

250 The Galatians show us the way (not)

(God has continued to help me see how the modern-day church can become more like the New Testament church. Luvvit!)

As Paul has talked about the law, and got so cross with the Galatians, I've seen it in perspective by revisiting my 'History of the world in 500 words'.^[145] I've seen again the **seismic** change that occurred in Paul's lifetime and how stupid it is, having seen it, to go back to the law to define your life and identity.

Here's the broad picture, in note form, which has helped me to (a) understand Paul's complex arguments and so (b) avoid making the same stupid mistake as the Galatians:

2000 BC – Abraham receives the promise of blessing and life – **for the whole world!**

100 years – Family grows in that blessing, but then famine strikes!

400 years – Slavery in Egypt before...

RELEASE! – Exodus

40 years – Grumbling against God

1500 BC – Law ('introduced 430 years later') given as Tom Wright's interim 'babysitter'^[247]

1500 years – In and out of exile, looking back to **exodus** (good idea), **identity in the law** (not a good idea)

~350 years judges

~500 years kings (good and bad) + prophets

~250 years exile (in and out) + prophets

~400 years – SILENCE

0 BC/AD – **God comes to his people**

Current **identity** = family, traditions, the law, the coming Messiah (to defeat the Romans?!)

30 AD – Death of God + Resurrection of God, New Covenant, release from law (babysitter)

RELEASE! – New Exodus

New exodus, new covenant, new life, **new identity** = **LOVE**, not FEAR

God **is** relationship: Father – Son – Holy Spirit

Jesus is Lord (so Caesar isn't!), no FEAR ('perfect love casts out all fear')

"And so they lived happily ever after..."? Sadly, no. Even as early as...

50 AD – "You have to **also** obey the law and be circumcised"

As Galatians shows, all too easily we decide: "This freedom/love stuff is nice but we need to specify things more carefully." e.g. Circumcision.

2000 years – (on and off) Ruled by **fear**, not love. :-(

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The long-term questions that I've been asking these past few years are – for me, anyway – made sense of when I see this principle worked out time and again in **me**.^[0]

From the best of motives, (I/the Judaisers/the church) have worked out 'exactly what's right', so that 'people don't go into error'.

Good motive, but what happened to **Exodus? Freedom? a loving relationship with God?**

Why, oh why, have I alienated so many people in my life by insisting on 'exactly what's right'?

Why, oh why, has the church alienated so many people by insisting on 'exactly what's right'?

And once again, the church is going to split: we're causing each other pain, by insisting on 'exactly what's right'.

Fear causes pain.

Love transforms pain.

Paul Bev. 28.2.23