

# **Galatians Study Guide No. 1**

## **Background and Introduction to Galatians**

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- I. There are three main things we can do to arrive at truth:
  - A. Christ promised that the Holy Spirit would guide us into all truth in John 16:13. Pray that He will.
  - B. In John 7:17 Jesus said, “If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself. Therefore, if we have a humble heart and are willing to follow truth when it is revealed, God will show us the truth.
  - C. Study to discover, not to prove. True inductive Bible study seeks only to discover truth. One of the biggest hindrances or blinders to the discovery of truth is to try to make Scripture line up with our theology. If we are going to be honest we must line up our theology with Scripture.
  
- II. The importance of this letter to the Galatians.
  - A. “Galatians is the impregnable citadel, a very Gibraltar, against any attack on the heart of the gospel. This epistle is the grand arsenal which is stocked with the weapons that assure victory in the ceaseless battle for the central truths of the gospel.”—R.C.H, Lenski
  
  - B. “The Epistle to the Galatians is my own little epistle. I have betrothed myself to it; it is my Katie von bora.” (name of Luther’s wife)—Martin Luther.
  
  - C. “It is a unique and marvelous letter, which embraces in its six short chapters such a variety of vehement and intense emotion as could probably not be paralleled in any other work.”—Dr. William Ramsay.
  
  - D. “Few books have had a more profound influence on the history of mankind than has this small tract, for such it should be called. Christianity and the thought of the Western world might have been entirely pagan had it never been written. Galatians embodies the germinal teachings on Christian freedom which separated Christianity from Judaism, and which launched it upon a career of missionary conquest. It was the cornerstone of the Protestant Reformation, because its teaching of salvation by grace alone became the dominate theme of the preaching of the Reformers.”—Dr. Merrill Tenney
  
  - E. “For the inquiring or transitioning Adventist a clear understanding of the gospel as taught in the book of Galatians and expanded in the book of Romans is all that is needed for the honest seeker of truth. The gospel is the plum line by which to evaluate all theology. The errors of legalism become apparent when brought into the bright light of the gospel of God’s grace.” Dale Ratzlaff

III. Background: Read the letter to the Galatians through in one sitting.

IV. Who were the Galatians? Galatia was a region, not a city. Most scholars believe Paul refers to the Southern region of Galatia including the cities of Lystra, Iconium, Derbe and the region surrounding them. Read Acts 13:44–52 and all of Acts 14.

A. Who stirred up the crowds against Paul and his companions?

B. List any miraculous events recorded in this section of Acts.

C. What persecution did Paul receive? See Acts 14:19, 20.

D. In addition to proclaiming the gospel of Christ, what did Paul do to lay the foundation for starting the new Christian churches in Galatia? See Acts 14:22–23.

1.

2. How were the elders selected?

E. When Paul and Barnabas returned from their first missionary journey, how long did they stay at Antioch?

V. What are the underlying issues which Paul addresses in the letter to the Galatians?

A. Gal. 1:6–9; 2:14.

B. Gal. 1:11–15.

C. Gal. 3:10–14; 4:21.

D. Gal. 5:1, 13.

VI. When was the book of Galatians written? Read Acts 15 and the book of Galatians.

A. Does the letter to the Galatians deal with the same subject matter as the Jerusalem Council?

B. Do you think that Paul's letter to the Galatians was written before or after the Jerusalem Council?

C. List the reason for your answer in No. 2 above.

D. If Galatians was written before the Jerusalem Council then it was probably written around AD 49 and is Paul's first letter to the young Gentile churches.

E. If one accepts “D” above, where in the history recorded in Acts would you place the writing of Galatians?

VII. In order to understand this letter we must understand how Paul uses “circumcision” and “law”. Paul uses “circumcision” six times and “Law” 32 times.

A. What does “circumcision” stand for?

1. Acts 7:8.
2. Gal. 5:2–4.
3. Was the main issue “circumcision” itself, or what circumcision stood for?
  - a. Gal. 5:6.
  - b. Acts 16:3.
4. Considering the above, when you read “circumcision” in the book of Galatians what is the underlying meaning?
5. Does the fact that Paul only mentions circumcision six times but law 32 times add support to your conclusion in No. 4 above?

B. What does Paul mean by “Law” in his letter to the Galatians? There are three basic opinions: (1) the so called “ceremonial law” excluding the Ten Commandments, (2) the Ten Commandments, (3) the whole law from Exodus through Deuteronomy, or Torah. We should determine which one is correct by Paul’s use of law in this book. After each of the following verses ask yourself which “Law” is used in that verse. Put an “X” in the appropriate column.

	Ceremonial:	10 Comm.:	Whole Law:
1. Gal. 2:16	_____	_____	_____
2. Gal. 2:19	_____	_____	_____
3. Gal. 2:21	_____	_____	_____
4. Gal. 3:2	_____	_____	_____
5. Gal. 3:5	_____	_____	_____
6. Gal. 3:10	_____	_____	_____
7. Gal. 3:11	_____	_____	_____
8. Gal. 3:12	_____	_____	_____
9. Gal. 3:13	_____	_____	_____
10. Gal. 3:17	_____	_____	_____
11. Gal. 3:18	_____	_____	_____
12. Gal. 3:19	_____	_____	_____
13. Gal. 3:21	_____	_____	_____
14. Gal. 3:23	_____	_____	_____

	Ceremonial:	10 Comm.:	Whole Law:
15. Gal. 3:24	_____	_____	_____
16. Gal. 4:4	_____	_____	_____
17. Gal. 4:5	_____	_____	_____
18. Gal. 4:21	_____	_____	_____
19. Gal. 5:3	_____	_____	_____
20. Gal. 5:4	_____	_____	_____
21. Gal. 5:14	_____	_____	_____
22. Gal. 5:18	_____	_____	_____
23. Gal. 5:23	_____	_____	_____
24. Gal. 6:2	_____	_____	_____
25. Gal. 6:13	_____	_____	_____

C. What is the best way to understand “Law” in the book of Galatians?