


**We will be a congregation who knows,  
honors, and reads the Bible.**

*“I grasp the story of the Bible, respect it as  
authoritative, know how to read it, and  
actually read it.”*

## [necchurch.org/resources](http://necchurch.org/resources)

- Genesis
  - Exodus
  - Deuteronomy
  - 1-2 Samuel
  - Psalms
  - Isaiah
  - Nehemiah
  - Matthew
  - Acts
  - Romans
  - 1 Corinthians
  - Philemon
  - Revelation
- 

## Journey into Captivity.

Life is a journey into captivity. The only thing you choose is what captivates you.

# Galatians 5:16-17

Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh ...

# Galatians 5:24

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to His cross and crucified them there.

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March 10th	Perseverance	Galatians 6:17-18
March 24th	Preservation	Galatians 1:1-10

## How to Read an Ancient NT Letter

1. Treat it like you're listening to one side of a phone convo.

# Interpretive Key for Galatians

- Literary Type: theologically dense letter
- Author: Paul, formerly Saul or Tarsus
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- Problem: some very influential false-teachers from within Christianity have undermined Paul's gospel to the gentiles by adding Torah-allegiance on top of faith in Jesus (Jesus + Torah)
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## Galatians 1:6-7

I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who called you to Himself through the loving mercy of Christ. You are following a different way that pretends to be the Good News but is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who deliberately twist the truth concerning Christ.

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**1:9 - If anyone preaches any other Good News than the one you welcomed, let that person be cursed.**

**5:12 - I wish those who unsettle you would castrate themselves!**

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## How to Read an Ancient NT Letter

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2. See if Acts gives you any backstory.

(8-15)

# Acts 8-9 – Meet Saul the Persecutor of “The Way”

## After Paul Met Jesus

- Writes 13 letters that are canonized in NT
- Teaching on core doctrines like justification, sanctification, atonement, resurrection become normative
- Planted some of the first churches in major Roman cities (approx 20)
- Suffered greatly for Christ
- Led the church into gentile inclusion

## Before Paul Met Jesus

A9:1 – “...breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord”

A8:1 – Saul was one of the witnesses, and he agreed completely with the killing of Stephen [the first recorded Christian martyr].



## Acts 22:3-5

I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in [Jerusalem] at the feet of Gamaliel, educated strictly according to our ancestral law, being zealous for God, just as all of you are today. I persecuted this Way up to the point of death by binding both men and women and putting them in prison, as the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify about me. From them I also received letters to the brothers in Damascus, and I went there in order to bind those who were there and to bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment.

## Two Major Post-Conversion Shifts

1. Salvation and inclusion in the people of God is by faith in Jesus through the faithfulness of Jesus.

2. He had a special calling from God to take this gospel outside the Jews to the gentiles.

## Acts 9:15-16

“...[Paul] is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring My name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I Myself will show Him how much He must suffer for the sake of My name.”

## Acts 8-15

- Saul persecutes "The Way" (A8:1; 9:1)
- ✓ ~~Antioch~~ Saul has radical conversion experience (A9:3-19)
  - Paul tries to get an audience w/the disciples but they are afraid. (A9:26)
  - Meets Barnabas who vouches for him. (A9:27)
  - Accepted and endorsed by key disciples and sent home to Tarsus. (A9:30)
  - Barnabas enlists Paul to plant a church in Antioch with him. (A11:25-26)
  - Antioch Church sends B&P out on first church planting trip. (A13:1-3)
  - So successful, there was mass influx of gentiles into Christianity, which presently was Jewish messianic movement
  - Caused a huge theological debate between Old Covenant conservatives vs. New Covenant progressives. (A15:1-2)
  - Debate so contentious, the Church called their first ever Council (A15)
  - Jerusalem Council ruled in favor of B&P (A15:19)



MACEDONIA

THRACE

BLACK SEA

BITHYNIA AND PONTUS

GALATIA

ASIA

CAPPADOCIA

ACHAIA

CARIA

LYCIA

PAMPHYLIA

CILICIA

COMMAGENE

SYRIA

PHOENICIA

TRILENE

NABATEA

EGYPT

JUDEA

Philippi  
Neapolis  
Thessalonica  
Amphipolis  
Apollonia  
Berea

THASOS  
SAMOTHRACE

LEMNOS

Troas  
Assos

LESBOS  
Mitylene

CHIOS

EUBOEA

Athens  
Corinth  
Cenchreae

Sparta

SANTORINI

CRETE

Pergamum  
Thyatira

Sardis

Philadelphia

Smyrna

Ephesus

Milet

PATMOS

Hierapolis  
Laodicea  
Colossae

Antioch in Pisidia

Iconium

Lystra

Derbe

Attalia

Patara

Perga

Salamis

Paphos

Seleucia Pieria

Antioch

Aleppo

Sidon

Tyre

Ptolemais (Acco)

Caesarea Maritima

Jerusalem

Damascus

Paul & Barnabas receive great Jewish opposition to the Gospel

Paul & Barnabas flee to avoid being killed

Paul & Barnabas mistaken for gods Paul stoned

The Church at Antioch sends Paul & Barnabas on a missionary journey

Proconsul Sergius Paulus converted

Jerusalem Conference c. 49-50 AD

0 100 200 Miles  
0 100 200 Kilometers

**PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY**

Acts 13 & 14

- City
  - One of the "Seven Churches" - Rev. 2-3
  - ← Paul's Route →
- ConformingToJesus.com

## Acts 15:1-2

While Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch of Syria, some men from Judea arrived and began to teach the believers: “Unless you are circumcised as required by the law of Moses, you cannot be saved.” Paul and Barnabas disagreed with them, arguing vehemently. Finally, the church decided to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, accompanied by some local believers, to talk to the apostles and elders about this question.

# Acts 15:19

“And so my judgment is that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.”

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# Gal 1:6-9

JUDAISERS

I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who called you to Himself through the loving mercy of Christ. You are following a different way that pretends to be the Good News but is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who deliberately twist the truth concerning Christ. Let God's curse fall on anyone, including us or even an angel from heaven, who preaches a different kind of Good News than the one we preached to you. I say again what we have said before: If anyone preaches any other Good News than the one you welcomed, let that person be cursed.

Their Message – Jesus + Torah (specifically  
circumcision) = Gospel

Gal 2:4-5 – Even that question came up only because of some so-called believers there—false ones, really—who were secretly brought in. They sneaked in to spy on us and take away the freedom we have in Christ Jesus. They wanted to enslave us and force us to follow their Jewish regulations. But we refused to give in to them for a single moment. We wanted to preserve the truth of the gospel message for you.

## Their Influence

Gal 2:11-13 – But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him to his face, for what he did was very wrong. When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile believers, who were not circumcised. But afterward, when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision. As a result, other Jewish believers followed Peter's hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

- Gal 1:1 – This letter is from Paul, an apostle. I was not appointed by any group of people or any human authority, but by Jesus Christ Himself and by God the Father, who raised Jesus from the dead.

- Gal 1:11-12 – Dear brothers and sisters, I want you to understand that the gospel message I preach is not based on mere human reasoning. I received my message from no human source, and no one taught me. Instead, I received it by direct revelation from Jesus Christ.

- Gal 2:7-9 – [The leaders of the Jerusalem Church] saw that God had given me the responsibility of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as He had given Peter the responsibility of preaching to the Jews. For the same God who worked through Peter as the apostle to the Jews also worked through me as the apostle to the Gentiles. In fact, James, Peter, and John, who were known as pillars of the church, recognized the gift God had given me, and they accepted Barnabas and me as their co-workers. They encouraged us to keep preaching to the Gentiles, while they continued their work with the Jews.

## Gal 2:16, 19-21

Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law.” ... For when I tried to keep the law, it condemned me. So I died to the law—I stopped trying to meet all its requirements—so that I might live for God. My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not treat the grace of God as meaningless. For if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die.

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## Gal 3:26-29

For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are His heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.

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**Gal 5:16,18 - So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves ... But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.**

**Gal 5:22-23 - But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!**

**Gal 5:6 – For when we place our faith in Christ Jesus, there is no benefit in being circumcised or being uncircumcised. What is important is faith expressing itself in love.**

**Gal 6:15 – It doesn't matter whether we have been circumcised or not. What counts is whether we have been transformed into a new creation.**

# New Creation!

- a multi-ethnic-nonprejudicial-family-like community
- prioritizing faith in Jesus
- learning to follow the Spirit
- living in the freedom of love
- safeguarding the integrity of the true gospel
- sharing it with everyone no matter their country, color, class, or culture

# Gal 5:13

For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.

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