

# EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

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**Approximate date:** 48-49 C.E. or 50-52 C.E.

**Time period:** season of great confusion among many new non-Jewish Believers, and their integration into the community of faith

**Author:** the Apostle Paul

**Location of author:** Macedonia, Ephesus, or Antioch

**Target audience and their location:** mostly non-Jewish Believers in the province/region of Galatia

**People:**

Paul, Peter, Barnabas, Titus, James, John, false teachers or Influencers

**People mentioned:**

Yeshua the Messiah, Abraham, Hagar, Sarah, Isaac

**Places:**

Northern Galatia or Southern Galatia (debated),<sup>1</sup> Jerusalem, Arabia, Damascus, Syria, Cilicia, Judea, Antioch

**Places mentioned:**

Mount Sinai

**Key Themes:**

defense of Paul's genuine apostleship / a different gospel or so-called "good news" / Paul's testimony of salvation and being called by God / Paul and Barnabas' approval by the Jerusalem assembly / opposition of Paul to Peter / bewitching of Galatians via some (mis)usage of the Torah / promise of Yeshua as the Seed of Abraham / relationship of the Torah to the slave versus the free individual / concern for the Galatians' having returned to previous (pagan) practices / false zealotry of the Influencers toward the Galatians / analogy of Hagar and Sarah / true freedom in Yeshua / living by the Spirit / Influencers want to boast over those who follow their craft

**Key Scriptures:** Galatians 2:15-21; 3:11; 5:11, 16-26; 6:7-10 / **Greeting** (1:1-5); **Anathema Against Perverters of the Gospel** (1:11-2:21); **Paul's Dogmatic Argument** (3:1-4:31); **Ethical Exhortations** (5:1-6:10); **Conclusion** (6:11-18)<sup>2</sup>

**Theological Summary:** Genuine Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Galatians is something that all conservative and liberal examiners today accept. The message of Galatians, the exact audience of the Galatians, and some of the theological and historical background surrounding Galatians, however, have all been vigorously debated by examiners in the past century. Without question, the major theme of the letter to the Galatians is a warning about a perversion of the good news. Some contemporary Christian theologians have likened Galatians to be the "Magna Carta of Christian freedom" (further comparing Romans to being the "Constitution"). Consequently, any proper Messianic handling of Paul's letter to the Galatians has to keep these various points of view – and many others, in fact – in mind. Within Galatians, the Apostle Paul does

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<sup>1</sup> Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe (Acts 13:13-14:28).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, pp 486-488.

have to respond to some drastic, negative circumstances which have arisen, among a group of Believers who he has just spent some significant time with, helping them get started in their new Messiah faith and onto the right path of maturity. Outsiders had come in and had decided to ruin much of what Paul had started, questioning his apostolic authority and discipleship of the Galatians.

There is debate present in Galatians examination, as to who the exact audience of the letter is.<sup>3</sup> Up until the Twentieth Century, it was generally agreed that the target audience of Paul's letter, while obviously known as the Galatians, were actually those who originally migrated from Gaul into what is today Northern Turkey. These were ethnic Celts, who later integrated into the local population. Called today the **Northern Galatian Theory**, Paul's audience primarily consisted of ethnic Galatians. Sir William Ramsay is often credited with challenging this theory in the mid-Nineteenth Century, advocating instead that Paul's target audience was not ethnic Galatians, but rather Southern Galatians. Known as the **Southern Galatian Theory**, any reference to Galatia by Paul is to the Roman province in what is today Central Turkey. Much of the debate, over whether the Galatians Paul writes in his letter were ethnic Galatians from North Galatia or provincial Galatians from South Galatia, pertains to how Luke in the Book of Acts tends to use local designations of places (Acts 16:3; 18:23), whereas Paul in his letters uses the Roman provincial names. Among a large number of conservative examiners of Galatians today, the Southern Galatian Theory is what is generally adhered to, with the audience of Galatians being those Paul ministered to during his First Missionary Journey (Acts 13:13-14:28). This would more easily account for Paul's intimate relationship with the congregations of Galatia, as indicated throughout his letter.<sup>4</sup>

It is notable that of all Paul's letters, Galatians is the only letter for sure written to a group of assemblies, as opposed to a specific congregation or individual.<sup>5</sup> The date of composition for the Epistle to the Galatians is often tied to that of when the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 convened.<sup>6</sup> Concurrent with Paul's traveling through Galatia, a composition date of either 48-49 C.E. or 50-52 C.E. is often estimated. Given the debate present over the intended audience, if the Galatians Paul writes to are those from South Galatia, then it is probable that the letter was written prior to the Jerusalem Council—possibly even a bit close to its assembling—because no appeal is made in the letter to the Apostolic decree of Acts 15:19-21. Many theologians believe that Galatians was the first letter that Paul wrote (1 Thessalonians being another candidate for his first letter). Where Paul wrote Galatians from has been debated, as some favor a composition locus of Macedonia or Ephesus, while advocates of the Southern Galatian Theory tend to favor Syrian Antioch.

One thing we can be certain of is that Paul's Galatian audience was Greek speaking. While there are some Messianics who actually claim that Paul wrote to them in Hebrew or Aramaic, as an Eastern Roman province Greek would have been the predominant language in Galatia, other than a regional dialect like Phrygian.

The common, most widespread theological approach toward Galatians witnessed among readers and interpreters, at least since the Protestant Reformation, is that the non-Jewish Galatians were trying to keep the Law of Moses in order to earn their salvation before God—and for this the Apostle Paul was desperately worried. While some kind of human Torah keeping to earn salvation can definitely be detected as an element within the letter, whether this is the *only issue*, and determining if there are some more specific, targeted phenomena occurring, has been a significant debate over the past half century.

Questions that have been visited and revisited many times by those examining the Epistle to the Galatians, especially in the past twenty to thirty years, include: Who were the opponents of Paul in Galatia? Who were those being led astray? What were the "works of law" spoken against? What are the different

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<sup>3</sup> J. Knox, "Galatians, Letter to the," in *IDB*, 2:341-342; H.N. Ridderbos, "Galatians, Epistle to the," in *ISBE*, 2:380-381; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, pp 465-472; Hans Dieter Betz, "Galatians, Epistle to the," in *ABD*, 2:872; G.W. Hansen, "Galatians, Letter to the," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, pp 323-326; Carson and Moo, pp 458-461.

<sup>4</sup> Ridderbos, "Galatians, Epistle to the," in *ISBE*, 2:379.

<sup>5</sup> Ephesians is widely agreed to be a circular epistle as well, given the manuscript evidence in Ephesians 1:1 lacking "in Ephesus" (see RSV rendering).

<sup>6</sup> Ridderbos, "Galatians, Epistle to the," in *ISBE*, 2:382-383; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, pp 472-480; Carson and Moo, pp 462-465.

dynamics of “justification” that need to be considered? What is the big issue with “circumcision”? Many of these questions have been spurred on by what has been termed the New Perspective of Paul (NPP) in Biblical Studies, as particularly found in the various writings and proposals of theologians like James D.G. Dunn and N.T. Wright. Their proposals have tried to take into closer consideration ancient Jewish issues regarding the Torah, and the community’s relationship to the larger pagan world. Three areas, where NPP proposals have altered a few traditional views of sections of the Epistle to the Galatians, would be in how:<sup>7</sup>

- **“Righteousness” or “justification” in Galatians can include a corporate status as a member of God’s people, every bit as it regards personal justification and remission of sin.** As a direct result of expressing faith in Yeshua the Messiah, individual Believers are made a part of God’s corporate people. One’s righteousness is to come via *faith and trust* in the gospel.
- **“Circumcision” in Galatians is not so much an emphasis on a physical operation, but instead is more of an emphasis on the ritual of becoming a proselyte to Judaism.** In undergoing “circumcision,” the non-Jewish Galatians would have discounted the power of the gospel and faith in Yeshua as being the entryway to God’s covenant people, but instead an act of the flesh. (And if “circumcision” is used as a shorthand for “ritual proselyte conversion”—it can include women equally as much as men [i.e., the use of the generic *anthrōpos*, ἄνθρωπος or “human being” in 5:3].)
- **“Works of the Law” do not concern obedience to God’s Torah, as much as they concern a specific way of following the Torah as determined by a sectarian Jewish community,** as is witnessed in the document 4QMMT in the Dead Sea Scrolls. By Paul asserting that righteousness does not come via “works of law,” while right to conclude that one’s personal forgiveness does not come by human action, he is more specifically stating that inclusion among God’s people does not come by following the Torah according to a specific group’s set of values.<sup>8</sup>

No reader of Galatians disputes how justification by faith is a major theme of the letter. Faith in God, and now in the Messiah He has sent, is the way that people are to be redeemed of their sins. Trust in what the Messiah has accomplished is also to form the core identity of who His followers are. Yet, whether some places of Galatians where these themes have been traditionally viewed to set faith in God against keeping the Law of Moses for salvation (i.e., 2:16; 3:2, 5; 9-10), or whether some ancient First Century Jewish issues are in view, has become a great debate. Even if some ancient issues are in view in a few places, requiring “works of law,” for example, to be something a bit more specific than just Torah-keeping in general—the fact is that faith in the Lord is required for salvation (2:20; 3:7-8, 11, 14, 24-26). No one should think that traditional interpretations being challenged *in a few places* merits a complete dismissal of all traditional views of Galatians since the Reformation.

One of the recurring subjects, in Paul’s letter to the Galatians, is the identity of the group that is most commonly called the “Judaizers.” Generally speaking, they are agreed to have been “Jewish Christians who insisted that it was necessary to belong to the Jewish nation in order to receive the blessing of God” (Hansen),<sup>9</sup> and the process of membership they required for non-Jewish Believers was far from just expressing faith in Israel’s God and the Messiah. These were individuals who made circumcision and Torah observance required prerequisites for salvation (cf. Acts 15:1) and inclusion among God’s people. They perverted the simplicity of the gospel by adding requirements to it. Translated as “to Judaize” (2:14, YLT), the verb *Ioudaizō* (Ἰουδαῖζω), is often defined as **“live as bound by Moasic ordinances or traditions, live in Judean or Jewish fashion”** (BDAG).<sup>10</sup> The challenge with interpreting this properly is that today, largely because of Jewish-Christian

<sup>7</sup> These have been listed from the author’s blog post, “Three Silver Bullets for Understanding Galatians.”

<sup>8</sup> Consult the author’s article “What Are ‘Works of the Law’?”

<sup>9</sup> Hansen, “Galatians, Letter to the,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, pp 327; cf. Carson and Moo, 465.

<sup>10</sup> Frederick William Danker, ed., et. al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, third edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 478.

dialogue, a renewed interest in Hebraic studies, and an examination of broad sectors of First Century Judaism—is what “Judaize” meant to Paul. In Esther 8:17 in the Septuagint, the verb *loudaizō* renders the Hebrew *yahad* (יָהַד), as “many among the peoples of the land **became Jews**, for the dread of the Jews had fallen on them.” Another important usage of the verb *loudaizō* appears in Josephus’ account of the Jews fighting the Romans, and how a Roman general named Metilius was spared from death, because he promised to be circumcised and become a Jew (*Wars of the Jews* 2.454).<sup>11</sup> The verb *loudaizō*, “to Judaize,” is something which tends to occur in instances of force. Yet, due to the pejorative nature of a term like “Judaizer” in much of Christian thought, Paul’s opponents in Galatia have been more frequently referred to as “Influencers” by some interpreters, and some commentators just call them “agitators” or even the more basic “(false) teachers.”

The Apostle Paul addresses his Galatian audience as being former pagans, yet they have “more than a mere passing acquaintance with the Jewish religion and the OT (cf. 3:6-22; 4:21-31)” (*ISBE*).<sup>12</sup> The Galatians, to whom he speaks, were largely a group of non-Jewish people who were still maturing in their Messianic faith, although they had received the good news and Paul himself with great enthusiasm (4:13-15). Much of what Paul says in Galatians, likely repeats those things that he had discussed with them while in person, which can make various parts of the letter a bit difficult to understand. At the very least, this requires some patience when reading through discussions that had previously transpired between Paul and the Galatians he had helped guide.

There is a minority opinion, largely relating to the discussion of what Paul meant by employing the term “elemental spirits” (4:3, 9) or *stoicheia* (στοιχεῖα), as to whether or not the Judaizers/Influencers somehow advocated practices connected to ancient syncretistic or mystical Jewish ideas, which later made their way into the full blown Gnosticism of the Second Century.<sup>13</sup> While the entry disagrees, it at least has to be noted that “‘The elemental spirits of the universe’ of which Paul spoke in 4:3, 9 in connection with the observance of days, months, seasons, and years, are seen [by some] as having reference to Gnostic ideas” (*ISBE*).<sup>14</sup> The only other place where this same terminology appears is in Colossians 2:8, where how syncretistic, proto- or incipient-Gnostic ideas had infected the local Judaism in Colossae, is widely agreed to be the problem (see the entry on **Colossians**). Paul’s opponents in Galatia, then, could have been those who—in addition to pushing ritual proselyte circumcision on the non-Jewish Believers—held to some errant, mystical ideas surrounding the Torah. This could easily account for Paul rightly accusing them, “For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves” (6:13), as well as his question to the Galatians, “how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things?” (4:9). The “days and months and seasons and years” (4:10) would not be the appointed times of the Torah, per se, as much as they would be the appointed times saturated with ungodly rituals, like those from astrology or witchcraft, that the Galatians should have left behind in paganism.<sup>15</sup>

It is not agreed among examiners whether or not Paul composed the Epistle to the Galatians prior to, or immediately after, the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15. Much of this is determined by the intended audience of the letter. Some view Paul’s references to Jerusalem in Galatians 1:17-18 as speaking of the events of Acts 11, as opposed to Acts 15. Many conservatives are in agreement on a South Galatian audience and the letter composed sometime (immediately) prior to the Jerusalem Council. Whether or not Galatians was written before the Jerusalem Council, the decree of the Jerusalem Council would be spread into the Mediterranean basin, and the early mixed groups of Jewish and non-Jewish Believers in Yeshua would have to abide by it.

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<sup>11</sup> “And thus were all these men barbarously murdered, excepting Metilius; for when he entreated for mercy, and promised **that he would turn Jew**, and be circumcised, they saved him alive, but none else” (*Wars of the Jews* 2.454; *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*, 626).

<sup>12</sup> Ridderbos, “Galatians, Epistle to the,” in *ISBE*, 2:380.

<sup>13</sup> And by extension, would parallel many things witnessed in the Jewish mystical tradition of the Kabbalah.

<sup>14</sup> Ridderbos, “Galatians, Epistle to the,” in *ISBE*, 3:382; cf. the mention of it in Samuel J. Mikolaski, “Galatians,” in *NBCR*, 1100; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 484; Betz, “Galatians, Epistle to the,” in *ABD*, 2:874; Gundry, “The Early Epistles of Paul,” in *A Survey of the New Testament*, 344 fn#1.

<sup>15</sup> This is examined more fully in the commentary on Galatians 4:9-11, in the author’s article “Does the New Testament Annul the Biblical Appointments?”

Among Galatians resources, though, one can see a huge gulf often present between conservative and liberal interpreters, as the former believes that Paul and the Jerusalem Council were in agreement with Paul abiding by the Apostolic decree (Acts 15:19-21), whereas the latter tends to portray Paul and Jerusalem at odds. Today's conservatives tend to view the Galatians 2:1-10 Jerusalem meeting as the relief mission of Acts 11:27-30. Paul's statements concerning what to do with the non-Jewish Believers in Galatians, even if probably written before the Council, must be interpreted in the light of the Apostolic decree as he readily submitted to Jerusalem's authority (cf. 2:9). The Apostolic conference was agreed that the non-Jewish Believers did not have to be circumcised and keep the Torah for salvation (contra. Acts 15:1, 5).

Since the Protestant Reformation, Galatians has understandably been used as a major source of support for the doctrine of justification by faith. It was used extensively by Martin Luther in his refutations of Medieval Catholicism. Freedom or liberty for Believers is also a major theme of Galatians (cf. 5:1). Such freedom is often viewed, though, as more than just the redeemed being released from the penalties of sin (3:13), and is thought to also mean that the Galatians—and by extension all Believers since—do not have to obey God's Torah any longer. As is summarized by most Christians, "Certain Jewish teachers, who professed to be Christians and acknowledged Jesus as Messiah, were obscuring the simplicity of the gospel of free grace with their propaganda. They insisted that to faith in Christ must be added circumcision and obedience to the Mosaic Law" (*NIDB*).<sup>16</sup> More specifically, and even a bit disturbingly, a typical Lutheran reading of Galatians will seek to split up Christianity from its Jewish origins, as Martin Luther did believe that God's Law and God's grace were polar opposites: "the letter separates in principle and as far as we know, for the first time, Christianity from Judaism" (Betz, *IDBSup*).<sup>17</sup> Among many Christian examiners today, the letter to the Galatians is thought to portray how the Torah of Moses was something temporary, only for the pre-resurrection era,<sup>18</sup> and probably only for the Jewish people at that (cf. the main view on 3:24).<sup>19</sup> A number of Galatians interpreters will even view Paul as depicting the Torah of Moses and paganism as being quantitatively indifferent.

Do not be fooled: Galatians can be a difficult text for many contemporary Christian laypersons to read. Too many evangelical Christians' engagement level with Galatians is only evident via a selection of verses here or there, without any sizeable consideration for the original position and setting of the audience. Too many laypersons who read through Galatians, do not also consider that they need to read Galatians in concert with the rest of the Bible—including Paul's other letters, and especially his letter to the Romans. "It is evident that the same thoughts [seen in Galatians] were developed in a more thorough and perhaps more balanced manner in the Epistle to the Romans...The Epistle to the Galatians, although it is more abrupt and less systematic, has a great appeal in that in addition to being a document of deep theological insight, it gives a picture of Paul's great humanity and emotion in one of the most critical moments of his apostolic activity" (*ISBE*).<sup>20</sup> Reading some further remarks, in the later letter to the Romans, may be necessary to shed some light on difficult sections of the letter to the Galatians. Furthermore, it needs to be recognized that while many conservative Christian readers of Galatians do not believe that the Apostle Paul or James the Just are at odds—as they instead present their points from different positions—many liberal readers absolutely consider them at odds.<sup>21</sup>

While Galatians is often viewed as being anti-Law, a wide number of Christians in history have viewed Galatians as *only* opposing Law-keeping for salvation. This does not include obeying God's commandments as a matter of proper living, per Paul's direction to follow "the law of Christ" (6:2), which would necessarily be centered around love (5:14; cf. Leviticus 19:18) and focused on the Messiah's Sermon on the Mount (Matthew

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<sup>16</sup> D. Edmond Hiebert, "Galatians, Letter to the," in *NIDB*, 367; cf. Ridderbos, "Galatians, Epistle to the," in *ISBE*, 2:381.

<sup>17</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, "Galatians, Letter to the," in *IDBSup*, 352.

<sup>18</sup> Beverly R. Gaventa, "Galatians," in *ECB*, 1374.

<sup>19</sup> Be aware of the different renderings for the clause *eis Christon* (εἰς Χριστόν) as either "to Christ" (NASU) or "until Christ came" (RSV/NRSV/ESV).

<sup>20</sup> Ridderbos, "Galatians, Epistle to the," in *ISBE*, 3:385; cf. Betz, "Galatians, Epistle to the," in *ABD*, 2:872.

<sup>21</sup> Betz, "Galatians, Epistle to the," in *ABD*, 2:875.

chs. 5-7). Such Christians have recognized that the Torah's authority, in matters of morality and ethics at least, remains in force for the post-resurrection era.

One of the biggest features of the Epistle to the Galatians, which can be significantly overlooked by readers, is Paul's reliance upon the Tanach (Old Testament) for his arguments. Statements about Abraham or Hagar or Ishmael, or the different assertions or analogies seen, cannot make any sense without understanding the Tanach's narratives. Even understanding something like "It was added because of transgressions..." (3:19), requires one to know some of the specificities of Torah jurisprudence. The role of Habakkuk 2:4, "Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith," in Galatians 3:11, is frequently missed by your average Bible reader.

The Epistle to the Galatians is easily the most difficult text of Scripture for today's Messianic movement to read and interpret properly. For Messianics today, Galatians often proves to be a problem text, as a surface reading of Galatians may appear to be quite negative toward a lifestyle of Torah obedience. Coupled with this are a whole host of readings of Galatians that separate Biblical "freedom" from not only a release from the penalties of sin for the redeemed, but also how obeying God's Torah is to bring about freedom (Psalm 119:45). Giving Galatians its proper due, and treating the text with a high level of integrity for the ancient circumstances it addressed, are unfortunately quite difficult for far too many within the broad Messianic community. Fortunately, there have been a number of Galatians commentaries released from a Messianic perspective, although their conclusions on a selection of topics have been a bit varied.

Even though the great majority of contemporary Messianic Believers do not think that obeying the Torah will merit them eternal salvation, Torah-keeping as a matter of sanctification, holiness, and demonstrating good works is something affirmed. Due to the various views of Galatians present in today's Christianity, our faith community will be often accused of *adding to* the simplicity of the gospel, with statements issued from various verses in Galatians.<sup>22</sup> The frequency of this occurring will only increase, as the Messianic movement grows and expands.

Having more refined views of Galatians, and/or more targeted examinations into its various vignettes, is undoubtedly required of today's Messianic movement. Galatians will be used by many outside opponents of the Messianic movement, who believe that the Torah was just something temporary for the pre-resurrection era, viewing the Torah as a cause of division and contention among people. Internally, though, among different groups of Messianics, there will be debates over the place of the Torah in the lives of non-Jewish Believers versus those of Jewish Believers. Likewise, if "works of law" were ancient Jewish identity barriers that defined sects of the Jewish community, then what were they *and* what might we see today that somehow parallels them? And not to be overlooked at all, are the (strong) internal disagreements among complementarian and egalitarian perspectives to be expected of Galatians 3:28, not just over its assertion of equality for Jews and non-Jews, but especially males and females.<sup>23</sup> Ultimately, Galatians asks the emerging Messianic movement whether it will develop into something that is focused around what makes us different, or the common element of Yeshua's sacrifice for human sin.

Regardless of one's position on some of the specific statements encountered in the Epistle to the Galatians, all readers should be in *full agreement* on the requirement for us as born again Believers to all love others, and so fulfill what is labeled as "the law of Messiah" (6:2). The *EDB* entry's statements should be very well taken:

"Paul argues that the whole law is fulfilled in the statement, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' (5:14, quoting Lev. 19:18). Consequently, the Galatians must serve each other through love (5:13). If they bear one another's burdens they will fulfill 'the law of Christ' (6:2). This expression, which occurs only in Galatians, probably refers to the law as it was lived by Christ, i.e., in accord with the principle of self-sacrificing love (cf. 1:3-4; 2:20). To summarize, the Galatians will fulfill the law if they live in the realm of the Spirit in accord with the law of Christ."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. Carson and Moo, 466.

<sup>23</sup> Consult the author's exegetical paper on Galatians 3:28, "Biblical Equality and Today's Messianic Movement."

<sup>24</sup> Frank J. Matera, "Galatians, Letter to the," in *EDB*, 478.

It is obvious, though, that today's Messianics might think of such a "Torah of Messiah" to involve more than just the "love command." Galatians does have many ethical and spiritual lessons that our faith community has overlooked far too many times. It does communicate the need for Jewish and non-Jewish Believers in Yeshua to come together, in *mixed communities*, in unity and in one accord. It also asks various questions about the motives for Torah obedience on the part of all. Are today's Messianic Believers Torah obedient out of a true, Spirit-led need to be holy—or for some other, self-serving reason? Is the Torah ever misused as a means to keep people out, or from feeling welcome in the assembly? How to properly approach and apply the Epistle to the Galatians will certainly be an ongoing challenge for the Messianic movement until Yeshua returns!<sup>25</sup>

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## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION ON GALATIANS:

1. How important do you believe it is to understand or read Paul's letter to the Galatians in its entirety? To what degree should knowledge of First Century history and different sectors of Judaism be integrated into our interpretation of Galatians?
2. When Paul uses the term "works of the Law," in what context is he using it? Explain your thoughts.
3. What do you believe was the principal error Paul addressed in his letter to the Galatians?

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<sup>25</sup> Consult the author's commentary *Galatians for the Practical Messianic* for a more detailed examination of Galatians.

4. As a Messianic Believer, what challenges does Paul's letter to the Galatians present to you personally?

5. Have you ever encountered a Messianic fellowship or congregation like the ones Paul wrote to in Galatia? If so, what were its strengths and weaknesses?

## REFLECTION ON GALATIANS' PLACEMENT IN THE CANON

*Write two short paragraphs about what struck you about reading Paul's letter to the Galatians:*