

Galatians

Chapter 1

Let's open with prayer,

Our heavenly Father,

Again we thank you for your word. We submit this time to you to spend in your word. We ask that you would open up our hearts and minds and that we might clear away all outside distractions of everyday life as we study this great book. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen!

We are beginning the first of two chapters that cover the defense of Paul's ministry and his message, some very powerful verses.

S.O.

<u>Galatians Chapters 1 - 2</u> The Defense of Paul's Ministry and Message

C.O.

<u>Galatians 1:1-5</u> The Introduction
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We have the introduction in Galatians Chapter 1 Verses 1 through 5, and in it, he covers five different areas.

First of all, his calling:

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1 Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)

He says, Paul, an apostle.

So right away he's presenting his authority. Well, they know who Paul is, but he's reminding them that he's writing to them on the basis of his apostolic position. He is an apostle.

The word apostle actually means someone who is sent on a mission, commissioned by an officer. It's a military term where a ranking officer would commission somebody to go somewhere for a particular task.

These people are emissaries, ambassadors. They do not represent themselves and they're not going for themselves. They are going to represent the one who has commissioned them and sent them.

Paul says he is an apostle. If you are looking for rank in the church, that's the highest rank there was in the early church, an apostle.

But then notice what he says about the commission. He says not of men, neither by man.

Let me give it to you literally. Not from men, neither through man.

Notice the first one is plural, not from men. He's designating committee. I did not receive my apostleship from a committee.

Neither through man, singular. This is through a human, whether it be a person, or an agency, or a system.

But through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;

So he says that Jesus Christ commissioned him. Now I think that's interesting, and I'm sure you've run into people through the years who have presented themselves as "called of God for the ministry!"

It seems as though there are more people "called of God" to preach than there are people in the congregation!

But it is interesting that if you go back to Acts Chapter 13, when Paul was in Antioch, in Syria, and he was teaching within the church that God spoke to him and to Barnabas about the first missionary journey.

But God spoke to the whole church. It's not to just one person. And when they came and shared the impression they had that they should be going out on a missionary journey, and the church prayed and said we get the same impression, so we'll pray for you and send you out.

Paul could have said you guys don't know who I am. I'm an apostle, and I'm going to go out on a missionary journey. But Paul didn't go unless it was confirmed.

Now the people themselves didn't send Paul. He got his commission from Christ. But he got his confirmation from people. He didn't force himself on anyone.

It's through Jesus Christ, and God the Father who raised Him from the dead.

In Romans Chapter 1 Verse 4, the raising of Jesus from the dead is the proof of His Son-ship. And when God the Father raised Him from the dead, God the Father showed who He the Father was.

You see, in the Old Testament, people went by the God of creation. Then the Jews specifically went by the God of the Passover, the deliverance from Egypt, miraculous, powerful!

But in the New Testament, it isn't God the creator, or God the deliverer, but God who raised Jesus from the dead. That's who God is. He showed His approval of His Son, and He showed His own power, because not only was Jesus raised, but we have the promise also that we're going to be raised by the same God!

He also brings in his companions in Verse 2:

2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:

And all the brethren which are with me, and I think that's interesting that he doesn't name them.

Later, he'll name Barnabas. But he's saying that this is not an individual independent thing. Not only is Paul the apostle writing to you, but I've got other brothers here with me. It's not a one man show!

And then unto the churches of Galatia:

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Notice that it's plural. So he's talking about the southern section of Asia, where he made his first missionary journey.

And then the condition:

3 Grace *be* to you and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ,

He prayed that grace would be with them and peace. In fact, the word "be" is in italics because there is no verb in the Greek text. But according to Greek structure, it is to be received as an "is." It is a fact. It's not a wish or a prayer.

Grace is to you, and peace, from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace, Charis, is a form of greeting for Greek and is the greeting for Gentiles. Then he says, and peace. And that's the greeting for the Jews, Shalom.

But not from people, and not from Paul. But rather from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. May it be His peace and His grace. It's not human.

4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

In speaking of Jesus Christ, it says, who gave himself for our sins.

The purpose: that he might deliver us from this present evil world.

The plan: according to the will of God and our Father:

It is God's will that all of those that respond to Christ, all of those who are born of the Spirit of God, will be delivered from this present evil world.

The word present is a perfect participle. The world that stands in a condition of being evil. And God has delivered us, and it's all according to His will and plan.

And then Paul's comment in benediction:

5 To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

That's about as close as you're going to get to a warm greeting by Paul in this book!

C.O.

Galatians 1:6-10
The Influences of the
Perpetrators

Paul actually presents some wording from the legal system that basically he is saying that if someone preaches any other gospel than that which he has preached, they are criminals.

6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

He says I marvel, and the word marvel means surprised. And it's in the present tense, which means he says that I am continually surprised. He's in a state of shock!

That you are so soon removed. Let me break that down for you.

The word "so" is called the adverb of manner, or way in which something is done.

That you are in this way, soon, adverb of time. The word soon means quickly. And the word removed actually means to be off in the opposite direction in which you were going.

So I am surprised that you are in this way, that is these false teachings, and so quickly, after being established in the gospel, removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ.

He says you were called. God called you, and the grace of Christ called you. And now you're going in the opposite direction, and that you are removed unto another gospel:

There are two words for the word another in the Greek language. One means another of a different kind, and one means another of the same kind.

This one is another of a different kind. You are so soon removed unto another, a different gospel. That's his concern for them!

The cause for his concern in Verse 7:

7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

He says, which is not another;

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That's another of the same kind, different Greek word. So you've been removed to a different gospel, which is really not another gospel. A false gospel is not another one. It's different.

But there be some that trouble you, and the word trouble is in the present participle, and it means to agitate.

There are those who are continually agitating you, and desiring to pervert the gospel of Christ. Strong words!

So he presents a contrast in Verse 8:

M.V.

Galatians 1:8

8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, the consequence: let him be accursed.

The word for accursed is the word Anathema. And its basic meaning is to consecrate or dedicate a sacrifice for destruction. Very strong language!

M.V.

Galatians 1:9

So then he repeats this, but gives the creed. He says here's the bottom line. And he included himself in Verse 8. He said an angel from heaven. There are large religions in the world today built upon "special messages" from angels, supposedly to the leaders.

Bet Paul included himself. He said that even if we come back and give you a different gospel, and if we get off track and come say "Remember what we told you last time? Well, we got some new stuff for you that's a little different, and forget the first thing we told you, because we got some new stuff for you.

Paul includes himself!

9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

The creed is, as we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that you received, the consequence: let him be accursed.

And the more I read this year after year, the more scared I get. I don't want to be one of those that adds to or says something different than what Paul taught.

Obviously he says this is a serious thing. There is no room for people and their fantasies and imaginations presenting something different because they feel like "they've heard from God."

The scripture is difficult to understand, and it's worthy to study so that we understand what the bible says. But if Paul says if anybody preaches any other gospel than that which he has preached, let him be accursed, that's everybody that preaches anything else than what Paul preaches. That's pretty serious!

M.V.

Galatians 1:10

Paul's conduct:

10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men?

The word please means satisfy. I don't think anybody could read what Paul just said, and then read Verse 10, and say "I think Paul's compromising to make some people happy." I don't think so!

For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

Very, very powerful! One day, I will have to answer to Christ on how I represented Him and His word. But I would not be a servant of Christ if I seek to please men.

C.O.

Galatians 1:11-24
The Information of Paul's
Credentials

So he's talked to them by way of introduction. He presented the influences of the perpetrators that are troubling them and preaching a different gospel, which is really not a gospel.

So now Paul gets to his credentials. First of all, the concept:

11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

But I certify, or literally I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after, or according to man.

12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

For I neither received it from man, neither was I taught *it*, but through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

He didn't go to bible school. This doesn't lay a precedent here that says you don't need to study the bible, just go out in the desert for a while, and whatever imaginations flow through your mind, that's what it means.

Paul was a chosen vessel. God purposely separated him from the other 12 apostles. And we'll see the reason for that in a moment.

So now he rehearses some stages of his life.

First of all, the contribution of his involvement with Judaism before he was saved.

He's presenting this to show that there was no contribution to his understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ from his involvement in Judaism.

13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

He says for you have heard of my conversation, or lifestyle, in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure, and we have three imperfect tenses coming up.

Imperfect tense means continuous action in the past. And I will read it that way.

That beyond measure, I was persecuting the church of God. And I was destroying it continuously.

Thirdly, in Verse 14:

14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

And profited, or more literally, was advancing. And those are the three imperfect tenses, continuous action in the past

And I was advancing in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

He wasn't just a laid back journeyman. He was so zealous for the traditions of their fathers, he was the top of the class.

He studied under Gamaliel, the head Rabbi/Teacher in Jerusalem. Paul was Gamaliel's number one student.

He was continually persecuting the church to nearly destroying it, and continually advancing in the Jew's religion.

Verses 15 and 16, his conversion:

And I want to put intervention in there, because this is his lifestyle. Verses 13 and 14 tell us what his life was like before the Lord intervened, as recorded in Acts Chapter 9, on the road to Damascus.

He was on his way to Damascus with legal papers to round up Christians in the city of Damascus. He was obsessed!

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace,

16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

To reveal his Son in me, in order that I might preach him amongst the Gentiles; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

Notice that it says when it pleased God.

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Paul was around 30 to 32 years of age when he had the experience on the Damascus road in Acts Chapter 9. He was putting Christians to death. He might have even killed some himself, but for sure he put many of them in jail.

But when it pleased God!

I'm sure there's been a time in your life when you looked back and said "You know, I've had so many wasted years."

But you look back even at your Christian life and say "Well, I just wasted so much time. I could have been studying. I could have been learning the word. Even before I came to know Christ, I wish I would have come to know Him sooner, because all those wasted years!"

But these were not wasted years. This is all part of God's plan to bring Paul to Christ.

You see, as he served the Lord, after he was saved, he continually presented himself to the people as somebody who is not worthy. In fact, he's the chiefest of sinners because he persecuted the church of God. He carried that with him throughout his entire ministry and life, and that kept him humble.

Just to think that there were some Christians that he helped execute or put in prison. We don't know their names. There not even in the bible. But they are all instruments which God used in Paul's life in service to Christ.

We always hear of the famous preachers, but we forget about the preachers that preached when they got saved. These are those people!

At the time when it pleased God, the exact moment that God had planned, and that he was separated from his mother's womb.

That means that he was under God's call and guidance for 30 to 32 years, carrying on his sinful acts through religious righteousness. But there came a time when God said "Time's up!" And Jesus intervened in his life.

And I find that true with most, if not everyone that gets saved, is that we're on our own journey, and He intervenes, cuts us off, stops us dead in our tracks, and points us in His direction.

The purpose: to reveal His Son in me so that I can preach Christ among the Gentiles.

In Romans Chapter 11, he said that he was chosen. We'll also see it later in Galatians. He was chosen to preach amongst the Gentiles, and Peter was chosen to preach amongst the Jews.

He says, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

That's a Hebraism that means human. After his conversion on the road to Damascus, he did not look up people to find out what do I do next.

17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

Neither did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; Secondly, but I went into Arabia, Thirdly, and returned again unto Damascus.

Fourthly:

18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

M.V.

Galatians 1:19

19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

But other of the apostles I didn't see, except for James the Lord's brother.

Reference Matthew 13:55 that Mary and Joseph had children after the birth of Christ. One of them is the name James.

So Paul was out there in Arabia, emphasizing isolation and separation from everybody else, for three years.

And then he went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and spent 15 days with him. And he saw the Lord's brother. He didn't see anybody else.

Then he presents the celebration:

20 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

Here is a time slot between what he had just said about following his travels and staying separate from people. That's the way the Lord led him. And it was through the revelation of Christ that he received his instruction.

But unbeknownst to many people, after Paul got back from Arabia and Damascus, and seeing Peter, and seeing James for two weeks, he went back to Tarsus.

In fact, he was preaching there in Tarsus for approximately 11 years, when Barnabas in Antioch of Syria hears about it. They know about Saul of Tarsus. It's like "Whatever happened to that guy? He was out rounding up Christians."

All of a sudden, they started getting word about Paul preaching in Tarsus, and you can see how the word could travel because they are pretty close to each other.

Paul was ministering all of those years from Tarsus. So Barnabas goes over to Tarsus to find out what's going on. And he finds Saul of Tarsus, who is now Paul, ministering for Christ.

And so he tells Paul "You got to go back with me. Others have to know what God has done in your life." The last thing that they had heard was that he persecuted the church of God.

21 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;

22 And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ:

23 But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

24 And they glorified God in me.

Remember from the book of Acts that people were hesitant. They didn't trust him. In their minds, he was trying to make his way in and learn where we meet and where all the leaders are so he can persecute us some more.

Barnabas said no you don't understand. Barnabas kept sticking up for him. Barnabas said he's the real thing!

But you can take a guess what tipped the scale. What do you think it was that tipped the scale, that convinced the churches that he was indeed of Christ? What do you think it was?

Remember, they are hesitant. Barnabas is encouraging them, but they're still leery of him. How did they know that he's the real thing?

His suffering!

Nobody who is an enemy of Christ and His church is going to suffer for the sake of Christ in the church unless they are the real thing!

If he's a plant in the church, or a mole as they're called, he's going to be exposed. "Oh, you're a preacher of the gospel? Well, in this town they round them up and persecute them."

It didn't deter Paul any. And we know from Paul's record, that he suffered greatly in every single city in which he was in.

When I read this text now, I don't feel bad for Paul, I feel convicted for myself. It's like hardly any of that happens to me. What am I doing wrong, you know? I must be compromising or trying to satisfy some people.

Let's close with prayer,

Our heavenly Father,

Again we thank you for your word. Your word is powerful and brings conviction to our hearts and shows us how far from perfection we are. Teach us to be humble. Help us to submit to the persuasion of your Spirit. Help us to hear your voice speak to our hearts. We desire to know the truth as it is the truth that sets us free. Again, we thank you and it is in Jesus' name we pray, Amen!