

The Last Impression

A Look at the Conclusions of Various Epistles

Galatians

Initial Meeting

Acts 13-14 mention four Galatian cities visited by Paul: Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. These cities had congregations established during Paul's 1st journey. However, the Jews of Pisidian Antioch became jealous of Paul's popularity and expelled Paul and Barnabas from the region. Paul had to flee from Iconium also. In Lystra, people thought Paul and Barnabas were Zeus and Hermes. They preached in Derbe, then returned to Syrian Antioch.

Current Situation

Two theories exist about the date of writing. The Northern Galatian Theory dates this letter c. 54-55 A.D., after the Jerusalem Council. The Southern Theory dates it c. 48-50 A.D. The Southern Theory is preferred because it posits that Paul had already met these churches when writing this letter to them. It also fits with the timeline presented in Acts. What Paul speaks of in **Galatians 2** fits with **Acts 11:1-18** with the Jerusalem Council of **Acts 15** addressing in a public way the issues discussed in Galatians. The gospel was at stake in this region. The false teaching was spreading which said a person did have to follow Mosaic Law in addition to believing in the gospel of Christ. If you think you must follow law, you rebuild what Jesus has destroyed causing Christ to be of no value for you!

Last Impression

Galatians 6:11-18

See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand! ¹² Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. ¹³ Not even those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your flesh. ¹⁴ May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵ Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation. ¹⁶ Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God. ¹⁷ Finally, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. ¹⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

1. Why does Paul say, "See what large letter I use with my own hand!"? Is this for emphasis or a hint at the nature of the thorn in his flesh mentioned in **II Corinthians 12**?
2. Think about **v. 12**. The issue of circumcision is used again as typical of following the entire OT law. What was the real reason many were being circumcised?

3. What things do we do to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ? When we do such things, what are we being?
4. What's the truth about those who claim to follow the law and make a show of it? Where's their boast?
5. Do you want to boast? Well, don't, no one like that, but if you must, what is the only acceptable boast there is for God's child to make?
 - What's the initial implication of **v. 14b**? What's the far the reaching implication of **v. 14b**?
 - What does actually count when it comes to God's people and how saving faith is displayed in their lives? See **Galatians 5:6** for further explanation.
6. To what rule is Paul referring in **v. 16**?
7. Explain **v. 17**. Why did Paul say this? Considering **Proverbs 9:7-9**, is this a realistic expectation?
8. What's a good way to wrap up a tough conversation with someone? How is Paul's sign-off a great example for us?
9. What's your last impression of Galatians?