing enough good works to hopefully please God to get to heaven!”
  - c) The Christians in the Galatian churches are like that!
  - d) These Christians will not be able to help others because they are not sure of their own salvation! They only worry about themselves, just do bible study, and they are self-righteous, joyless, etc. because they wonder if they will make the grade to heaven.
3. Nominal Christians are of a totally different category. They do not even start with Christ, they start with themselves. They do not go to church but try to obey the 10 commandments and those who cannot obey on their own, ask Jesus for help and mercy to obey.
4. Agnostics is another group of people who do not even see Jesus in their equation of life. They just do their best on their own.
5. True believers seek the Lord for patience, courage etc., in this sanctification stage after justification and await glorification.
6. Galatians 3:6-8 say that Abraham was justified by faith and the Gospel was preached to Abraham and the Gospel was meant for all, a multinational Church, not just to the Jews! Hence there is no need for circumcision, etc.
7. Galatians 3:10-13. Those who live by the Law are under the curse! No one can obey the Law 100% just like when we try to obey all the traffic laws. It does not matter if you break the traffic laws only once and obey them all the rest of your time. You become an outlaw even if you break just one law. Only Christ can live this perfect life!
8. Galatians 3:23. The Law was given to us as a guardian to make life reasonable on Earth until we are given a new heart and a new spirit when we trust in Christ! Now, it is the Law of Christ stated in Mark 12:30-31, which is to love God and love your neighbours.
9. Galatians 3:27 says we are to put on Christ. God does not see me but sees Christ because He took my sins and clothed me with His righteousness!

#### Chapter 4

Galatians 4:6. No other religion has anything close to this Gospel! We call God, “Abba” and “Father” because we are in Christ! In other religions, this claim of God living in us is blasphemy.

#### Chapter 5

1. Galatians 5:2
  - a) If you accept that you need circumcision to be saved, then you are cut off from going to heaven! This doctrine of “saved by Christ plus good works” is a false teaching.
  - b) Even though you started in Christ, but you think you need good works, then you have fallen from grace, i.e. if you think you need another condition for salvation! Because Christ said, “It is finished” and you did not believe in Christ alone, you just do not trust Him! Did you believe in a Jesus who only saved your past sins? There is NO such Jesus! You have believed in a different Jesus! See Deuteronomy 4:2, do not add to His words. It is clear that if you want to do more, then you do not believe that Christ alone is sufficient!
2. Galatians 5:9. A little leaven leavens the whole lump! This law of circumcision will lead to more requirements to be obeyed such as food laws, festivals observation, etc. Some people think that if they do not go to church or attend bible study, they cannot make it to heaven! They keep relying on obeying laws to get to heaven.
3. Galatians 5:13. We Christians have freedom and liberty because of Christ. We do not have to worry about the 613 laws! If you think you have to do this and that, you do not have this freedom and cannot focus on serving others!
4. Galatians 5:14. All law is fulfilled in one word which is “You shall love your neighbour as yourself!” Loving your neighbour is evidence that you love God. If you love God, God will enable you, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to love your neighbours and even your enemies.
5. Galatians 5:19 describes the works of the flesh! If that’s your life, then you are not a believer!
6. Galatians 5:22-23
  - a) These verses describe the “Fruit of the Spirit” which has 9 characteristics but a singular “fruit”. We should note that every human being has some of these characteristics whether they are saved or not saved, e.g. some are very patient or kind even if they are unsaved!
  - b) But when you have Christ, you will have LOVE, JOY and PEACE in your heart (which is relationship with God) and then you will have PATIENCE, KINDNESS, and GOODNESS to others (which is relationship with others). You do not have to worry about yourself. Then your character will show FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS and SELF-CONTROL in your own daily life. It is one singular fruit.

## Chapter 6

1. Galatians 6:2. Bear one another’s burden so as to fulfil the Law of Christ.
2. Galatians 6:10. If you have the opportunity, do good to all, especially to your brethren. Be willing to bear other’s burdens and not worry about whether you can make it to heaven.

3. Galatians 6:14-15. Boast only in Christ! We are a new creation and circumcision does not matter! The greatest miracle of Christ is Him on the Cross Therefore, all we want to glory in, is Christ!
4. The Cross is not just the start of your Christian life. Everything you need after trusting, such as victory over sins and freedom to live a life of Love, Joy and Peace, is found in Christ's love in us!
5. It is not by trying on your own! It is joyful as we co-operate with the Holy Spirit and put away our old sinful habits! Glory in the Cross.