

McCoy Memorial Baptist Church

Date: September 21, 2022

Fall Study: GALATIANS: “Letter of Liberation”

PAUL Established HIS AUTHORITY and HIS GOSPEL (1:1-5)

1. His AUTHORITY (vss. 1, 2)

Paul claims for himself the very title which the false teachers (Judaizers) denied him: “an apostle” (*ἀπόστολος*.)”

A. The title which Jesus used for His special representatives or delegates (Luke 6:13; Mark 3:14). To this select group of apostles Paul claimed to belong. They’re all “brothers” (vs. 2), but he alone among them is “an apostle” (vs. 1). And he leaves no doubt about the source of his apostleship. He makes a forceful statement that his apostleship is not human in any sense, but wholly divine.

B. Why did Paul assert and defend his apostleship?

It was because the GOSPEL 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. He defended his apostolic authority in order to defend his message.

C. This special, divine authority of the apostle Paul is enough to discredit and discard certain modern views of the New Testament.

1) The view of modern RADICAL theologians.

The apostles were merely first-century witnesses to Jesus Christ. We are twentieth-century witnesses, and our witness is just as good as theirs, if not better.

2) The ROMAN CATHOLIC view.

Since the Bible authors were churchmen, the church wrote the Bible. Therefore, the church is over the Bible and has authority not only to *interpret* it, but also to *supplement* it.

3) The NEW APOSTOLIC REFORMATION (see Ephesians 4:11).

Most Christians believe that two of those offices (apostle & prophet) have ceased for centuries. According to the NAR the Lord has restored these 2 ministries to begin the process of setting up His kingdom on earth. The NAR’s unique feature is the office of apostleship being reestablish.

2. His GOSPEL (vss. 3-5)

A. Paul begins by sending a message of “grace and peace” as in all his epistles. These are not formal & meaningless terms. They are loaded with theological substance. They summarize Paul’s gospel message of salvation.

1) The NATURE of salvation is “peace” — peace with God, peace with men, peace within.

“Peace” identifies a state of well-being or wholeness, a restored relationship (reconciliation).

2) The SOURCE of salvation is “grace” (God’s free favor, irrespective of any human merit or works, His loving-kindness to the undeserving. God’s free, undeserved kindness to sinners).

B. Paul immediately goes on to the great historical event in which God’s grace was exhibited and from which His peace is derived; namely, the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. There is some rich teaching given here about the death of Christ.

1) The NATURE of Christ’s death: Christ “gave himself for our sins”.

The death of Jesus Christ was primarily neither a display of love, nor an example of heroism, but a sacrifice for sin. The New Testament teaches that Christ’s death was a sin-offering, the unique sacrifice by which our sins may be forgiven and put away (3:13; 1 Pet. 3:18).

- 2) The **OBJECT** of Christ's death: "to rescue us from the present evil age" (Col. 1:13).
Lightfoot: "the verb *rescue* strikes the keynote of the epistle". He adds, "The Gospel is a rescue, an emancipation from a state of bondage." The Greek word (**αἰών**) does not refer to a period of time but an order or system, and in particular to *the current world system ruled by Satan* (1 Jn 2:15, 16; 5:19).
- 3) The **ORIGIN** of Christ's death: "according to the will (plan) of our God & Father".
Paul didn't invent the gospel of grace; God did. It was God's purpose from eternity past to save sinners (see Rom. 8:28-30; also, "God our Savior" in the Pastorals). Therefore, Paul exclaimed that God deserves glory forever and ever (Gal. 1:5).

PAUL Exercised HIS AUTHORITY (1:6-9)

1. The Unfaithfulness of the Galatians (vs. 6)

A. "You are so quickly *deserting* the one who called you by the grace of Christ"

The Greek word (**μετατίθημι**) signifies "to transfer one's allegiance". It's used of soldiers who desert, and of men who change sides in politics" (turncoats). It is of this that Paul accuses the Galatians. They are religious turncoats, spiritual deserters. He accuses them *not only of deserting the gospel of grace*, but of "deserting the one who called" them by grace. You Galatians beware, it is impossible to forsake the gospel without forsaking God.

B. "You are *turning to* a another (*heteros*) gospel—which is not another (*ou allos*)."

Any teaching that claims to be "another gospel" is "not another" (vss. 6, 7). To make this point, he uses the two adjectives **heteros** ("another" in the sense of "different") and **allos** ("another" in the sense of "a second"). The HCSB brings it out: "You . . . are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another gospel." In other words, there are certainly different gospels being preached, but that is what they are—different (strange, abnormal). There is not another, a second; there is only one. The message of the false teachers was not an alternative gospel; it was a **perverted** one.

2. The _____ of the Judaizers (vs. 7)

The two chief characteristics of the false teachers are: (1) they were **troubling** the church; and (2) they were **changing** the gospel; the 2 go together. To *tamper* with the gospel is always to *trouble* the church.

3. The _____ of the apostle (vss. 8-9)

A. One of utter _____ (cp. 3:1)

The devil disturbs the church as much by _____ as by _____.

B. One of _____ over the Judaizers (vss. 8, 9)

*The Greek word twice translated "eternally condemned" is **anathema** (ἀνάθεμα). See Joshua 6, 7.*

What are we to say about this anathema? Are we to dismiss it, reject it, explain it away?

- 1) It's _____ in its embrace: "anyone" – "angels" – "we" (apostles).
- 2) It's uttered _____ and with conscious responsibility to God.

Why did he feel so strongly, and use such drastic language?

- 1) The _____ of Christ was at stake.
- 2) The good of men and women's _____ was at stake.

How can we recognize the true gospel? Its marks are given to us here in Paul's introduction:

- 1) The _____ of the gospel
The true gospel magnifies the free and unmerited grace of God (Gal. 2:15, 16, 21).
- 2) The _____ of the gospel
The true gospel is the gospel of the apostles of Jesus Christ; in other words, the New T. gospel.