

The First-Century Church  
"The Churches in Galatia -- Fickle and Unstable"

Introduction:

1. The New Testament contains a tremendous amount of information that was written "to" and "about" various congregations in the first century.
2. This information is both positive and negative.
3. By examining this information we can learn the Lord's will for His church today.
4. This lesson is a study of the churches in Galatia.
  - a. These congregations are mentioned in 1 Corinthians 16:1.
  - b. The apostle Paul also wrote a letter to these congregations [Galatians].
  - c. Galatians indicates that these congregations were somewhat fickle and unstable in that they were following a perverted gospel.

Discussion:

- I. (Galatians 1:6-9) PAUL REBUKED THE CHURCHES IN GALATIA
  - A. These churches had turned from the Gospel that Paul preached.
    1. Paul had been made an apostle by the Lord (Galatians 1:1).
    2. The Gospel Paul preached had been revealed to him by the Lord (Galatians 1:11-12).
    3. The true Gospel plays a key role in salvation (Romans 1:16-17).
  - B. These churches had turned to a perverted gospel.
    1. In our study of the Jerusalem church we showed how certain teachers were binding circumcision and the Law of Moses on Gentile converts (Acts 15:1, 5).
    2. Although this issue was settled in Jerusalem, these teachers continued spreading their doctrine in various areas, including Galatia.
    3. Paul said that these teachers were "*accursed.*"
    4. What would be the spiritual condition of those who followed their teaching?
- II. REASONS WHY THE CHURCHES IN GALATIA WERE NOT TO FOLLOW THESE ACCURSED TEACHERS
  - A. (Galatians 3:1-5) Who gave the Spirit to the members of the Galatian churches -- Paul or the accursed teachers?
    1. The apostles could lay hands on Christians and give them a miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17).
    2. As an apostle, Paul had this power (Acts 19:6).
    3. The accursed teachers had no such power.
  - B. (Galatians 3:19-25) The Law of Moses had served its purpose.
  - C. (Galatians 3:26-29) People now become children of God by following Christ -- not Moses.
  - D. (Galatians 4:4-5) Christ came to redeem those who were under the Law of Moses.
    1. Ephesians 2:14-18
    2. Colossians 2:10-14
  - E. (Galatians 5:1-4) Those who seek to be justified by the Law of Moses "*are fallen from grace.*"
  - F. (Galatians 6:15) Physical circumcision is no longer important -- being a new creature is (Romans 6:3-4).

Conclusion:

1. The churches in Galatia made the mistake of following a perverted gospel.
2. In restoring the Lord's church today, we must remain true to His Word (John 8:31-32).
3. The Lord's true followers will not change His Word in any way (Revelation 22:18-19).
4. Let us carefully examine the doctrines we are taught (1 John 4:1).