

## The Opening Salutation

Sermon Delivered on January 16th, 2022  
AM Service

By: Pastor Greg Hocson

### Text:

Galatians 1:1 Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) 2: And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: 3: Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, 4: Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: 5: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

### Introduction

As you all know by now, our theme this year is “**No Other Gospel!**” I will be preaching a series of sermons based on the letter of the apostle Paul to the Galatians. Someone has said, that Galatians is **Paul’s most explosive letter**. Paul was on fire when he wrote this letter. He wrote this letter to **warn the churches in Galatia about the false teachers** known as the Judaizers. These **Judaizers** came and started **preaching a distorted gospel** to the Galatian churches. They insist that in order to be right with God one must be a Jew, meaning obey the Mosaic law.

As I have said last Sunday, after 2000 years, the “**Judaizers**” are **still alive and well and active in our day**. There are those in our day who seek to mix grace with law; faith with works. **There are those who insist that salvation can be earned by good works and obedience to the Law**. This is why I personally believe that this is a very important and appropriate letter for us to study because in this letter **Paul gives us a clear and powerful declaration and defense of the true gospel** and its implications. It is critically important for us to know and understand what the true Biblical Gospel is, for two reasons, namely **for our salvation and for others’ salvation**. The Bible says that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. We must believe the true Biblical Gospel, because **a different gospel believed and appropriated will lead to the eternal damnation** of the souls of men.

Those of us who believe and love the gospel of Jesus Christ, **must be involved and committed in maintaining the purity of the gospel** that we believe and preach. If our church is to be blessed by God and have a positive impact in our community, **we, all of us, not just the pastor and few leaders, we all should have a clear grasp** of the gospel and should **be committed in defending and declaring the gospel**.

This morning I want us to look at the opening salutation of Paul in this letter. Letters in the 1st century, the greetings included three parts, namely, **the name of sender**, then **the name of recipient**, and then **the main theme of the letter**. Not like letters today, in Paul’s days, they

begin their letters by stating **who the letter was from**, then **to whom the letter was written**, and then **what the letter is about**. That's what we read in verses one to five.

Galatians 1:1 Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) 2: And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: 3: Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, 4: Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: 5: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

So, this morning, consider with me first, the **Author (v1)**, the **Addressee (v2)**, and the **Address (Sermon, Discourse) (vv3-5)**.

### **I – The Author**

Galatians 1:1 Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)

Without a doubt, Paul is the author of this epistle. At the outset, Paul's gets to the point. He identifies himself to be an apostle. He wastes no time in defending his apostleship. He does this because his apostleship was being challenged. If you remember, the Judaizers insisted that Paul was not a true apostle. They undermined his authority. They claimed that he was not one of the original Twelve.

So, in this letter, Paul defends his apostleship, and the reason why that is important is because he delivered the content of the gospel. Paul could not remain silent. **He could not allow the gospel to be corrupted and the churches to be weakened**. And so, Paul sat down and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote out a response, which we call the book of Galatians.

**Now what is an apostle?** The Greek word for apostle (apostello) comes from a verb that means "to send." Therefore, an apostle is "a person sent by another, a messenger, an envoy." An apostle is one sent forth. One chosen and sent with a special commission as the fully authorized representative of the sender.

One of the qualifications of an apostle is that he had to be an **eyewitness of the resurrection** or had to see Jesus alive after His resurrection.

Acts 1:22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, **must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection**. 23: And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 24: And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, 25: **That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship**, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. 26: And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

1 Corinthians 9:1 Am I not an apostle? am I not free? **have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?** are not ye my work in the Lord?

Before he reminds the Galatians what the gospel is, Paul wanted to show that he is an apostle and that he had received his call to the apostleship, not from man, but from God.

Galatians 1:1 Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)

Paul opens the letter with a strong claim for apostolic authority. His apostleship is “not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father.” Just like the other apostles, Paul had received his commission, “not of men” — not from any human source or “neither by man” — not through any human agency, appointment or commission, “but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father” — directly from God and Christ. He was **not a self-appointed and self-proclaimed apostle**, he was **directly called by Jesus Christ and God the Father**. Paul says that his apostleship is supernatural and of divine origin. It is through the agency, through the choice and accomplishment of God the Father and Son working together.

The fact that Paul was an apostle meant that **his call and his teaching about Jesus Christ did not come from his own imagination or ambitions**. His gospel was not a human invention. Rather, his gospel was revealed to him by none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

Galatians 1:1 Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)

Paul mentions the resurrection here because on the Damascus road, **it was the resurrected Christ who called him to be an apostle**. Before he became an apostle, Paul was an enemy of the church. He hated and persecuted the Christians. But in the book of Acts, we read about his dramatic and sudden conversion and it was all because of his **direct encounter with the risen and glorified Christ**. Paul insists that this is one of the requirements to be an Apostle.

1 Corinthians 9:1 Am I not an apostle? am I not free? **have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?**

Galatians 1:2 **And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:**

Paul, here, mentions all the other brethren who are with him. Why? Because he wanted to make them understand that He is not writing this just on his own. The Christians who are with me, agree with me. The gospel he believes and preaches is the same gospel that other Christian with him also believe and preach. This is not just his private opinion.

## II – The Addressee

Galatians 1:2 **And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:**

It was written to the believers in the churches in Galatia. He is not writing just to one church. He is writing to several churches — “**churches of Galatia**.” This is the only letter that Paul wrote that is addressed to a group of churches rather than to one individual person or to one particular church.

The word church is used in two ways in the New Testament. One use of the word church includes the entire body of believers who have trusted Christ as Saviour. The other use of the

word church refers to local assemblies, which is how Paul uses the word here. There were churches, or local assemblies, in many parts of Galatia. The churches of Galatia included the churches in the cities of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, all of which Paul himself founded, as described in [Acts 13](#) and [14](#). On his first missionary journey, Paul with his partner in the ministry Barnabas, preached the gospel and established local churches in Galatia. He taught the new believers the basics of the Christian faith, appointed leaders, and then moved on to the next town to repeat the process.

The region of Galatia was located in the central portion of **modern-day Turkey**. It was a Gentile region, which meant that these churches were **predominantly Gentile, not Jewish**. That point will become very important as we seek to understand what Paul wrote.

Paul says “**churches**”. These Judaizers had not only infiltrated one church but many churches in the region of Galatia. Paul is addressing **a problem that was wide-spread**. Sometimes, false-doctrine spreads like **wildfire**; and in this case, it could have terribly distorted the purity of the faith while it was still in the cradle! How thankful we should be that God gave us the Book of Galatians!

### **III – The Address** (Message, Discourse, Speech)

[Galatians 1:3](#) *Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,*

Paul went straight to heart of the issue. At the beginning he states the main theme of his letter, and that theme is **GRACE!** Salvation is by grace and not by works. Salvation does not depend upon observing forms, rituals, and ceremonies of the Law of Moses. **Salvation is in the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

[Galatians 1:3](#) *Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, 4: Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:*

**Nothing that we can do, nothing that we have, nothing that others can do for us can remove our sins**, it is only the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God who gave Himself for our sins. If our sins could be removed by our own efforts, what need was there for the Son of God to be given for us? Since Christ was given for our sins it clearly implies that they cannot be put away by our own efforts.

[Who gave himself for our sins...](#)

Jesus gave His life for our sins, just as God our Father planned, in order to rescue us from this evil world in which we live. **What did He give?** Not gold, nor silver, nor lambs and goats, but Himself. **What for?** Not for a crown, or a kingdom, or our goodness, but for our sins. **What is Christ getting in exchange for His life?** Sinners like us.

*Amazing love! How can it be,  
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?*

The apostle Paul had been clear from the very beginning that the message of the gospel. The gospel centers in a Person and Work of Jesus Christ. He voluntarily and willingly and lovingly gave Himself for our sake and for our salvation. Such love for sinners! Such grace!

### **Closing Thoughts**

Max Anders writes that *“Grace and peace summarize Paul’s gospel of salvation. Grace, God’s unmerited favor, is the source of salvation. When a person believes in Jesus Christ, he or she receives salvation and peace with God, others, and self. Thus, grace leads to peace.”*

Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins. There is nothing that we can add to the value of His sacrifice. Nothing! How wonderful and glorious that is!

*Jesus paid it all,  
All to him I owe  
Sin had left a crimson stain  
He washed it white as snow!*

To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**AMEN!**