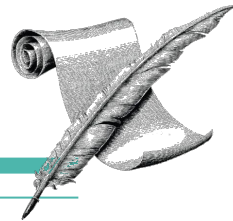


Paul's letter to the Galatians



Paul's Opening Declaration

Galatians 1:1-5



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1:1 ~ Paul identified himself as the author

- New life with the indwelling Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17; Acts 1:5) can empower believers to live in a way that pleases God. This is infinitely better than futile attempts at law-keeping through human effort alone, and it superseded the legal code of the Mosaic Covenant.
- Parts of an ancient letter:
 - **Signature** ~ the writer
 - **Address** ~ the intended recipients
 - **Salutation** ~ *"I wish you well"*
 - **Ascription of appreciation** ~ thanksgiving
 - **Prayer** for the recipients (typical of Paul's letters)
 - **Main body** of the letter and final admonitions
- **"apostle"** (*apostolos*) ~ "one who is sent forth"
- Jesus personally met Paul on the road to Damascus and commissioned him as "a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel" (Acts 9:15).

1:1 ~ Paul defends his apostleship

- *The **NEGATIVE** side of the issue:* **“not from men”** ~ Paul’s apostleship did not have its origin or source in any other person or group of people. The ultimate source of his apostleship was not from any human authority. **“nor through the agency of man”** ~ Paul denied that his apostleship came through any human means.
- *The **POSITIVE** side of the issue:* **“but through Jesus Christ”** ~ Paul’s commissioning as an apostle was directly from the Lord Jesus Christ. **“and God the Father”** ~ this was all according to the will and preordained plan of God the Father. **“who raised Him from the dead”** ~ Paul had spoken with the resurrected Christ just as the Jerusalem apostles had, so Paul’s calling was not inferior to theirs in any way.

1:2 ~ The *signature* followed by the *address*

- **“all the brethren who are with me”** ~ the brethren in Antioch were in a unique position to understand the problem Paul was addressing with the Galatians. They would have been well aware of the issues, and they would have given their full support to what Paul was saying.
- **“To the churches of Galatia”** ~ **“churches”** (plural) indicates that this letter was to be circulated among all of the local churches in Galatia. All of them may have been visited by the Judaizing teachers. In any case, Paul wanted all of the churches to understand and beware of the dangers of the destructive error about which he was writing to them.

1:3 ~ The *salutation*

- **“Grace to you and peace”** ~ the salutation was often expressed using the Greek word *“rejoice”* (*chairein*), but Paul adapted and deepened it by using *charis* which is translated as *“grace”* ~ the unmerited favor of God toward those who cannot earn and do not deserve His favor.
“peace” ~ the customary Jewish greeting. Paul used this word to communicate the deep inner sense of tranquility and well-being which God gives to those who have been reconciled to Him through faith in what Christ accomplished on the cross.
- **“from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”** ~ the unique source of these qualities. People cannot experience this type of *peace* unless they first are recipients of God’s *grace*.

1:4 ~ The death of Christ on our behalf

- Paul shifted his focus to the true gospel message proclaimed to the Galatians which they originally believed in order to be saved.
- **“who gave Himself for our sins”** ~ **“gave”** (*didōmi*) means to bestow a gift freely of one’s own accord, and the aorist tense points to a definite point in time when this occurred. This refers to the voluntary sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross. **“for”** (*hyper*) means on behalf of or for the sake of someone else. Jesus died in our place, for our benefit, and in reference to **“our sins.”** Theologians call this the substitutionary atonement.
- Jesus’ death as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29) paid the penalty and satisfied the righteous justice of God against all of sinful humanity.

1:4-5 ~ Rescue from this present evil age

- **“so that He might rescue us from this present evil age”** ~ Christ’s death in our place formed the basis for sinners to be rescued. **“rescued”** (*exaireō*, middle voice) ~ carries the idea of rescuing, delivering, or saving someone from danger (e.g. Acts 7:10, 34; 12:11; 23:27; 26:17).
“from” (literally, *out of*) **“this present evil age”** ~ the period of time in which we currently live as characterized by **“evil”** (*ponēros*) ~ wicked or bad; filled with toil, annoyances, hardships, and perils.
- **“according to the will of our God and Father”** ~ from eternity past it was God’s gracious desire and plan to pay the penalty for the sin of mankind through Christ’s substitutionary death in our place.
- **“to whom be the glory forevermore”** ~ literally, “glory into the ages of the ages.”

The grace of God

- *From the human side* ~ there is nothing that a sinful human being can do to earn or gain the favor of a holy God (Rom 3:23).
- *From the divine side* ~ God is completely holy, righteous, and just. He simply cannot overlook or pardon unholiness without violating His justice, so the problem of human sin must be overcome. Jesus Christ died on the cross as our substitute so that God's judgment against our sin would be fully satisfied.
- The problem of human sin has been solved, so all that remains is for people to put their trust in what Christ did for them in order to reconcile them to God. Admit your need for rescue and rely completely on Jesus!