A journey through the NT#11
The book of Galatians

Paul and Barnabas passed through the region of Galatia on their 1st missionary journey.

This is from Acts 13&14 where they traveled through Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

This letter is unique in that it wasn't written to an individual or one particular church. But rather, it was written to the churches of Galatia.

These churches were made up of both Jews and Gentiles; and they were standing firm in the faith (at least until Paul left).

They had received the gospel of Christ with gladness:

- They had been baptized into Him (Gal. 3:26,27).
- They had received miraculous gifts from the HS (Gal. 3:5).
- The apostles had appointed Elders in all the churches (Acts 14:23).

These new converts understood that it was through Jeus Christ that they were saved and free from sin.

However…it wasn't long after Paul left this region that false teachers came in and started leading them astray.

Some say Paul had been gone for less than a year when these Jewish teachers (called Judaizers) came and started teaching "another gospel"…actually they were perverting the true gospel!

These false teachers were claiming that, in addition to faith in Jesus and being baptized into Him (3:27), one must also obey the law of Moses to be saved (4:21; Acts 15:1). Truth for Today, McKinney, pg. 10

And so, Paul writes them a letter to remind them of this:
Theme of letter:
Gal. 5:1
Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

This is the CHRISTIAN'S LETTER OF LIBERTY…throughout the letter Paul talks about the freedom that comes from Christ.

These new Christians had been set free from the bondage of the Old Law but the Judaizers came in right after Paul left and started dragging them back into the Old system of a "works based' faith.

The book can be divided into three sections:

- **Chapters 1–2 — The Gospel Defended**
- **Chapters 3–4 — The Gospel Explained**
- **Chapters 5–6 — The Gospel Lived**

I. GALATIANS 1—THERE IS ONLY ONE GOSPEL

Gal. 1:6-9
I **marvel** that you are **turning away** so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, [7] which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to **pervert** the gospel of Christ. [8] But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. [9] As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Marvel—astonished, shocked, amazed
It was hard for Paul to believe that they had turned from the gospel of Grace so quickly…he starts his letter with a strong rebuke and warning for anyone that turns from the gospel of Christ.

Turning away—literally means to "desert". When they turned away from grace they were turning away from God!

Pervert—to reverse…to turn around—these false teachers when turning these Christians from Christ back to the Law.

Why can we NOT change the gospel?
Because: **THE GOSPEL COMES FROM GOD!**

Gal. 1:11,12
But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. [12] For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught *it,* but *it came* through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Paul didn't create this message. He received it through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Not only that but Paul was changed by this gospel:
Gal. 1:13-24
Paul went from a persecutor of Christ to a preacher of Christ!

We have no authority to change the doctrine of Christ…to add to or take away from it (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6, Rev. 22:18,19)— "do not add to or take away anything written in this book"

There is only ONE GOSPEL that has been given to man…it is the perfect, true will of God…and we cannot change it!!

II. GALATIANS 2-- THE GOSPEL IS ABOUT GRACE, NOT THE LAW

Paul is going to remind them of a story that happened in Acts 15…to tell them that this matter has already been settled once and for all(the matter of circumcision).

Summary of the COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM, ACTS 15:
Some in the Jewish churches (Judaizers) were teaching that Gentiles could become Christians and be a part of the church, but they also needed to be circumcised.

Of course, if you are keeping one part of the Law…you must keep the entire Law.

What these "false teachers" were saying:
"They desired to rewrite the Great Commission so as to make it read, "He that believes, is baptized, is circumcised, and keeps the Law of Moses shall be saved."
(Robert Taylor Jr. Studies in Galatians)

And so, they had this meeting:

- From the Gentile churches, Paul, Barnabas and Titus
- From the Jewish churches: James (the brother of Jesus), Peter and John.

This was an enormous meeting…one commentary pointed out that between the 2 parties in this meeting, 22 out of the 27 books of the NT were written, (Knox, Jr. Galatians, pg. 74).

So, the decisions that came from this MEETING had HUGE consequences and implications for the entire church!

They all agreed that through Jesus, all men, Jew and Gentile have been set free from the law of Moses and that had been given the HS…and that circumcision and the keeping of the Law has been done away with.

They sent a letter to the Gentile churches and everything was GOOD!
(Acts 15:23-29)

They were all in agreement! Everything was great…the matter had been settled!

However, Peter was inconsistent in his actions, eating with Gentiles until his Jewish brethren came in…and he withdrew from them. Paul rebuked him to his face…and then wrote this…
Gal. 2:16
knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

This is the theme of the entire book of Galatians…*Man cannot be saved by the Law, salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ*.

And this faith changes the way we live!

Notice one of the most notable verses in the Bible:
Gal. 2:20
I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Paul is reminding Peter and the others…that we died to our old way of life in baptism.

- Paul had "put away" all of his achievements in Judaism
- Paul had "died" to the old law and its customs.

And this was hard for him…but he had to crucify that old man.

And now, he lives for Christ and for the church of Christ…and Christ lives in him.

III. GALATIANS 3—THE LAW COULD NOT SAVE

Gal. 3:1,2
O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? [2] This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Paul asks the Galatians a simple question:

Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing of faith? — 3:2

Abraham was justified by faith
Gal. 3:6
just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

Paul goes back before the Law of Moses to Abraham.

The Law brought a curse — 3:10
How: The Law demanded perfect obedience, and humanity could not keep it perfectly.

Christ redeemed us from the curse
Gal. 3:13,14

Jesus accomplished what the Law could never accomplish.

The Law pointed us to Christ
Gal. 3:24,25
Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. [25] But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor

The Law was temporary and served a purpose.

In Christ we become God's children
3:26–29
For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. [27] For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. [28] There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. [29] And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

They were all "sons of God" not by obedience to the Old Law…but because of their faith in Christ.

And now, where the old law totally separated Jew and Gentile…Paul says, because of baptism in Christ…you are ALL(Jew and Gentile) Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.

All of this comes through the avenue of FAITH and NOT the LAW!

IV. GALATIANS 4—CHRIST MADE US FREE

Paul uses an allegory from Hagar and Sarah…a slave woman and a free woman to compare the old law with the new law.

Gal. 4:21-23
Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? [22] For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. [23] But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise,

Gal. 4:31
So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

Christ freed us so that we could become God's children—not so that we could return to bondage.

V. GALATIANS 5—STAND FAST AND WALK BY THE SPIRIT

Gal. 5:1
Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

This is what the entire letter is about…and Paul repeats this theme over and over again.

Paul was reminding them of their FREEDOM IN CHRIST!

Don't use freedom as an excuse to sin — 5:13
"Do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh…"

Christian liberty isn't:
"I can do whatever I want."
It is:
"I am free to serve God and others."

Love fulfills our responsibility toward others — 5:13–14
"Through love serve one another."

Walk in the Spirit — 5:16
"Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

Put away the works of the flesh — 5:19–21
Paul gives a very practical list of sinful behavior.

Produce the fruit of the Spirit — 5:22–23
Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Crucify the flesh — 5:24
"Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

True freedom in Christ isn't freedom to live for myself; it is freedom to live for Christ.

VI. GALATIANS 6—LIVE LIKE CHRIST

In chapter 6, Paul is going to encourage the brethren that are SPIRITUAL to help those brethren that have fallen into the trap of sin.

Pick them up
Gal. 6:1
Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who *are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

Hold them up
Gal. 6:2
Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Build them up

Gal. 6:9,10

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. [10] Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Paul ends this letter by telling them not to boast in the flesh, that is in keeping the Old Law…but only boast in Christ Jesus.

Gal. 6:14,15

But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. [15] For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

Galatians begins with people **turning away from the gospel** and ends with Paul **turning them back to the cross**.

The gospel is not simply something we believe. It is something that changes us. We don't need the Law of Moses to bring us to Christ—it has already done its work. We don't need another gospel—we have the gospel of Christ. And we don't need to return to the slavery from which Christ has freed us.

Christ died for us, Christ freed us, and now Christ calls us to live for Him.