

Dr. Dave Mathewson, New Testament Literature, Lecture 18, 2 Corinthians and Galatians

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This was lecture 18 on 2 Corinthians and Galatians by Dr. Dave Mathewson in his New Testament History and Literature course.

All right, let's go ahead and get started. What we'll do today is move through rather quickly 2 Corinthians. We'll talk a little bit about its background and why it was written, the main theme of it, etc.

But I won't go into a lot more detail. This is one of the books where we will sail rather high or fly rather high. But with Galatians, we'll dive down again and take a closer look at Galatians as far as what was going on with that book, why it was written, and look at a couple of the texts in a little more detail.

But let's open with prayer, and then we'll try to ask the question, why another letter to the Corinthians? All right.

Father, thank you for your love for us and for so graciously revealing yourself to us through your written word that we have a record that continues to speak to us, a written record of your past revelation but ongoing revelation to your people as well today. And I pray that as a result of this class, we will be enabled to think more deeply and profoundly about that revelation and its implication for our lives today. In Jesus' name, we pray, amen.

All right, so we ended the last class period looking at 1 Corinthians in some detail, but we also learned that 1 Corinthians is actually only one letter, at least that we know of, one letter out of at least four that Paul wrote to the city of Corinth, a city that he visited on one of his missionary journeys that we read about in Acts, Acts chapter 18. Paul basically lived in Corinth for about a year and a half and established a church there, and then Paul wrote at least four letters to the Corinthians. Two of them have survived in what we call 1 and 2 Corinthians.

The others we find references to in the letters themselves in our 1 and 2 Corinthians, but we no longer, we don't have those, and for some reason, they have not survived. But why another letter to the Corinthians? So, let's pull out another piece of the church's mail, of the early church's mail and the letter that we call 2 Corinthians, which we saw technically is 4 Corinthians. It's at least the fourth letter that Paul, that we know of, that Paul wrote to the Corinthians probably.

But why another letter to the Corinthians? Well, first of all, after 1 Corinthians, apparently many of the Corinthians did respond positively to 1 Corinthians. All the

various instructions that Paul gave to the Corinthians, all of them are related to how the church had allowed the values and thinking of secular Corinthian culture to infiltrate the church, especially class distinctions and social elitism, the patron-client relationship, etc. Those kinds of social dynamics had crept into the church and actually caused a number of problems that Paul addresses in the book of 1 Corinthians.

So apparently, for the most part, the Corinthians, most of them had responded positively to his letter. However, in the meantime, Paul receives some news that his authority as an apostle has been challenged by some troublemakers in the Corinthian congregation. So, after Paul writes 1 Corinthians, and again he's physically separated from the city, some think Paul actually did make another trip to Corinth that we don't see referred to at this point in Acts, but Paul does receive news that there are some in the city of Corinth in the church who are challenging his authority as an apostle.

And so, Paul writes a letter that is often known as the painful or the tearful letter. In chapter 2 and verse 4, Paul says, For I wrote you out of much distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain, but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you. And if I can back up to verse 3, the verse right before it, he says, actually I'll go back to verse 1. So, I made up my mind not to make you another painful visit.

So, you can see that there's tension between Paul and many in the Corinthian congregation. For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? And I wrote as I did, referring to this previous letter, probably not 1 Corinthians, but another letter, I wrote as I did so that when I came, I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice. For I am confident about all of you that my joy would be the joy of all of you.

For I wrote you out of much distress and anguish of heart and with many tears. Many take that then as a reference to this tearful or painful letter that Paul wrote sometime after he wrote 1 Corinthians to respond to a new problem and to respond to this challenge to his authority. Now following that painful letter, Paul receives word that many Corinthians, have responded to that painful letter and they have actually repented of the way they've been treating Paul.

And they now have responded appropriately and responded in the way that Paul hoped to this tearful letter. However, along with this good news, Paul receives bad news that there are still some in Corinth who are opposing him and his authority as an apostle. And in response to this, Paul then writes the book that we know as 2 Corinthians, which technically is at least 4 Corinthians.

Again, we know of at least 4 letters apparently that Paul has written and our 2 Corinthians is the 4th of the letters that we know of. But in response to this, in

response to the fact that many have responded positively to that tearful, painful letter, but that there's still some who are opposing him and his authority as an apostle, in response to both of those, Paul now will write the letter of 2 Corinthians and send that to the Corinthians to address this issue. So again, hopefully, you have caught on by now that the New Testament letters are not purely theological documents.

Again, at no point do we see Paul simply sitting down and writing an essay or a textbook expressing all his theological thinking, but Paul's letters grow out of very pastoral concerns. That is, Paul is aware of issues and problems that have arisen in these churches that he's planted from the book that we read about in Acts, or even a couple of churches such as the city of Rome, the letter to the Romans that he did not plant, but still hears of problems or difficulties, and now Paul sits down and writes these letters. So, it is theology that is directed towards a specific purpose, and 2 Corinthians clearly is addressed to an important problem or issue that has arisen in the first-century city of Corinth.

So, what then is the purpose of 2 Corinthians? Why did Paul write it? Basically, Paul writes 1 Corinthians to praise the Corinthians for responding to his letter that he had written to them, this tearful letter, so he writes to praise those who have responded, but he also writes to warn and admonish those who are still opposed to him. A group of individuals that Paul calls super-apostles, to use a possible English translation. These super-apostles are challenging Paul, Paul writes to warn and admonish them concerning the way they were acting, and therefore to reestablish his authority as an apostle, especially to those who are questioning his apostleship.

Now one of the issues with 2 Corinthians is the fact that when you read 2 Corinthians carefully, there appears to be a rather abrupt change in Paul's attitude and tone, a little over halfway through the letter, starting with roughly chapter 10. So, chapters 1-9 are fairly positive in tone, and this is where Paul establishes, he does talk about his authority as an apostle, he reminds them that he is a minister of this new covenant, we've talked a little bit about the new covenant in previous sections of the New Testament, and Paul establishes his authority as an apostle and a minister of the new covenant, but chapters 1-9 are very positive in outlook and tone. When you come to chapter 10 through the rest of the letter, Paul's tone becomes much more negative and harsh.

And there's really no transition in between, it's just you reach, you get to chapter 10, it's not like there's something at the end of chapter 9 that prepares you for the harsher, more negative tone in chapter 10, it's just an abrupt change. And this has led a lot of scholars to ask, well how can we explain that change? One of the solutions is that 2 Corinthians is actually, at least in the form that we now have it when it was included in the New Testament canon, some feel 2 Corinthians is actually a compilation of two separate letters that Paul wrote, because the shift is

just so abrupt, and the change so drastic, that certainly it couldn't be two letters, so some have suggested chapters 1-9 and 10-13 are two separate letters that have been combined when they made their way into the New Testament, they were combined and edited into the letter that we now know as 2 Corinthians. And there are probably some other reasons why people think they're two different letters as well.

But that's a very common suggestion, that what we have is actually two separate letters. Some have even suggested that within this somewhere, one of these is actually the tearful letter that Paul refers to in chapter 2, that the tearful letter is one of the letters included in this section, perhaps in 10-13. Now, without spending a lot of time on this, because again, no matter what happened, in the form that we have it in the New Testament, we do have to still account for the fact that we have this book that we call 2 Corinthians that's chapter 1-13.

So ultimately, the goal is to deal with the finished text, the final text as we have it. However, without spending a lot of time, is there a way perhaps to explain the difference in tone between these two sections? Is this indicative of the fact that these are two separate letters? Or can you think of another way to explain perhaps the difference between chapters 1-9 and chapters 10-13, without suggesting that what we have are two separate letters that Paul wrote on different occasions, and later on, a scribe or somebody brought them together as it made its way into the New Testament and put it together in this nice letter form that we call 2 Corinthians. Is there another way perhaps to account for the abrupt shift in perspective and tone between the first nine chapters and chapters 10-13 that are more negative? Maybe Paul just had a rough night and he finished chapters 1-9, didn't sleep well and was irritable, and woke up and wrote 10-13.

You didn't like that one? What might account for the difference? Thinking about some of the background that we just talked about. It's possible, you're exactly right, it's possible that first of all, we don't need to perhaps think in terms of, although this may have been the case, but did Paul have to sit down and write the whole thing in one sitting from beginning to end? I don't know, maybe that is the way they wrote letters in the first century. Or could he have written some of it and received new information that caused him to write the rest of the letter, which then is more negative in tone in light of some of the information that he received?

That's entirely possible. You would think that, especially in light of 1 Corinthians where he signals, now I write to you concerning what was written to me. You might expect in chapter 10 to begin with some indication that he may have received additional news.

But that is plausible though, he could have received additional information. Assuming that his readers knew what was going on would have kind of changed his tone. Couldn't we also look at it from the standpoint of chapters 1-9 would be Paul

addressing particularly those who have responded favorably, whereas in chapters 10-13, Paul then addresses the same segment of Corinth that is still opposing him and challenging his authority.

And therefore, his tone becomes more harsh and negative towards those who are still opposed to him. So the change in tone may reflect not two separate letters, but the two separate groups in the church of Corinth. Once again one has responded positively that he praises, and the other is still opposed to him and challenging his authority, where then Paul becomes more harsh and negative in tone.

So I don't think the change in tone necessarily has to lead us to think that there are two separate letters that a later scribe edited and brought together, but again they may just reflect two different segments of the Corinthian church and their attitude towards Paul. One of the texts, just to say something very briefly about towards the end of the first section that's more positive in tone, in chapters 8-9 of 1 Corinthians, I'm sorry, 2 Corinthians, Paul in a rather lengthy section, in fact, the lengthiest section that we have on the topic of giving or some of us would use the word tithing, Paul basically encourages the Corinthians because he wants to take up a collection that Paul will take back to Jerusalem. So Paul hopes that when he arrives at Corinth he'll be able to gather, that the Corinthians will have taken an offering or collection and he will take that back to Jerusalem, to the church in Jerusalem, which historically the church in Jerusalem has often suffered famine and things like that during the first century, and perhaps then this is Paul's attempt to gather support from the Corinthian church to aid the famine relief in the city of Jerusalem, the church and Christians in Jerusalem.

Now a couple of questions, or maybe a question and observation, first of all, and one of them more a practical theological type observation, but first of all, a question, why do you think Paul would be keen to get the Corinthian Christians to take up an offering so he could send it back to Jerusalem? I mean this is, I'm not saying there's only one reason, but just thinking kind of theologically about some of the things we've talked about in relationship to the history leading up to and during the time of the New Testament, some of the things we've seen in the Gospels and other letters of Paul, is why might Paul be keen to encourage the Corinthian church to take up a collection, an offering, that he would then send to the Corinthian church? Besides just being good humanitarians and showing compassion and concern for those who are suffering and who are in need, when they perhaps have the resources or even if they don't, Paul does tell them to be willing, that they've given out of their poverty, but why would Paul be so intent on getting them to take a collection up so he could take that back to the Jerusalem church, the Christians in Jerusalem? If the Jerusalem church is primarily Jewish and the Corinthian church more Gentile, this would be another way for Paul to establish the solidarity between Jew and Gentile, by having a Gentile church now support the church in Jerusalem. So, this may be a more pragmatic manifestation of Paul's underlying concern of the unity between Jews and

Gentiles. And so, by having the Gentile church now take a collection that he will now send back to the Jerusalem church, hopefully that would help in the, again pragmatically, the solidarity between Jew and Gentile, that Paul has fought so hard to maintain, that the Gospel goes out to Gentiles as well as Jews, that there's now one true people of God.

And we'll see that theme crop up in Galatians and a number of other places as well. Yep? Right, right. Yeah, there might be that as well.

There very well could be the idea that it's also a call for the Gentiles to recognize the true roots of their participation in the Gospel, to realize that you owe some, not that they're paying for anything, but in a sense it's a recognition that, as Paul will say elsewhere, Gentiles were separated from the commonwealth of Israel, they were strangers and foreigners and aliens, but now they have been made shares in the promises and covenants that have been made to Israel. Perhaps this is a way of reminding them and kind of showing their gratitude to the Jewish background for the salvation that they possess. That's a very good point.

The other interesting thing about this text is, again this is more of a practical theological matter that at least it's interesting to think about, particularly when you compare it with the Old Testament, it's intriguing that the most extended treatment of giving in the New Testament at least doesn't mention anything about giving a tithe. In fact, when you read 2 Corinthians 8 through 9 carefully, Paul never, and as I understand the New Testament, never calls on us to tithe 10%. Instead, Paul makes it clear that the measure of our giving is generosity and out of gratitude for Jesus Christ.

In fact, I'm convinced today even that this, and we've probably all heard that and I still hear that, but 10%, to say you need to give 10% of your income, is for some people that are simply unreasonable. For others that's criminal. They're getting off easy.

10%, they should be giving 30 or 40% perhaps. But Paul doesn't ever talk in terms of giving a tithe. Instead, 2 Corinthians 8 through 9 is clear that Paul talks in terms of giving as generously as you can out of gratitude and love for Jesus Christ and what he has given you.

So, what I would suggest when we think about giving is the primary factor is not to calculate 10% of what you make or earn, but instead to ask how can I, what's the most generous amount, how can I be as generous as possible in what I give? One other thing to say about 2 Corinthians before we move on, and I'll just state what I think is the main theme of the book perhaps, or one of the main themes, is 2 Corinthians from the start to the very end, it's very intriguing, especially when Paul is combating these super apostles or those who are opposed to him, it's intriguing that

the primary sign or indication of the validity of Paul's apostleship is always his suffering. It's intriguing that when he points to the genuineness or the validity of his apostolic authority, he doesn't point to his rhetorical skills or his ability to wield power over someone else, but instead he always intriguingly points to his suffering. So, in the book of Corinthians, suffering is not to be seen, with Paul at least, as an indication of his weakness or his subordination to these super-apostles.

In fact, that's what apparently these super-apostles were doing. They were pointing to Paul's weaknesses as an indication that he really wasn't an apostle, but Paul makes it clear that his suffering is actually an indication of the validity of his apostleship. So for example, towards the end of the letter in chapter 12, and this is interesting how he writes, towards the very end of the chapter he says, and you can hear Paul's almost being ironic in a sense, he's telling these super-apostles, those who are opposing him and boasting about their credentials and demeaning Paul because he lacks credentials and he lacks the power of speech and presentation, as Paul says, it is necessary to boast.

Nothing is gained by it, but I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. So, Paul in a sense says, I don't want to boast, but if I'm going to boast, and you force me to, I can lay down credentials as well. And he says I can go into visions and revelations that I've had.

He says, I know a person in Christ who 14 years ago was caught up to the third heaven, whether in the body or out of the body, I don't know, God knows. And I know that such a person, whether in the body or out of the body, I don't know, God knows. It's interesting he repeats that twice.

This person was caught up in paradise, into heaven, and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. In other words, Paul has a visionary type experience along the lines that you read about in Daniel in the Old Testament and the book of Revelation in the New Testament which we'll look out for later, that we'll look out later in the semester. But Paul goes on and says, on behalf of such a person as this, I will boast, but on my own behalf, I will not boast except in my weaknesses.

And then he goes on and says, to keep him from being conceited, God gave him a thorn in the flesh. And this is a metaphor for some kind of hindrance or something that kept Paul from boasting some limitations. There's been all kinds of disagreement as to whether this was physical or whether it was spiritual.

Some have tried to tie this to Paul having bad eyesight. Did he have some disease or speech problem or was this a physical torment? The text doesn't tell us. But what it does go on say in verse 8, Paul says, three times I appealed to the Lord about this to

remove this hindrance, whatever it was, physically or spiritually, but the Lord said to me, my grace is sufficient for you for power is made perfect in your weakness.

So, Paul says, so I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore, I am content with weakness, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ. For whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

So, part of the answer for Paul pointing to his weakness as a credential for his apostleship is he's convinced that it is through his weakness that God's power is made most manifest and apparent. Therefore, in view of his weakness, there can be no other option or no other conclusion that it's God's power that is working through him and not his own power and not his own ability. So weakness and suffering play a very important part, a very important role in 2 Corinthians, especially as one of the credentials for Paul's apostleship over against these false super apostles that are challenging his authority.

So, what is the theme? If I could summarize the theme of 2 Corinthians, at least one of the dominant themes would be glory through suffering. Along the lines of those verses we just read, God's power, God's glory is manifest through the apostle Paul's suffering. Not in spite of it or in addition to it, but through it and in it.

All right, any questions on 2 Corinthians? That's mainly what I want you to understand is the main purpose of it to respond in praise for those who responded to Paul's letter and his commands and his apostleship, but to warn and admonish those who still oppose him. And Paul does that by pointing to his suffering and weakness because it's through his suffering and weakness that God's glory and power are most evident. So then on an exam, you'll be able to answer anything I throw at you about 2 Corinthians, anything that we've talked about in the discussion today.

All right, I told you that we'd sail through 2 Corinthians rather quickly, but let's open another piece of the early church's mail and that is we'll reach into the mailbox and pull out a letter that is addressed to the Galatians. Now, one of the questions that arises is where would you take the letter? If you were a first-century mail carrier, and hopefully you picked this up in your reading of your textbook *Introducing the New Testament*, if you were a mail carrier in the first century and Paul gave you a letter and said, here, take this to the Galatians, where in the world would you go? Because you'll soon discover there's no city called Galatia. We've looked at Rome.

Rome was a city and Corinth was a city, but we get to the Galatians and you look on the map and there's no city called Galatia. But that's where the debate is. Galatia was actually a region or a country, for now, just to put it generally.

But where is it located? I mean, where would Paul, again, if you were a first-century mail carrier, where would you have carried the letter to the Galatians? Who was Paul addressing? Because again, when you go back and read the book of Acts, you don't find any mention of Paul going to the Galatians to establish a church or anything like that. So where was Galatia? Where would Paul have gone to establish a church or churches in Galatia? Where would you have taken this letter? What was the destination for this letter that Paul wrote? Because he begins in the first verse, as he does in all his letters, he usually identifies himself and then mentions the recipients. That was just the common way of opening a letter in the first century, much like we say, dear so-and-so, and then we launch into our body.

Instead of dear so-and-so, in the first century, the author of the letter would have introduced himself and identified himself and the recipients as well. So Paul begins, Paul, an apostle sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities, but through Jesus Christ and God, the Father, who raised him from the dead to the churches of Galatia. So where were the churches of Galatia? Well, this is a map of, again, you've seen this before, a map outlining Paul's missionary journeys in the book of Acts and his final trip that he makes to Rome in Acts chapter 28.

And you see, you can't read this, it's a little bit distorted, but you can obviously see that this map contains the names of most of the cities that Paul visited in his missionary journeys throughout Acts. Now, you'll notice that perhaps you can't see this, but this right here says Galatia. And it's kind of confusing where it's placed because it's not really specific.

Where's Galatia? Did Paul... You'll notice, here's Galatia up here, but in none of Paul's journeys does he actually get up in this region, at least that we know of in the book of Acts. Most of Paul's activities, this is modern-day Turkey, and Asia Minor back then, most of Paul's activity has been in the southern part, the southern half of modern-day Turkey or Asia Minor. So, is Paul addressing people that he's never visited again, or what's going on? Where is Galatia? Where did Paul send this letter? There are actually two theories that hopefully you read about and recall from your textbook.

One of them is what is known as the North Galatia theory. That is originally, the name Galatia referred to the ethnic Galatians, which was in this area in the northern part of kind of central Turkey or Asia Minor. This would have been a place settled by the Gauls and subsequently known as Galatia.

That's known as the North Galatian theory. And so, some think that when Paul wrote a letter to the Galatians, he was addressing the ethnic area, the ethnic area of Galatia. Even though Acts does not tell us that he ever went up there, some would even say, well, maybe Acts doesn't tell us everywhere Paul went.

Maybe somewhere in one of these journeys, he ventured into the northern part of central Turkey, the area known as Galatia. And sometimes he may have visited there and established churches. And now he's writing a letter to the Galatians.

So that's what is meant by the North Galatia theory. That when Paul says to the Galatians, he's writing to the ethnic Galatians, to the actual northern country of Galatia. However, there's another theory called the South Galatian theory.

And that is by the time of the first century when Rome took over, Rome actually established Galatia as one of its provinces. If you remember, as the Roman Empire took over, one of the ways it governed its territory was by dividing it up into provinces. One of those provinces was Galatia.

And interestingly, the Roman province of Galatia did extend south to the Mediterranean Sea. So most likely, under this view, the South Galatian view, Paul is addressing a series of cities, Lystra and Derbe, a series of cities that were in South Galatia. That is the province of Galatia.

So, do you see the difference? North Galatia says that Galatia only referred to the northern, originally, the country of Galatia. Ethnically, the Galatian people lived in the northern part of central Turkey. But by the time of the Roman Empire, Rome turned this into a province and extended Galatia all the way down into southern Turkey, modern-day Turkey, that would encompass a number of cities that Paul visited on more than one occasion.

So again, I don't want to go into detail about why, I think, or which one we should hold to and why, but it seems anymore that, I think, almost everyone agrees that Paul was probably addressing these cities here in South Galatia. That is, Galatia refers to the, not the ethnic country, but referring to the Roman province. So, again, most likely Paul is addressing a cluster of churches or cities that he visited on his missionary journeys in South Galatia, that is the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia.

Now you can sleep tonight, you know where Paul addressed, that's right, you got it down now, north, you know it's South Galatia. Again, there's not, you know, it's not like you're going to read their letter completely differently, but it does help when we're asking the question, well how does this connect with Acts? Because, again, we don't see Paul going up to the northern area around Galatia, the ethnic area of Galatia, but we do see Paul in southern Turkey in what was known as the Roman province of Galatia during that time, so most likely that's whom Paul is addressing. So, I think if you would have been Paul's mail carrier and he would have handed you the letter and said, here, take this to the Galatians, you would have traveled to this cluster of towns right in here and delivered this letter to them.

That was the Galatians. The other question that, again, is not, won't make a big difference in the way you interpret Galatians, but does have to do with how you relate Galatians to Acts, whether you think it fits or it contradicts or how do we fit Galatians into what we know about Paul from the book of Acts? And that is, when was Galatians written? Was it early or late? Well, that's a good grief. Early or late in comparison to what? By early, I mean if Galatians was written early according to an earlier date than where most scholars would date it, it would probably be the first letter written by Paul that we have, that we know of, that we have possession of.

Remember, the New Testament letters of Paul are not arranged in the order they're written. They're roughly arranged in order of length. That's why Romans comes first.

But if we date Galatians early, then basically, I'll put that up in just a moment. If we date it early, basically we're saying that Galatians is probably the first letter that Paul wrote, at least that we have a record of. If we date it late, then probably 1 Thessalonians is going to be the first letter, or maybe the first letter that Paul wrote.

And Galatians would come a little later, a few years later after he wrote 1 Thessalonians. Again, I'm not answering this point as to the exact date as far as the year of A.D., but just the main thing I want you to know is if you date it early, Galatians is the first letter, at least we know of, probably that Paul wrote. If you date it later, then most likely 1 Thessalonians.

1 Thessalonians is next in line, and it would get bumped to the head of the list as the first letter that Paul wrote. Now, how we answer this question, whether this is the first letter Paul wrote or whether it's a second letter, how it relates to Acts. And the key factor is Acts chapter 15, which records what? Very good, the Jerusalem Council.

Remember the Jerusalem Council where Paul and other apostles got together and they addressed the issue, of what is required of Gentiles to be the people of God? Do they have to submit to the law of Moses? And the consensus was, no they don't. So Gentiles can be God's people along with Jews without having to submit to the Mosaic law from the Old Testament. That's what happened in Acts 15.

The question is, how does Galatians relate to that? Because in Galatians, these are not meant necessarily to line up. I'm just listing it, and you'll see why in a moment. In Galatians 1 and 2, we read, Galatians 1 and 2, Paul kind of gives us a summary of his life, from the time, his life as a Jew.

Remember he was a Pharisee. We saw in Acts chapter 9, that Paul was a Pharisee, kind of the zealot type. He was like a first-century terrorist, trying to destroy the church out of his zeal for the law and for Judaism.

But then when Christ confronted him on the road to Damascus, Paul is converted and also is called to be an apostle. Paul summarizes his life in chapters 1 and 2 of Galatians, and in these chapters, Paul refers to two visits to Jerusalem. One of the visits to Jerusalem happened not too long after his conversion.

In Acts chapter 9, on his way to the Damascus road, when God knocked him down and Christ appeared to him. Shortly after that, Paul visits Jerusalem. But then later on in Galatians 2, Paul mentions another trip to Jerusalem he makes.

So, Paul mentions two trips to Jerusalem. Between his conversion and between the time he's now writing Galatians, Paul says he's visited Jerusalem twice. Acts, the first 15 chapters of Acts, starting with chapter 9, with Paul's conversion, Acts 9-15 mention three visits of Paul to Jerusalem.

The first one, in Acts 9-10, obviously is the same one he's referring to in Galatians 1. So that problem is solved. Again, Paul clearly refers to a visit to Jerusalem right after his conversion to Christianity and then Acts 9-10 record the exact same visit. I think everyone agrees with that.

The problem is, the visit to Jerusalem in Galatians 2, which one does it correspond to? Luke, who wrote Acts, mentions a visit, apparently a visit of Paul to Jerusalem in Acts 11, where Paul actually went to help in a famine relief effort to Jerusalem. And then Acts 15 is your Jerusalem council. So, the question is, this one is taken care of.

We can draw a straight line from Galatians 1 to Acts 9-10. They're both the same or an equal sign. They're both the same visit.

But the question is, when Paul talks about his visit to Jerusalem in Galatians 2, does it refer to Acts 11, the visit of Paul to Jerusalem to relieve the famine, the famine relief effort? Or is Paul in Galatians 2 referring to the Jerusalem council? Now you can see where the early and late. If Galatians 2 refers to Acts 11, the visit, the famine relief visit, then Galatians is the earliest letter that we have that Paul wrote. If Galatians 2 refers to Acts 15, the Jerusalem council, then Galatians is written a few years later, and 1 Thessalonians would be the first letter that Paul wrote.

So that's the issue behind whether it's early or late. Again, it all revolves around, in Galatians 2, again, Galatians 1 and 2 is kind of a summary of Paul's life, surrounding his life in Judaism and his conversion. And in Acts 2, he mentions one of his visits to Jerusalem, a few years after he was converted.

And the key is, which of the visits in Acts is that referring to? Because Paul doesn't spell that out in detail. And which one you think it's referring to will affect whether you think Acts is the first book letter that we have that Paul wrote, that is, if it's referring to the visit in Acts, or if you think Galatians was written a little bit later, and

maybe 1 Thessalonians was written first, that would be the case if Galatians 2 refers to Acts 15. Because obviously, if it refers to Acts 15, then Galatians could not have been written until sometime after that, well past the halfway mark of the first century.

But if it's referring to Acts 11, then Galatians must have been written before Acts 15 ever took place. That would place Galatians a little bit earlier. Just so you know, but again, I don't want to defend it, in my opinion, Galatians chapter 2 is referring to Acts 15, the Jerusalem Council.

And for some reason, Paul did not choose to mention this one. There's a different explanation as to why that might be the case, but I think a good case can be made that Galatians 2 and Acts 15 are referring to the same event so I think perhaps Galatians was a little bit later then, and 1 Thessalonians probably was the first book written, at least that we have evidence of Paul's letters. All right, any other questions on the issue of the north and south Galatian? Where was Galatia in the date of Paul's letter? Right, you're exactly right.

This is actually a minority position. I don't know why I take it. But most New Testament, if you went to the library and looked at a bunch of New Testament surveys or introductions similar to your textbook, you'd find that most of them would link Galatians 2 with Acts 11, and then place Galatians as the first letter Paul wrote.

But again, I'm still convinced that Galatians 2 resembles Acts 15 very closely. And if you read the two accounts, I mean they're obviously going to be different because the author of Acts isn't going to record it exactly the same way Paul is, especially Paul is going to abbreviate it greatly for his epistolary genre in which he is writing. But a very good observation, you'll notice that what I've just said about the date of Acts and Galatians 2 and Acts 15 is the opposite of what your textbook suggests.

All right, well let's talk a little bit about why Paul wrote this letter in the first place. The book of Galatians is, when it comes to the purpose or why Paul wrote it, I think it's fairly, although some of the details might not be easy, it's very broad, it's fairly easy, I think, to infer from reading the book of Galatians. I would guess if we all took time to read the book of Galatians, most of you could come up with a fairly reasonable suggestion of what Paul was trying to do if you read it carefully and thought about it a little bit.

And that is, Paul seems to be addressing a situation very different from what he was in Romans and First Corinthians. That is, Paul seems to be addressing a situation where certain Jewish Christians, and we'll see what they were doing and how they were doing it in just a moment, but certain Jewish Christians are actually undermining Paul's gospel. And if you remember, Paul's gospel, to kind of summarize it, is that Gentiles, as well as Jews, Gentiles can also participate in the blessings of

salvation and can become the people of God apart from submitting to the law of Moses.

So, Gentiles, based, marked solely by faith in Christ, can participate in the promises of salvation and be God's true people, along with Jews, and they can do so without having to submit to the law of Moses. That gospel is now being challenged by a group of Jewish Christians who are calling into question and trying to undermine, apparently, Paul's gospels. Paul and scholars, scholars usually refer to the group in Galatians as Judaizers, that is, those who are forcing or trying to force the Jewish way of life under the law of Moses on Gentiles.

Perhaps this slide will kind of explain Paul and the Judaizers. So basically, the Judaizers that Paul is addressing, and it's important, I think, to realize that they do appear to be Christian, Christian Jews. They're saying that they weren't denying that, apparently they weren't denying that one needs to place faith in Jesus Christ, but they were suggesting that it also demanded conformity to the law of Moses.

So Gentiles, yes, faith in Christ, but one also needed to submit to the law of Moses as an indicator of belonging to the people of God. And that then results in justification or salvation, or we saw back in Romans, Paul meant by justification, it was a legal term to vindicate, to declare that one is not guilty, to vindicate someone by faith in Jesus Christ, plus taking on the identity marker and the lifestyle of the Mosaic law is what would have brought about justification. Basically, although maybe a little bit too simplistically, Paul is going to, in a sense, redo this formula and suggest that faith in Christ, faith in Christ is what brings about justification, but justification, though, is clearly coupled with obedience to Christ, which Paul is going to link with the Holy Spirit.

Notice that he's removed the law, he's removed the law of Moses from the equation. So, it's not faith plus the law of Moses, it's faith alone qualifies one to belong to God's people and to be vindicated, but that is accompanied by obedience, which Paul attributes to the new covenant Holy Spirit. Remember we said when the Holy Spirit, this is chapter 2, upon the people of God, back in the book of Acts, on the day of Pentecost, that is part of the new covenant.

When God, in the Old Testament, when God promised that one day He would establish a new covenant, part of that was the pouring out of the Spirit upon His people. Now, Paul attributes it to obedience. Obviously, Paul is not going to say we'll look at this a little bit later when we get to the end of Galatians.

This is not Paul's way of saying; therefore, you don't have any responsibility or you don't have to do anything. It's all the work of the Spirit in your lives. But clearly, Paul links obedience not to living life under the law, but by participating in the new

covenant Holy Spirit that God has now poured out upon His people, who enter through faith in Jesus Christ.

So, again, you can kind of see how Paul has kind of inverted the formula. Not that we want to attribute a formula to Judaism or even Paul's view, but if we could just to kind of spell it out in detail, this seems to be what Paul is combating and arguing against and his solution is to view it like this. Now, one interesting thing about this letter is you can begin to see where, although we confess that the New Testament is the Word of God, that never diminishes the humanity of these documents, that one can see that they were produced by human beings through very human means of writing and composition, and even reflect the distinct tone and style of the individual authors and the way they wrote.

For example, when you start reading Galatians, you get a very different picture of Paul than you did in Romans. In Romans, Paul appears to be slightly more, I'm not sure if I really want to psychologize the letter, but at the same time, it does appear Paul seems to be a little bit more reserved or more calculated in the way he presents himself, whereas Galatians, you get the sense that Paul is really on edge and his tone is a little bit more abrupt and harsh and you get a sense that he's really upset at the situation he is now facing. So, notice, after the introduction, which we said Galatians begins like any first-century letter.

Paul, identifies himself, even though he elaborates on that a little bit, and then he identifies his readers to the Galatians. That's just how you begin a first-century letter. Paul's not doing anything unusual.

However, what is unusual is that in Galatians, when you compare Galatians to all the other letters Paul wrote in the New Testament, it's missing something that you find in all the other letters and that would have been found in any first-century letter, and that was a thanksgiving. All of Paul's letters begin with, I thank my God through my Lord Jesus Christ because of you, and he'll thank God because of something that his readers have done or because of something in the lives of his readers. In first-century secular letters, most people would have thanked the gods, the Roman gods, or something like that for the readers or thanked them for their good health or something like that, but Paul usually thanks the readers because of what they have done or because of their progress in the gospel.

But Galatians is missing a thanksgiving. Again, that's odd in Paul's letters, but it would have been just as odd at times in a first-century letter. Instead, notice how chapter 1 and verse 6 begins.

Right after the introduction, Paul says, I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel. Not that there is another gospel, but there are some who are confusing you

and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim you another gospel, contrary to what we proclaim, let that person be accursed.

Again, this is strong language. Again, he just skips the thanksgiving and says, I am astonished that after all the time I spent preaching the gospel to you, I'm astonished that you would so quickly be led astray by something that is clearly other than the gospel. Chapter 6 and verse 11, notice how he ends the letter.

In chapter 6 and verse 11, he says, see what large letters I make when I am writing in my own hand. Now, remember we said, back with Romans, remember we said that Paul, following again fairly typical convention of a first-century letter writer, Paul would have employed the services of an amanuensis or a secretary that most likely he would have dictated his letter to. That was probably true with Galatians.

But now it appears that Paul takes the pen and says, see what large letters I make when I am writing in my own hand. Some have said, well, that's because of Paul, they connect this with the thorn in the flesh. Back in 2 Corinthians, they said the thorn in the flesh was Paul's poor eyesight, so he had to write in large letters because he couldn't see.

No, I think that's baloney. I think this is an indication of Paul's anger and his distress and astonishment. He's trying to get the attention.

Now he's saying, if I can paraphrase, it's as if he's saying, now I'm going to take the pen and finish this letter. See what large letters I write. In other words, you pay attention to this because I'm astonished at how you have responded and so quickly turned from this gospel.

So, in Galatians, we see a very different tone on Paul's part. We don't see a letter that's primarily going to be encouraging and he's not going to praise his readers for much. Instead, it's going to be a letter where Paul is clearly writing out of frustration and despair and astonishment at what the readers are doing and now will try to persuasively get them to not be led astray by these Judaizers who are trying to force the Gentiles to submit to the law of Moses and life under Judaism and to try to get them to see that the Old Testament law no longer plays a role.

Faith in Jesus Christ is the primary requirement for being declared righteous, being vindicated, being justified, and belonging to the true people of God. So, we'll see just how Paul argues that and does that in his letter. Have a great spring break.

This was lecture 18 on 2 Corinthians and Galatians by Dr. Dave Mathewson in his New Testament History and Literature course.