Paul's Letter to the Galatians 7.25.10

Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia . . . (Galatians 1:1-2)

What a privilege it is to look at this letter together

- One of the most powerful and influential documents ever written
- Written by one of the consequential men in the entirety of human history
- Several important questions to answers as we begin our journey

Who wrote this letter?

- The letter was written by Paul
  - Nobody has ever seriously doubted this
    - The Bible is clear (*Gal 1:1*)
    - It is consistent with Paul's other letters
- Paul identifies himself as an Apostle

Who was to receive the letter?

- The letter was written to the churches of Galatia (*Gal 1:2*)
- There is some question about this
  - The Galatic region is shaped like a figure 8 on a map
    - Was the letter written to North Galatia?
    - Or was it written to South Galatia?
  - Probably written to South Galatia, but it honestly doesn't matter that much

When was the letter written?

- Could have been written as late as 55 A.D.
- Probably written in 48 A.D. before the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)

Why was the letter written?

- People in the Galatian Churches were trying to persuade the Christians that they needed to keep the Old Testament Law to be legitimate
  - These false teachers have been called Judaizers
  - They seem particularly interested in teaching the necessity of circumcision
- Paul is shocked, offended, and angry at this teaching
- He writes a stern letter to these churches to emphasize the true Gospel of Jesus
  - We are not saved by keeping the Law, but by faith in Jesus Christ
  - This truth is a central part of the Apostolic preaching
  - This truth is confirmed by the Old Testament itself
  - This Gospel leads to freedom, power, and holy living
  - This Gospel is eternally and inalterably true and should never be rejected

Where to from here?

- Threats to the Gospel always exist
  - As sinners we naturally lean in the direction of seeking to be saved based on our labors
  - Whether we learn of these labors from the Old Testament Law or we make them up on our own, we are always seeking to save ourselves by what we do
  - But people can save themselves by doing anything—we must have a savior who can do something for us
- As we approach this letter be humble: You need your understanding of the gospel correct by this letter!
- As we approach this letter be courageous: You need to learn from Paul's passion for the Gospel and share some of it!
- At Crossing we want to love the Gospel! We should all pray for grace that we can understand it, believe it, live it, and share it better after our study of this letter