

## INTRODUCTION.

### A. WWW.

1. The Good News of salvation (1Cor. 15:3-4) through faith in Christ is the most important message in the world. But now this message was being attacked, and Paul was out to defend the truth of the Gospel. Some false teachers had invaded the churches of Galatia--churches Paul had founded--and were teaching a different message from that which Paul had taught. [WWW]
2. As you begin to read Paul's letter to the Galatian Christians, you can tell immediately that something is radically wrong, because he does not open his letter with his usual praise to God and prayer for the saints. He has no time! Paul is about to engage in battle for the truth of Gospel and the liberty of the Christian life. False teachers are spreading a false "gospel" which is a mixture of Law and grace, and Paul is not going to stand by and do nothing. [WWW]

### B. JBC.

#### 1. The Country.

- a. Politically it was the Roman province which included Lycaonia, Isauria, and parts of Phrygia and Pisidia.
- b. Geographically it was the center of the Celtic tribes, and in this sense it seems to be used in this epistle and in Acts (1:1; Ac. 13:14; 14:6; 16:6). [JBC]

#### 2. The Celtic People.

They were descended from the Gauls who sacked Rome in the 4th century BC and in the 3rd century BC invaded Asia Minor and northern Greece. They were quick-tempered, impulsive, hospitable, and fickle people. They were quick to receive impressions and equally quick to give them up. They received Paul with enthusiastic joy, and were then suddenly turned from him (4:13-16). [JBC]

#### 3. The Churches of Galatia.

Just how and by whom these churches were established we do not know. The great highway from the East to Europe passed through this region, making it possible for some of those present at Pentecost to have sown the seed of the gospel there. On the second missionary journey Paul visited them (Ac. 16:6) and seems to have been taken sick while passing through and to have preached to them while unable to travel (4:14-15). They gladly received his teaching, and churches seem to have sprung up. Paul also visited them while on the third missionary journey (Ac. 18:23) and instructed and established them in the faith. [JBC]

#### 4. Occasion of the Epistle.

- a. Judaizing teachers had gone among the Galatians, claiming that the Jewish law was binding upon Christians, admitting that Jesus was the Messiah, but claiming that salvation must, nevertheless, be obtained by the works of the Law. They especially urged that all Gentiles be circumcised.
- b. In order to gain their point and turn the Galatians from their belief, they were trying to weaken their confidence in Paul, their spiritual teacher. [JBC]

#### 5. The Purpose of the Epistle.

The purpose of the epistle was to root out the errors of doctrine introduced by the Judaizers and to hold the Galatians to their earlier faith. To do this it was necessary to establish his apostolic authority and the divine origin of his gospel. In fulfilling these purposes he gave us an inspired classic upon the fundamental doctrine of justification by faith and forever settled the disturbing question of the relation of Christians to the Jewish law. [JBC]

#### 6. Author and Date.

It was written by Paul, probably from Corinth in 57AD. [JBC]

C. PP.

1. This reminds us that a great problem to be sorted out in the early church was as to how far a Christian should become a Jew. What about Gentiles who became Christians? Were they also to become Jewish proselytes and be circumcised, and commit themselves to all the requirements of Jewish teaching? Were they expected to fully 'observe the Law', both ceremonial and moral? Many said, 'Yes'. [PP]
2. Paul's reply was swift. The Law, he pointed out, when looked at as a way to God, has in fact done its job in pointing us to Christ. It is like a mirror in which we look to see how dirty we are. It has shown us our sinfulness. Now therefore it has been replaced. The Law is no longer required by us as Christians, except as a means of reminding us of our sinfulness, and as a guide to show us how to live. It is unable to cleanse. [PP]

## THE PERVERSION OF THE GOSPEL (1:1-10).

A. He Explains His Authority (1:1-5).

1. His ministry (1:1-2).

Paul, an apostle (not *sent* from men nor through the agency of 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:

  - a. Paul is an apostle. It is word meaning "one who is sent with a commission."
  - b. It should be noted that Paul was not here making a distinction between himself and the other true apostles in Jerusalem. "For they did not owe their commission to man any more than he did." The truth affirmed here was two-fold: (a) Paul's apostleship was on a full equality with that of the Twelve, and (b) it was genuine, as contrasted with that of the false teachers who were operating among the Galatians. Macknight believed that there is also in view here a denial that Paul had been appointed to the apostleship by the Twelve, as had been the case with Matthias. [JBC]
  - b. But in his ministry Paul had a second basis for authority: he had founded the churches in Galatia. He was not writing to them as a stranger, but as the one who had brought them the message of life in the beginning! This letter reveals Paul's affection for these believers (see 4:12-19). Unfortunately, this affection was not being returned to him.
  - c. When Paul heard that false teachers had begun to capture his converts and lead them astray, he was greatly concerned--and rightly so.
  - d. The view being followed in these studies is that they were the churches of southern Galatia, the ones founded on Paul's first missionary tour. [JBC]
  - e. Sad to say, many of the Galatian Christians had turned away from Paul, their "spiritual father" in the Lord, and were now following legalistic teachers who were mixing OT Law with the Gospel of God's grace. (We call these false teachers "Judaizers" because they were trying to entice Christians back into the Jewish religious system.)
2. His message (1:3-4).

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

  - a. The essential Christian doctrine of Christ's vicarious sacrifice of himself to save people from sin is here emphasized in order to contrast the true source of salvation in Christ with the false premise of the Judaizers which made redemption to depend upon observing forms and ceremonies of the Law of Moses. Paul's stressing this here was for the purpose of "convincing the Galatians that the pardon of sin was not to be obtained by the Levitical atonements, nor by any service prescribed in the Law." [JBC]
  - b. "Liberty in Christ" is the dominant theme of Galatians. (Check the word *bondage* in 2:4; 4:3,9,24-25; 5:1). The Judaizers want to lead the Christians out of the liberty of grace into

the bondage of Law. Paul knew that bondage was not part of the message of the Gospel, for Christ had died to set men free.

3. His motive (1:5).

to whom *be* the glory forevermore. Amen.

Like false teachers today, the Judaizers were not busy winning people to Christ. Rather, they were stealing other men's converts and bragging about their statistics. But Paul's motive was pure and godly; he wanted to glorify Jesus Christ (see 1Cor. 6:19-20; 10:31-33).

B. He Expresses His Anxiety (1:6-7).

I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; 7 which is *really* not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

1. "I am amazed that you are so quickly moving away!" This is the first reason for Paul's anxiety; the Galatians were deserting the grace of God.
2. "The grace of God" is a basic theme in this letter (Gal. 1:3,6,15; 2:9,21; 5:4; 6:18). Grace is simply God's favor to undeserving sinners. The words "grace" and "gift" go together, because salvation is the gift of God through His grace (Eph. 2:8-10). The Galatian believers were not simply "changing religions" or "changing churches" but were actually abandoning the very grace of God! To make matters worse, they were deserting the very God of grace!
3. But they were guilty of another sin, that gave Paul great anxiety; they were perverting the gospel of God. The word translated "pervert" in 1:7 is used only three times in the NT (Ac. 2:20; Gal. 1:7; Jas. 4:9). It means "to turn about, to change into an opposite character." The word could be translated "to reverse." In other words the Judaizers had reversed the Gospel—they had turned it around and taken it back into the Law.
4. Vine stated that the word thus rendered by this verse means "subverting the souls of believers by evil doctrine." The exact characteristics of the evil teaching going on among the Galatians were gleaned from this epistle by David Lipscomb thus:
  - It puts in bondage (Gal. 2:4),
  - Causes entanglement (Gal. 5:1),
  - Could not bring justification (Gal. 2:16),
  - Or freedom (Gal. 5:1);
  - It made Christ of no profit (Gal. 5:2),
  - And it made the death of Christ, which is the very essence of the gospel, a superfluous thing of no account (Gal. 2:21);
  - And in addition to providing no blessing whatever, it puts men under a curse (Gal. 3:10); and all who accepted it fell from grace (Gal. 5:4). [JBC]

C. He Exposes His Adversaries (1:8-10).

But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

1. An angel from heaven...

McGarvey pointed out that the word of Christ was superior to that of angels who had ministered the old covenant, and "The sayings of Jesus were weightier than the words of angels in this very respect." This probably accounts for Paul injecting the thought of angels into this passage. [JBC]

2. Paul did not say, "the gospel I preach," but "the gospel we preach." Dummelow affirmed that the "we," both here and in the following verse, is epistolary; but it seems mandatory to read it as

Paul's conscious intention of including the other apostles as also being preachers of the true gospel. [JBC]

3. The Judaizers are identified by the false gospel that they preached. The test of a man's ministry is not popularity (Mt. 24:11), or miraculous signs and wonders (Mt. 24:23-24), but his faithfulness to the Word of God (see Isa. 8:20; 1Tim. 4; 1Jn. 4:1-6; and note that 2Jn. v5-11 warns us not to encourage those who bring false doctrine.
4. The word Paul uses to condemn the false teachers and false teaching is the word 'anathema' which means "dedicated to destruction."
5. But there is a second characteristic of Paul's adversaries: the false motives that they practiced. Paul was definitely not a man-pleaser. His ministry did not come from man (1:1), nor did his message come from man (1:12). Why, then, should he be afraid of men? Why should he seek to please men? His heart's desire was to please Christ.
6. Paul uses three steps to engage these false teachers in battle:
  - a. His first approach is personal (Ga. 1-2).
  - b. His second approach is doctrinal (Gal. 3-4).
  - c. His final approach is practical (Gal. 5-6).

#### **APPLICATIONS AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.**

- A. Applications:
  1. How does grace and peace (v3) apply to your everyday life.
  2. What does it mean to you that Jesus rescues us from this present evil age?
  3. Why are men/women tempted to add to or distort the gospel of Christ?
- B. Discussion Questions:
  1. By what two things was Paul amazed?
  2. What are the characteristics of a false gospel?
  3. What warning did Paul give about preaching "another gospel"?
  4. What is Paul's point in verse 10.

**II. PAUL DEFENDS HIS MINISTRY (1:11-24).**

- A. The Persecutor (1:11-14).
- B. The Believer (1:15-16b, 24).
  - 1. God did it (1:15a-16a).
  - 2. God did it by grace (1:15b).
  - 3. God did it through Christ (1:16a).
  - 4. God did it for the sake of others (1:16b).
  - 5. God did it for His glory (1:24).
- C. The Preacher (1:16c-23).
  - 1. He went to Arabia (1:17b).
  - 2. He went to Damascus (1:17c).
  - 3. He finally visited Jerusalem (1:18-20).
  - 4. He returned home to Tarsus (1:21-23).

**III. THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM (2:1-10).**

- A. The Private Consultation (2:1-2).
- B. The Public Convocation (2:3-5).
- C. The Personal Confirmation (2:6-10).

**IV. PETER (CEPHAS) OPPOSED BY PAUL (2:11-21).**

- A. Peter's Relapse (2:11-13).
- B. Paul's Rebuke (2:14-21).
  - 1. The unity of the church (2:14).
  - 2. Justification by faith (2:15-16).
  - 3. Freedom from the Law (2:17-18).
  - 4. The very gospel itself (2:19-20).
  - 5. The grace of God (2:21).

**V. FAITH BRINGS RIGHTEOUSNESS (3:1-14).**

- A. The Personal Argument (3:1-5).
  - 1. He saw the Son of God (3:1).
  - 2. He received God's Holy Spirit (3:2-4).
  - 3. They experienced miracles from God the Father (3:5).
- B. The Scriptural Argument (3:6-14).
  - 1. Abraham was saved by faith (3:6-7).
  - 2. This salvation is for the Gentiles (3:8-9).
  - 3. This salvation is by faith, not by Law (3:10-12).
  - 4. This salvation comes through Christ (3:13-14).

**VI. THE INTENT OF THE LAW (3:15-29).**

- A. The Law Cannot Change the Promise (3:15-18).
- B. The Law is Not Greater Than the Promise (3:19-20).
  - 1. The Law was temporary (3:19a).
  - 2. The Law required a mediator (3:19b-20).
- C. The Law is Not Contrary to the Promise (3:21-26).
  - 1. The Law was not given to provide life (3:21).
  - 2. The Law was given to reveal sin (3:19a,22).
  - 3. The Law was given to prepare the way for Christ (3:23-26).

D. The Law Cannot Do What the Promise Can Do (3:27-29).

**VII. SONSHIP IN CHRIST (4:1-20).**

- A. He Explains Their Adoption (4:1-7).
  - 1. What we were: children in bondage (4:1-3).
  - 2. What God did: redeemed us (4:4-5).
  - 3. What we are: sons and heirs (4:6-7).
- B. He Laments Their Regression (4:8-11).
- C. He Seeks Their Affection (4:12-20).

**VIII. BOND AND FREE ALLEGORY (4:21-31).**

- A. The Historical Facts (4:21-23).
- B. The Spiritual Truths (4:24-29).
  - 1. He was born by God's power.
  - 2. He brought joy.
  - 3. He grew and was weaned (Gen. 21:8).
  - 4. He was persecuted (Gen. 21:9).
  - 5. Hagar was Abraham's second wife.
  - 6. Hagar was a slave.
  - 7. Hagar was not meant to bear a child.
  - 8. Hagar gave birth to a slave.
  - 9. Hagar was cast out.
  - 10. Hagar was not married again.
- C. The Practical Blessings (4:30-31).

Dealing with the old nature:

  - 1. We can try to change them.
  - 2. We cast them out.

**IX. FREEDOM IN CHRIST (5:1-15).**

- A. The Slave--You Lose Your Liberty (5:1).
- B. The Debtor--You Lose Your Wealth (5:2-6).
- C. The Runner--You Lose Your Direction (5:7-12).

**X. WALKING BY THE FLESH, WALKING BY THE SPIRIT (5:13-26).**

- A. The Spirit Enables Us to Fulfill the Law of Love (5:13-15).
- B. The Spirit Enables Us to Overcome the Flesh (5:16-21,24).
  - 1. The conflict (5:16-17).
  - 2. The conquest (5:18).
  - 3. The crucifixion (5:19-21,24).
- C. The Spirit Enables Us to Produce Fruit (5:22-23,25-26).

**XI. BEAR ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS (6:1-10).**

- A. Bearing Burdens (6:1-5).
  - 1. A contrast in aim.
  - 2. A contrast in attitude.
- B. Sharing Blessings (6:6-10).

**XII. CLOSING REMARKS, REVIEW OF EPISTLE (6:11-18).**

- A. The Legalist (6:12-13).
  - 1. They are braggarts (6:12a,13b).
  - 2. They are compromisers (6:12b).
  - 3. They are persuaders (6:12a).
  - 4. They are hypocrites (6:13).
- B. Jesus Christ (6:14-16).
  - 1. Paul knew the Person of the cross.
  - 2. Paul knew the power of the cross.
  - 3. Paul knew the purpose of the cross.
- C. The Apostle Paul (6:17-18).

## LESSON ONE

### I. THE PERVERSION OF THE GOSPEL (1:1-10).

- A. He Explains His Authority (1:1-5).
  - 1. His ministry (1:1-2).
  - 2. His message (1:3-4).
  - 3. His motive (1:5).
- B. He Expresses His Anxiety (1:6-7).
- C. He Exposes His Adversaries (1:8-10).

## NEXT LESSON.

|       |    |         |  |
|-------|----|---------|--|
| 09-12 | 02 | 1:11-24 | Paul Defends His Ministry                    |
| 09-19 | 03 | 2:1-10  | The Council at Jerusalem                     |
| 09-26 | 04 | 2:11-21 | Peter (Cephas) Opposed by Paul               |
| 10-03 | 05 | 3:1-14  | Faith Brings Righteousness                   |
| 10-10 |    |         | Gone to Texas, substitute teacher and lesson |
| 10-17 | 06 | 3:15-29 | The Intent of the Law                        |
| 10-24 | 07 | 4:1-20  | Sonship in Christ                            |
| 10-31 | 08 | 4:21-31 | Bond and Free Allegory                       |
| 11-07 | 09 | 5:1-15  | Freedom in Christ                            |

|       |    |         |   |
|-------|----|---------|---|
| 11-14 | 10 | 5:16-26 | Walking by the Flesh; Walking by the Spirit |
| 11-21 | 11 | 6:1-10  | Bear One Another's Burdens                  |
| 11-28 | 12 | 6:11-18 | Closing Remarks; Review of Epistle          |

I. **Personal: Grace and the Gospel (Chapters 1-2).**

- A. Grace declared in Paul's message (1:1-10).
- B. Grace demonstrated in Paul's life (1:11-24).
- C. Grace defended in Paul's ministry (2:1-21).
  - 1. Before the church collectively (2:1-10).
  - 2. Before Peter personally (2:11-21).

II. **Doctrinal: Grace and the Law (Chapters 3-4).**

- A. The personal argument (3:1-5).
- B. The scriptural argument (3:6-14).
- C. The logical argument (3:15-29).
- D. The historical argument (4:1-11).
- E. The sentimental argument (4:12-18).
- F. The allegorical argument (4:19-31).

III. **Practical: Grace and the Christian Life (Chapters 5-6).**

- A. Liberty, not bondage (5:1-12).
- B. The Spirit, not the flesh (5:13-26).
- C. Others, not self (6:1-10).
- D. God's glory, not man's praise (6:11-18).