

New Testament Survey

Class 13: Galatians

Author:

Paul (undisputed)

Date:

Circa 48 AD; after the first missionary journey (Acts 13-14), but before the so-called “Apostolic Council” (Acts 15)

What was the false teaching?

- Requiring obedience to the Law of Moses, especially circumcision (Gal 3:1-6, 10-12; 5:1-6, cf. Acts 15:1, 5)
- Seeking approval from Judaism in order to avoid persecution (Gal 6:12-13)
- Paul identifies the false teachers as “the circumcision party” (Gal 2:12, lit. “those of the circumcision,” cf. Acts 11:2).

What was Paul’s response?

- No middle ground is possible with this teaching (Gal 1:6-9). It compromises “the truth of the gospel” (Gal 2:5). This is a first order issue of theological triage.
- Paul is more critical of the Galatian churches than any other churches he writes to (cf. the absence of thanksgiving in the letter’s opening; Gal 3:1).
- Paul emphasizes justification by faith in Christ alone, not by any works of the Law (Gal 2:16, 21). He points out that even Abraham was “counted righteous”—that is, justified—by faith alone (Gal 3:6).

3-Dec-23	Galatians
10-Dec-23	What happened to the Old Covenant?
17-Dec-23	Ephesians
24-Dec-23	----- NO CLASS -----
31-Dec-23	----- NO CLASS -----
7-Jan-24	Philippians
14-Jan-24	Colossians
21-Jan-24	1 Thessalonians
28-Jan-24	2 Thessalonians
4-Feb-24	Intro to the Pastoral Epistles
11-Feb-24	1 Timothy
18-Feb-24	2 Timothy
25-Feb-24	Titus

Contrasts in Galatians

1. **Justification through faith alone vs. Justification by works of the law (2:15-21; 3:10-14)**
2. **Slavery to the Law vs. Liberty in faith (2:4; 4:1-10, 21-31; 5:1-13)**
3. **Spirit vs. Flesh (3:2-5; 5:16-24)**

Applications:

- **Rest in the knowledge that your acceptance with God is final through faith in Christ, not because of anything you accomplish.**
- **Call others to freedom in Christ, not obedience to the Law.**
- **The truth of the gospel must be preserved by active resistance to false teaching (Gal 2:5).**
- **Gently restore Christians who wander from the truth (Gal 6:1-2).**
- **Our faith in Christ is worked out in love toward others (Gal 5:6; 13-15; 22)**