



A STUDY IN
The Epistle to the Galatians
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With my whole heart have I sought thee; O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee. Ps. 119:10,11

The Epistle (*letter*) to the churches in southern Galatia was written by the Apostle Paul, during his first missionary journey to Asia Minor. (*Acts 57-14*), and because he had part in establishing these churches, there was (*for him*) a personal relationship with them. That relationship gives reason for the somewhat extreme tone he takes with them at the beginning of the letter. Galatians is the earliest, and the *angriest* of the epistles written by the Apostle Paul, and the strong tone of the epistle is the expression of his strong desire, that the churches not be deceived and ever follow after the truth of the Gospel delivered to them at the first by himself and the ministers accompanying him on his missionary effort.

After arriving back in Antioch after 18 months on the road, Paul receives a report that the churches in Galatia had allowed a group of Judaizers—(*Jews who sought to make obedience to Mosaic Law, a requirement of the Christian faith*)— to gain authority, and with that, influence for followship in error (*another Gospel*). As emphasis to serious of his purpose, Paul takes the pen (*it appears Galatians 6:11*) from his scribe, and wrote the end of the letter himself **IN LARGE LETTERS**. Paul wrote to these churches only a few months before attending a Jerusalem Council meeting to address this very subject matter (*The relationship between Christian Jews and Christian Gentiles—UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST. Acts 15:1-30*), which would be the *first* controversy to plague the early church. For him, this was no minor issue, as he went so far as to call the Galatians “deserters of Christ, turning from the truth, to another Gospel.

When the Galatians turned so quickly from the Gospel of Grace (*preached by Paul*), they made clear their not receiving him as an Apostle of Christ, therefore denying him apostolic authority over them. The churches at Galatia now understood from Judiazers that “Justification” (*being made to have a right/ righteous standing before God*) can only be accomplished by works of the Law and faith in Jesus. They now held that to live by Grace and freedom in Christ was Lawlessness and degenerate living (*according to their new teachers*). Unfortunately false teaching is extremely difficult to root out, as it was in bible times, so it today. We must walk a fine line —on the one hand, that we don’t fall into legalism, while at the same time we don’t want to mock the truth of the Christian’s commitment to Christ with it’s accompanying free gift of Grace, through faith—by living an “anything goes” lifestyle.

The freedom that the Gospel of Christ offers, upon acceptance, is far greater and more important than any “earthly” comparison made (*i.e. being released from prison, or escaping the cruel oppression of a nation upon it’s people*). These “freedoms” have merit, and rightfully so, but no imprisonment by steel bars, or any of the oppressive policies a people are made to endure, is followed with being “*eternally separated from God*”; but to stay in the “bondage of sin” until death, has it’s commensurate issuance in this present age, and the age to come (*eternal*). Pauls letter to the Galatians proclaims that the bondage exacted upon mankind by sin has but one liberator *Jesus Christ*, and that by His Grace alone, can the chains of the “Gospel of Works” be broken, and the ensuing freedom there-of.. be experienced. Freedom is a glorious gift indeed!

“*For if Keeping the Law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die*”
(Gal. 2:21)