

## Galatians: Outline and Overview

### Initial considerations:

- The letter was written at a time when either the ban on Jews from Rome was in effect, or was close to being lifted.
- At the same time, Jews enjoyed respite from forced participation in the pagan worship that Rome required of all its subjects and citizens. The Emperor cult was particularly strong in Galatia. Non-Jews did not enjoy an exemption.
- By the time of Nero at least, restrictions on these exemptions were known. Only Jews were exempted, not necessarily the G-d-fearer Non-Jews, even if they were closely associated with the synagogue.
- By converting, one could enjoy the exemptions of Judaism.
- The focus of the issue was Jewish identity, NOT Jewish practice or worship.
  - Peter feared those who demanded full conversion (Gal 2) and would not even eat with non-Jews for a time. Note that Peter's motivation was fear, not conviction.
  - Ritual uncleanness with regards non-Jews was misunderstood in a similar way as the issues surrounding Mark 7.
- It is possible that Paul uses ironic reversals in order to make his points, much as he does with the Corinthians, and with the Romans concerning strong, weak, knowledgeable and less so.
- Paul sharply divides being made righteous in G-d's Presence with doing the commandments.

## Outline and Overview

### Overall issue:

Having a Relationship with G-d does not require one to become Jewish

The Jewish people have an essential role in the Kingdom, being “Chosen” is not for the purpose of gaining salvation.

The relationship between the Jewish believers and the non-Jewish believers is at the front and center of this letter.

### Chapter 1: 1 – 2:21

Paul's History, particularly in regards his authority, emanating BOTH from Hashem Himself, AND from Jerusalem.

- 1-2. Paul establishes his calling as directly from Hashem
- 3-4. The calling is for deliverance from the world of sin and death, into the Kingdom of Life and the Presence of G-d, characterized by obedience for His Glory.
- The Galatians have not taken his message to heart.
  - Recall his mission from Jerusalem, and the message to the nations in the synagogues.
  - Paul is not trying to curry favor. This was apparently an issue.
- 11-24. Paul establishes his history, zealous Jew, persecutor of the Messianics.
  - Calling directly from Hashem, initially taught by G-d Himself (implied)

## Paul's History continued

- Paul in concert with the leaders in Jerusalem. His teaching not in vain.
- Titus, a non-Jew, is not compelled to convert. (Contrast with Timothy).
- The influence is strong, and in all quarters, even from Jerusalem (although not necessarily from the elders themselves.) If we recall, at the Jerusalem council, arguments like these were presented. It was not an isolated viewpoint.

# Galatians 1

## Statement of the problem

Paul Introduces himself and establishes his unique authority

- Probably he was being attacked by Jews from Antioch Pisidia who were implacably opposed to Paul and his message of the Messiah.
- He quickly focuses his letter on the Messiah. That is a central issue throughout this letter. Our salvation is in Him, no one or nothing else.
- The issue is how to enter into relationship with The Most High. Many in Judaism had taught that “chosen” meant we get the prize, and no one else does. Only Jews get to be saved. Only Israel can have a relationship with G-d. All Non-Jews must become Jews. The Torah was part of that package. One must be circumcised and follow Torah of Moses as a precondition for salvation. See Acts 15 This attitude did not go away after the Jerusalem council, both inside and outside the Messianic community, it was still a prominent part of Judaism.
- Paul and Barnabas were to be bringing the proper message. A hint of how pervasive this attitude was, lies in the fact of Barnabas and even Peter's confusion about these issues.
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