

Galatians 1

The book of Galatians is a letter written to multiple communities or cities and not to a specific church. The area of Galatia is in modern day Turkey from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. The Epistle was to reinforce the Gospel; Paul had heard that Judaizers were following him from church to church to contradict or discredit the message that he was teaching.

Galatia was later absorbed by the Roman empire, then by the byzantine empire and then the Ottoman empire before finally becoming modern day Turkey.

Galatia was mentioned twice in Acts, once in chapter 16 in passing and again in chapter 18.

Acts 18: 20-23 ²⁰ When they asked *him* to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, ²¹ but took leave of them, saying, "I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing." And he sailed from Ephesus. ²² And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up and greeted the church, he went down to Antioch. ²³ After he had spent some time *there*, he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

- Paul was out and about spreading the news of the Gospel and planting churches.
- The book is thought to be written about 50AD that means Paul had been spreading the news of Christ for about 15 years.
 - Paul was saved on the road to Damascus we read about that in Acts 9 and I'll talk more about that when we get to the text.

The book of Galatians is 6 chapters but 1 letter, the letter can be broken up in 3 parts.

- Chapters 1-2 show the truth of the Gospel and the Freedom from the law
- 3-4 we learn about the foundation of the Gospel and the role the Law played in the Old Testament
- 5-6 the result of the Gospel and the Freedom that we have in Christ.

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,

- Paul's greeting starts with the showing of his authority showing that he is an Apostle and was called by Jesus and God the Father.
- We see that in Acts 9;3-6

Acts 9:3-6 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. ⁴ Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" ⁵ And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." ⁶ So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?"

- Saul filled with the Holy Spirit,
- He then received his sight
- Finally, he was baptized and then in verse Acts 9 verse 20
- Grace given to Paul

Acts 9:20 Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.

Following his conversion, Paul spent some time in Arabia, where he was taught by Christ (Galatians 1:12–17). The other **apostles recognized** that **Jesus Himself** had appointed their former enemy to be one of them. As Saul went into Gentile territories, he changed his name to the Greek "Paul," and Jesus, who gave Paul his apostleship, sent many messages through him to His churches and to unbelievers. *Guzik*

2b...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.

- To the churches of the region
- Paul's familiar greeting was used 5 other times by Paul.
 - Grace was used more than 100 times by Paul and only around 55 but the other writers of the New Testament.
- Paul was and is the Apostle of grace, because of how he was transformed and made new he was very aware of the Grace he was given.

"These two terms, grace and peace, constitute Christianity." (Martin Luther)

- Highlighting that God and Jesus are one.
- Present and evil age is still present today, the same but different.

- Perverters of the Word of the Gospel. It was happening then and its still happening now.

Paul writes in this in 2nd Corinthians 4

2nd Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

- The present evil age is the grip that the world has on us, we need to in the word and have a relationship with Christ growing closer to Him and farther away from this present evil age.

Jesus says this in John

John 17:14-19¹⁴ I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

- To whom be glory be glory forever and ever...
 - Missing is Paul's, praise and thanksgiving, this shows us the readers that it was a big problem that needed a strong hand.
 - In Paul's letters to the Romans, Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians and the Thessalonians, Paul wrote expressions of thanks and praise, he did not do that in this letter.
- This letter was sent to the churches in of Galatia and was probably read aloud in the town centers as a proclamation

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.

- Turning away so soon, but why?

- Judaizers
 - Traditionalists
 - Legalists
 - False teachers
 - Perverts of the word
- Pervert in the Greek, **metastrephó: To change, to alter, to pervert, to turn**
 - Pervert used here means to distort and twist and manipulate the truth.
 - We see this happening in the young churches in Paul's day, and we see it today with false religions in the churches today.
 - Something that happens a lot today is cherry-picking scripture to fit it into whatever narrative you want and not using it in context.
 - We are being directed here to be vigilant, to ensure that what we are ingesting is the unaltered Word of God.
 - Accursed used twice of very close together.

It might be fair to ask, "Where was Paul's love?" He asked for a "double curse" on people – people who spread a false gospel. He didn't just ask God to curse the message, but to curse the people who spread the message. So, where was Paul's love? Paul's love was for souls that were in danger of hell. If a gospel is false, and not "another good news" at all, then it cannot save the lost. Paul looked at this false, perverted gospel and said, "That is a rescue ship about to sink! It can't save anyone! I want to do everything right before God to warn people away from the wrong rescue ship." Guzik

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.

- How are we living?
 - Are we living with fear of man or fear of the Lord?
 - Do we speak His name with reverence, or do we blaspheme or corrupt (pervert) His word?
 - Are we overflowing with the Holy Spirit and is His light radiating from us?
 - If our aim is true and we are truly filled with the Holy Spirit, it will be visible...
 - Are we doing everything to be a Bondservant?
 - In the Word

- Sharing the Gospel
- Taking our thought life captive
- Praying and Listening
- Giving Grace to others

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.

1 Timothy 1:12-15 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry, ¹³ although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. ¹⁴ And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

- Paul was not of the original 12, and the Judaizers used that fact to discredit the message that Paul was preaching.
- Paul was accepted; the other Apostles saw the complete transformation in Paul. The way Paul proclaimed the Lord and shared the Gospel and spoke with humility and acknowledged the authority and influence of the original apostles.

¹³ For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and *tried to* destroy it. 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's legalistic conduct prior to his revelation of Jesus Christ...
 - Paul was following his forefathers
 - We see that today, I am because they were/are, I was raised that way...

Acts 8:3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing *them* to prison

Acts 9:1-2 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

- Paul conduct was widely known; he was infamous for his persecution of Christians.
- Paul wasn't proud of what he had done, he was amazed by the grace given to him and the way Christ turned him around. It was part of his testimony.

The value of personal testimony is not restricted to those who have a dramatic conversion story like Paul did. We can see the glory of God's work just as much in those who think they have a boring testimony. Guzik

- Every one of us who is a believer has a testimony. Some big, huge, amazing stories, some small and simple and nobody has the same as another.

Your Christian testimony—the story of how you came to know Jesus Christ and how He's changed your life—should not surprise your hearers, but should simply confirm and clarify your lifestyle, values, and decisions. Billy Graham

¹⁵ But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called *me* through His grace, ¹⁶ to reveal His Son in me, that 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.

- When it pleased God.
 - No man pressured him.
 - He wasn't forced or coerced
 - God did it in His own time with God's grace and unmerited favor.
- For Paul to 180, to change his entire outlook on life on the world and to do it so completely with zero doubts. Paul is saying it was done in my mother's womb, meaning the Lord already knew the end from the beginning and that He was going to use Paul.

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blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. ¹⁴ And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

- No one is beyond redemption, if we are here and breathing, God's love and forgiveness are available to us.
- Abundant Grace, unmerited favor.

Isaiah 38:17 Indeed *it was* for *my own* peace
That I had great bitterness;
But You have lovingly *delivered* my soul from the pit of corruption,
For You have cast all my sins behind Your back.

¹⁸ Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. ¹⁹ But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. ²⁰ (Now *concerning* the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.) ²¹ Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. ²² And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which *were* in Christ. ²³ But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once *tried to* destroy." ²⁴ And they glorified God in me.

- Paul went on a 3-year mission and spread the Gospel before he ever met the other apostles. This proves that he was indeed taught by Jesus.
- Paul was feared at first by reputation and then embraced as a brother
 - Judged
 - Feared
 - Assumed the worst
 - Chuck Smith said they thought he was a "KGB" agent
 - Fear he was a wolf in sheep's clothing
 - He was transformed and filled to overflowing with the Holy spirit, Paul just had to keep preaching and walking the walk and eventually he was embraced.

Paul spends time in the first 2 chapters defending his apostleship and establishing his God ordained authority. In doing this Paul is teaching us about grace, about faith and that Jesus doesn't call the equipped the equips the called. Paul was called to spread the

Gospel of grace, and we are called to do the same. Paul teaches that Jesus is enough it is not Jesus +. Grace alone, through Faith alone, in Christ alone.

Strong's concordance says that the N. T. writers use Grace (χάρις) pre-eminently of that kindness by which God bestows favors even upon the ill-deserving, and grants to sinners the pardon of their offences, and bids them accept of eternal salvation through Christ

Free grace can go into the gutter, and bring up a jewel! Spurgeon

A man can no more take in a supply of grace for the future than he can eat enough today to last him for the next 6 months, nor can he inhale sufficient air into his lungs with one breath to sustain life for a week to come. We are permitted to draw upon God's store of grace from day to day as we need it. D.L Moody

For the Prodigal Son, grace wins
For the woman at the well, grace wins
For the blind men and the beggar, grace wins
For always and forever, grace wins
For the lost out on the street, grace wins
For the worst part of you and me, grace wins
For the thief on the cross, grace wins

Matthew West