

Galatians 1

Salutation; Paul's Defense of the Gospel and His Apostleship;
Paul's Early Years as a Believer

Galatians 1 key words: "man (men), grace, gospel, preach"

Day 1

Read Galatians 1:1-6

Salutation; Paul's calling

1. Who is the author and recipients of this letter? 1:1,2

2. How did Paul describe his calling? 1:1,10 (Compare Romans 1:1)
 - Who was and wasn't the source of Paul's apostleship? 1:1b

For Your Information: "This is addressed to **the churches of Galatia**, because **Galatia** was a *region*, not a *city*, and there were several **churches** among the cities of **Galatia**...It is clear that Paul intended his words to have a wide circulation in the region of Galatia. The letter would be taken to each centre and read there, or several copies would be made and one taken to each church.' (Morris)

Paul was in southern Galatia [*its Roman provincial name*] on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:13 to Act_14:23), he went through northern Galatia [*the old, ethnic name*] on his second (Acts 16:6) and third (Acts 18:23) missionary journeys."
- David Guzik

3. How are believers able to have access to grace and peace? 1:3 (See also Romans 5:1,2)

For Your Information: Grace and Peace: "The true message of salvation is based solely on God's grace (1:6; 2:21) received by faith (see Eph. 2:8), and it provides peace with God (See Rom. 5:1) - The Nelson Study Bible (1968)

"Divine grace is the basis of the gospel, and peace between God and man is the result." - Charles Swindoll (11)

4. List (or number) the phrases that describe what Christ did that brought us grace and peace. 1:1,4,5
 - What does the word "*deliver/rescue*" (1:4) imply about the seriousness of our condition/our need? (See also Colossians 1:13,14 for what we have been rescued from.)

Optional Digging Deeper

What else does scripture teach about this "age" (also translated "world"):
1 Corinthians 2:6

2 Cor. 4:4

Ephesians 6:12

1 Timothy 6:17

5. What reason is given for our salvation? 1:4b,5 (See also Ephesians 1:5,6)

FYI: "The phrase 'our God and Father' reminds us that the majestic God (who is over all and controls all) is also our loving Father (rescuing us even when we were still his enemies). It is no wonder that Paul burst into praise."

- Africa Bible Commentary (1414)

Digging Deeper

What experience did Jesus have with His disciples?

John 6:66

Matthew 26:55-56

What did Paul experience?
2 Timothy 1:15; 4:16-17

Paul's concern for the Galatians

6. What were the Christians in Galatia doing? How did Paul feel about that? 1:6

IT'S GREEK TO ME: ***Deserting/turning away*** NT:3346 *metatithemi*; to transfer... transport...exchange...change sides, or (figuratively) pervert:
- Strong's Concordance

"The Greek word is an interesting one. It signifies 'to transfer one's allegiance'. It is used of soldiers in the army who revolt or desert, and of men who change sides in politics or philosophy."
- John Stott (21,22)

"There were many who wanted to twist the early advances of the gospel to their own ends. They would follow Paul and other missionaries, attempting to 'straighten out' the new converts to their own crooked ways of thinking (Gal. 5:7). We call one such group 'the Judaizers' because they wanted to Judaize the believers - to make them Jews as well as Gentiles. They taught Gentile converts that '*Unless you are circumcised according to the Law of Moses, you cannot be saved*' (Acts 15:1; compare Galatians 6:12). They apparently claimed to represent the church leadership in Jerusalem (Acts 15:24), so some Gentiles obediently began trying to follow the Law (Galatians 3:2,3; 4:10)..."

But if even Jews looked to the Law as a means to secure God's favor, then their faith was not in Christ and His completed work on the Cross. If the Gentiles were required to practice the Law-an impossible task-then suddenly the means of both salvation and living the Christian life became human effort, rather than faith in God." - Galatians Life Change Series (12)

Applying the Word: *Who has helped you know about Jesus? Who has helped you understand what He did for you? What made that person so compelling?*

Day 2

Read Galatians 1:6-10

Concerns about the gospel

7. How are we called? 1:6

FYI: "***called by the grace of Christ***" "This means that God called us, we didn't call him. And God accepted us right away despite our lack of merit. That is the order of the gospel. God accepts us and then we follow...But other religious systems have it the other way around. We must give God something and then he accepts us...We did not ask for rescue, but God in His grace planned what we didn't realize we needed, and Christ by His grace (v 6) came to achieve the rescue we could never have achieved ourselves."
- Timothy Keller (18,16)

8. From 2 Timothy 1:9 and Titus 3:4,5 list what are and are **not** reasons for our calling.

Reasons for our calling	NOT reasons for our calling

- What reasons do we often feel were the ones that motivated God to call and save us?

9. List the adjectives that Paul used to describe what “*some*” people were doing to the gospel. 1:6-8

IT'S GREEK TO ME: **Distort/pervert** NT:3344 *metastrepho*; to turn across, transmute...corrupt - Strong's Concordance
"to transform into something of an opposite character" - Vine's Expository Dictionary

"[the different gospel] used the names and ideas familiar to the Galatian Christians, but it slightly twisted the ideas, and this made their message all the more deceptive...It is as if Paul writes, 'They brought you a completely different gospel. They claim it is just an alternative gospel of the same kind, but it isn't at all. It is all together different.'" - David Guzik

"The people who suggested that the Galatians simply add the Mosaic ceremonial law to Christ were not simply suggesting a revision of the gospel but a complete reversal. In vs.7, we are told that this teaching '*perverts*' or literally '*reverses*' the gospel. This is illuminating. If you add *anything* to Christ (the grace of Christ *plus* something else) as a requirement for acceptance with God, you completely *reverse* the 'order' of the gospel and make it null and void...To change the gospel the tiniest bit is to lose it so completely that the new teaching has no right to be called a 'gospel.'" - Timothy Keller (9)

"The legalists didn't make it easy for [Paul]. They challenged him every step of the way, setting up barriers they thought were impregnable. Paul refused to back down...[In chapter 1] Paul began by refuting their challenges to his apostolic authority and exposing their gospel of works as false (1:1-9). Then he pressed further, knowing down their claim that he was not a true servant of God but a man-pleaser [1:10-12]...In the latter half of chapter 1, Paul deals with the most formidable argument yet: The gospel of grace is from man, not God." - Charles Swindoll (16)

10. By what standard did Paul say people should judge someone's ministry and message, including his own? 1:8

FYI: "Paul is saying in verse 8 that even his apostolic authority derives from the gospel's authority, not the other way around. Paul is telling the Galatians to evaluate and judge both him as an apostle and his teaching with the biblical gospel. The Bible judges the church; the church does not judge the Bible...The church and its hierarchy *must* be evaluated by the believer with the biblical gospel as the touchstone or plumb line for judging all truth claims." - Timothy Keller (21,22)

11. What did Paul say should happen to the people who distorted the gospel? 1:8,9 (Cross reference 3:10)

FYI: "The false teachers...did not deny that you must believe in Jesus for salvation, but they stressed that you must be circumcised and keep the law as well." - John Stott (22)

"To change the gospel the tiniest bit is to lose it so completely that the new teaching has no right to be called a 'gospel'." - Timothy Keller (18)

12. From the following verses in Galatians, what do you learn about the ways that people were disturbing others and distorting the gospel?

- 5:1-4
- 6:12,13

13. What do the following teach about the place of *works* in a gospel of *grace*?

- Ephesians 2:8,9
- Romans 11:6

Paul defends his apostleship

14. What does 1:10 imply that Paul's stand on the gospel cost him? (cf. 5:11)

FYI: "Am I now seeking the favor of men" "Those who were questioning Paul's authority may have been implying that this was what he was trying to do when he insisted that salvation is by faith alone, while the Judaizers insisted that works were also necessary."
- Africa Bible Commentary (1415)

15. What 3 things were *not* true about the origin of the gospel Paul received? 1:11,12a (See also 1 Thessalonians 2:13)

- What do Paul's objections indicate about the nature of the arguments being used against him?

16. How did Paul receive the gospel? 1:12b Cf. 1:1 (Acts 9:3-29 gives the account of Paul's conversion.)

Digging Deeper

For some of the criticisms to Paul's preaching see: Acts 15:1-2; 2 Corinthians 11:5,6

See Paul's defense of his apostleship in 1 Corinthians 9:1, 15:7-10

Food for Thought: "If Paul's gospel, the message of the Bible, really came from God, then it is the most important fact in the world. If it is just a human invention or achievement, then it is the most dangerous lie in the world." - David Guzik

Applying the Word: How would your heart, life and sense of wellbeing change if you truly believed there was nothing you could do to earn God's love?

Or

How do you think you have changed or will change as you become more confident of Christ's unfailing love?

Day 3**Read Galatians 1:13-16****Paul's background**

17. What was Paul like before he met Jesus? 1:13

FYI: "Church" is used in three different ways in the NT.

1. house churches (Rom. 16:5)
2. local or area churches (Galatians 1:2; 1 Cor. 1:2)
3. the whole body of Christ on earth (Gal. 1:13; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22; 3:21; 5:23-32) – Bob Utley

18. What adjectives did Paul use to describe the education and religious life he had? 1:14 (See also Philippians 3:4-6)

- How did Paul feel about his “religious” accomplishments after He came to know the Lord? Philippians 3:7-9

FYI: “Paul is saying: I’ve already been there and done that! I know all about this subject! You cannot make yourself acceptable to God by the most zealous and detailed following of moral, ethical, or cultural codes.” - Timothy Keller (27)

19. What activities was Paul engaged in against Christians?

- Acts 8:3
- Acts 9:1,2
- Acts 26:9-11

Paul's calling

20. What force do the words “*but when God*” and “*through his grace*” carry? (1:15)

21. When, why and for what ministry did God call Paul? 1:15,16a (Note Jeremiah's calling 1:4,5)

Optional Digging Deeper

What is God “pleased” to give us?

John 5:21

Ephesians 1:5

Note also Ps 149:4; Zeph. 3:17

22. When did God have a plan for your life? Psalm 139:16; Ephesians 1:4a

23. Underline what Paul credits for his accomplishments.

- 1 Corinthians 15:9-10 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them-yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. NIV
- Ephesians 3:7-8 I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, NIV

24. What made Paul's life a powerful testimony to God's love for us? 1 Timothy 1:15,16

For Your Information: "Grace is the free, unmerited favor of God, working powerfully on the mind and heart to change lives. There is not clearer example than Paul that salvation is by grace alone, not through our moral and religious performance...Paul's experience proves vividly that the gospel is not simply 'religion' as it is generally understood. The gospel calls us out of religion as much as it called us out of irreligion. No one is so good that they don't need the grace of the gospel, nor so bad that they can't receive the grace of the gospel ...God does not love us because we are serviceable; He loves us simply because He loves us. This is the only kind of love we can ever be secure in, of course, since it is the only kind of love we cannot possibly lose. This is grace." - Timothy Keller (28,30)

25. Underline how Paul referred to himself and his ministry in the following verses.

- Acts 9:15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel NASB
- Acts 26:16-18 "Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you... I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.' NIV
- Romans 15:16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God NIV
- 1 Timothy 2:7 For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. NASB

Applying the Word: Read Psalm 139. Do you fully believe that God has every day of your life already marked out? How does that belief shape your perspective on life?

Day 4**Read Galatians 1:17-24****Paul's early years as a believer**

26. What *didn't* Paul do immediately after becoming a believer? 1:16,17a (Why is that important? Cf. 1:11,12)

FYI: "There seem to have been some who were claiming that Paul had been taught the gospel by Ananias (Acts 9) or by the original apostles. They implied that Paul was now departing from what he had been taught by leaving out the need for works for salvation."
-Africa Bible Commentary (1415)

27. Where did Paul spend his first three years? 1:17 What activities was Paul involved in? Acts 9:19b,20

- List the reactions the Jews had to Paul's preaching. Acts 9:21,22,23

FYI: "Why did Paul thus assert and defend his apostleship?...It was because the gospel that he preached was at stake. If Paul were not an apostle of Jesus Christ, then men could, and no doubt would, reject his gospel...what Paul spoke was Christ's message on Christ's authority. So he defended his apostolic authority in order to defend his message."
- John Stott (915)

28. When and why did Paul go to Jerusalem? 1:18,19

29. How did the disciples in Jerusalem react to Paul? Acts 9:26-28

- Why didn't Paul stay longer (more than "15 days"- 1:18) in Jerusalem? Acts 9:29,30
- (Interestingly, note what Peter said about Paul's teaching in 2 Peter 3:16.)

FYI: "Why did Paul go to meet Peter?... No doubt they talked about Christ, and Paul used the occasion to enrich his already firm grasp of the gospel by the stories Peter could tell of the life and actual teachings of Jesus... The Greek verb ['acquainted/see'] (*historeo*) is the word from which we get our word 'history.' It suggests the telling of a story. Paul would have told his story, Peter his. So the two leading apostles--Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, and Peter, the apostle to the Jews--became acquainted and encouraged each other in their forthcoming work. For the point of Paul's argument, it is important to note that this was a private visit and not one designed to secure the support of any human authorities."
- Expositor's Bible Commentary

30. How did Paul's past become a powerful witness in his preaching? 1:23-24

Applying the Word: What does Paul's example say about God's ability to use ALL your life experiences, including troubles and mistakes, to work in you and through you to bring blessings into your life and the lives of others?

Outline of Galatians

- 1:1-9 – Introduction to the Gospel and the occasion for the letter
- 1:10-2:21 – Paul's Personal Defense of his gospel ministry
- 3:1-4:31 – Paul's Theological Defense of the gospel message
- 5:1-6:18 – Paul's Practical Application of the gospel message to our lives

- Tim Keller