

Insights From Galatians

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Insights From Galatians

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Introduction

One of the ways I've been studying the Word of God is by making a list of everything that each book of the Bible teaches. This has resulted in more than a thousand pages of material. Although it's interesting and I've learned a lot from writing it, that's a lot of bullet points to read through!

The purpose of this book is to extract the most interesting insights from that massive list. This isn't intended to summarize each book of the Bible because that's what my "Chapter Summary of the Bible" is for. It's also not intended to list the major points of each book because you're probably already familiar with them. Finally, it's not intended to offer in-depth commentary because that's what my regular commentary is for. This book is simply a collection of points that I found interesting.

I hope there's some material here that you find edifying.

Jon Cooper
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Galatians

- Paul was made an apostle by Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:1)
- God the Father raised Jesus from the dead (Galatians 1:1)
- This letter didn't just come from Paul. It was also sent by all the Christians who were with Paul at the time he wrote it (Galatians 1:2).
- Even though Paul was writing to rebuke the Galatian churches, he still wanted them to have grace and peace. Paul wanted the Galatian church to be saved and return to the faith (Galatians 1:3, 6).
- The Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins (Galatians 1:4).
- When Jesus came and gave Himself for our sins, He was obeying the will of God the Father (Galatians 1:4).
- We must seek the everlasting glory of Jesus (Galatians 1:5).
- Paul believed that the heresy of the Galatian church needed to be immediately and publicly rebuked (Galatians 1:6).
- The Bible doesn't teach that it makes no difference what you believe as long as you're sincere. Instead it says that we must all stay in the true gospel – and there's only one true gospel (Galatians 1:6-9).
- All those who preach a false gospel are accursed. This applies to both men and angels (Galatians 1:8-9).
- It's wrong for preachers to seek to please people instead of pleasing God (Galatians 1:10).

- Paul was taught the gospel by Jesus Christ Himself. He didn't receive that doctrine from someone else (Galatians 1:12).
- God separated Paul for His service while he was still in his mother's womb (Galatians 1:15). That means it happened before Paul was born.
- God is the one who determines what we're going to do in life. He may call us before we're even born.
- The reason Paul came to believe in Jesus is because God revealed Jesus to him (Galatians 1:16).
- Paul was afraid that if he publicly preached the gospel to famous people then that would mean he had run in vain. Therefore when he spoke to famous people he did so privately (Galatians 2:2). It seems Paul was trying to avoid pride.
- It wasn't necessary for Titus to be circumcised in order to be saved (Galatians 2:3). Circumcision isn't required for salvation.
- Churches need to be on guard against false converts who enter the church for malicious reasons (Galatians 2:4).
- God gave Paul the ministry of preaching to the Gentiles, and He gave Peter the ministry of preaching to the Jews (Galatians 2:7).
- It wasn't wrong for an apostle to focus on preaching to one group of people at the expense of a different group of people.
- The pillars of the early church were James, Peter, and John (Galatians 2:9).

- The apostles believed that churches had a responsibility to take care of the poor (Galatians 2:10).
- When Peter sinned, Paul publicly rebuked him it (Galatians 2:11). Since Peter was sinning publicly in front of the church and was leading people astray by his bad behavior, Paul rebuked him publicly in front of the entire church.
- When a person is leading others into sin, it's not wrong to publicly confront them about it. You don't have to first meet with them privately before you can bring it up to the church. The Matthew 18 procedure is only for situations where another individual has personally wronged you (Matthew 18:15), not for cases of heresy or false teaching.
- Gentiles don't have to live as Jews (Galatians 2:14). This means we aren't required to keep the Mosaic Law.
- We aren't justified by the works of the Law. Instead we're justified by the faith of Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:16).
- Paul repeatedly says that we're justified by the faith *of* Christ (Galatians 2:16, 20; 3:22; Philippians 3:9). It's certainly true that we become the children of God by having faith *in* Christ (Galatians 3:26). However, the Bible teaches that we're actually justified by *Christ's* faith.
- Paul repeats three times in one verse that we're not justified by works (Galatians 2:16).
- Christ lives within those who are saved (Galatians 2:20).
- The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross was an act of love (Galatians 2:20).
- If righteousness comes by keeping the Law then Christ

died in vain. In that case His death accomplished nothing and was a waste (Galatians 2:21).

- The gospel of salvation by works has nothing to do with Jesus and is actually a rejection of Him (Galatians 3:1).
- Our salvation begins by faith and continues by faith. It doesn't begin by faith and then switch over to works at some point (Galatians 3:2-3).
- Those who believe that they're saved by their works, or that they must do good works in order to maintain their salvation, aren't saved at all (Galatians 3:1-4). Instead they're going to Hell.
- All suffering doesn't have value. It depends on *why* you're suffering. There's no profit in suffering for a false gospel (Galatians 3:4).
- The true children of Abraham are those who have faith, not those who seek salvation by works (Galatians 3:7).
- When God promised Abraham that all the nations of the world would be blessed through him, He was talking about the fact that salvation was going to come to the Gentiles (Galatians 3:8).
- Those who seek salvation by works are cursed (Galatians 3:10).
- The just will live by faith (Galatians 3:11).
- Christ saved us from the curse of the law by taking that curse upon Himself (Galatians 3:13).
- God made a promise regarding the “seed” of Abraham. Since the word "seed" is singular and not plural, the promise was talking about a specific descendant of

Abraham – the Messiah (Galatians 3:16). That's how much the individual words of the Bible matter.

- Since the promise to Abraham was about Christ, and since salvation comes through Christ, that means salvation does not and *cannot* come through works. Salvation by works is contrary to the promises of God (Galatians 3:16-17).
- Salvation by faith was taught all the way back in the days of Abraham. The gospel always pointed to Christ and was never about works (Galatians 3:16-17).
- The Law which God gave Moses at Mount Sinai was given 430 years after God gave His promises to Abraham (Galatians 3:17).
- The Law came *after* the promises that God made to Abraham. That means the promise of salvation by faith came first, before the Law was ever given. The Law can't overrule salvation by faith because faith came first and the Law came hundreds of years later (Galatians 3:17).
- The Mosaic Law wasn't intended to endure forever. It was only in place until Jesus came (Galatians 3:19).
- The Mosaic Law was ordained by angels (Galatians 3:19).
- There's no law that can give life. The Law is incapable of doing that (Galatians 3:21).
- None of us are without sin (Galatians 3:22).
- God gives the promises to those who believe (Galatians 3:22). He doesn't give them to those who seek salvation by works.
- Some things weren't revealed until after Jesus came

(Galatians 3:23).

- The Law isn't an end in itself. Instead it's intended to lead us to Christ, who is the only one who can save us (Galatians 3:24).
- We are justified by faith (Galatians 3:24).
- The children of God are all those who have faith in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:26). One of the things the Bible consistently teaches is that those who aren't saved are *not* the children of God, but are the children of the devil (1 John 3:10).
- We are saved by the faith *of* Christ (Galatians 2:16), and by faith *in* Christ (Galatians 3:26). Those are two different things.
- Baptism is a public demonstration that we've put on Christ (Galatians 3:27). It's a picture of what Christ has done for us.
- Those who haven't been redeemed by the blood of Jesus are still slaves to this world (Galatians 4:3).
- God the Father is the one who sent Jesus into this world (Galatians 4:4).
- When Jesus redeemed us He also adopted us as His children (Galatians 4:5).
- The Spirit of Jesus lives in the hearts of all those who have been redeemed (Galatians 4:6).
- It seems the Galatians followed the Mosaic Law. They kept the Sabbath, celebrated the Jewish feasts, and observed the other things that the Law required. They did this because they believed they had to keep the Law in

order to be saved, and Paul strongly condemned them for doing this (Galatians 4:10-11).

- Paul said that the Galatians would have given him their eyes if it were possible to do so (Galatians 4:15). This hints that Paul's physical problem (his "thorn in the flesh") was related to his eyes.
- Paul doubted the salvation of the Galatians. The fact that they had rejected the gospel of grace and were seeking salvation by works made him think they were not saved (Galatians 4:20). This means it's not wrong to tell people who believe in salvation by works that you doubt their salvation. They need to be told the truth so they will repent and believe.
- Abraham was a real person and the things that happened to him really happened. However, his life also serves as an allegory. God used him to illustrate the difference between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace (Galatians 4:22-31).
- Paul said there's a Jerusalem which is above – a heavenly Jerusalem (Galatians 4:26). Since he speaks of it in the present tense it must have already existed in his day.
- Our heavenly mother isn't Mary. Instead it's the heavenly city – the New Jerusalem (Galatians 4:26).
- Those who seek salvation by works persecute those who seek salvation by grace. This was true in the past and it's still true today (Galatians 4:29).
- Although Abraham really did cast out Hagar and Ishmael, God used that as an allegory to illustrate the fact that those who seek salvation by works won't be saved (Galatians 4:30-31). Those who seek salvation by the

works of the flesh (who are represented by Ishmael) will be cast out, but those who are saved by the promise and grace of God (who are represented by Isaac) will receive the inheritance.

- We must stand fast in the liberty that Christ has given us. We must never go back to seeking salvation by the works of the Law (Galatians 5:1).
- Paul was passionately against adding *anything* to the gospel (Galatians 5:2). Even adding just *one* new requirement – a single work which must be performed – was enough to turn the gospel into a false gospel and send all those who believe in it to Hell.
- Paul said that if you add even one work to salvation then that means you're seeking to be saved by works – and that means you must keep the *entire* Law perfectly, which is impossible. (Galatians 5:3). Adding a single requirement adds the entire Law.
- Those who seek to be justified by works are fallen from grace and aren't saved (Galatians 5:4).
- The apostle Paul believed that the Galatians would listen to his rebuke and repent, and return to the truth (Galatians 5:10).
- God will punish those who teach salvation by works (Galatians 5:10).
- Paul said that if he taught salvation by works then he would no longer be persecuted because the world wouldn't find that gospel offensive (Galatians 5:11). The world is offended by the doctrine of salvation by grace, not salvation by works.
- Paul didn't pray that God would save those who were

teaching a false gospel. Instead he prayed that God would kill them (Galatians 5:12). Note, however, that Paul did *not* suggest that the church itself should do anything to physically harm false teachers! Instead Paul put the matter into the hands of God.

- Even though we aren't saved by our works, we must not lead sinful lives (Galatians 5:13).
- God's commandments define what love is (Galatians 5:14).
- If we walk in the Spirit then we won't fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Galatians 5:16).
- The reason we struggle in our Christian walk is because the flesh is at war against the Spirit (Galatians 5:17).
- Those who lead sinful lives will go to Hell. If they don't repent of their sins and seek salvation by faith in Christ then they won't enter the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21). The apostle John taught that those who continue to lead sinful lives aren't saved at all; their actions are revealing their true sinful nature (1 John 2:3-5).
- Joy comes from having the Spirit in our life (Galatians 5:22).
- The ability to be gentle with others comes from having the Spirit in our lives (Galatians 5:22). Gentleness is a good thing, and it should characterize our interactions with others.
- All those who belong to Christ have put to death the desires of the flesh. Genuine Christians walk in the Spirit instead of in sin (Galatians 5:24-25). However, this doesn't mean Christians never sin (which can be seen

from the fact that Paul rebuked Peter when he sinned.)

- If someone is overtaken in a fault, we have a responsibility to do something about it (Galatians 6:1).
- There's a certain amount of danger in helping other people overcome their faults. We may find ourselves tempted to sin (Galatians 6:1).
- We have a responsibility to care for one another (Galatians 6:2).
- The way we demonstrate love for one another is by helping people bear their burdens (Galatians 6:2).
- It's not wrong to rejoice in our work (Galatians 6:4).
- Those who sow to the flesh (leading sinful lives) will reap corruption. Those who sow to the Spirit will reap everlasting life. (Galatians 6:8).
- We have a responsibility to do good to everyone as we have the opportunity to do so (Galatians 6:10). This includes those who are saved and those who aren't.
- Paul wrote this entire letter himself, with his own hand (Galatians 6:11). He didn't dictate it to someone else, which was unusual for him. This seems to be an indication of how strongly he felt about its subject matter.
- It seems some people had compromised the gospel to avoid persecution (Galatians 6:12). However, that road leads to Hell.
- Those who teach salvation by works don't keep the Law themselves (Galatians 6:13).
- God doesn't allow us to take glory in our works, in our good deeds, in or our obedience. The only thing we can

take glory in is the cross of Jesus (Galatians 6:14).

- Paul prayed for peace upon "the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16). This seems to be a reference to the Jews who were seeking salvation by faith and not by works.
- The scars that Paul bore on his body were proof that he had preached the true gospel. No one could say that he hadn't been preaching the truth (Galatians 6:17).
- Paul ended his letter to the Galatians on a note of grace (Galatians 6:18).