

Galatians for the Practical Messianic

By J.K. McKee


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Paul's Epistle to the Galatians is easily the most difficult to understand text for people within today's broad Messianic movement. Galatians has been historically interpreted by Christianity as delivering Believers a stark choice between God's Law and God's grace. Those who choose any obedience to the Law, according to this view of Paul, are unfaithful to the Messiah and the saving power of the gospel. Supposedly, Paul was desperately concerned for anyone who was trying to keep the Torah of Moses. Consequently, Galatians is a frequently-quoted text to today's Messianic Believers, many of whom are simply trying to live a life of holiness by obeying God's commandments in accordance with the example of obedience modeled by Yeshua (Jesus). Understanding Galatians in its original context, for its original audience, and for the original issues that it addressed, can be a severe challenge. Was the issue that the Galatians faced forced circumcision, followed by salvation--or was the issue ritual proselyte conversion for inclusion among God's people? Likewise, who were the people errantly influencing the Galatians? Were they authorized members of the assembly, or misguided outsiders with a definitive agenda? In the commentary Galatians for the Practical Messianic, TNN Online editor J.K. McKee takes a direct look at the issues of Paul's letter as he rebukes the Galatians for errors that have crept into their midst. Engaging with contemporary Christian scholarship on Galatians, critical questions regarding common conclusions of Paul's words are asked. Are Paul and Yeshua truly at odds when it comes to the Torah? Were the Jerusalem leaders and Paul at constant odds with one another? How do Paul's Pharisaical background and views affect the composition of this letter? What were the spiritual dynamics present in Galatia? What does the term "works of law" really mean? These are only a few of the questions that are considered. Likewise, some of the proposals from the New Perspective of Paul in theological studies are also analyzed. The Epistle to the Galatians gives us a small peek into the world of the First Century Body of Messiah, and the social dynamics and divisions between Jewish and non-Jewish Believers that had to be resolved. Many of the issues that the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 would address had yet to be discussed. Many did not understand the Abrahamic blessing of his seed being a blessing to the whole world. Many thought that inclusion among God's people came via ethnicity, rather than faith. Many did not know the proper place of obedience to the Torah in the post-resurrection era. Paul's letter set in motion the need for these issues to be addressed by the First Century faith community. This commentary will aid many Messianic Believers who have difficulty with Paul's

letter to the Galatians. It also provides solid, exegetical answers to those who are skeptical, if not critical, of today's Messianic movement. Also included in this commentary is an exposition on Acts 13:13-14:28: Paul's visit to Southern Galatia.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

J.K. McKee (B.A., University of Oklahoma; M.A., Asbury Theological Seminary) is the editor of Messianic Apologetics (www.messianicapologetics.net), a division of Outreach Israel Ministries (www.outreachisrael.net). He is a 2009 recipient of the Zondervan Biblical Languages Award for Greek. He is author of numerous books and commentaries, dealing with a wide range of topics that are important for today's Messianic Believers.

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