

The Book of Galatians
Lesson 1 - Galatians 1:1-10
Gospel Living
“The True Gospel”

The first two chapters are personal, and the key word in them is “Gospel,” found ten times in these forty-five verses. Paul’s aim was to show that his message and ministry came directly from Christ and not from men. Paul did not preach a secondhand message that he learned from Peter or any of the apostles. Rather, God took every measure necessary to keep Paul’s ministry separate from that of the Twelve, to prevent anyone from thinking Paul’s ministry was given to him by the apostles.

The Judaizers who “bewitched” the Galatians (3:1) were telling them that Paul’s apostleship and message were not trustworthy because he lacked official endorsement from Jerusalem. “We have our credentials from Peter!” they would say, as though the approval of men is proof that a preacher is sent of God. Paul begins his letter by declaring that his message and ministry came directly from Jesus Christ.

Paul’s Gospel was centered in Christ, not in Moses or the Law. It was a Gospel of grace that brought peace. May we never be confused as to the content and intent of the Gospel. The Gospel is not “follow Christ and imitate His life” but “receive Christ by faith and allow Him to set you free.” There is no place in the Gospel for a salvation that is attained by keeping the Law.

The apostle speaks forcefully in condemning any other gospel, regardless of who the preacher might be, even an angel! Keep in mind that there are many “gospels” (messages of good news), but only one Gospel of the grace of God as Paul preached it. Abraham believed “the gospel,” the “good news” that through his seed all the nations would be blessed. In every age, men have been saved by believing whatever promise God revealed to them. Noah believed God’s Word about a flood and the ark; Abraham believed God’s Word about his promised seed; today we believe God’s Word about His Son’s death and resurrection.

Read Galatians 1:1-5 and answer the following questions

1. In verse 1 Paul refers to himself as an apostle. What does this mean? When was he made an apostle? (See Acts 1:21-22, 9:4-6).
2. The greeting in verse 3 is typical of all Paul's letters. Why does he always start by saying "Grace and peace" instead of "Peace and grace"?
3. Paul reminds us that Christ rescued us from "*this present evil age.*" What do you think God's purposes are in doing this? (See Eph. 1:6, 10:2:4; 3:10-11). Why is there so much evil still in the world?
4. In verse 4, Paul says it was the will of God that Jesus died to save you. Does your life personally reflect your gratitude for that rescue? In what ways does your life reflect or not reflect this?

Read Galatians 1:6-10 and answer the following questions

5. Why do you think Paul reacted so strongly to the Judaizers? Who were they and what were they doing?
6. What are some of the different or false gospels you have heard? How might we confront their false teaching to avoid being led astray?

7. What are the requirements for salvation? (See John 3:16, James 2:14).

8. What happens when people try to add to or subtract from the requirements for salvation? How do we know what to believe?

9. In verse 10, we see that Paul has apparently been accused of being a “people pleaser.” Why do you think his enemies would say this about him?

10. What is wrong with trying to win the approval of someone?

11. Why does being a “people pleaser” make it difficult to be a servant of Christ? (See Gal. 1:10).

12. Discover more of what it means to please God rather than men. (See John 12:42-43, Colossians 3:23-24, 1 Thessalonians 2:4-6, 1 Peter 3:3-4).

Only Christ **(Word in Life Study Bible)**

Throughout Christian history people have “added on” or “subtracted from” various requirements to the gospel message, almost always with an appeal to Scripture. Inevitably the result is a distortion of the faith that does great damage.

In first century Galatia, the challenge came from Judaizers teachers who insisted that belief in Jesus was not enough for salvation. One must also keep the law of Moses, they said. In a way, one can understand their point of view. For centuries,

Jews had held to the law as a righteous path to favor with God. The Judaizers perceived Jesus as perhaps building on the law of Moses, but not replacing it. Their teaching greatly troubled the young believers in Galatia who had responded to Paul's message. If what the Judaizers said was true, Paul had been wrong and Christ alone did not really save a person.

Not surprisingly, Paul was outraged. He was furious with the deceptive claims of the Judaizers and zealous to defend the integrity of the gospel. So he composed the letter that we call Galatians.

If Galatians emphasizes anything, it is that Christ alone is sufficient for salvation, nothing more nothing else. Centuries later after the church had again embraced add-ons to the faith, a young man named Martin Luther claimed Galatians for his own, calling it the Magna Carta of Christian liberty. It helped usher in the reclamation of the faith in which salvation is based on Christ's grace, not on peoples efforts.

Still every generation is marked by a tendency to classify believers according to their outward observances. Some are considered first class, others second class. In nearly every case, the resegregating of the church results from add-ons to the simple pure gospel message of Christ. But when believers hold to Christ alone, then their faith and the church will grow. That's the message of Galatians.