

Gal 1:1-10

Paul's letter to the Galatians is in many ways different than other letters he's written.

In this letter He has to get to business right away.

- Paul is writing to the Galatians
- Warning them of others perverting the gospel of Christ thru legalism,
- they were the Judaizers.

This seemed to be a recurring issue **within** the early church.

- We just read of this in our study of Corinthians.

The Judaizers had the mindset that

- a Non-Jew could not be saved
- unless he converted to Judaism.

Paul was writing to churches in Galatia, not to an individual church

This is probably one of his most important along with Romans.

I'm not saying this is most important

- in terms of most important in the bible,
- but in changing the course of church history.

A couple of key words in Galatians are:

- "law" meaning "laws of Moses."
- The second word is "faith."

They each say, do this and you will live.

- keep in mind that there are only 3 divisions in the letter.
- Chapters 1 & 2 which are personal.

In Chapters 3 & 4 Paul explains how we're saved by faith and not by works.

In chapters 5 & 6.

- There Paul gives applications of how
- a life lived for Christ translates to
- a Holy loving lifestyle.

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead), 2 and all the brethren who are with me,

To the churches of Galatia:

3 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Only One Gospel

6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, 7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

10 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

Paul immediately states his position within the body of Christ.

Again, the Judaizers were Jewish Christians

- insisting that Gentiles had to keep the laws of Moses
- in addition to walking out their Christian walk.

They added to the message of grace.

So Paul identifies himself as an apostle,

And he says:

(not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead), 2 and all the brethren who are with me,

To the churches of Galatia:

3 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

We can't experience God's peace

- unless we've experienced His grace first.
- Grace is God's unmerited favor.

Paul opens this letter with worship in verse 5.

Gal 1:6-10

6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,

This is the same verb Jesus used in John 3:7

- when speaking to Nicodemus about being born again.

There He told Nicodemus,

- “Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”

So it means “to wonder, to be struck with admiration or astonishment.”

Paul was astonished that some in Galatia were turning away so easily from the gospel.

Gal 3:1

1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?

Back to verse 6.

Paul was astonished that some had turned away so soon.

The word “soon” could mean that their action

- had been hasty and without consideration
- or that not much time had elapsed between
- their acceptance of the gospel and their defection.

I think it’s more likely they walked away

- by the leading of the false teachers

So Paul says that this gospel which you received

7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

The NIV translation says there were some who were trying to throw them into confusion.

Paul said something similar in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 11:4

4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted – you may well put up with it!

In Galatia there were some that were causing trouble.

The Greek word translated “trouble” means “seasick, or “to agitate or to stir up.”

It's the same word used in Matthew 14:26, when, in the midst of a storm, the disciples were troubled when they saw Jesus walking on the water.

Paul also said to Timothy, 2 Tim 1:13-14

13 Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 14 That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

Paul says at the end of verse 7 that some were trying to pervert the gospel.

- They (the Judaizers) were wanting to go back
- to the law of Moses instead of toward God's grace.

They made salvation predicated upon a ritual.

8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

Paul says if anyone, even an angel were to preach any other gospel, let him be accursed.

Jesus Himself warned:

Matt 7:15

15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

Accursed means to "let him be completely cut off."

In the OT, the word "accursed"

- described people or people groups
- that were destined for destruction.
  - (Josh 6:17-18; Josh 7:1, 25-26)

For example, the book of Joshua chapter 6 speaks of the destruction of Jericho.

Joshua tells the men of war prior to the walls coming down and them going in that

- they were to abstain from the accursed things
- otherwise they'd become accursed, they'd be "cut off!"

The Lord set the Israelites apart for destruction when they turned to other gods.

Fortunately, there is coming a day

- when the ban for destruction will be lifted
- on Jerusalem forever according to Zech 14.

So why would Paul use such harsh words?

- Because these false teacher had
- the promise of salvation
- and they prevented people
- from trusting in the one who can grant salvation.

In Mark 10:13,

- there were some people who brought some children to Jesus
- so that He'd bless them.

But the disciples rebuked those who brought them

- Jesus wasn't too happy with their attitude:

Mark 10:14-16

14b "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. 15 Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." 16 And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.

Jesus loved the children, and we are His children. That's why Paul says,

- let those be accursed who present any other gospel
- other than the gospel of Christ!

9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Paul felt so strongly about this that he mentions it a second time.

These people were attacking the cross

10 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

Prov 29:25 says:

The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.

Our security is in the Lord, not in man!

It's the Fear of Man that Brings Humiliation

David went to the Philistine city of Gath when fleeing from Saul (1 Samuel 21).

1 Sam 21

11 "Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of him to one another in dances, saying:

'Saul has slain his thousands,  
And David his ten thousands?'

*David must have thought, "Oh great," they know who I am.*

So, the Word says, "He changed his behavior before them and feigned himself mad in their hands." He scratched on the doors of the gate and let spit run down his beard.

Here was David, the guy who killed Goliath, noted for courage and valor is now falling prey to the fear of man.

David was humiliated and embarrassed all because he played the fool because of the fear of man.

Truly, the fear of man brings humiliation, (see 1 Samuel 21:14, 15).

Gal 1:11-17

11 But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

These two verses are very important for us to know.

First off,

- the gospel taught by Paul was not according to man.

Secondly,

- the word came to Paul thru revelation.

13 For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure (meaning violently) and tried to destroy it. (Because of his hatred of Christians, he tried to destroy the church) 14 And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

Paul was a Greek,

- that is he knew the Greek culture,

He also had his Roman citizenship,

- so he knew Roman law,

As a young boy at the age of 13

- his father sent him to Jerusalem
- to study under one of the great mentors, "Gamaliel"

- a highly esteemed as a Jewish Rabbi.

Gamaliel was not fond of Christianity,

- in fact, he spoke against it as soon as it took off.

And Saul (Paul's former name)

- became very much like his mentor Gamaliel
- and developed a hatred toward the church.

Because he was involved in two different worlds,

- the secular side and the spiritual side,

he learned to say,

- to the Jew I've become as a Jew
- that I might win the Jew,
- and to those without the law
- I've become like those without the law
- that I might win those.

He could relate to so many people on many levels.

Notice he says in verse 14

- that he was zealous for the traditions of his fathers.

He was referring to the oral law,

- Not the written law from Moses

It was his religious zeal that made him a persecutor of the church.

In acts 8:3 it says that Paul made havoc of the church.

His biography says that

- he went from house to house in Jerusalem
- arresting believers and forced them to blaspheme.

That is he was forcing them to show contempt or to lack reverence for God.

Paul said in verse 13 that he tried to destroy the church then he said something similar to the Philippians:

Phil 3:4-8

4b If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; 6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.

In his letter to Timothy he said:

1 Tim 1:13

13 although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent (proud) man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

Paul who stood by as Stephen the first Christian martyr was killed.

What were Paul's thoughts when he heard Stephens last words, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin."

Gal 1:15

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,

I love this verse: But...God!

Listen, when God wants to do something in you and thru you,

- He will make it happen.
- And He often uses our past
- to fulfill things in the future.

Even to the Galatians he said earlier in verse 6, I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel.

In Jeremiah 1:5 He said, Before I formed you in the womb I knew you;

Are you called?

- If you've answered the call, then yes!

When you're invited to a wedding or any other event

- you're asked to RSVP,
- you have to decide whether or not
- you're going to attend.

God has invited each and everyone of us

- to a future banquet,
- will you RSVP!

So why did God call us thru His grace?

16 to reveal His Son in me (us),



God calls us thru His grace to reveal His son in us:  
that (we) I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with  
flesh and blood,

17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to  
Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.