

Introduction to Galatians

After Paul established churches in the region of Galatia, other teachers arrived who claimed spiritual authority but altered the message Paul had preached. They did not deny Jesus outright; instead, they added requirements to faith—particularly obedience to the Mosaic Law—as necessary for being right with God.

Paul responds with alarm:

“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel.”

Paul makes it clear that any gospel that adds human effort to Christ’s finished work is no gospel at all. Jesus saved us when He shed His blood on the cross. Nothing can be added to that sacrifice, and nothing needs to be.

The Galatians were being told that faith in Christ was not enough—that righteousness required law-keeping, rituals, and conformity to religious regulations. Paul writes to expose this as spiritual bondage.

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.”

Paul teaches that the law reveals sin but cannot produce righteousness. Returning to law-based righteousness after receiving grace is not spiritual growth; it is regression.

Paul’s opponents attacked his credibility, suggesting that his gospel was incomplete because his apostleship was inferior. Paul answers by explaining that his calling and message came directly from God.

“Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead).”

Paul was not defending his reputation—he was defending the gospel. If his authority were dismissed, the message of grace would be dismissed with it.

At the heart of Galatians is the question humanity has always asked: How can a person be right with God?

Paul answers decisively: by faith, not by works.

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ.”

Abraham himself was declared righteous by faith long before the law was given. Paul uses this to show that God’s promises are rooted in grace, not performance.

Paul does not merely argue theology; he calls believers to live it out. True freedom is not lawlessness—it is life empowered by the Spirit.

“Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

The Spirit produces what the law never could: transformed hearts, genuine love, and godly character.

One of the sharpest rebukes in Scripture appears in Galatians:

“Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?”

Paul warns that beginning with grace and continuing with self-effort is spiritual folly. The Christian life begins, continues, and is completed by God’s grace.

Key Verses:

knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. (Galatians 2:16)

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)

Key Truth:

Because our justification rests entirely on faith in the person and finished work of Jesus Christ, we are set free from legalistic demands. Ultimately, the Gospel is not a rigid religion of rituals, but a dynamic, life-giving relationship with our Savior.

Summary

Paul wrote Galatians to:

- Defend the true gospel of grace
- Expose legalism as spiritual bondage
- Affirm that righteousness comes through faith, not law
- Call believers to freedom in Christ
- Warn against any distortion of the gospel

The resurrection declares that Jesus Christ is God, Savior, and Lord. Because He lives, grace is sufficient, faith is effective, and freedom is real.

Galatians is ultimately a call back to Christ alone—not religion, not law, not human effort, but the finished work of Jesus.