

LESSON 1

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS AND GALATIANS

The Importance of Paul's Writings

The Epistle to the Romans is considered by most people to be one of the most important writings ever produced. It is the most significant work in the field of theology. Whereas the Synoptic Gospels present the teachings and describe the activities of Christ, Romans interprets implications of those teachings and activities for man's daily life and his eternity.

The Epistle to the Galatians is studied with Romans because of their similarities in content. Both Epistles present the doctrine of redemption and Christian living by faith. Galatians was written to solve a problem which arose concerning requirements for salvation. Its content is limited primarily to this doctrine and one related to it concerning the practical expression of salvation in Christian living. Romans is more systematic and inclusive in its presentation of these doctrines.

God's ultimate revelation in His Son was given in the context of Jewish beliefs and national customs. When the Gospel of Christ was presented to the Gentiles, it was necessary to find new terms and expressions to communicate the revelatory concepts. Gentile proselytes to Judaism understood some Jewish hopes based on the Old Testament, but the majority of Gentiles were acquainted with neither the moral requirements of the Old Testament nor the hopes concerning the Messiah and the Kingdom of God. For God's redemptive act in Jesus Christ to make sense to them, it was necessary to speak of the event in terms of faith in Christ and the new life which results from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The theology of the Gentile Church was shaped primarily by the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians. During the Reformation, an emphasis on the doctrines of these Epistles was renewed and became the foundation of Protestantism.

Sources of Paul's Understanding of Christ

More than a century ago Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860) proposed that Paul turned a purely human Jewish teacher into the supernatural Christ. He believed that apart from Paul's writings Jesus

Romans interprets the implications of Jesus' _____ and _____ for man's daily _____ and his _____.

(teachings, activities, life, eternity)

List two emphases which are found both in Romans and Galatians.

1. _____
2. _____

(the doctrine of redemption, Christian living by faith)

For God's redemptive act to make sense to the Gentiles, it was necessary to speak of _____ in Christ and the new life through the indwelling of the _____.

Whose writings contributed to the Gentiles' understanding of the Gospel? _____

(faith, Holy Spirit, Paul's)

would have been no more than a Galilean Rabbi. Ernest Renan of the same era stated:

The writings of Paul have been a peril and a stumbling-block, the cause of the principal defects of Christian theology; Paul is the father of the subtle Augustine, the arid Aquinas, the sombre Calvinist, the sour Jansenist, and the ferocious theology which predestinates to damnation¹

Renan predicted that the reign of Paul would come to an end in our day. He underrated the true magnitude of Paul and failed to see that as long as Christianity lasts Paul's letter to the Romans will remain a primary source of the doctrine of the Church.

Karl Barth differed from Renan in his appreciation for Paul:

Paul, as a child of his age, addressed his contemporaries. As prophet and apostle of the Kingdom of God, he veritably speaks to all men of every age... If we rightly understand ourselves, our problems are the problems of Paul; and if we be enlightened by the brightness of his answers, those answers must be ours.²

What were Paul's background and the sources of his understanding of Christ? There are at least six sources or influences which must be considered in order to understand his doctrine of the living Christ.

A knowledge of the sayings and activities of Jesus.—Although Paul stated that he did not go to Jerusalem to confer "with flesh and blood", the statement does not deny his knowledge of the "Apostles' doctrine" (cf. Gal. 1:16ff.; Acts 2:41ff.). The requirements for apostleship were two:

1. To have been present with the disciples "all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us ..." (Acts 1:21-22);
2. To have been a witness of the resurrected Lord (Acts 1:22).

¹See A. M. Hunter, Interpreting the New Testament 1900-1950 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1951), p. 61.

²Karl Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, trans. by Edwyn Hoskyns (6th ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. i.

Give one source of Paul's understanding of Christ. _____

(A knowledge of the sayings and activities of Jesus)

List two requirements for apostleship.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

It is apparent from these requirements that the Apostles' doctrine (teachings—*didache*) included the teachings and activities of Jesus and the verification of His resurrection.

The time of the Apostles was devoted to prayer and the "ministry [service] of the word" (Acts 6:4). Only they had first-hand knowledge of Jesus' teachings, and their time was spent instructing others. Luke received an accurate account of the activities and sayings of Jesus from "eyewitnesses, and ministers [servants] of the word" (Luke 1:2) and recorded them in his Gospel. The Apostles alone could qualify as "eyewitnesses", but those instructed by them became "ministers of the word". The same phrase for "ministers of the word" is used to describe John Mark who accompanied Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey (cf. Acts 13:5). The implication is that Mark's task was to drill the new converts in the Apostles' doctrine. The content of Mark's Gospel coincides with the knowledge required of Apostles—"Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection" (Acts 1:22). Both Mark and Luke were companions of Paul on the missionary journeys. From them, if not before, he would have known well the events of the life of Christ.

Since the missionary journeys began more than ten years after Paul's conversion, it is likely that he had a knowledge of the teachings of Jesus long before the first journey. After his conversion, he was "certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.... Saul increased the more in strength [became more forceful], and confounded the Jews . . . , proving that this is very Christ" (Acts 9:19-22). Probably Paul learnt the Apostles' doctrine from "ministers of the word" (disciples) at Damascus.

At least by the time of the first missionary journey, Paul had a thorough knowledge of the content of the Gospels. By his third journey, he could even add words of Jesus which were not included in the Gospels: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). The first missionary journey came at least ten years before Paul's letter to the Romans. The sayings and activities of Jesus constituted the primary source for his doctrine of the resurrected Christ.

Paul shared the attitude of Jesus concerning legalistic Judaism. The meticulous keeping of the Law (customs of the elders) would not establish a right relationship to God. Jewish ceremonies did not cleanse from sin. Only faith in Jesus as the Messiah (Christ) and Lord would bring about the new life in the Kingdom.

The Apostles' doctrine included the _____ and _____ of Jesus and the verification of His _____.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Who were the eyewitnesses? _____

Who were the "ministers of the word"? _____

Paul may have learnt of the life of Christ from _____ and _____ who accompanied him on his journeys.

(the Apostles, those who were instructed by the Apostles, Mark, Luke)

Paul may have learnt of the Apostles' doctrine from "ministers of the word" in _____ long before his first missionary journey.

(Damascus)

What was Paul's primary source for his doctrine of the resurrection? _____

(the sayings and activities of Jesus)

Paul did not disagree with Jesus' emphasis on the Kingdom; he simply found the necessity of expressing the concept in different terms for his Gentile converts. He stressed the importance of "walking in the Spirit". He firmly held the conviction that Jesus would come again to raise the dead and to judge all mankind. These doctrines are vital to the Synoptic accounts of Jesus' teachings, Paul did not originate doctrines which Jesus had not taught or implied; he interpreted the teachings of Jesus to the churches of the Gentile world.

His encounter with the living Christ on the road to Damascus.—Although Paul was a student of Judaism and the Old Testament, his years of study had not enabled him to find truth. The witness of Stephen at the time of his death may have shaken Paul's confidence that pharisaical Judaism was the way of life. The decisive life-changing experience came on the road to Damascus when the light shone from heaven and the voice of the Lord was heard. Paul's life and theology were completely reversed. The Christians who had been his enemies became his brothers. Doctrines and ambitions which had dominated his life became meaningless (cf. Gal. 1:13ff.; Phil. 3:4-11). In Christ, Paul experienced a new power which gave him victory over "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). The resurrected Christ living in him gave victory over sin and the assurance of resurrection. Paul's knowledge through experience transformed his theology.

Special divine revelation.—Paul stated that God, according to His own pleasure, revealed "his Son in me" (Gal. 1:16) for the purpose of making the Good News known to the Gentiles. Paul did not receive his understanding of Christ from men; he went into Arabia perhaps to restudy the teachings of the Old Testament and to correlate them with his new experience in Christ. While in the solitude of Arabia, the Holy Spirit guided him in the reinterpretation of Old Testament Scriptures, a new understanding of the Kingdom of God, and a new concept of attaining righteousness through faith. Paul implied that special divine revelation came to him there (cf. Gal. 1:16-18).

His knowledge of the Old Testament.—Paul was a typical Pharisee who expected the Kingdom of God to be the restoration to power of Israel as a nation. As a Pharisee, he was strict in keeping the law or customs of the elders and zealous for his religious beliefs to the extent of persecuting the Church (Phil. 3:5-6). The Pharisees believed that if the Law was kept perfectly for one day the Kingdom of God would come.

Another source of Paul's understanding of Christ was his own encounter with _____ on the road to _____.

This encounter changed his life--

1. The Christians whom he had persecuted became his _____.
2. He experienced a new power for victory over _____ and the assurance of _____.

(Christ, Damascus, brothers, sin, resurrection)

By Paul's own statement, we know another source of his understanding of Christ was special _____.

(divine revelation)

Because of Paul's pharisaical background, he had a knowledge of the _____ which was also a source of his understanding of Christ.

(Old Testament)

As a Pharisee, Paul had given a nationalistic, exclusive interpretation to the Old Testament Scriptures with an emphasis on those which spoke of Israel's exaltation and the defeat of her enemies. Because Israel was God's chosen, she expected God's blessings to exalt her above the surrounding nations and to bring them into dependent submission. Zion was depicted as the seat of the Davidic dynasty, and the seed of David would rule over other nations (cf. Isa. 32:1-5; Jer. 33:14-17; Mic. 5:2-4).

Other Scriptures spoke of the place of the Gentiles in restored Israel. The "sons of the stranger" would join themselves to the Lord to serve Him and to love the name of the Lord (Isa. 56:6). The Temple would be called "an house of prayer for all people" (Isa. 56:7). Isaiah promised that when Israel was gathered from her captivity, Gentiles would be gathered also. Probably Paul had pondered frequently the Scripture: "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (Isa. 60:3). Such Scriptures and the stand of Stephen began to make sense to Paul after the Lord revealed to him that he was "a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15). Paul's narrow nationalism was changed into a universalism in which he saw Israel's God as the God of all the universe. The responsibility of God's servants, therefore, was to make His name known to all people. The Kingdom of God was not to be limited to the Jews, but it was to include the people from every Gentile nation.

The Kingdom of God is the presence of God in power to rule over His people. Paul discovered that the Kingdom is not an earthly power or organization centring in some great human leader but God's power in the lives of His children who walk in the Spirit. The understanding of the Old Testament concept of the Kingdom of God as God's presence took on new meaning in the light of the experience that Christ abides within.

His training as a Pharisee.—Paul claimed that he was a strict Pharisee who kept the Law. Because of his religious zeal, he attempted to make himself right with God; however, his soul was not at ease as long as he recognized that sin controlled his life. In his pre-Christian experience, he was very zealous to maintain perfectly the Jewish Law. His later understanding of freedom in Christ was based on his previous attempts to keep the Law and the discovery of its inadequacy. God in Christ was able to do what the Law could not do.

Paul's training was under Gamaliel who was a recognized teacher among the Pharisees. He was probably a grandson of Hillel who followed a more liberal interpretation of the Law than his rival

UP TO THIS POINT YOU HAVE STUDIED FOUR SOURCES OR INFLUENCES WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO PAUL'S UNDERSTANDING OF CHRIST. CAN YOU NAME THEM? TRY IT.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Paul's nationalistic interpretation of the Old Testament changed to a _____ interpretation in which he saw Israel's God as the God of all the _____.

(universalistic, universe)

Paul's training as a _____ was another source of help in understanding _____.

(Pharisee, Christ)

teachers. According to Acts 5, Gamaliel may not have been as radical in his attitude towards Gentiles as other Pharisees.

His Gentile environment.—Paul was raised in Tarsus of Cilicia where he was exposed to a Gentile-dominated society. Although his rabbinic training tended to separate him from Gentiles, his childhood environment forced him to be exposed to Gentile culture. His early exposure undoubtedly led to a greater understanding of Gentiles than many other Jews possessed.

Following the teachings of Jesus concerning the emptiness of rituals and ceremonies, Paul recognized that Jewish legalism did not save nor were Jewish customs practical for Gentiles to follow. Even Peter admitted that Jews who were raised as Jews could not keep all of the rules stipulated by the Pharisees (cf. Acts 15:10). Why should Gentiles who had not been raised as Jews be required to live by Jewish rules in order to obtain salvation? Peter supported Paul's argument that Gentiles were saved by faith apart from keeping Jewish customs of circumcision and purification rituals. He referred to the salvation of Cornelius who received God's gift of the Holy Spirit without observing Jewish rituals. As Paul worked among the Gentiles, he experienced the power of God and saw evidences of salvation among them as they responded by faith to the Gospel. These experiences added to his conviction that salvation is by faith and not by keeping the Law as the Pharisees claimed.

The Occasion and Purpose of Galatians

The Book of Acts gives some indication of the struggles which Paul experienced in spreading the Gospel among Gentiles. The Jews considered that they had special privileges as God's chosen people. Their relationship to God was based on the Covenant which was signified by circumcision. The Covenant set forth the responsibility of the Jews to keep the Law of Moses. To assure that the Mosaic Law was properly observed, the scribes made many rules which defined permissible and forbidden actions with regard to keeping each Law under varying circumstances. For example, in order to keep the Sabbath holy by refraining from work, rules were established which defined work. A person was not permitted to walk more than a "Sabbath day's journey" (about 3/5 mile) nor to harvest grain (the disciples plucked ears of corn).

Relationship with God was thought to depend upon circumcision and the observance of the rules or customs of the elders. Spiritual pride characterized

Paul's _____ environment also helped him understand Christ. One reason is he was exposed to Gentile _____.

(Gentile, culture)

Another reason Paul's Gentile environment influenced his doctrine was that as he worked among Gentiles, he experienced the power of _____ and saw evidences of salvation among them.

(God)

NOW YOU HAVE STUDIED ALL SIX SOURCES OF PAUL'S UNDERSTANDING OF CHRIST. NAME THEM ORALLY.

What was the relation of circumcision to the Covenant? _____

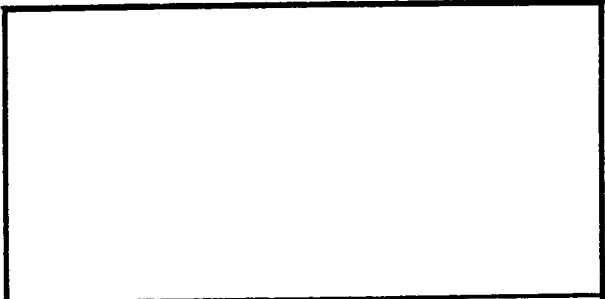
(The Covenant was signified by circumcision.)

the Pharisees who claimed to walk according to the Law and traditions of the elders. Jesus had seen their inconsistencies and accused them of being meticulous in following ceremonial rules while grossly violating the moral law. While the Pharisees were careful to tithe even the inexpensive products like mint, anise, and cummin, they had no convictions about cheating widows and orphans and neglecting aging parents (cf. Matt. 23:14, 23; Mark 7:11).

Paul followed Jesus in rejecting legalism ("the works of the law"—Gal. 2:16) as a means to righteousness and a right relationship to God. He went so far as to deny the necessity of Gentiles' being circumcised which signified a legalistic relationship to God. He taught that cleansing from sin and reconciliation to God took place through the death of Christ, not through the ceremonial symbols of blood sacrifices at the Temple in Jerusalem. The Temple symbolized the presence of God with His people, but Paul found in Christ the reality of God's presence; therefore, he taught that it was not necessary for Gentiles to travel to Jerusalem to find God. Even if they had visited the Temple area, they would have been prevented from entering the inner court of the Israelite men. Paul's denial of the necessity for Gentiles to be circumcised, to keep scribal rules, to offer sacrifices in Jerusalem, and to observe the purification rituals of washings led to opposition by the Jews.

At the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15), it was agreed that Gentiles would not be required to keep the "Laws of Moses" (Jewish ritualistic customs) since they were saved by faith. It was also agreed that Jews even in predominantly Gentile cities would be encouraged to keep Jewish customs related to the Mosaic Law. Apparently problems arose within churches which consisted of both Jews and Gentiles. If strict Jews were not present, the problem could be solved by Christian Jews neglecting certain customs, especially the custom of a Jew not entering the house of a Gentile. The fellowship of Christian congregations composed of both Jews and Gentiles would have been greatly hindered by the refusal of strict Jews to fellowship with Gentiles and to accept them as equals.

Certain converted Pharisees (cf. Acts 15:5) insisted that it was necessary to circumcise Gentiles and to command them to keep the Law of Moses in order to be saved. Either these Judaizers (strict Jewish Christians) from Jerusalem or Jews from Galatia followed Paul to various Gentile cities and stirred up trouble. Even the agreement to the contrary by the Church in council in Jerusalem did not resolve the conflict. The decrees adopted by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem were shared with the churches of Galatia (Acts 16:4-5), but after



List four elements of Judaism which Paul said were unnecessary for Gentiles.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

(to be circumcised, to keep scribal rules, to offer sacrifices in Jerusalem, to observe the purification rituals of washing)

What Jewish custom made fellowship among Jewish and Gentile Christians difficult?

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Judaizers were strict Jewish Christians or converted _____. They insisted Gentiles must be _____ and keep the _____ of Moses.

(Pharisees, circumcised, Law)

Paul's departure it appears that Judaizers arrived and contradicted the decrees and Paul's teachings. Apparently they accused Paul of receiving his doctrine from certain men in Jerusalem (cf. Gal. 1:11-19) instead of following the teachings of the Old Testament and the traditions of the scribes.

Paul wrote the Epistle³ to the Galatians to refute the heresy which arose in the Church as a result of the teaching of Judaizers. He insisted that a right relationship is established with God through faith and not by following the rules and regulations of the scribes. He used Old Testament Scriptures to support his argument that Christ is God's promise through whom righteousness is received by faith. In Christ, the discrimination of Gentiles by Jews was removed and all became one. To refute the error that the neglect of legalistic rules results in sin, Paul emphasized the importance of walking in the Spirit who gives man guidance and power to live a life of victory. The Galatian Epistle sets forth the new relationship to God established by faith in Christ. The teachings of this Epistle are similar to the Roman Letter; therefore, the two Epistles are studied together.

The Recipients of the Galatian Epistle

The Epistle states that the readers were called Galatians (see 3:1) and were grouped in what is described as "the churches of Galatia" (1:2).

The North Galatian theory

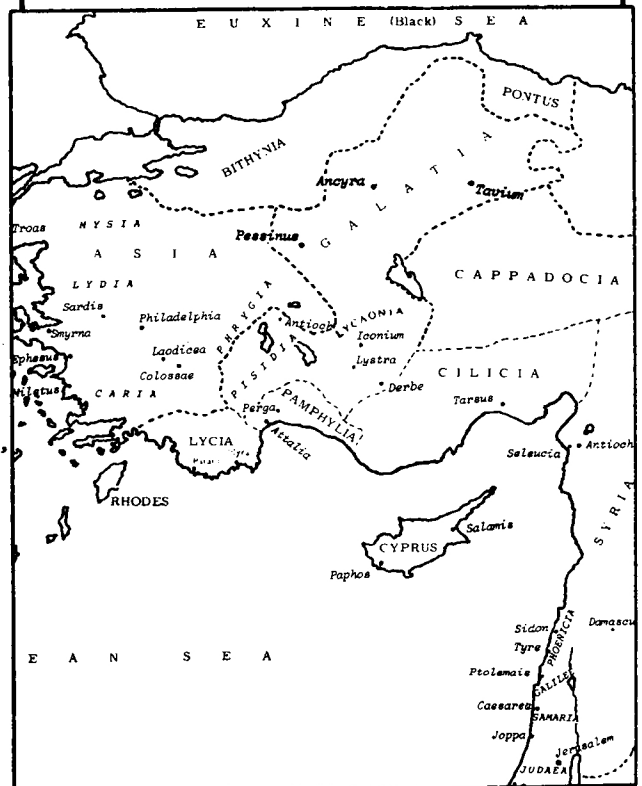
There are two theories concerning the area designated by Luke as Galatia. Until the nineteenth century, most scholars concluded that the Epistle was addressed to churches in North Galatia. Luke mentions in Acts 16:6 that "when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia ...", they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the Word in Asia (cf. Acts 18:23). Scholars concluded that Paul and Silas turned back at that time to a region south of Bithynia and Pontus where they established churches in the cities of Pessinus, Ancyra, and Tavium. If churches were established in that region, the Book of Acts makes no mention of them.

The geographical limits of Phrygia varied continually. The northeastern region was taken over by the Gauls in the third century B.C. Southern

³Epistle and letter are used interchangeably in this study guide. See E. F. Harrison, Introduction to the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmann Publishing Company, 1964) pp. 240ff. for a discussion of the differences.

How did Paul refute the error that the neglect of legalistic rules results in sin?

(He emphasized the importance of walking in the Spirit.)



Phrygia extended towards Pisidia in which Antioch was located. Iconium also was often called Phrygian by ancient writers. In Roman times, Phrygia included the cities Colossae, Hierapolis, and Laodicea. One part of Phrygia became part of the Roman province of Galatia. The larger part formed part of the province called Asia.⁴

Confusion arises over the area indicated by 'Galatia' because the term was used in two different senses during the first century. In the third century B.C., Celts or Gauls invaded much of western Asia Minor and were gradually confined to a district with boundaries set for them. This district was located in the central mountainous region south of Bithynia and Pontus and along the middle course of the Halys River. This region earlier had been Phrygian. The cities of the region—Pessinus and Ancyra—remained predominantly Phrygian in character. The Gauls did not become urbanized, but they lived in open sites, retreating to mountain fortresses in time of military danger. However, they gave their name to the area they inhabited, hence the term 'Galatians'.

The Roman province of Galatia

In 25 B.C., the Romans established a province known as Galatia. This province included Galatia proper (the region from Pessinus in the West to Tavium in the East) with major extensions: Lycaonia, Isauria, and Pisidia. Lycaonia included the cities of Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. Pisidia included the cities of Apollonia and Antioch. These cities are known because of Paul's visiting them during his first missionary journey. They were part of the large Roman province of Galatia but not of the original geographical region known by the same name. In the first century, the term 'Galatia' was used geographically to designate the country in the northern part of the central plateau of Asia Minor, but politically it designated a large province of the Roman Empire which was established for administrative purposes.

The South Galatian theory

Until the nineteenth century, scholars generally believed that 'Galatia' referred to the northern geographical region. Sir William Ramsay challenged that view by suggesting that the Epistle to the Galatians was written to the churches in the southern part of political Galatia. He suggested that Acts 16:6

⁴F. V. Filson, "Phrygia", Vol. III of The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, ed. by G. A. Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 806.

Geographical Galatia was the region south of _____ and _____ and along the middle course of the _____ River.

The cities of the region were _____, _____, and Tavium.

(Bithynia, Pontus, Halys, Pessinus, Ancyra)

Political Galatia included _____ proper, plus _____, _____, and _____.

(Galatia, Lycaonia, Isauria, Pisidia)

refers to the Phrygic-Galatic region by which he meant that part of the Roman province of Galatia which was inhabited by Phrygians and was known geographically as Phrygia. This region was south of the old kingdom of Galatia which is commonly called North Galatia. He pointed out that Acts contains no reference to Paul's visiting North Galatia, but Luke does give considerable attention in the earlier stages of Paul's missionary activity to churches in South Galatia. Kirsopp Lake has suggested that Acts 16:6 is a descriptive phrase of a region whose people were partly Phrygian-speaking and partly Galatian-speaking. His suggestion does not settle the question of the location of the churches to which the Epistle was addressed.

The fact that Barnabas is mentioned in the Epistle to the Galatians (2:1, 9, 13) strongly suggests that the churches were acquainted with Barnabas. Since Barnabas was with Paul on the first journey but not the second, the churches of Lystra, Derbe, Iconium, and Antioch would have known him. Paul's statement that "even Barnabas" (2:13) was carried away by the insincerity of Peter and other Jews implies that this was unexpected in view of what was known of Barnabas' character; therefore, Barnabas appears to have been well-known by the churches. The Galatian churches probably were composed of both Jewish and Gentile Christians. The teachings of Jews who may not have been members of the Church seriously jeopardized the fellowship.

The Date of Galatians

Scholars suggest dates from A. D. 49 to A. D. 56, depending on their preference for the North Galatian or the South Galatian theory. A. M. Hunter suggests that the Letter's complete silence about the apostolic decree described in Acts 15 strongly supports a date earlier than the Jerusalem Council in A. D. 49. "If Paul had been writing after the Council, he would surely have quoted the decree and closed the issue."⁵ Hunter suggests that Paul wrote the Epistle about A. D. 49, either at Antioch or on his way up to Jerusalem for the Council.

If the Letter was written to churches in North Galatia, the date must be placed late enough to allow for Paul's visit to the northern area on his second journey and probably after a second visit to the region (Gal. 4:13—"I preached the gospel to you at the first"—implying two visits). If the statement implies that

⁵A. M. Hunter, Galatians to Colossians in The Layman's Bible Commentaries (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1959), p. 9.

List the Churches to which the Galatian Letter probably was written.

What evidence indicates these Churches were the recipients? _____

(Lystra, Derbe, Iconium, Antioch. Barnabas apparently was well-known by these Churches.)

Scholars date the writing of Galatians from A. D. ____ to A. D. ____.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

two visits were made by Paul before the writing of the Epistle, the second visit would need to be identified with Acts 18:23. The date of the Epistle would be subsequent to the second visit, probably while Paul was at Ephesus about A. D. 55.

Because of the similarity of the content of Galatians to the Epistle to the Romans, many scholars place the writing of it just before Romans. Paul probably wrote two letters to the Corinthians—a lost letter and 1 Corinthians—while he was in Ephesus for three years during the third missionary journey. According to the view of most scholars, Paul wrote 2 Corinthians while he was in Macedonia after leaving Ephesus (Acts 20:1). He spent three months in Greece, perhaps Corinth, before returning through Macedonia and making his last trip to Jerusalem. Many scholars suggest that Galatians and Romans were written during the three months that Paul spent in Corinth in late A. D. 56 or early A. D. 57. Other scholars believe that Galatians was written early during Paul's three-year ministry in Ephesus.

A knowledge of the place, date, and recipients of the Epistle is not necessary to understand its message. These special introductory matters do affect the reconstruction of Paul's journeys to Jerusalem which are mentioned in the Epistle.

The Church in Rome

Paul's Epistle to the Romans was addressed to a church he did not begin; however, he was acquainted with many Christians who were in Rome. Since he was an Apostle to the Gentiles, he felt some responsibility for the people of the area.

Neither Paul nor Peter were founders of the Church of Rome. Jews and proselyte Gentiles from there were present in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10). They may have been among the three thousand who were baptized and who "continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:41-42). The fact that some disciples sold their possessions in order to provide for others "as every man had need" implies that converts from other provinces may have continued in Jerusalem for a period of time to learn the Gospel, making it necessary for Jerusalem Christians to help provide food for them. The Pentecostal converts may have returned to Rome and established the Church. They would have known the sayings and activities of Jesus, the significance of His resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit. Both Jews and proselyte Gentiles were represented in the initial group.

One possible date and place for the writing of Galatians is A.D. ____ in _____.

(55, Ephesus)

Another possible date and place for the writing of Galatians is late A.D. ____ or early A.D. ____ in _____.

(56, 57, Corinth)

Are these statements true or false?

Peter probably started the Church in Rome. _____

Paul probably started the Church in Rome. _____

Pentecostal converts probably started the Church in Rome. _____

(false, false, true)

There is no historical certainty that the Pentecostal converts established the Church in Rome, nor is there any information on the development of the Church. A period of twenty-five years separated Pentecost from the writing of the Roman Letter. Perhaps the Christian witness spread in Rome during this period. The Roman Catholic Church claims that Peter founded the Church in Rome, but Peter was still in Jerusalem at the time of the Council about A.D. 49. Suetonius records that Claudius banished Jews from Rome in A.D. 49 because there had been rioting at the instigation of one called Chrestus. Although the reference may not be to Christ, there is a possibility that Christians were somehow involved in this matter.

Paul stated that he did not build upon another man's foundation (Rom. 15:20); however, he revealed no hesitation in writing to the Roman Church and expressing a desire to share in its ministry. Paul's freedom to relate to the Church is another indication that Peter probably was not the founder.

It is likely that a church existed at the time that Claudius banished the Jews from Rome in A.D. 49. Originally, the membership may have been primarily Jewish, but the decree of Claudius left only Gentile Christians in the Church. Aquila and Priscilla appear to have been Christians when they left Rome. Paul joined them in Corinth about A.D. 50. They had returned to Rome by the time of the writing of Romans (Rom. 16:3). Paul may have encouraged them to return to Rome to help the predominantly Gentile Church (cf. Rom. 16:4). They were probably leaders of a church which met in their house (Rom. 16:5).

Some scholars have supported the theory that the Church was Jewish. Others have suggested that it was primarily Gentile or a mixture of both. William Manson believed that the major portion of the Church was Jewish because the arguments throughout the Epistle are more applicable to Jews than to Gentiles. Others have pointed out that in Romans 1:5ff., Paul included the readers among the Gentiles to whom he was commissioned as an apostle. He compared them with "other Gentiles" (1:12-14). Paul stated "I speak to you Gentiles" in a passage which emphasizes that the readers obtained mercy through Jewish unbelief (11:13, 28-31). Although Aquila and Priscilla were Jews (cf. Acts 18:2), they worked in the Gentile churches and had a church meeting in their house (Rom. 16:4-5).

C. H. Dodd (The Epistle of Paul to the Romans) and Sanday and Headlam (The Epistle to the Romans) suggest that the congregation was a mixture of Romans and Jews. The Jewish element may have predominated before the banishment by Claudius in

Give one reason Peter likely did not start the Church in Rome. _____

(Peter was still in Jerusalem at the time of the Council, about A.D. 49)

Give another reason Peter probably was not the founder of the Roman Church. _____

(Paul stated he did not build upon another man's foundation.)

The first members of the Church in Rome were primarily _____, but after the decree of Claudius the members were only _____.

(Jews, Gentiles)

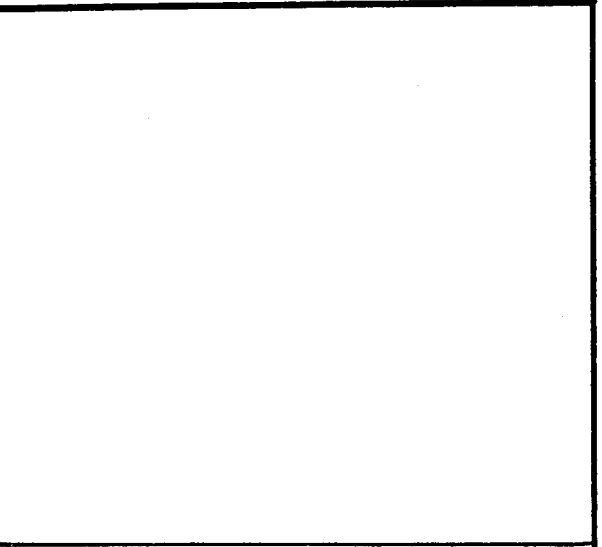
A.D. 49, after which the Gentile element prevailed. When Paul arrived in Rome, he was met by members of the Church at the Three Taverns, but the membership is not identified (Acts 28:15). Paul was greatly encouraged by the meeting which may indicate that harmony existed between Jews and Gentiles within the Church. After his arrival, he met with the leaders of the Jews to explain the circumstances of his trial. Apparently these Jewish leaders were not members of the Church but were interested in hearing "concerning this sect" which was spoken against everywhere (Acts 28:22). After Paul taught them concerning Jesus, many believed but others did not. After the unbelieving Jews departed, Paul turned to the Gentiles with the Gospel.

The Occasion and Date of Romans

Romans differs from other Pauline Epistles by not addressing a specific problem within the Church. Although the doctrinal content of Galatians and Romans is similar, Galatians addressed a specific problem within the churches. Romans is a doctrinal treatise which deals with the question of whether salvation requires the observance of Jewish Law or is by faith alone. If salvation is not by the keeping of the Law, what causes Christians to live a righteous life?

Probably Aquila and Priscilla had communicated the doctrine of salvation and righteousness by faith, but questions still remained unanswered. If a right relationship with God is not dependent on Jewish ceremonialism and legalism, how is one cleansed from sin and impelled to live righteously? The requirement of keeping the Law to gain salvation provides the motive for striving to live righteously but salvation by faith alone apparently has no such incentive. How can new Christians from paganism find victory in living righteous lives? If the Old Testament Law does not bring salvation, what purpose did God have in His dealings with the Jewish nation? These were urgent questions for the new and expanding Church. Each question had a bearing on the relationship of Jews and Gentiles within the Church. Jews who had been taught that they were to have no dealings with Gentiles had to resolve the question of Jewish legalism and ceremonialism in relation to the new Christian movement. If the Old Testament which had been interpreted to exclude the relation of Jews and Gentiles was followed, how could a church composed of both Jews and Gentiles experience fellowship?

Paul set forth the theological foundation for a victorious Christian life through faith. His doctrinal system did not exclude Gentiles from the Church nor



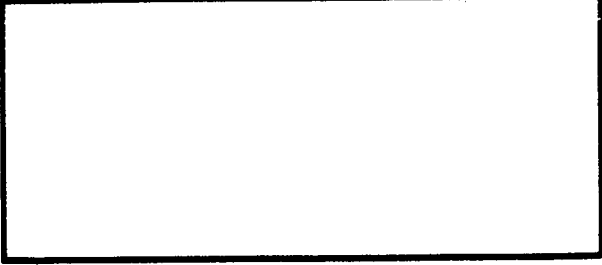
Is this statement true or false?
The Epistle to the Romans deals with a specific problem within the Church. _____
(false)

Romans is a _____ treatise.
(doctrinal)

List three questions Paul had to deal with in his Letter.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

(How is one cleansed from sin and impelled to live righteously? How can new Christians from paganism find victory in righteous living? What purpose did God have in dealing with the Jewish nation?)



did it excuse them for immoral deeds. Rather he showed both Jews and Gentiles how to be made righteous through cleansing from past sins and how to gain victory over present temptations.

The immediate occasion of the Letter seems to have been to strengthen Paul's relationship to the Church in order that when he visited Rome he would be able to minister in their midst. Also, he planned to visit Spain (cf. Rom. 15:24, 28). Perhaps he hoped that the Roman Church would share in his Spanish ministry by supporting him.

There was perhaps some tension which existed between Jewish and Gentile elements in the Church. This tension would be natural in most churches because of national pride. The best way to solve the disturbance was to present a doctrinal position which emphasized universal reconciliation. Also, the members needed a fuller understanding of the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith.

Most scholars believe that Paul wrote the letter to the Romans after he left Ephesus in about A. D. 56. He journeyed first to Macedonia and then spent three months in Greece, perhaps Corinth (Acts 20:1-3). While at Corinth, he concluded that his ministry in that area was completed; therefore, he wrote the Letter to the Romans to prepare for his visit to them after he had carried an offering from the Gentile churches to the saints in Jerusalem.

Corinth is suggested as the place for the writing of Romans because:

1. Paul had just completed his collection for the poverty-stricken believers at Jerusalem (Rom. 15:22ff.).
2. Paul had preached the Gospel throughout the district from Jerusalem to Illyricum (Rom. 15:19).
3. Paul commended Phoebe who belonged to the Church at Cenchreae to the Romans (Rom. 16:1). Cenchreae was the port of Corinth.
4. Paul was a guest of Gaius at the time the Epistle was written (cf. Rom. 16:23). Gaius may have been the same person who was baptized in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:14).

The Style of Romans

Previously this book was called an epistle, but the discovery and publication of the ancient Egyptian papyri changed the view of scholars towards it. The style of Romans agrees with that of ancient

List two possible reasons Paul wrote Romans.

1. _____

2. _____

(To establish a relationship to the Church for his proposed visit to Rome, To encourage support for his visit to Spain)

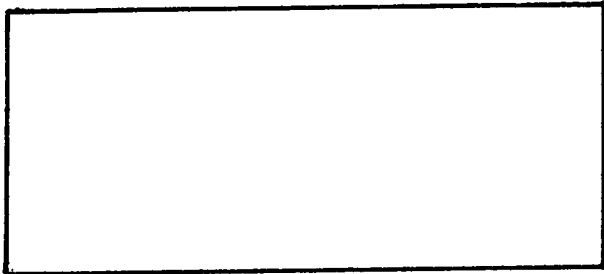
Another possible reason for Paul's writing Romans was to solve the tension which probably existed between the _____ and _____.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

When and where do most scholars believe the Epistle to the Romans was written? _____

(A.D. 56, in Corinth)

letters.— Typical letters began with a greeting followed by prayer, thanksgiving, and the special content. The letter was closed with special salutations and personal greetings. Romans follows this pattern. A special secretary named Tertius wrote the letter for Paul, but he probably contributed no more than his and his younger brother's greetings at the end of the special note for Phoebe (16:22-23).



Home Study Exercise

Basic Activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions.

1. Name two emphases found in both Romans and Galatians. _____

2. What was Paul's contribution to the Gospel for the Gentiles? _____

3. Name the six sources or influences which contributed to Paul's understanding of Christ.

4. What was the difference between the Apostles and "ministers of the word"? _____

5. From whom did Paul probably learn the Apostles' doctrine? _____

6. How was Paul's life changed by the Damascus road experience? _____

7. How did Paul's interpretation of the Old Testament change? _____

8. Name two reasons Paul's Gentile environment influenced his doctrine. _____

9. What was the relation of circumcision to the Covenant? _____

10. Name four elements of Judaism which Paul claimed were unnecessary for Gentiles. _____

11. What Jewish customs made fellowship among Jewish and Gentile Christians difficult? _____

12. Who were the Judaizers and what did they teach? _____

13. How did Paul refute the error that the neglect of legalistic rules results in sin? _____

14. Where were geographical Galatia and political Galatia? _____

15. Evidence that Barnabas was well-known to the Galatians suggests that the Letter was written to which churches? _____
16. Name two possible places and dates for the writing of Galatians. _____

17. Who started the Church in Rome? _____

18. Give two reasons Peter likely did not begin the Church in Rome. _____

19. Did Jews or Gentiles make up the membership of the Roman church? _____

20. How does Romans differ from other Epistles? _____

21. What are three questions Paul dealt with in Romans? _____

22. Give some additional reasons why Paul wrote Romans. _____

23. Give the place and date of the writing of Romans. _____

Supplementary activity (Level 2):

1. Read pages 11-22 in The Epistle to the Romans by Hunter and pages 7-11 in Galatians to Colossians by Hunter.
2. According to Hunter, of whom was the Roman Church composed?
3. Outline Paul's plan in Romans according to Hunter.
4. List the reasons Hunter gives for the neglect of the study of Romans.
5. Which churches does Hunter believe to have been the recipients of Galatians and what date does he give for its writing?
6. What was the issue between Paul and the Judaizers in Galatians?

Advanced activity (Level 3):

1. Read pages 11-33 (to "Faith, not works") and 58-65 in The Epistle of Paul to the Romans by Bruce and pages 7-11 in Galatians to Colossians by Hunter.
2. What does Bruce state to be the occasion of Romans?
3. By whom was the Roman Church established and who constituted its membership at the time of Paul's writing?
4. Why is the mentioning of "Chrestus" by Suetonius important?
5. List reasons why copies of the Roman Letter are believed to have been sent to other churches at an early date.
6. What is the *corpus Paulinum*?
7. Which churches does Hunter believe to be the recipients of Galatians and what date does he give for its writing?
8. What was the issue between Paul and the Judaizers in Galatians and is the issue still alive today? Explain.

Seminar Discussion

1. How did Paul's theology change when he became a Christian?
2. Which source of Paul's Christian doctrine appears to have been the most important?
3. Was Galatians written to North or South Galatia?
4. How are Romans and Galatians similar and different?
5. How did Paul's concept of salvation differ from that of the Pharisees? Is legalism a problem today?
6. What were Paul's purpose and occasion in writing Romans and Galatians?