

## The Epistle To Galatians

### Code: 12/ NT / 3

#### 1. General Aims of the unit

Better Understanding of the "word of God" to live according to its instructions

#### 2. Special aims of the lesson

1. To have an overview of the churches of Galatia and the heresies among them (refer to the decision of the council of Jerusalem Acts 15)
2. To acknowledge that this epistle with 'Romans , 1<sup>st</sup>,2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians' represent the major doctrine of St. Paul
3. To explore the meanings of the main terms used in this epistle " Law , deeds of the Law, faith , gospel for uncircumcised , gospel of circumcised , pillars of the church , justification , heir of God , born according to the flesh , born according to the promise , children of promise , freedom ,
4. Highlight the justification of Abraham with faith and compare with what St. James declares about justification of Abraham through faith. Compare between the deeds of faith and the deeds of Law.
5. Show the Christian meaning of "freedom"
6. Compare between the deeds of flesh and that of the spirit.
7. Show the real characteristics of the Christian who is justified with the Blood of Christ and live according to the Spirit without any of the practices of Moses Law

#### 3.Outcomes

##### By the end of this lesson the teens are able to:

1. be a part in a debate about the differences between the deeds of faith and that of the Law and their interpretation in our daily life (uses scenarios)
2. Remember by heart the main ideas of the epistle .
3. Reconsider his/her ideas about slavery and freedom in Christ
4. Set a list of prerequisites to be filled with the fruits of the Spirit, and remember by heart the 9 fruits of the Spirit.
5. List the works of the flesh and which of them are dominant in this generation , and how we overcome them.
6. Memorize the verses which is the base of our spiritual progress " V. 3:12-14

**4.Verses:** Gal.2:9 , 16 , 20 , 21 ,3:13 , 27 ; 4:4-7 , 19 , 28 , 31 ; 5:4-5 , 13-14 , 16-17 19-21 , 22-25 ; 6:8-10,14,17

**5.References:** See the attached notes

## **The epistle of Saint Paul to Galatians**

### **The writer:**

Saint Paul, who had established churches in a number of cities in Roman province of Galatia in Asia Minor. It is the only epistle Saint Paul wrote to a group of churches. None of the scholars argues about the identity of the writer.

### **The Churches of the Galatians and the timing of the epistle**

There are two theories about the Churches of Galatia;

#### **1. The north Galatia theory**

This epistle is written to the Galatians by race, or the churches located in the old kingdom of Galatia, i.e. north central part of Asia Minor [Pessinus, Ancyra, Tavium]. Saint Paul during his 2<sup>nd</sup>. Mission (Acts 16:6) he was delayed in Galatia by sickness [Gal. 4:13]. During his illness, he preached these areas and founded the Christian churches in Galatia [Gal. 1:6]. According to this theory the letter was written between 53AD – 57AD from Ephesus or Macedonia.

#### **2. The South Galatia theory**

In 25BC, the Roman Empire combined Southern territories into the province named Galatia. In this case the epistle was written to the churches founded by Saint Paul in his 1<sup>st</sup>. mission in the area of Asia Minor extended from the sea coast inland like Lystra, Derbe [Acts 13,14]. This assumption places the epistle among the earliest writings of Saint Paul, possibly in 48AD. Some suggest the timing was Jerusalem council (49-50AD), but most probably after the council.

### **The aim of the epistle and the circumstances.**

False teachers known as Judaizers (Jewish – Christians legalist) followed Saint Paul in Galatia. They opposed his doctrine which is the sufficiency of Christ for salvation. They try to impose Moses Law on the Gentiles as the only passage to Christianity. Saint Paul normally disregarding the ceremonial law (circumcision, Sabbath, new moons, ...) and considered it of no value to the faith in Christ.

They used the following tactics:

1. Disputed Saint Paul apostolic authority [Gal. 1:1-12], and argued that the other apostles Peter, James, and John did not abolish these customs in the Church of Jerusalem.
2. Argued that Saint Paul was less informed than the twelve apostles [Gal. 1:11-24]

So Saint Paul's main aim in this epistle is to defend the sound doctrine of "sufficiency of Christ for our salvation without the need to any other mediator like the Law".

He 1<sup>st</sup>. defend his apostolic authority and equality to the other twelve apostles, and the approval of the pillars of the Church to his doctrine.

Then he proved his teaching from the OT.

At the end of the epistle ,he explained practical implications of living in liberty from the deeds of the Law but in the freedom of Christ.

### Characteristics of the epistle

1. This epistle is the strongest among Saint Paul epistles to defend his theology of “the gospel of Gentiles”, where
  - Justification by faith is working through love.
  - New life is in Christ.
  - Responsibilities of love
  - Meaning of cross
  - walking in spirit
2. The epistle reveals the organization and structure of the Church in Saint Paul’s time. Saints Peter , James , and John are considered the pillars of the Church in Jerusalem[Gal. 1:18-19] , defining the fields of service [ Gal. 2: 9]; and of disputes between two apostles.
3. It provides lot of data about Saint Paul’s life and ministry.
4. The epistle presents our Lord Jesus as our Liberator, and explains Christian liberty.[Gal. 5:1 ,13]
5. The epistle contains many contrasts:
  - grace and Law [Gal. 2:21]
  - faith and works of the Law [Gal. 2:15-20]
  - fruits of the Spirit and works of the flesh[Gal. 5:19- 6:5]
  - the cross and the world [Gal.6 :14].
  - trusting in man’s reasoning and Christ’s revelation[Gal. 1:11 , 2:14] and many others
6. Christian life -according to this epistle- does not know extremes but always has the compromise:
  - liberty as the freedom of bondage of the observance of the works of the Law , but not outside the law of Christ.
  - Christian life is personal, without ignoring the communal life of the Church.
  - all the believers are one in Christ, but some are pillars of the Church.
7. In this epistle our Lord Jesus Christ is Our Liberator who grants us freedom and power. He is called;
  - our-sin bearer [Gal.1:4]
  - redeemer [Gal. 3:13 ,4:5 ]
  - a curse for sinners [Gal. 3:13]
  - the seed [Gal. 3:19 , 4:4]
  - the Justifier [Gal. 2:16 ,3:24]
8. The epistle concentrates on the grace of God that makes us free from the burden of Mosaic Law, and also reveals the work of the Holy Trinity in the life of the believers, granting him inner liberty.

## Outline of the epistle

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|---|------------------|
| <b>1. Introduction</b>                              | <b>1:1-10</b>    |
| a. Greetings  | 1:1-5            |
| b. Reasons of writing                               | 1:6-10           |
| <br>  |                  |
| <b>2. Defense of his Apostolic Authority</b>        | <b>1:11-2:14</b> |
| a. The call for apostleship                         | 1:11-24          |
| b. The doctrine is approved by the Council          | 2:1-10           |
| c. Rebuked Saint Peter                              | 2:11-14          |
| <br>  |                  |
| <b>3. Justification by Faith ( the true gospel)</b> | <b>2:15-4:31</b> |
| a. Faith in Jesus Christ                            | 2:15-21          |
| b. The Galatians' experience of the gospel          | 3:1-5            |
| c. The experience of Abraham                        | 3:6-9            |
| d. The curse of the Law                             | 3:10-14          |
| e. The priority of the promise                      | 3:15-18          |
| f. The purpose of the Law                           | 3:19-25          |
| g. Sons not slaves                                  | 3:26-4:11        |
| h. Appeal to enter into freedom from the Law        | 4:12-20          |
| i. The allegory of Hager and Sarah                  | 4:21-31          |
| <br>  |                  |
| <b>4. Living in Christian Liberty</b>               | <b>5:1- 6:10</b> |
| a. Danger imposed by legalism (Judaizers)           | 5:1-12           |
| b. Freedom and love                                 | 5:13-15          |
| c. Between flesh and spirit                         | 5:16-26          |
| d. Do good for all                                  | 6:1-10           |
| <br>  |                  |
| <b>5. Concluding remarks</b>                        | <b>6:11-18</b>   |
| a. The practical cross                              | 6:11-17          |
| b. Benediction                                      | 6:               |