

GALATIANS

Magna Carta of Christian Liberty

A defense of the freedom we have in Christ

Introduction:

1. Recipients: Churches in Southern Galatia
2. Date of writing: 49 AD [believe it to be his first]
3. Occasion and purpose of writing: what prompted Paul to write
 - a. There was a sudden change in their attitude toward truth 1:6-9
 - b. To counter false teaching. 1:9
 - c. Turning to the Law for maturity 3:3; 4:10; 5:2-4
 - d. There was conflict and strife in the Churches. 5:15
4. Theme: Magna Carta of Christian Liberty
5. Tone: very harsh, a strong polemic [basically chewing them out]
6. Importance of the Book:
 - a. protected early churches from degenerating into just another Jewish sect, seems to be the thrust of the Judaizers.
 - b. Makes an emphatic statement of salvation by grace through faith apart from works which is extremely relevant today.
 - c. During the reformation Galatians along with Romans was instrumental in exposing the fallacies of Catholicism's system of works for salvation.
7. OUTLINE
 - Salutation: 1:1-5
 - The Occasion: Defection from Christian Liberty, 1:6-9
 - Rest breaks down into three major sections.
 - I. Paul's Defense of His Right to Preach Christian Liberty, 1:10-2:21
 - Deals with a real challenge to his authority as an apostle.
 - Very personal section actually.
 - II. Justification by Faith as the Basis of Christian Liberty, 3:1-4:31
 - Very strong doctrinal section.
 - Refutes the arguments of the false teachers, the Judaizers.
 - III. Christian Liberty in Practice, 5:1-6:10
 - Challenge to exploit the freedom we have in Christ.
 - Also deals with the consequences of legalism.
 - Chapters 5 and 6 spell out the practical outworking of the gospel of God's grace, which enables the saint to live a godly life in a fallen world.

Conclusion: Final Counsel Concerning Judaizers, 6:11-18

The Epistle to the Galatians, the first of Paul's letters, centers the attention of the reader on two dominant themes:

- (1) the justification of the believer by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ apart from legal works, and
- (2) the ministry of the Holy Spirit as the indwelling energizer of the spiritual life in Christ. [Sanctification]

Salutation: 1:1-5

The situation in the Galatian churches is different, agitators had challenged the author's right to the title of apostle - his right then to speak authoritatively.

- apostle *avpo, stoloj* from *apostellw* means 'one who is sent forth' and carries the thought of an official, authoritative sending with the necessary credentials to carry out a mission.

What are the qualifications of an apostle. How do we know if one is or isn't? Paul in 2 Cor. fights against false apostles who claimed to be super apostles.

#1 Must have seen Jesus. **1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8-9**

#2 Must be directly commissioned by Jesus. **Acts 9:15-16**

#3 One commissioned as an apostle has the authority of Christ. **1 Cor 14:37**

Paul goes out of his way to ensure that the Galatians were clear on the fact that his commission came not through or by means of man.

Observations: 1:1

1. Paul abruptly begins this epistle by establishing his office and authority and the source of his appointment.
2. He goes to great lengths to make it very clear that he was not appointed to office by a group of men (an official body, leaders of the Church at Jerusalem or Antioch) or by a man. [Peter, James, Ananias]
3. His bold claim is that his authority, that is his apostleship, was of heavenly origin.
4. The impression given here is that Paul's authority had been undermined with the Galatian believers. Therefore the attempt was to make him an inferior apostle.

5. The apostle of the New Testament was very similar to the prophet of the Old Testament. A prophet functioned as God's spokesman or mouthpiece, so that if one rejected a prophet, the spokesman for God, he rejected God Himself. Zech. 1:2-4
6. The great doctrinal issues could not be addressed, no problem can be solved, however, until the issue of authority is settled. This is especially true in teaching the Word of God. [True in any teaching situation.]
7. It is because of the absolute and uncompromising gospel which he proclaimed. Paul teaches that the only alternative to faith in the gospel which he preaches is eternal judgement.

v2. and all the brethren who are with me,

Church (ἐκκλησία) is a very important word.

It means "called-out ones" and in the New Testament context refers to individuals called out from a doomed and dying world by the grace of God.