

Introduction

“Chapter 13 in the book of Acts marks a turning point. The first 12 chapters focus on Peter; the remaining chapters revolve around Paul. With Peter, the emphasis is the Jewish church in Jerusalem and Judea; with Paul, the focus is the spread of the Gentile church throughout the Roman world, which began at the church in Antioch.”

“Paul wrote Galatians to counter Judaizing false teachers who were undermining the central NT doctrine of justification by faith. Ignoring the express decree of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:23–29), they spread their dangerous teaching that Gentiles must first become Jewish proselytes and submit to all the Mosaic law before they could become Christians.”

John MacArthur

The MacArthur Study Bible, p. 1622 and 1755

This year we are memorizing Ephesians 2. This week’s verse is Ephesians 2:11...
“Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands...”

Day One

Read Acts 13–14; Paul’s First Missionary Journey

1. In Acts 13:1–3, what direction did the Holy Spirit give to the prophets and teachers of the church at Antioch?

2. In verses 6–12, how was Paul’s calling as an apostle revealed through his interaction with Elymas?

3. From Acts 13:14–41, in your own words, briefly summarize the encouragement Paul gave to the people gathered in the synagogue in Antioch Pisidia.
 - a. According to verses 42–52, how did the people respond and why was that significant?

 - b. Why was it necessary that the gospel be preached first to the Jews?

4. From verse 43, and Hebrews 6:11–12 and 10:32–39, what do you think Paul meant when he encouraged the devout Jews to “continue in the grace of God”?
 - a. How can you continue in the grace of God in your life today?

5. Which attributes of God do you see in Acts 13, and how does understanding God’s plan for Israel and the Gentiles cause you to worship Him today?

Day Two

Read Acts 14:24–15:41; The Jerusalem Council

1. From Acts 14:26–15:2, summarize the events leading up to the Jerusalem Council and the question that the Council was to resolve.
2. According to Acts 15:1 and 5, what requirements for salvation were imposed by the believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees?
3. From Acts 15:8, 9, 11, 14–18, and 19–20, summarize the main agreements of the Jerusalem council.
4. Considering God’s plan of redemption, why was the decision of the Jerusalem Council an important issue in the formation of the church? How did this decision pave the way for the gospel to go out to all the nations?
 - a. What significance does the council’s decision have for believers today?
5. From Acts 15:19–20 and 1 Corinthians 8:13, in your own words, summarize in one sentence the instructions of the council for Gentile converts.
 - a. Why do you think the council gave Gentile converts these instructions?
 - b. How do these instructions differ from legalism, and how can you tell the difference?

Day Three

*Read Galatians 1:1–10 and 2:15–21; **Swift Doctrinal Drift***

1. According to Galatians 1:6–7, after Paul established the churches in Galatia on his first missionary journey in Acts 13–14 and sent them copies of the Council’s letter, what report did he receive concerning the churches?
 - a. How did Paul respond to the news? What do you think Paul meant when he called what the Galatians had been taught a “different gospel” or a “gospel contrary” to the one they had received? (See 2 Corinthians 11:4.)
2. According to Galatians 2:15–16, what teaching did Paul affirm that the Jews and Gentiles of the Galatian churches should have already known?
 - a. How did the teaching of the Judaizers, which focused on faith by works, nullify grace?

- b. What does “nullifying grace” look like today?

- c. How can understanding Galatians 2:18–21 help you live practically this week so that God’s grace to mankind is magnified rather than nullified?

Day Four

Read Galatians 3:1–4:7: **Justification by Faith Alone**

1. In Galatians 3:2–9, what rhetorical question did Paul ask, and how did he answer his own question?

2. According to Galatians 3:15–18, did the Law or the Abrahamic Covenant come first? Why is the order of events important to understand Paul’s answer in verses 7–9?

3. **Dig Deeper:** Since the law came after the covenant/promise, what was the purpose of the law? Use Scripture to support your answer.

4. According to Galatians 3:28–29, what does and what doesn’t distinguish Abraham’s offspring?

5. According to Galatians 4:1–7, what is the difference between those in faith before Christ, and those in faith after the fullness of time had come (v. 4)?
 - a. Have you been adopted into God’s family? If so, how does the knowledge of your adoption by God impact you now?

Day Five

Read Galatians 5–6; **Gospel Truth Leads to Freedom and Godly Living**

1. From Galatians 5:1, what is the natural consequence of no longer being slaves but sons, as all who put their faith in Christ are?

2. According to Galatians 5:16–18, how are believers to live?
 - a. From Galatians 5:22–23, and Ephesians 5:1–2 and 15–21, what are some marks of a spirit-filled life?

 - b. How are you taking advantage of opportunities to strengthen yourself spiritually and walk in the Spirit? What needs to change to do that more fully? Be specific.

3. According to 1 Corinthians 6:12, 8:8–13, and 10:23–33, what principles should govern a believer's freedom?

a. Are you living obediently to these principles? Consider one principle you can focus on this week and ask the Lord to help you practically live out that truth.

4. From this week's lesson in Acts and Galatians, what particular truth most affected you, and why.

Luenebrink Adapted from Every Woman's Grace at Grace Community Church of Sun Valley, CA January 18, 2016