

# Galatians 1

# Review of second half of Acts 18

- Paul left *Corinth* for *Caesarea* with a stopover in *Ephesus*
- He took Priscilla and Aquila with him and they remained in *Ephesus* where he will rejoin them on his Third Missionary Journey
- Before Paul left *Corinth* he apparently took a Nazirite vow (based on Numbers 6:1-21)
- Paul arrived at *Ephesus* where he spent a few days meeting in the synagogue before departing for *Caesarea* and then up to *Jerusalem* to offer sacrifices prescribed by the vow

# Review of second half of Acts 18 (Cont)

- He then traveled on to *Antioch* ending his Second Missionary Journey before leaving for his Third Missionary Journey
- He then moved through the Churches in Galatia strengthening the brethren in route back to *Ephesus*
- Before he arrived we meet Apollos from Alexandria who passed through *Ephesus* where he was educated in the true baptism of Jesus by Priscilla and Aquila before he went to *Corinth*

# Review of Acts 19

- Paul then passes through the upper country and then on *Ephesus* where he discovers a group of Christian believers who have only been baptized in the Baptism of John
- We then see the 1<sup>st</sup> century practice of Baptism and the laying on of hands
- Here we also identify the practice from the first century of use of the Trinitarian formula for Baptism

We then discussed the use of the term “the Way”

We concluded with a presentation on the Church’s appreciation of relics

# Transition to Galatians

- This was Paul's **third letter** and it was written while he was in *Ephesus* during his **Third Missionary Journey**
  - The letter was addressed to the five churches of Galatia which Paul had established on his **First Missionary Journey**
  - He visited each church on his **Second Missionary Journey** to strengthen the disciples and provide them with the decision of the **Council of Jerusalem** concerning circumcision and Kosher laws
  - At this point most of the believers had come from the Gentiles

# Transition to Galatians (Cont)

- Unfortunately, the churches in *Galatia* were being infested with the *Judaizers* who we met at Antioch before the Council
- After they were rejected in *Antioch* and later in *Jerusalem* they move north into *Galatia* teaching that a convert to Christianity had to be circumcised and practice the Kosher laws of Moses
- For one reason or another, after hearing about this problem, Paul decided to wait until he arrived at *Ephesus* to deal with the problem by writing his **Letter to the Galatians**

# Transition to Galatians (Cont)

- The heart of the problem as Paul saw it was a direct attack or **challenge to Paul's apostleship**
- This can be seen in his strong response in the first sentence of the letter where he says: "Paul an apostle – not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ..."
- It is believed that Paul wrote the **Letter to the Galatians** between 54 - 57 A.D.
- He also wrote his **1<sup>st</sup> Letter to the Corinthians** from ***Ephesus*** around 57 A.D.
- He wrote his **2<sup>nd</sup> Letter to the Corinthians** possibly from ***Philippi*** around 57-58 A.D.

# An Overview of Paul's Epistles

- Before we look at the letter to the Galatians, let's look back at the general outline or overview of Paul's letters
- His Epistles are listed in the Bible beginning with the longest and ending with the shortest because that is the way they were used in the lectionary of the early church
  - *This lectionary was divided into the Gospel Book and the Epistle Book*
- His 14 Epistles are divided into two groups:
  - 9 Community Epistles
    - This is the third community epistle
  - 5 Personal Epistles (including Hebrews)

# An Overview of Paul's Epistles (Cont)

- Again, his letters typically:
  - Began with his name
  - Included who was traveling with him
  - Identified the Church to whom the letter was written
  - Contained the phrase “in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”
  - Included the statement containing the words “by grace” and “peace”
  - Often contained a “blessing” followed by a “thanksgiving section”
  - Finally, included a theological section as the heart of the letter

# Early Christian Time Line

- **0-6 AD Birth of Jesus the Christ**
- **1-5 Saul's birth**
- **30-33 Christ is crucified, raised and ascends into Heaven**
- **33 Pentecost**
- **33 Stephen is martyred**
- **33-34 Saul's conversion on the Road to Damascus**
- **34-36 Saul's sojourn in Arabia**
- **36-37 Saul's return journey to Jerusalem**
- **37-42 Saul in Tarsus**

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- 41-44 Herod Agrippa I reigns
- 42 Paul in Antioch
- 44 Famine in Jerusalem
- **45-49 Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> missionary journey**
  - *Spring of 45 they sail for Cyprus*
  - *Fall of 45 they sail for Asia Minor and arrive at Antioch of Pisidia*
  - *Fall of 46 they arrive at Iconian*
  - *They may have remained 1 year in Derbe before returning to Antioch in Syria*
  - *48 was their triumphal journey to Jerusalem*
  - *49 was the Council of Jerusalem*
- 50 Council of Jerusalem

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- **49-52 Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey**
  - Autumn 49 Paul leaves Antioch and moves through the Churches of Galatia
  - Spring 50 Paul in Thessalonica
  - 51 Paul arrives in Beroea
  - March 51 Paul arrives in Athens
  - Spring 51 to autumn of 52 Paul was in Corinth
  - Winter 50 51 Paul writes the letter to the Thessalonians
- **53-58 Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey**
  - Middle 53 Paul arrives at *Darbe*
  - April 54 Paul arrives at *Ephesus*

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- **53-54 Paul writes the letter to the *Galatians* from *Ephesus***
- **57 *three Christians from Corinth deliver a letter to Paul at Ephesus asking for clarification***
- **57 *Paul writes his first letter to the Corinthians from Ephesus***
- **57-58 *Paul writes his second letter to the Corinthians from Philippi***
- **58 *Paul end's his third missionay Journey***

# Galatians

- **Gal 1:1-2a** *“Paul an apostle - not from men nor through man, but **through Jesus Christ and God the Father**, who raised him from the dead – and all the brethren who are with me,...”*
  - Look at how differently Paul began this letter
  - He emphatically defended his **apostleship** before he gave his usual thanksgiving section
  - Then he resumed the introductory section to include “in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” followed by “grace” and “peace”

# Galatians(Cont)

- He next continued to address the issue of the challenge to his apostleship
- The whole issue is wrapped up right here in this introductory statement as a responded to the question of his apostleship, and the question concerning “who sent him”
  - **“Apostolus”** is Greek for “one who is sent”
  - There were people visiting *Galatia* who had challenged Paul’s authority saying that they spoke from a higher authority because they had been sent from the Apostles in Jerusalem (implying Peter and James)

# Galatians (Cont)

- These folks (Judaizers) purported to have come from Jerusalem to the churches in Galatia and began to ask the community why were they not circumcising their sons and practicing Kosher
- They asked them who told them that they did not have to follow these practices of the Laws of Israel
- The people replied that Paul had told them what was required to become a Christian
- They responded that Paul was not a proper authority and that he was not a real Jew as he was a Benjaminite from Tarsus
- They said that he was not really one of the leaders of the Church

# Galatians (Cont)

- Again, these guys were from the same *Judaizer party* in Jerusalem who originally caused all the problems in *Antioch* before the Council
- Looking back to **Acts 15:1** we see that they had not been formally sent to Antioch by the Church in Jerusalem, and by this point (after the Council) they were no longer welcome in the Church of Jerusalem or Antioch
- So the only place they could go was to the churches in the north (*Galatia*) where they started infecting the Churches of Asia minor just like they had in *Antioch*
- They were resurrecting the same old problems

# Galatians (Cont)

- They claimed that Paul not only was not one of the 12 Apostles, but he didn't even know Jesus
- He was a Benjaminite from Diaspora city of Tarsus
- They claimed that they had studied at the feet of James, the Bishop of Jerusalem
- They claimed that Paul was never sent, he just started going on these missions on his own accord
- So here Paul starts out by taking the argument right out from underneath the Judaizers by indicating that he was not sent by Peter or James, **but was sent directly by Jesus!**
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# Galatians (Cont)

- Paul then refutes their arguments by calling them liars
- He said that he did not care who sent them (even though he knew that they were not from Peter or James) because he was sent to the *Galatians* by God!

# Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 1:2b-7** *“To the churches of Galatia: Grace to you and peace from God...not that there is another gospel, but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ”*
  - Here Paul returns to his normal introduction section giving the blessing from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
  - Then he again deviates from praise and thanksgiving to address the problem of their doubting his teaching
  - He emphatically established the fact that there was only one gospel and they should never doubt the gospel that he had given to them

# Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 1: 8** *“He preached to you? Let him be **accursed**”*
  - Accursed is translated from the Greek *“**anathema**”*
    - \*A person or thing:
      - Condemned
      - Sent away
      - Detested or loathed
      - Consigned to damnation
      - A curse involving excommunication

# Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 1:9-10a** *“As we have said before, so now I say again, If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be **accursed**. Am I now seeking the favor of men, or God?”*
  - We will see this issue again at the end of *Galatians* and in *Romans* where Paul will deal with some other false apostles from the Jews who were teaching other things
  - Here he is accusing the Judaizers of teaching these false teachings because they were concerned about their fellow men and not God
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# Galatians (Cont)

- They were going into the local synagogues stating that they had accepted Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah but they believed that the Christians had to keep circumcision and the Laws of Moses
- This was to ensure that they would be accepted by the local Jewish communities and avoid persecution
- They were trying to make everyone happy by bringing the Gentile community into the Jewish community
- But look at what Paul had to say about this:

# Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 1:10b -11** *“Am I now seeking the favors of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a **servant** of Christ.’ For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not man’s gospel.”*
  - Servant can also mean **slave** in Greek
  - Paul presented a subtle argument when he tells them that his gospel was not a man’s gospel and it was not delivered by men
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# Galatians (Cont)

- The Judaizers claimed (even though it was not true) that their teaching was preached to them by *Cephas* (Peter) and *Jacob* (James)
- So Paul took their argument right out from under them by saying that he heard his gospel **directly from Jesus!**

# Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 1:12-15** *“For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, ... so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and called me through grace,”*
- Paul is saying that he received his gospel just like Peter and James did
- Now why does he bring this up?
- Because they are trying to teach them that this is what they need to do and that Paul really doesn't know his stuff
- So here's where Paul shows them his credentials

# Galatians (Cont)

- Then he went on to discuss his persecutions of the early church and his zeal “for the traditions of my fathers”
- This can be seen as an allusion to the teachings of the **Prophet *Jeremiah***
- Often in Paul one can find many allusions to *Jeremiah* and other Old Testament references
- In this case he assumed that his audience would have known the passage he was alluding to or they would go and read it
- Paul, like Jeremiah, was not married and was persecuted by his religious contemporaries

# Galatians (Cont)

- Jeremiah was a priest in the Temple but he had been rejected by the other priests because he obviously was preaching against the pagan sacrifices that were being offered there at the time
- Paul was experiencing a very similar experience in his life
- Thus, if you look at Paul's life very carefully and compare it to the life of **Jeremiah**, you will find many parallels
- It is possible that Paul read Jeremiah regularly for inspiration

# Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 1:15-17** *“But when he who set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I return to Damascus.”*
  - At this point these were primarily Gentile churches
  - An Aramaic idiom meaning “humanity” which we find in **Mt 16** – flesh vs the heavenly or spiritual
  - As these guys have claimed that they did
  - Again, he has taken their argument right out from underneath them

# Galatians (Cont)

- Here we are getting a bit more information about Paul's conversion and the three year period before he went up to Jerusalem than we were given by Luke in Acts
- Paul indicates that he spent about three years in the wilderness

# Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 1:18-20** *“Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord’s brother. (In what I’m writing to you, before God, I do not lie!)”*
  - Why does he say three years and not after a few years?
  - The number three in the Bible is the number for completion. After three years of staying away, which was plenty of time, he goes up to Jerusalem to visit with Peter
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# Galatians (Cont)

- He is saying this to refute those who said that he did not know Peter or James or study under the great prophets of the church
- They kept stating to the folks in Galatia that Paul did not know anything
- So Paul says:
  - First he received the gospel directly from a revelation from Jesus
  - This makes him equal to Peter and James
  - He did go to Jerusalem and met with Peter and James and took an oath or swears that he is telling the truth

# Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 1:21-24** *“Then I went into the region of Syria and Cilicia. And I was still not known by sight to the churches of Christ in Judea; they only heard it said, ‘He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.’ And they glorified God because of me”*
  - This is discussing Paul’s early travels with Barnabas who told the Church in Jerusalem that Paul was a good guy who could be trusted which we have heard about from Acts
  - Eventually Paul went back to Tarsus until he was invited to return with Barnabas to Antioch in Syria followed by their trip to Jerusalem