



(For access to all available commentaries and sermons of Charlie's click [HERE](#))

Galatians

Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,
Galatians 1:3

Paul here makes his usual apostolic greeting which is found, for example, in Romans 1:7. "Grace" is the blessing poured out from God on those who are undeserving of His favor. Grace is "getting what you don't deserve." Instead of judgment and wrath, we are lavished with His goodness and abundance. This is the standard Greek greeting one might expect at the time of Paul.

"Peace" is a fullness of everything that is needed to be satisfied in all ways. It is a request for health, filling of every need, and even abundance. It would be the standard greeting of the Jews that one would expect at this or at any time. The Hebrew word which Paul would have on his mind would be *shalom*. In Greek, it is *eiréné*.

The term "from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ" means that these blessings come from both. God is the Source of all things; Christ is our Mediator. If one thinks of a stream of water, it doesn't matter if the water comes right from the well which bubbles from the ground or from some point down the river. In both, the same water is drunk. If the well is by itself inaccessible, the stream is there bringing it to us. This is how it is for us spiritually. Christ is the One who makes the abundance and blessings of God possible for us to enjoy.

It is of note that despite the upbraiding that Paul is going to give to the Galatians because of their straying from the truth, he still takes the time to pronounce this blessing upon them. It is certain that his pronouncement is actually intended as a way of preparing the way for them to receive and accept the truth of his coming words.

Life application: Even if we have to hand out discipline, we can still pronounce a blessing as well. Paul's example is one we should take to heart in such delicate and difficult times.

...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, Galatians 1:4

The opening clause of this verse lays out the tone for the rest of the epistle. It is the very thing which those in Galatia had forgotten or had intentionally set aside. They were given the gospel and then along came Judaizers who were intent on watering it down through a works-based religion. This is contrary to what God has set forth as being pleasing to Him. It was Christ "who gave Himself for our sins." As this is so, then what could be added to that? If Christ has given Himself for our sins, then that is how our sins are atoned for. Adding in works of our own, of any kind, in an attempt to cover our sins is thus contrary to the gospel of Christ.

This is repeated numerous times in the New Testament, but several examples of note are:

"...just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Matthew 20:28

"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32

"For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all..." 1 Timothy 2:6

"...who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works." Titus 2:14

Christ is the only atoning sacrifice for our sins; He is the only One who could ransom us from the world of sin; and He is the only One who has redeemed us to God. When we fall back on the law, which was given to show us our sinful state and to show us how utterly sinful sin is, then we reject the very sacrifice which has redeemed us from that law. It is a self-condemning act. When Jesus said on the cross, "It is finished," He wasn't saying, "It is partially fulfilled and so keep working hard.... you might make it to heaven someday." Rather, He indicated that all was complete and all sin-debt was satisfied through His work.

Everything He did was so "that He might deliver us from this present evil age." Further, it was a voluntary act. He "gave Himself." Therefore, if it was insufficient to save, then it was a horrific waste. When a person jumps on a grenade in order to save his friends, the intent is to fully save them. If he and those he tried to save died, then the death was futile indeed. But if the friends are saved, then the purpose for his death was met. If Christ died on the cross of Calvary to save His people but failed to save them, then what a waste! However, if He did accomplish this as intended, then for us to say, "I still need to do something," is to reject the very thing He did.

The reason for His death was to save us from our sins, and the object of that salvation was "that He might deliver us from this present evil age." If we are in this present evil age even now, then His death must have an effect of saving us *through* the entire age. If not, then He would save us and pull us right out as soon as He saved us. However, we are still here and thus we are to trust that His salvation has accomplished what it was intended to do. If we continue adding works into our life in order to be pleasing to God enough to be saved, then we do not believe that what Christ did was really sufficient to save us in the first place.

Finally, Paul says that this work of the Lord was "according to the will of our God and Father." The Bible's goal, from the very beginning, is to show God's plan of salvation for man. Just after the fall, the Messiah was promised. The coming of Messiah then is a pre-planned course of action to redeem man from his fallen state. If the work of Christ wasn't sufficient to do that, then not only was He a failure, but the God from whom He came was also a failure. If this is so, then He isn't the true God. Further, man is still in his sin and there is no hope of ever being reconciled to God.

Rather, the work of Christ is wholly sufficient to save, in and of itself. Anything added to it as an attempt to reconcile ourselves back to God is to reject the entire plan of God. Either the law is fulfilled or it is not. If it is, then it is set aside. If it is set aside, then Christ's work on our behalf is solely of grace and grace alone.

Life application: Trust in the grace of Christ alone.

...to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen. Galatians 1:5

This doxology, which is affixed to his greeting and blessing, is unique to Paul's epistles and it shows us what is on his mind. He is affixing it here for a specific reason. It is a continued rebuke to the Galatians for their having departed from the truth of the gospel. In Romans 1, he uses a similar line of thought in connection with the negative comments on those who pervert the natural order of things from the truth of God's revelation -

"Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." Romans 1:24, 25

The words which precede this thought were, "Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, 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." This is the revelation of God to us in all spiritual matters; that Jesus Christ came to give Himself for our sins. Because of this, Paul says, "...to whom *be* glory."

There is an article in the Greek before "glory." Therefore, some scholars say it should read, "...to whom *be the* glory." However, the Pulpit Commentary takes it a step further and says, "When the article is added it marks the noun as expressing its notion viewed absolutely, in its entirety or universality: q.d. 'Whatever glory is to be ascribed anywhere, be it ascribed to him.' Thus ἡ δόξα is equivalent to 'all glory.'"

This then is a refutation of the Judaizers who have come in and attempted to reintroduce the law as a requirement for salvation. If this is so, then Christ's fulfilling of the law on our behalf was insufficient to save. Thus, He is not to be ascribed "all glory." Instead, some of the glory belongs to us because we must participate in our salvation. This is refuted by Paul. To God, and to Him alone, belongs the glory.

David understood this when he wrote these words -

"Blessed are You, LORD God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever.
Yours, O LORD, *is* the greatness,
The power and the glory,
The victory and the majesty;
For all *that is* in heaven and in earth *is Yours*;
Yours *is* the kingdom, O LORD,
And You are exalted as head over all." 1 Chronicles 29:10, 11

And this glory, which belongs to God alone, is forever and ever. The Greek is literally, "unto the ages of ages." It is a Hebraism which denotes an infinite amount of time and which is indefinitely multiplied. There is no end to the glory of God. To solidify this, he ends with "Amen," or "so be it." Paul is adamant that

there is no participation by us in our salvation. It is a work of God alone and we can only ascribe to Him that glory... forever.

Life application: If you believe that you must adhere to any point in the law in order to be saved, or to keep being saved, you have been misled. If you teach this point to another, you become a heretic. Don't be a heretic. Teach the truth of God in Christ. He is the fulfillment of the law and only through His work can we be saved.

I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, Galatians 1:6

After his opening blessing, Paul jumps immediately into the meat of the matter. There is no delay or beating around the bush. Rather, his words are direct and are intended to show the immense dissatisfaction that he has with the Galatians. According to Vincent's Word Studies, the words "I marvel" are often used "by Greek orators of surprise as something reprehensible." They are used by Jesus in this same way -

"And He marveled because of their unbelief." Mark 6:6

Next he says, "...that you are turning away." The word for "turning" implies a transfer in the middle of something and carries the specific idea of going over to another party as a deserter. The Galatians had begun to apostatize from the true faith. The tense of the verb shows that it is in the process of occurring. The KJV says "that ye are so soon removed." Thus it misses the sense of the verb which indicates the on-going nature of what is occurring; they are in the process of being deluded.

Continuing with his words, the NKJV says that they are turning away "so soon." The word means "quickly" rather than "after a short time." The Galatians made a sudden change in direction from where they were heading to where they are now

heading. This explains the astonishment of Paul. He had probably heard that things were going along well at some point in the past, and then all of a sudden he hears that they have started down another completely new avenue.

The certain explanation for this is that they have been misled by a new and unsound doctrine. This will be confirmed as the chapter continues, but it is the same thing that happens constantly in churches around the world. Some person comes in with a false message, and because the people don't know the word, they are easily misdirected from the truth of "Him who called you in the grace of Christ."

This is speaking of "God the Father" who is mentioned in verse 4. Therefore, the word "in" should be translated "by." In other words, Christ is the mediate agency by which God's grace is bestowed upon sinners. As Charles Ellicott notes -

"The 'grace of Christ' is His voluntary self-surrender to humiliation and death, from no other prompting than His own love for sinful men."

It is by this work of Christ that the Gospel is brought into the world of fallen man. It is from this precious gospel, which is the pure and undefiled gift of God, that the Galatians had begun to turn to "a different gospel." However, as will be seen in the next verse, this "different gospel" is no gospel at all. There is only one truth in this matter and the Galatians had turned from it.

The work of the Judaizers, who have as yet not been introduced into the epistle, has had a damaging effect on the Galatians. And their false message continues to have the same damaging effect on countless souls today. Galatians is a vital epistle for understanding what the pure and undefiled gospel message is.

Life application: Grace indicates "unmerited favor." If you have to do something to receive grace, then it ain't grace.

...which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. Galatians 1:7

The NKJV wisely departs from the older KJV in their translation of verses 6 and 7. Notice the difference between the two -

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. NKJV

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. KJV

Two entirely different words are translated as "another" by the KJV. The first is *héteros* – *another* (of a *different* kind). This stands in contrast to *állos* ("*another* of the *same* kind"). The KJV confuses this. Should verse 6 be cited alone, which is not an uncommon thing for people to do, there could be a misunderstanding of what Paul is saying. Thankfully, there are other versions one can refer to in order to get a fuller meaning of the intent of what is being said.

His words show us that what was presented to the Galatians by the Judaizers was a "different" gospel which was no gospel at all. He is so adamant against these people who are bringing in their false message that he calls them *hoi tarassontes* - "the troublers." They are especially troublesome and are to be utterly rejected. There is one message of the good news found in Jesus Christ, and that is His fulfilling the law and then annulling it through His sacrifice on Calvary.

Paul notes in Romans 7:2, "For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to *her* husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of *her* husband." In this, he was using a real-life example to make a spiritual point about the law. In his continued explanation he then says in verse

7:6, "But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not *in* the oldness of the letter."

In other words, the gospel is that of grace. Christ fulfilled the law on our behalf and then He died, thus annulling the law (Hebrews 7:18) for all who believe in the sufficiency of His work. This is the gospel message. The Judaizers had come to the Galatians and were proposing a "different gospel" which was based on works of the law. This will be seen as we continue. It is these wicked people who Paul speaks of with the words, "but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ."

The word Paul uses for "pervert" is *metastrephó*. It indicates a complete turning from one thing to another. To understand its sense, read the words of Acts 2:20 which use the same word -

"The sun shall be **turned** into darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD."

The change in the sun is complete, from light to darkness. This is what happens when works of the law are reintroduced into the grace of Christ: something entirely different results; something which can only bring condemnation to those who pursue it.

Life application: Paul lays out, in advance of directly making his charges against the Judaizers, the enormity of the error which has come to Galatia. It is an error which continues on today when any precept of the Law of Moses is reintroduced into the Gospel of grace of Jesus Christ. Paul will use circumcision as the benchmark of what he means concerning reintroducing the law. But the precept stands true for any other precept of the law: "You cannot eat pork." - heresy! "You

must tithe" - heresy! "You must observe the Saturday Sabbath" - heresy! We cannot pick and choose what constitutes grace. We can only trust in the grace that is given through the work of Christ. Trust in Christ and in Him alone for your salvation. After that, if you want to not eat pork, that is fine. If you want to give 10, 20, or 90% of your money to the church, that is fine. If you want to lay around all day on Saturday and do nothing, that is fine too. But if you are doing these things expecting to earn God's favor and bring you salvation, you have fallen from grace.

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. Galatians 1:8

Paul now makes a most direct statement, asking his audience to think the words through carefully and with all of the weight of what they imply bearing over them. "But" is set against the words of the previous verses which said -

"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."

What Paul will write concerning delivering a "different gospel" is exactly what the Judaizers had done. However, their actions will now be placed in comparison to other categories which bear even more weight and authority than they supposedly possessed. This comparison will draw out the enormity of the sin which they bear for their false gospel.

"But even if we" is Paul's way of saying, "If I or any other true apostle." Those who were commissioned by Christ Jesus personally were the ones entrusted with the gospel message. They were the highest authorities in humanity concerning this precious trust which had been delivered to them. This is the first comparison and it is something that would seem unimaginable to occur. And yet, in verse 2:11, something will arise which could almost be considered in line with this impossible-

to-imagine scenario. When it does, Paul will note his actions to correct the situation.

From this human level of authority, Paul next raises the bar by saying, "or an angel from heaven." We might be able to conceive that a man would presume to preach "another gospel," but surely not so awesome an authority as an angel from heaven! And yet, Paul's words echo down through the ages, even to our modern times, as a warning against the tricks of the devil as he sends his demons, masquerading as heavenly angels, in order to pervert the gospel.

The religion of Islam was supposedly given to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel. It is a religion which is contrary to Christianity and is a "different gospel" for sure. Mormonism began by a supposed visit to Joseph Smith by the angel Moroni. Mormonism is likewise contrary to the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Other false teachers such as Ellen G. White of the 7th Day Adventists have claimed heavenly visions and have, in turn, perverted the truth of the true gospel. The list is not a short one and it is to be warred against by those who hold to the truth of the gospel.

And what is it that Paul warns against concerning these false apostles and false heavenly visitors? It is that they will "preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you." There is one gospel message. Jesus Christ has come in the flesh; He was born under the law; He lived out that law perfectly; and He died in fulfillment of that same law. In His death, the Law of Moses was annulled and in its place came a New Covenant. The proof of this gospel is that Christ rose from the dead, prevailing over death.

Paul clearly defines the gospel he preaches in 1 Corinthians 15 -

"Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again

the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶ After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷ After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸ Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time." 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

Christ is the fulfillment of the law and a New Covenant has been established through His shed blood. It is a covenant of grace. No works of any kind are to be added into the gift which He offers. To pervert this gospel is to say that what He did was insufficient for salvation. In essence, it is to say, "I don't trust Christ to fully save me." It is a slap in God's face and it is the greatest of heresy. For such a false message, Paul says to "let him be accursed."

Whether it is an apostle or even an angel from heaven who proclaims any different gospel, the pronouncement is the same. The word "accursed" or *anathema* in Greek means to be "devoted to God." In this case, it is to be taken in a negative way. Such a person is to be devoted to the curse of God as set apart for destruction.

Life application: Today, many people are following the "Hebrew Roots Movement." Although this sounds great because Jesus was a Jew and it's always good to know the background of any issue, they have taken it to dangerous extremes - reinserting the law and mandating that followers of Christ live as He lived - as a Jew under the Law of Moses. This is heresy and it is exactly what Paul argues against. Why would anyone want to go back under the bondage of the law instead of trusting in the grace of Christ? The reason is that they do not trust in the finished work of Christ. This, and any other perversion of the true gospel, is exactly what Paul condemns. Don't get swallowed up in such heresies. The law is fulfilled; we are under grace.