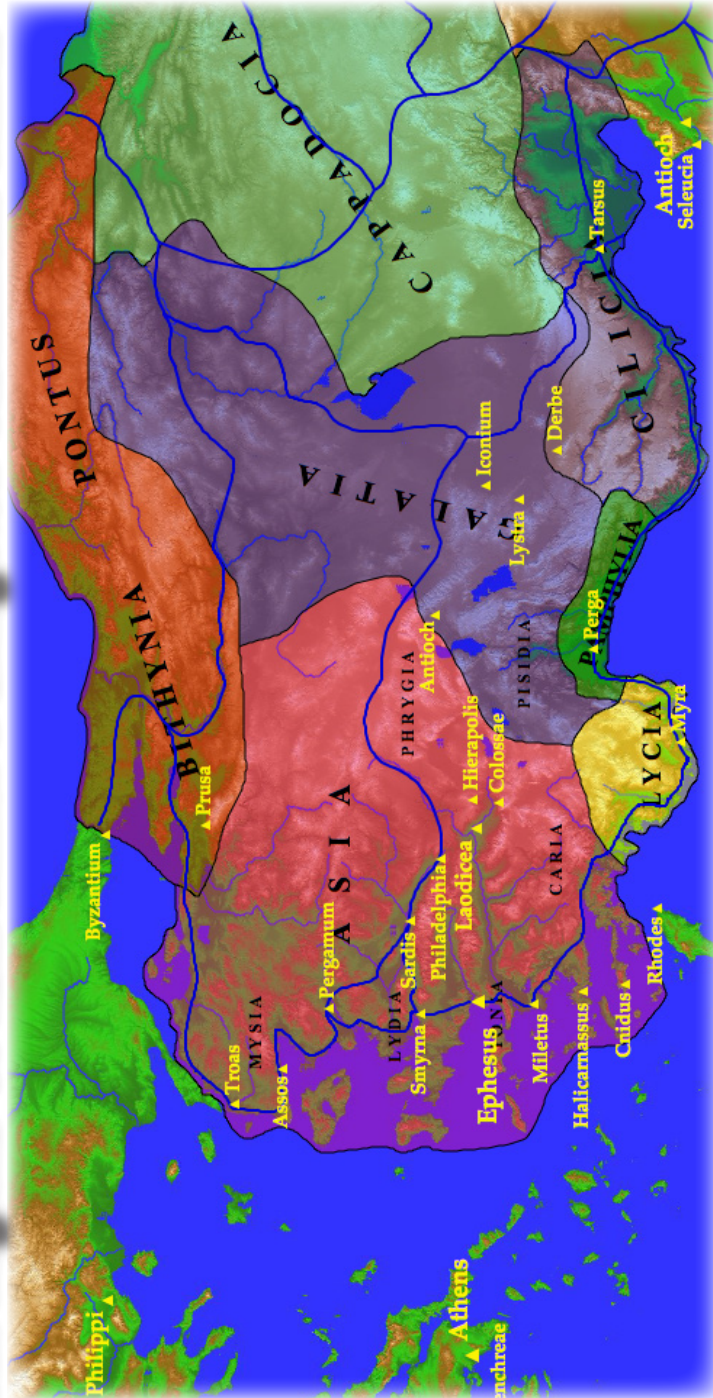


The Regions Of Asia Minor During New Testament Times



Deadly Independence

Long Beach Alliance Church • May 11th, 2008 • Pastor Chris Lankford

BRETHREN, EVEN IF ANYONE IS CAUGHT IN ANY TRESPASS, YOU WHO ARE SPIRITUAL, RESTORE SUCH A ONE IN A SPIRIT OF GENTLENESS; EACH ONE LOOKING TO YOURSELF, SO THAT YOU TOO WILL NOT BE TEMPTED. BEAR ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS, AND THEREBY FULFILL THE LAW OF CHRIST. FOR IF ANYONE THINKS HE IS SOMETHING WHEN HE IS NOTHING, HE DECEIVES HIMSELF.

~ GALATIANS 6:1-3 (NASB)

1) Is That Your Hand In The Cookie Jar?

- A) The book of Galatians was written by the Apostle Paul (Galatians 1:1, 6:11) to the churches in the region of Galatia (thus the name) in Asia Minor (1:2).
- B) Paul writes to the Galatians to aggressively defend Christ's church against "Judaizers," Jewish Christians who believed that following the practices of the Old Testament Law was binding for the New Testament church.
- C) Some of the strongest teaching on "justification by faith" is found in the book of Galatians (3:1-5), providing freedom to followers of Christ from the Law (3:24-26).

- D) As part of our freedom from the Law, God has provided us with the Spirit of Christ (4:4-7), which produces the fruit (note singular) of the Spirit (5:22-23) in our lives.

- E) Note that the Spirit *always* produces **unity** with Christ and with other Spirit-filled people. The absence of the Spirit always produces **isolation** from Christ and others (5:19-21).

- F) The Law naturally leads to an increase in rules and regulations, which produces a lack of unity and isolation. Grace, which comes by faith, naturally leads to unity and authentic relationships (5:25-26).

- G) Of course, wherever there are authentic relationships with others who have varying degrees of maturity (both spiritual and emotional), the chances for conflict are very high (Galatians 6:1).

- H) Inevitably in close relationships, we will discover deficiencies in one another. Sin will be exposed, isolation will be confronted, addictions become apparent, and selfishness is revealed (6:1). What are we to do?

2) A Community Of Grace

- A) The conscience of "spiritual ones" (ones of the Spirit) are pricked when a sinful situation arises (6:1). These people are characterized by the complete fruit of the Spirit (5:22-23)

- B) These are to confront in a gentle spirit as an effort to restore a right relationship between the one who has sinned with God and with the "brethren" (6:1).

- C) Of course, as with any confrontation (cf. Luke 6:41-42), the spiritual ones are to confront in all humility so as not to be led into pride and a sinful situation of their own (6:1).

- D) The ultimate call on followers of Christ who are in close relationships with one another is to bear each other's burdens (ease the weight, 6:2). This fulfills the "law of Christ" (6:2), which comes from grace through faith!

3) Attitudes Which Lead Toward Authenticity

- A) **Humility.** Bearing another's burden of sin or weakness is impossible without true humility (6:3-4). One must know with total certainty that they are "chief amongst sinners" (1st Timothy 1:15). Don't be impressed with anyone but Jesus!

- B) **Dependency.** Allowing someone else to help you, submitting to (biblical) authority, depending on another person when you are weak or caught in sin, being transparent and open to input -- requires an assumption that we depend on one another. We must never be independent!

- C) **Generosity.** In order to have relationships which are humble and inter-dependent, we must invest in one another. Financially, emotionally, with a helpful hand, with our time, and in response to God's Word -- be generous with your life!

- D) **Endurance.** Authenticity is forged when things are not going well. Treating others well when we are treated well is simply "being polite." Treating others well when you are treated badly is "Christlike." Be like Jesus -- show endurance!

- E) **Unselfishness.** We are to "do good to all people... especially Christians..." Doing good means preferring others, choosing them over yourself. Offer peace and love with your actions, especially when it is undeserved!