

## Study Guide





# Paul Defends the True Gospel

## Galatians 1:1–2:21

*Distribute before session 1 for use in session 1.*

*Use enrichment magazine pp. 2–4.*

### Resources for Worship

Use these resources for your daily study at home and at the week's assembly.

### Hymn

By grace I'm saved, grace free and boundless;  
My soul, believe and doubt it not.  
Why stagger at this word of promise?  
Has Scripture ever falsehood taught?  
No! Then this word must true remain:  
By grace you too will life obtain.

By grace God's Son, our only Savior,  
Came down to earth to bear our sin.  
Was it because of your own merit  
That Jesus died your soul to win?  
No, it was grace, and grace alone,  
That brought Him from His heav'nly throne.

By grace! On this I'll rest when dying;  
In Jesus' promise I rejoice;  
For though I know my heart's condition,  
I also know my Savior's voice.  
My heart is glad, all grief has flown  
Since I am saved by grace alone.

(LSB 566; LW 351; TLH 373; TCO disk 12, track 9; EVaS disk 7, track 21)

### Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, You have sent teachers and pastors to help us understand the wonderful Gospel of Your Son. We thank You for sending Your Son to save us and for revealing Your grace among all people of the world. Teach us to depend on Your mercy and to guard against anything that might take away Your grace or cause us to depend on anything else for our worth and hope. Bring Your Gospel to the ends of the world so all may know You as their Lord and Savior and rejoice in all that You have done. In Jesus' name. Amen.

### Digging Deep

#### My Personal Study for Week 1

#### Day 1 • Read Galatians 1:1–5

1. The first few verses in each of Paul's Epistles serve as a salutation for the letter that follows. The salutation of Paul's Letter to the Galatians (vv. 1–5) contains much more than a greeting. This bold introduction begins the line of defense Paul continues throughout this entire Epistle. First, he defends himself and his apostleship. He does this because he and his teachings were both under attack.

a. Reread verses 1–2. By whose authority was Paul sent?

b. At the end of verse 1, Paul attests to Christ's resurrection. His enemies, "Judaizers"—were Jews who claimed to believe the Gospel, yet negated it by insisting that those who came to faith in Jesus continue to keep the Jewish ceremonial laws—circumcision, kosher foods, observance of Old Testament holidays. They claimed that only the twelve disciples who followed Jesus on earth were true apostles. Why is it important that Paul actually saw the risen Christ?

Acts 1

Acts 9:3–6

1 Corinthians 15:7–8

2. a. Speculate why Paul mentions *grace* (the unmerited favor of God) before the word *peace* in verse 3.

b. How do grace and peace become ours? See verse 4.

3. The deliverance referred to in verse 4 is ours right now. How does the fact that your eternal life has already begun and the fact that you've been delivered from evil, *now* affect your attitude as you live your life here on earth?

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**Day 2 • Read Galatians 1:6–10**

4. Of what desertion does Paul speak in verse 6?

5. In verse 7, Paul says the different gospel of "some" (the Judaizers) is really not a gospel. Paul also states that the Judaizers "want to distort the gospel of Christ." To do this, they attacked Paul's presentation of the Gospel as incomplete because it did not include adherence to Jewish law as a means of salvation.

a. Against what standard should any teaching be measured? See 1 Corinthians 3:10–13.

b. What grave danger do people face when they follow a false gospel (v. 9)?

6. In verses 8–9, Paul curses anyone who preaches a gospel other than the true Gospel of Christ. The Greek

word for "accursed" is *anathema*. This word is a curse that means "to damn to hell." What do Paul's strong words tell you about how we should react when we are aware of false teachers who try to lead Christians away from the Gospel of Christ? Explain.

7. Reread verse 10. The questions Paul poses here are meant to make the Galatians realize that his motives for preaching the true Gospel were to glorify Christ. Paul, with the help of the Holy Spirit, preached the true Gospel to win souls for Jesus. The questions were also meant to open the eyes of the Galatians to the slander the Judaizers were trying to spread against Paul. The NKJV translates the last part of verse 10 as "For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ." A "bondservant" is a slave.

a. What does Paul mean when he says he is a slave of Christ? See Romans 6:18, 22.

b. You also are Christ's bond servant. What does this mean for everyday living?

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**Day 3 • Read Galatians 1:11–24**

8. a. How did Paul receive the Gospel of Christ?

b. How do we receive the Gospel of Christ?

Romans 10:17

1 Corinthians 12:3

9. In verses 13–16, Paul talks about his life before and after God brought him to faith in Jesus.

a. Describe Paul's life before his conversion.

Acts 7:59–8:3

Acts 26:4–5

b. What caused Paul to change from fanatic Pharisee to champion of the Gospel (vv. 15–16)?

c. Why do you think Paul makes reference to his transformation as he addresses the Galatians?

10. When might disclosing information about your life before and after knowing Jesus be important?

11. Verses 17–23 offer further proof of Paul's genuine apostleship. When the churches Paul mentions in verse 22 heard the reports about him, "they glorified God because of [him]" (v. 24). What instances can you recall when God's actions through you or another Christian evoked praise to God?

after he first visited Peter there (1:18). In the fourteen years between these visits, Paul spent eight years in Tarsus, his hometown. He spent at least a year in Syrian Antioch where he and Barnabas preached to the Gentiles. Paul also went on his first missionary journey, at which time he and Barnabas founded the Galatian churches. When Paul and Barnabas later returned to Syrian Antioch, they had a sharp dispute with a group of Pharisees who were most likely Judaizers (Acts 15:1–2). After this debate, Paul and Barnabas were sent to the council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:4–22), where they had another run-in with the Judaizers.

Barnabas (the name means "Son of Encouragement") was a close companion of Paul. Why do you think Paul took Barnabas with him to Jerusalem?

Acts 4:36–37

Acts 9:27

Acts 11:22–26

13. Reread verse 2. Did Paul go to Jerusalem only because the church leaders in Antioch wanted him to go? Explain your answer.

14. a. What does Titus have to do with the contentions of the Judaizers against Paul?

Galatians 2:3

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**Day 4 • Read Galatians 2:1–10**

12. As chapter 2 begins, Paul continues to let the account of the facts of his life and his ministry for Christ dispute the false charges of the Judaizers. In verse 1, Paul tells of his return to Jerusalem, fourteen years

Acts 15:5

b. The phrase “false brothers” (v. 4) refers to the Judaizers. The danger of these false brothers was that they threatened to take the truth of the Gospel away from the Galatians. What false brothers do you see attacking God’s Church today? How do they threaten to take the truth of the Gospel away from believers?

15. a. How does Paul refer to Peter, James, and John?

Verse 2

Verse 6

Verse 9

b. Paul’s repetition of these titles is in no way saying that he dishonors the other apostles. Instead, Paul repeats these titles to mock the Judaizers, who used them to try to convince the Galatians that Paul was not a genuine apostle. When the Judaizers called Peter, James, and John “influential” and “pillars,” they were also saying that Paul was not either of these things.

In what ways were the ministries of Peter and Paul different and alike (vv. 7–8)?

c. What does this tell you about the power behind your own sharing of the Gospel?

Romans 15:17–19

Ephesians 3:16

## Day 5 • Read Galatians 2:11–21

16. In verses 11–14, Paul reminds the Galatians of his encounter with Peter in Syrian Antioch. At this encounter, Paul pointed out Peter’s wrongdoing (his sudden refusal to eat with Gentile Christians). Paul states that Peter separated himself in this way from the Gentile Christians because of the “circumcision party”—the Judaizers. Paul confronts Peter with his sin publicly, before the members of the Antioch church. He states decisively, “he [Peter] stood condemned” (v. 11). In your opinion, why didn’t Paul take Peter quietly aside to discuss his wrong actions?

17. Paul’s doctrinal declaration in verses 15–21 may not have been made in conjunction with his statements to Peter in the preceding verses. Yet Peter, every Jewish Christian, the members of the church at Syrian Antioch, and the Galatians needed to hear it.

a. How are we justified by God?

b. Paul answers that question with firm clarity. It is an absolute truth. Society today often negates the idea of absolute truth. It questions the inerrancy of Holy Scripture. What evidence of this have you noticed and what trouble does the lack of acknowledgment of such truth cause?

18. In verses 19–21, Paul defines the true faith as belief in Jesus, not as subservience to the Law. Paul says that the Law’s purpose is to show that we are sinners. We live not by observing the Law but by believing in Jesus, who loves us and gave Himself for us (v. 20). In Jesus, we have new life. How can verse 20 be used as a battle cry by Christians today as we share the true Gospel?

## The Law and the Faith

### Galatians 3:1–4:31

*Distribute before session 2 for use in session 2.  
Use enrichment magazine pp. 5–7.*

#### Resources for Worship

Use these resources for your daily study at home and at the week's assembly.

#### Hymn

Amazing grace—how sweet the sound—  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost but now am found,  
Was blind but now I see!

The Lord has promised good to me,  
His Word my hope secures;  
He will my shield and portion be  
As long as life endures.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares  
I have already come;  
His grace has brought me safe thus far,  
His grace will lead me home.

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail  
And mortal life shall cease,  
Amazing grace shall then prevail  
In heaven's joy and peace.

(LSB 744; LW 509; TCO disk 20, track 11; EVaS disk 9, track 27)

#### Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, You have blessed us with the message of the Gospel and loved us with a love we cannot begin to understand. We thank You for all the joy You have brought into our lives and the many gifts You have given us in Your love. Help us to hold onto the grace that You have given us and help us see the blessings of the Gospel in our lives. May we never get bound into legalism, which seeks to rob us of the joy of the Gospel, but share the wonderful message with others so they, too, may have our joy in Christ. In Jesus' name. Amen.

#### Digging Deep

#### My Personal Study for Week 2

#### Day 1 • Read Galatians 3:1–14

1. In chapter 3, Paul continues his impassioned plea to the Galatians. He uses strong language, examples from Scripture, and logical thought to convince them that the teachings of the Judaizers are erroneous. Paul's defense of the Gospel shows the Galatians the way of true salvation.

a. Paul calls the Galatians "foolish" as he begins this part of the letter. What does he mean by this?

b. Why do you think Paul reminds the Galatians of Christ Jesus crucified? See 1 Corinthians 1:22–25.

c. Read verses 2–5. How did the Galatians first receive saving faith?

d. How did the Galatians propose to stay in faith?

2. Suppose you had a Christian friend who had come to worry about being good enough to keep God happy. How do you think Paul might address such misguided thinking, and why would it be important to do so?

3. **Challenge question.** a. Paul uses the example of Abraham because the Jews (and likely the Judaizers) took much pride in Abraham as the father of the

Jewish nation and the recipient of God's covenant of circumcision. In verse 6, Paul quotes Genesis 15:6. Read Romans 4:1–8. What does it mean that "Abraham believed God, and it was *counted* to him as righteousness" (emphasis added)?

b. Based on this fact, what conclusion does Paul draw in verse 7 concerning all who believe in Jesus as their Savior—Gentile and Jew alike?

c. Verse 8 says that "God would justify the Gentiles by faith." *Gentiles* in this verse means "nations" ("all peoples" [Genesis 12:2–3]). The Gentiles were not connected to the Law of Moses. Yet all who have the true faith are to be blessed along with Abraham (v. 9). How does this truth negate the teachings of the Judaizers?

4. In verses 10–11, Paul continues to use scriptural truth to point out how we are justified. These verses also tell why humanity cannot be saved by the Law.

a. Why is the Law a curse?

Deuteronomy 27:26

Psalm 14:3

Isaiah 64:6

b. Why did God design faith?

5. a. How did Abraham (and you) receive God's blessings?

b. What is included in the "promised Spirit"?

Romans 8:1–11

Ezekiel 36:26–27

John 14:16–17

## Day 2 • Read Galatians 3:15–25

6. Paul begins this section of his letter by using an example from everyday life to further define the purpose of the Law for the Galatians. In verse 15, Paul compares a human covenant (will) to God's covenant (testament) with Abraham and His people. Once a human will is notarized, no one can legally add anything to it. The same is true of God's covenant. Once God made His promises to Abraham (review Genesis 12:2–3; 17:4–8), that was that. God's covenant was not a mutual agreement between Him and man. God's covenant with Abraham was one-sided. Only God gave it. No substitutions or additions could be made.

a. To whom are the promises of God's covenant given (vv. 7, 16)?

b. According to verses 17–18, why does the Law have no effect on God's covenant promises, including the promise of salvation?

c. How can we be certain that God will keep His promise to us and will not allow anything else, including the Law, to supersede it? See Hebrews 6:13–18.

Romans 6:3–11

7. Verses 19–25 address the question “Why then the law?”

a. Why did God give the Law? Focus especially on verses 19 and 24.

b. What was the difference between the way God gave His covenant promise to Abraham and the way He gave His Law (vv. 18–19; Deuteronomy 33:2)?

c. Why is the Law no longer in effect (v. 25)?

8. As a justified and righteous child of God, how is serving God no longer a curse, but a blessing and a joy? See Romans 7:4–7.

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**Day 3 • Read Galatians 3:26–4:7**

9. Having discussed our lives under the Law, beginning with verse 26, Paul now describes the new status of our lives because of faith in Christ Jesus. Paul’s words point out the difference between the Old Testament era of living under the limits and restraints of the Law as God’s children and the New Testament Gospel era of living as grown-up sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

a. Read verses 27–29. How does becoming a son of God through faith in Christ Jesus change a person’s status with God?

b. **Challenge question.** What does it mean to be “baptized into Christ”?

1 Corinthians 12:13

10. In Galatians 4:1–7, Paul continues to explain the difference between God’s Old Testament children and His New Testament sons. Verses 1–2: When a person is a child (minor), although he is an heir, he is not legally able or capable of handling his inheritance. The child is under a guardian (tutor, steward, trustee) until the time when he is old enough to handle his inheritance wisely and with understanding.

Similarly, the Jews who believed in the promise of the Messiah were children of God and heirs of His promise to Abraham. But they were spiritually minors. They did not yet have a mature understanding of God’s plan of salvation. They were restricted under a tutor or guardian (the Law). Paul refers to these restrictions in verse 3 as “the elementary principles of the world.” These principles apply both to the Mosaic Law as well as to religions the Gentile believers once followed. While the Law served as a restraint from evil, it did not justify or provide salvation. Under the Law, God’s Old Testament children were not yet in full enjoyment of their sonship and inheritance. The Mosaic Law was like a yoke of slavery (5:1) upon their necks because of its demands, statutes, commandments, and sacrifices.

Verses 4–5 describe the deliverance from the Law that God sent.

a. Why is it important that Jesus was “born of woman” and “born under the law”? See also Romans 5:19.

b. Jesus’ redemption changed our status from slaves of the Law and immature children to being God’s children and full heirs. God adopted us as His full heirs because of what Jesus did for us as our Savior. This applies to both the Jews who had been under the Law and to the Gentiles who believed in Jesus. As God’s sons and full heirs, who is our new “Guardian”? See Romans 8:9.

11. a. As an adopted child of God and a full heir of His inheritance, what does it mean to you personally that you can now, by the power of the Holy Spirit, call God "Father"?

b. What added insight to Galatians 4:6 do you find in Romans 8:26–27?

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**Day 4 • Read Galatians 4:8–20**

12. In verses 8–20, Paul interrupts his doctrinal explanation to express his heartfelt concern for the Galatian Christians. Note the phrases in verses 11–20 that indicate Paul's heartache concerning the Galatian Christians.

a. What do these verses show about how the relationship should be between a pastor and his parishioners?

b. Because of his love for them, Paul rebuked the Galatians. We may find ourselves in a similar situation. How and when should we respond?

Ephesians 4:2–3

2 Timothy 4:2

13. Read verses 17–20. Do you think Paul was jealous of the effect the Judaizers were having on the Galatians? See 1 Corinthians 1:10–17.

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**Day 5 • Read Galatians 4:21–31**

14. Paul now turns to another line of defense in the hope of convincing the Galatians that it is not the Law but the Gospel that teaches the way of salvation. In verse 21, Paul challenges the Judaizers and those who wish to follow them as to their accurate knowledge of the Law. To do this, Paul once again uses the life of Abraham, about whom the Jews loved to boast. In verses 22–23, Paul refers to the facts about Abraham and his sons Ishmael and Isaac.

Read the original recording of these facts in Genesis 16:1–16 and Genesis 21:1–5. Which of Abraham's sons was a son of the flesh? a son of the promise?

15. **Challenge question.** In allegory form, Paul uses facts from the true story of Ishmael and Isaac to show the relation between those who live under the Law and those who live under the promise (the Gospel). In verse 25, Paul describes the people who are under the Law (slaves) as those from Hagar. Hagar's descendants are from "the present Jerusalem"—the capital of the Jewish race. In this earthly city live the Jewish leaders who continued to preach the necessity of keeping the Law in order to be saved.

Sarah's children, beginning with Isaac, are descendants of the promise. These are the Jewish and Gentile believers who have been freed from the bonds of the Law by Christ so that they might live in Him. God's Word and promise in Christ truly create new life! The promise God gives is not something that comes of our own will but by God's grace. Sarah's descendants are citizens of the spiritual Jerusalem (v. 26), also known as Zion or heaven. Here Christ reigns. This spiritual Jerusalem includes the whole Church of believers in Christ as their Savior, which is found throughout the earth.

Read verses 28–31. How does the story and situation of Hagar and Sarah/Ishmael and Isaac apply to the situation of the Galatian Christians and to Christians today? See Genesis 21:9–10.