

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK SERIES

GLEANNING FROM GALATIANS

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1. Galatians often called the Magna Charta of Christian liberty.
2. It is a book of passion, conviction, and urgency. It is written to Christians who are on the brink of apostasy.
3. Not addressed to a single church, but several scattered throughout the province.
4. Galatia was located in Asia Minor, what is now Turkey.
5. On Paul's second tour he, Silas and Timothy passed through Lyconia into Phrygia and Galatia to preach the gospel.
6. Soon after the establishment of the church Judaizing teachers entered, advocating the necessity of keeping various aspects of the law of Moses.
7. They also impeached the testimony of Paul and questioned his apostleship.
8. As a result the faith, unity, peace and harmony of the churches were disrupted.
9. The Letter was written for the following purposes:
 - a. Establish the validity of Paul's apostleship
 - b. Refute the doctrine of the false teachers
 - c. Plead with the Galatians not to revert to the law
 - d. Show the superiority of the gospel and the real purpose the law of Moses served.

There are many lessons we glean from this great book, among them:

I. The All-Sufficiency of the Gospel.

A. Paul vindicates his apostleship in 1:1 and 1:11-17.

1. Man had nothing to do with what he taught.
 - a. Not from man--man was not the source of his teaching
 - b. Not through man--man was not the instrument through which the teaching came
 - c. Not after man--his teaching was not copied after the teaching of some man
2. But by Revelation.
 - a. The false teachers charged that since Paul was not among the original twelve, what he knew he had gathered from the other apostles.
 - b. Paul shows that he did not confer with flesh and blood after his conversion, nor visit with other apostles, but went away into Arabia.
3. Characteristics of the True Gospel---1:6-9
 - a. As to age--The true gospel is as old as the apostles
 - b. As to purity--If added to, it becomes perverted
 - c. As to Adequacy--Accursed if any other is preached
 - d. As to validity--The gospel is certified i.e. backed up by a guarantee

Today, just as then, there are those who question the relevance of the gospel. Paul wrote in 2Timothy 4:3-4 "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables."

The gospel will always be relevant, that is pertinent and relating to our needs, for the following reasons:

1. The Gospel is Perfect. (James 1:25) "Perfect law of liberty"

That which is perfect cannot be improved upon by addition or subtraction.
That which is perfect cannot have anything added to it or taken away from it without marring its perfection. (Rev. 22:18-19)

2. The Gospel is Powerful. (Romans 1:16) The power of God to save.

"Power" from "dunamis" the same word from which we get the English words "dynamo" and "dynamic" and "dynamite".

Hence, God's dynamite unto salvation is the gospel. Not social reform, not moral change by itself, not temporary change, but complete salvation from sin for now and ultimate salvation eternally in heaven.

3. The Gospel is Complete. (2Timothy 3:16-17)

The all-sufficiency and absolute adequacy and adaptability of the bible to meet the demands of the human family is here emphasized in this passage.

Christians believe that "his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."
(2Peter 1:3)

Christians teach that "if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." (1Peter 4:11)

If the bible thoroughly furnishes a man unto every good work, then why have a supplementary book?

4. The Gospel is Enduring. (Mt.24:35; 1Peter 1:25)

The Word of the Lord is unmoved, fixed and permanent.
Empires rise and fall, kingdoms come and go; but the word of God abides.

The gospel system is as lovely now as it was when it was first revealed to man, and it has as much power to save now as it had when first applied to a human heart.

II. Justification comes by faith and not by works of the law.

A. No flesh can be justified by the law (2:16)

1. Abraham was not justified by law, but by faith.
2. Righteousness did not come by the law.
3. To be justified by Christ, makes us Abraham's seed and children of the promise. (3:29)
4. We are justified or pardoned by the blood of Christ (Rom.3:20-26)

B. What Was The Purpose of the Law?

1. One of the greatest obstacles to understanding the gospel, is a lack of understanding of the purpose of the law.

- a. This was the problem with the false teachers with whom Paul dealt.
- b. The same today, with those who are apart of the 7th Day Adventist movement, or the followers of Herbert W. Armstrong.

2. Paul asks the question: "did you receive the spirit by the works of the law or the hearing of faith?" The law had not brought them the Spirit, or its promises.

Their salvation was through the "hearing of faith" not the Law.

3. What then was the purpose of the Law? (3:19)

a. It was temporary and inferior to the Gospel.

1. It came between the promise to Abraham and the fulfillment of that promise.
2. It came 430 years after the promise (3:17)
3. It came not as fulfillment of the promise--Christ was the fulfillment.

b. It was given to the Israelite Nation. The law Moses was to the Jewish people, not the Gentiles.

c. It was added to convince or convict men of sin--or to make known the knowledge of sin. (3:19) To show that sin was a violation of God's commandments.

d. It was to last until the seed came--that is until Christ came. Christ was the promised seed.

1. Christ was the end of the law, that is, he was born under it, lived under it, magnified it, fulfilled it, and nailed it to the Cross. (Col.2:14)

e. It prevented the universal spread of idolatry 'till Christ came--by preserving the knowledge of God.

f. It served as a wall or partition between Jew and Gentile--'till Christ came.
Eph. 2:14-15 "For He himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace."

g. It was intended to bring its subjects to Christ.

1. The law kept man in ward (prison) shut up, that is it caused all to be recognized as sinners. The law was the jailer who held in custody those who were subjected to sin in order that they should not escape the consciousness of their sins. (3:23)

2. It was a tutor (a slave who was the custodian, to conduct the boy to school, not the teacher. The tutorship of the law lasted until God sent his Son to redeem us. (4:1-5) Hence we are no longer under the law. It was abolished with the death of Christ.

III. The Nature of Christian Liberty.

A. The Source of Christian Liberty.

1. Christ redeemed us (3:13) "to buy a slave out of the marked place" never to be put up for sale in any marketplace again.

2. "Curse of the law" that is the curse pronounced by law on those who disobeyed.

3. Christ became a curse for us in the sense that he died for us, thus satisfying the demands of the law.

4. His death made it possible for us to be "adopted as sons" (4:5)

B. An Exhortation: "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free..." (5:1)

C. A Prohibition:

1. Be not entangled again, that is "do not be held or ensnared"

2. In the "yoke of bondage" that is the law of Moses or legalistic Judaism.

3. Circumcision avails nothing. It does not have the power to effect a transformation in life, that can only be done by faith in Christ.

4. If we kept circumcision, we would be bound to keep all the law. However, we are free from the law: a. free from the condemnation it imposes upon the one who would disobey it.

b. free from the law as a means of justification.

c. free from the obligation to render obedience to its statutes.

D. A Warning: (5:13) "...do not use your liberty as an opportunity for the flesh..."

1. Cannot use the liberty we have in Christ to fulfill the lust of the flesh.

a. Paul anticipated some would take liberty for license.

b. "occasion" is a military term that refers to a starting point for an operation or a base from which to launch an offensive. Paul is saying "don't turn your liberty into a base of operations for the flesh."

2. Christian freedom is not freedom to please ourselves, but God. It is a freedom from sin, but not service. Christian freedom never grants the liberty to act contrary to the will of God. But gives the power to act according to the highest law, the law of love.