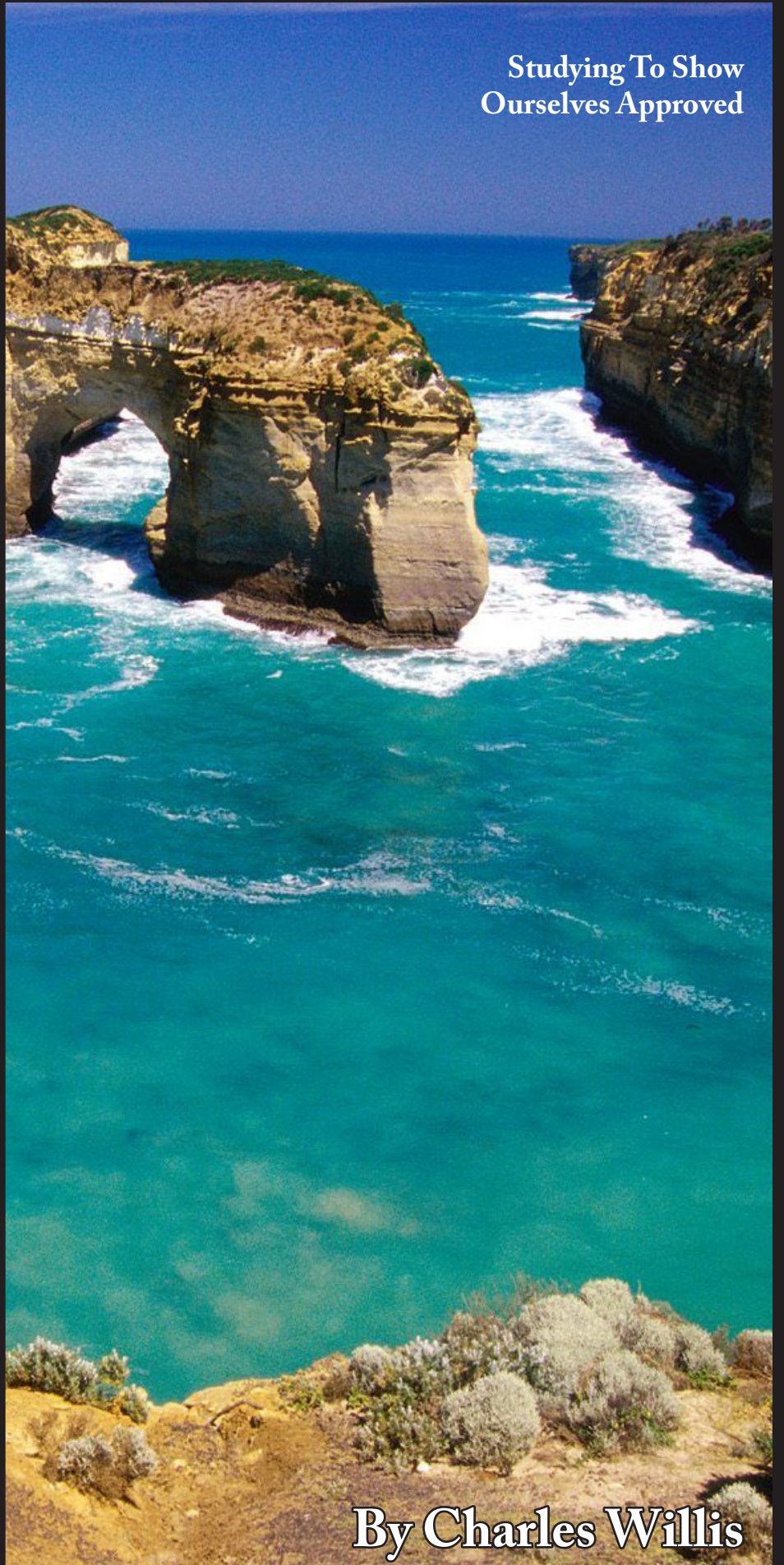


Galatians

Studying To Show
Ourselves Approved



By Charles Willis

Galatians – Background Information

Galatia was not a city (like most of the other epistles) but many cities that existed in the Roman Province of Galatia. In 189 B.C. the area of Asia Minor came under the dominance of Rome and was finally declared a province in 25 B.C. by Augustus.

This political province utilized borders that included some southern regions not previously associated with Galatia, but which came to be known as Galatia. Many of the cities which Paul evangelized in the first missionary journey would have been included in this political province: Pisidian, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe (see Acts 13-14).

We know that Acts 15 records the apostles gathering in Jerusalem to discuss some religious questions that arose, and we know Paul was present. Galatians 2 records a journey of Paul to Jerusalem which some hold corresponds with the events of Acts 11:27-30 where Paul brought a collection of money for the relief of saints. If this is true then a reliable time for the writing of Galatians would be A.D. 49 – 50.

The purpose of the writing is clear: “there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ” (Gal. 1:7). “They eagerly seek you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out so that you will seek them” (4:17). “You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?” (5:7). These were in fact Judiasing teachers who were trying to impose circumcision (in particular) on the Gentiles. Paul strongly refutes this throughout the letter.

In form and content the letter to the Galatians follows many of the same arguments and Old Testament proofs that are found in the Letter to the Romans. It is not as long as Romans and therefore at times is easier to understand. There is a lot of teaching about God’s grace in the scheme of redemption. There is much to commend this letter to our study, not the least of which is the strong teaching about which doctrine we are to follow as well as the fruit of the spirit (5:22ff).

There is no question about the author of this letter. It is Paul the apostle. It tells us so in 1:1 and the content and style are comparable to the other writings of Paul. We even see him writing a short note after his scribe has finished taking the dictation (6:11-18). This was a common practice of Paul, though this note is longer than most.

A Quick Outline

1. Introduction (1:1-9)
2. Gospel of Grace defended (1:1-2:21)
3. Gospel of Grace Explained (3:1-4:31) [Holy Spirit, Abraham, Justification]
4. Gospel of Grace Applied (5:1-6:18) [Loving one another, works of flesh and fruit of spirit, doing good]

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Galatians – Chapter 1

1. Who is this letter addressed to?
2. What strong point is Paul making in verse 1? Compare this statement with his assertions in verses 11-12.
3. What is the “present evil age” (v.4)?
4. In regard to verses 6-9:
 - A. Define “deserting” (v.6)
 - B. Is there a “different gospel”? If so what is it? What does this teach about modern denominationalism?
 - C. What is the Lord’s attitude about those who distort the gospel (in the context)?
 - D. How had the Galatians “received” the gospel? (v.9, compare it with verse 8) What do these verses teach about modern day revelations?
 - E. Why do you think the apostle repeated himself in verses 8 and 9?
5. What connection does the text place on doctrine and who we are trying to please? (v.10)
6. How did Paul “receive” the gospel? (v.11-12)
7. Where do we read in Acts about the events mentioned in verses 13-14?
8. Of what significance is the statement “I did not consult with flesh and blood” (v.16)? How does this compare with the actions of men today who are seeking the truth?
9. Why in verse 20 does he assure the Galatians he is not lying?
10. Why were the churches in Judea glorifying God because of Paul?

Galatians – Chapter 2

1. Why did Paul travel again to Jerusalem (v.2)?
2. Paul presented himself to those of reputation in private for fear that he might be running in vain (v.2). What does this mean?
3. Was Titus circumcised (v.3-5)?
4. Since God shows no partiality (v.6) why did Paul speak first to those of high reputation?
5. In what way was Paul entrusted with the gospel?
6. Who extended the right hand of fellowship to Paul (v.9-10)? Why is this significant?
7. Why did Paul oppose Peter in Antioch (v.11ff)
8. How is their hypocrisy described in verse 14?
9. Explain the point Paul makes in verse 16, specifically in regard to “the works of the Law”. What were these “works”?
10. Perhaps the most difficult verse in the chapter is verse 18. What do you believe Paul is teaching here?
11. How does Christ live in us (v.20)?
12. How does verse 21 teach against so many false doctrines present in denominationalism and modern religious groups that are based on Old Testament proofs?

Galatians – Chapter 3

1. Why did Paul call the Galatians “foolish” (v.1)?
2. What is the only thing Paul wants to know from them (v.2)?
3. Why would their suffering have been in vain (v.4)?
4. How were the current miracles being performed (v.5)?
5. What Bible book (or portion of a Bible book) does this chapter seem to resemble? Particularly verses 6-18?
6. Who are the sons of Abraham (v.7-9)?
7. Explain how Christ “redeemed” us from the curse of the Law (v.13).
8. Verse 14 says the promise of the Spirit is received through faith. Is this teaching salvation at the point of belief? If not, please explain.
9. Look again at verses 15-18. Taken together, what is the point Paul is making regarding the promise to Abraham and the Law?
10. What does Paul argue was the purpose for the Law (v.19)?
11. The Galatians were apparently attempting to bring in aspects of the Old Covenant into their beliefs as Christians. What did Paul think of this? Give one example of how folks are still doing this today.

12. Describe how Paul is using the word “faith” in verses 23-25.
13. Compare “faith” in verse 26 and “baptized” in verse 27. What conclusion to you reach?
14. What does it mean to be “clothed with Christ”?
15. How does one “belong” to Christ (v.29)?

Galatians – Chapter 4

1. Verses 1-7 sound a lot like a parable and an explanation. In your own words relate the point Paul is making.
2. What does it mean that Christ was “born under the Law” (v.4)?
3. Chapter three addressed issues about bringing aspects of the Old Law into Christianity, which was condemned. What other religious problems were present in Galatia (v.8-11)?
4. Would verse 10 indicate it is sinful to observe Memorial Day in our country? What about Thanksgiving? Or Christmas and Easter?
5. Why did Paul first preach the gospel to them (v.12-15)? How was he treated?
6. Verse 17 is key. Who are “they”?
7. In verse 19 Paul spoke of a time “until Christ is formed in you”. Were these people Christians? If yes, then what is Paul speaking of?
8. Why was Paul perplexed about them (v.20)?
9. Paul, in his customary fashion, makes a good point by comparing current events to things contained in the history of the Israelites. In verses 21-31 he tests our knowledge.
 - A. Who was Hagar (v.24)?
 - B. Who is the son whose descendants were to be slaves (v.23)?
 - C. Figuratively speaking, how is Hagar Mt. Sinai in Arabia (v.25)?
 - D. What is the main point of all this in verse 29?

Galatians – Chapter 5

1. What was the “yoke of slavery” that Paul told them not to be subject to again (v.1)?
2. READ verses 2-4.
 - A. Does verse 2 mean Christians cannot be circumcised?
 - B. If circumcision is received, what else must be kept?
 - C. When this is done, what happens to our relationship with Christ?
 - D. What impact does this teaching have on folks today who look to the Old Law to justify music in worship, worship on the Sabbath Day, or demand keeping the 10 commandments?
 - E. How many who call themselves “Christians” understand this?
3. What is the hope of righteousness for which we are waiting (v.5)?
4. What is important in Christ is “faith working through love” (v.6). How does this phrase defeat the concept of ‘once saved, always saved’?
5. What “persuasion” had the Galatians accepted (v.7-8)?
6. Verse 9 evokes a principle which the Church must understand. What is it?
(See also 1 Corinthians 5:6)
7. How was the cross a “stumbling block” (v.11)?
8. Why does Paul end with “those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves” (v.12)?
Would some consider this an “evil” thought? Why or why not?
9. Verses 13-15 should be taken together.
 - A. Describe how brethren today are “consuming one another”.
 - B. What should we be doing instead?
10. Paul explains how the flesh and the Spirit are in opposition to each other “so that you may not do the things that you please”. Relate that last phrase in your own words or other Biblical phrases.

11. Explain Paul's use of the word "Spirit" in verse 18.
12. Give a definition for each of the deeds of the flesh. (These are from the NAS)
 - A. Immorality
 - B. Impurity
 - C. Sensuality
 - D. Idolatry
 - E. Sorcery
 - F. Enmities
 - G. Strife
 - H. Jealousy
 - I. Outbursts of anger
 - J. Disputes
 - K. Dissensions
 - L. Factions
 - M. Envy
 - N. Drunkenness
 - O. Carousing
 - P. "Things like these"
13. Give a definition for each of the things called the fruit of the Spirit.
 - A. Love
 - B. Joy
 - C. Peace
 - D. Patience
 - E. Kindness
 - F. Goodness
 - G. Faithfulness
 - H. Gentleness
 - I. Self-control
14. What does it mean "against such things there is no law" (v.23)?
15. What does Paul affirm should become the attitude of the believer in regard to his flesh (v.24-26)?
16. What problems were present in Galatia as revealed in chapter 5?

Galatians – Chapter 6

1. In light of the first 5 chapters and the problems present in Galatia – what trespasses might brethren be caught in (v.1)? What problems might the brethren have been tempted in?
2. Who are the “spiritual” (v.1)?
3. “Bear one another’s burdens” (v.2) and “each one will bear his own load” (v.5) seem to contradict. Explain why they do not.
4. What impact does verse 6 have on congregations supporting preachers? What might the Galatians have been doing to Paul (consider also 4:15-16)?
5. From verse 8 explain what “flesh” and “spirit” mean. Consider this in light of previous teaching in the letter.
6. Paul’s closing remarks are words of encouragement: we will “reap if we do not grow weary” (v.9). Give two examples of how some have grown weary and are no longer sowing to the Spirit.
7. Explain verse 10 in light of the entire letter. What is the point?
8. When Paul began writing with his own hand, what does he reveal as the motivation for those who were teaching error (v.12-13)?
9. Were the Galatians causing trouble for Paul (v.17)? What were the “brand marks of Jesus” on his body?