

BOOK OF GALATIANS

“Meet the Leaders”

Scripture Reading: GALATIANS 1:18-24

-) **SLIDES 1-6**. Bible Jeopardy!
-) **SLIDES 7-8**. Read today’s Scripture text.
-) We continue, once again, in our expository study of the Book of GALATIANS. We are going verse-by-verse through this wonderful book. I want to unpack as many truths as I can find and share them all with you.
-) **SLIDE 9**. If you are new to this study or may have forgotten some of what was said about the first 18 verses of this book, you can go to our BGCC YouTube Channel or BGCC website.
-) Since we have now missed over 4 months since I preached on this Book, here’s a quick review of what we have covered from our study in the Book of GALATIANS.
-) **SLIDE 10**. In week #1 we learned that 1) the Apostle Paul wrote this book. 2) The main thrust of this book is to warn the people in the churches at Galatia about false teachers and false doctrine. 3) Paul wants to make sure the people know that he is an apostle sent by God.
-) **SLIDE 11**. In week #2, Paul grants peace upon the churches, 1) have been set free from their sins, and 2) they should praise God for His provision.
-) **SLIDE 12**. In week #3 we learned that in less than five years after their formation, the churches in Galatia were already beginning to embrace false doctrine.
-) **SLIDE 13**. In week # 4 we learned that 1) an incomplete gospel cannot save anybody and 2) that both grace and law must be preached. If not, there’s missing pieces.

-) **SLIDE 14.** In week #5 we learned that 1) the false teachers wanted to gain the favor of men. 2) Those who desire the favor of men are not servants of God.
-) **SLIDE 15.** And in week #6 we learned that 1) all the words of Paul have authority because he received a revelation from God and 2) his teachings are that of Jesus Himself.
-) **SLIDE 16.** And in week #7 we learned that 1) Paul makes an admission of a blemished past. That 2) Paul states his recommissioning because he was set apart by God for His purpose and His plan and His pleasure. And 3) Paul takes a 3-year intermission to prove that his calling, his training, and his apostleship are all from Jesus Himself.
-) **SLIDE 17.** That brings us up to today. This is message #8. Today's message is "*Meet the Leaders.*"
-) It was February of 1973. I travelled from Pittsburgh, PA to be interviewed for a job at the General Electric company in Waynesboro, VA. They were hiring electronic technicians. And I had that particular skill they could use.
-) I went through a series of interviews with different managers who were hiring technicians at that time. But getting through the interview process was rather intimidating. These men were so much older and mature. They appeared to be in their 30s. And they were already working for this major corporation.
-) I was only 19 years old and didn't know much about the world. But I was confident in my abilities to perform the task. I remember the day I received the letter from GE where they offered me a job as an electronic technician. I accepted the job. I worked there from April of 1973 until January of 2002.
-) It can be a little intimidating sometimes when you have to meet the leaders of an organization you want to become a part of. And that is where we find the apostle Paul in our Scripture text today. He meets two important leaders of the church.

-) In week #7 we learned that before Paul ever went to Jerusalem (v18), he spent three years in Arabia and Damascus. In these three years he was being trained by and sent directly by Jesus Himself. It was because of these three years he could say that he was neither trained by nor sent from men.
-) **SLIDE 18**. Remember, there are three credentials to be considered an apostle: 1) to have been a witness of the resurrected Christ (1COR 9:1); 2) to have been explicitly chosen by the Holy Spirit (ACTS 9:15); 3) to have the ability to perform signs and wonders (ACTS 2:43; 2COR 12:12).
-) Had Paul gone immediately to Jerusalem after his conversion (136 miles), everyone could say he was trained and sent by men. But his time with Jesus proves his apostleship and that is a critical credential for the foundation of the church.
-) **SLIDE 19**. We know that when he finally arrives back in Jerusalem, he meets up with Cephas (Peter) and stays with him for 15 days (v18). Chances are Peter would have been familiar with Saul—the man who persecuted the church and was maybe even fearful of him.
-) Paul would have been somewhat familiar with the followers of Jesus while Jesus was alive and teaching in and around Jerusalem. And that would have included Peter. Paul, in this visit with Peter, I'm sure explained his apostolic credentials and assured Peter that he was a changed man.
-) What he once persecuted (the church), he was now helping to build and establish. I'm sure in these 15 days there was some doubt at first on the part of Peter. Could he trust Paul? And I'm sure some very interesting conversations afterwards.
-) **SLIDE 20**. Verse 19 tells us that Paul also saw James, the Lord's brother. Who is this man James? Let me spend some time here this morning giving you some interesting historical facts about this man James.

-) **SLIDE 21.** There were two men named “James” who were two of the original 12 apostles. One was James the son of Zebedee (whose brother was John), and this James was part of Jesus’ inner circle (Peter, James, John), and then there was James the son of Alphaeus.
-) But this particular man named James, who Paul saw when he returned to Jerusalem, was neither one of those two men. So, who was he? Paul identifies him as the Lord’s brother. Wait! A real brother? Jesus had brothers? Or just a figure of speech like a brother to Christ. No, Jesus had brothers.
-) Bible history lesson. We know that Jesus was the firstborn of Mary. She was a virgin conceived by the Holy Spirit and bore Jesus as her first child. And we know that Joseph was Jesus’ stepfather. But Mary and Joseph went on to have more children after that.
-) **SLIDE 22.** MATTHEW 13:54-55 tells us this: *“He came to His hometown and began teaching them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, ‘Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?’”*
-) **SLIDE 23.** The Catholic Church, in their quest to keep Mary a perpetual virgin, say that the word “brothers” used in verse 55 is actually the word “cousin.” It is the Greek word “adelphos” which means brother. Jesus had half-brothers.
-) **SLIDE 24.** We read about an encounter Jesus had with his half-brothers in JOHN 7:3-5. *“Therefore, His brothers said to Him, ‘Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.’ For not even His brothers were believing in Him.”*

-) Was Jesus' brother, James, one of these unbelieving brothers in this verse? We don't know for sure, but I think he was. And we do know that sometime after that, James, this brother of Jesus, did become a believer and a rather prominent figure in the early church.
-) **SLIDE 25**. How may this have happened? May I suggest this theory. We have this very interesting text in 1COR 15:4-8. Read. Most scholars agree that the James mentioned here was the half-brother of Jesus. And seeing your brother risen from the grave and remembering all that He had said and done (like the miracles) may have been a defining and transforming moment in his life.
-) **SLIDE 26**. To know more about James, let me introduce you to a name we need to know. The man's name is Titus Flavius Josephus. Josephus lived from 37AD to 100 AD. He was a Jew/Pharisee. No, he is not mentioned in the Bible. He was a recorder of Jewish history.
-) His most important works were *The Jewish War* and *Antiquities of the Jews*. His work *The Jewish War* recounts the Jewish revolt against Roman occupation (66–70). His work *Antiquities of the Jews* recounts the history of the world from a Jewish perspective. Both of these works provide valuable insight into first century Judaism and the background of Early Christianity.
-) Remember, his writings are not Scripture and are not God-inspired. They are strictly historical. So, we will take what he says solely at historical value.
-) So, does he speak about James, the half brother of Jesus? Yes. In his writings he says that one of the key leaders in the early Jerusalem church was a man named James and says he was the half-brother of Jesus of Nazareth.

-) **SLIDE 27.** And we see this same James in ACTS 15:12-13. Read. ACTS 15 is the Jerusalem council and this man James is the leader of that council.
-) Also, this same James is also the author of the 5-chapter NT epistle of JAMES.
-) **SLIDE 28.** So, just to sum up this man James, we know: 1) Meets Paul (GAL 1:19); 2) Half-brother of Jesus (MATT 13:55); 3) Jesus appeared to him after the Resurrection (1COR 15:7); 4) Leader of the Jerusalem Council (ACTS 15:13); 5) Wrote the Book of JAMES. It would be interesting to know who learned from whom in this meeting. They were both changed men.
-) Today's lesson, Paul meets two leaders. Intimidating? I'm sure they were very interesting conversations. Next week we will learn how Paul faced his past reputation when he returned to Jerusalem.
-) The truth isn't always easy, but it does matter. And the truth will set you free!

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