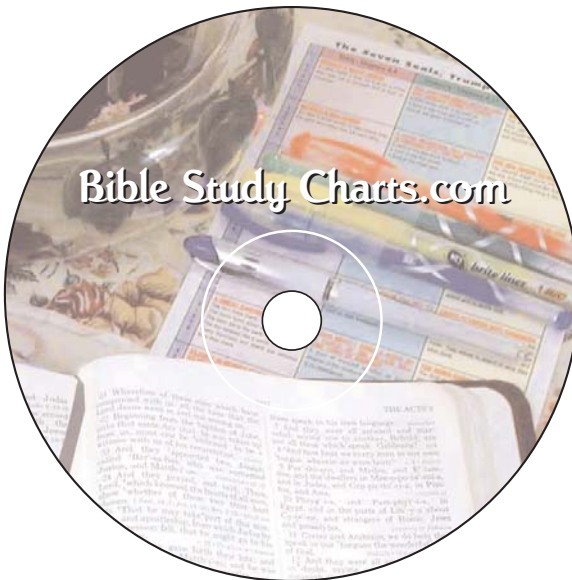


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THE OUTLINE OF GALATIANS

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The theme of Galatians

This letter is one that lends itself to statement of a theme—*justification by faith: the life and liberty of a believer in Christ apart from the yoke of the Mosaic law*. This theme dominates the entire letter, and this statement of it brings together both the positive and the negative, both the initial justification and the ongoing life of a Christian as controlled by faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

The Events that led to the writing of Galatians

Galatians is often listed in the second group of Paul’s letters, written during the third missionary journey. Galatians is the most difficult of all Paul’s letters to date or place, primarily because there are no references in the letter itself to tie in with what we know of Paul’s ministry.

Paul’s purposes in writing Galatians

Paul wrote to defend his place and authority as a genuine apostle of Jesus Christ (chaps. 1, 2 primarily), which included establishing that his commission and gospel came directly from Jesus (1:11–24) and that his gospel had been vindicated before the other apostles (2:1–14).

Paul wrote to correct the error of the Judaizers and prove the truth of the gospel he preached (chaps. 3, 4 primarily). This included demonstrating that justification is by faith and not by the law.

Paul wrote to teach about the Spirit-controlled life that accompanies justification by faith (chaps. 5, 6 primarily). This purpose may reflect that his detractors said his doctrine of grace led to licentiousness (Rom. 3:8; 6:1), but Paul would have been careful to teach the opposite truth anyway.