

Sunday, September 27, 2009—Grace Life School of Theology—Understanding Galatians and the Law—Galatians 1:2

Galatians 1:2

- As we have already discussed in our introduction Paul is writing this epistle to more than one church in the region of Galatia. Galatia is a geographic region which is located in modern day Turkey also known as Asia Minor. These churches include Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe which were established by Paul on his first Apostolic Journey.
- We need to spend a few minutes talking about the word Church because there is much confusion associated with this word.
 - Building
 - Institution
 - Denomination
- The word “church” is a generic term that comes from the Greek word “*ekklesia*” which simply means a called out group. *Ekklesia* is most often translated into English as church but does have other meanings.
 - Acts 19:32, 39-41—here the word is used to describe an unruly mob.
- Most people when they hear the word church automatically assume that it refers to the church the Body of Christ. Using this logic most of professing Christendom has made the mistake of teaching and believing that Body of Christ started in Acts 2.
 - Acts 2:47—this assumption is made because the word “church” appears in the text.
- However we need to always remember two things:
 - All the word *ekklesia* means is a called out group
 - There is more than one specific *ekklesia* or church identified in Scripture.

Three Bible Churches

- Acts 7:38—makes reference to another church of called out people that existed in the wilderness. Here we have an example of a group of people that was considered a church that had nothing whatsoever to do with the Body of Christ.
- Psalm 22:22—the word congregation means an assemblage. It has the idea of a gathering of people.

- Psalm 22:26-28—direct our attention to the fact that this praising in the congregation will take place in when the kingdom is established.
- Hebrews 2:12—is a quotation from Psalm 22:22. Here the Holy Spirit defines the word congregation as a church. Therefore, Psalm 22:22 is a prophecy about a future church or called out group that will be functioning during the time of the kingdom.
- Matthew 16:18—the church mentioned here is not the Body of Christ. Rather it is the one foretold in Psalm 22:22
- Acts 2:29-30—in Acts 2 Christ is raised from the dead to inherit the throne of David just as the Davidic Covenant predicted.
- Acts 2:47—the church of Acts was the Jewish kingdom church that was waiting for the establishment of the kingdom according to the prophets.
- Ephesians 3:2-10—the church the Body of Christ was the subject of the mystery not revealed to the prophets.
 - Ephesians 2:13-14—the church the Body of Christ is fundamentally equality between Jews and Gentiles.

Paul's Use of the Word Church

- We have already seen that Paul uses the word church to refer to the universal body of believers who have placed faith in Christ. This body is made up of both Jews and Gentiles and is not the subject of prophecy.
- There are some who teach that Paul never used the word *ekklesia* in any other sense. That is to say when Paul uses the word church he is always referring to the universal body of believers.
- Galatians 1:2—“churches of Galatia” Is Paul saying that there is more than one Body of Christ in Galatia? Certainly not. He is using the word church to refer to the local congregations of believers he established in the region during his first apostolic journey.
 - Acts 14:20-23—Paul ordained elders in every called out-group. Which means he did this is multiple locations.
- Romans 16:4-5—here we see the singular and plural usage in the same context.
- I Corinthians 16:19—does the Holy Spirit know the difference between singular and plural?
- Paul use of the word church is two-fold:
 - Universal body of believers

- Local organized body of believers with appointed leadership
- Paul is never talking about the structure the body meets in.