

**THE LETTER TO THE GALATIANS:
KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED BY THE APOSTLE PAUL
(Emphasis: How to Change to Be More Christ-like and Christ-centered)
Equipping Hour at Saving Grace Bible Church, Osprey, FL
(Lesson 2: 5/13/2018)**

INTRODUCTION

- Last Sunday in Lesson 1 we addressed that the letter highlights the importance of discerning truth regarding salvation and sanctification, are relevant for all believers in their walk, This includes equipping to reach the lost for Christ, as well as discipling those in Christ so they may be complete/mature in Him.
- I further encouraged you to read the letter once daily, especially Galatians Chapter 1.

REVIEW

In Lesson 1, we covered: a) The Purpose of Our Study; b) A General Introduction to the Letter highlighting the most pressing controversy in the early church; and c) The Historical Background..

POINTS OF EMPHASIS: LESSON 2 (TDOAY'S LESSON)

OVERVIEW: Galatians 1

Paul begins his letter to the Galatians in a manner different from all his other canonical epistles: although there is a short greeting (1:1-5), notice there is no thanksgiving to God for the Galatians. Instead, what follows is a denunciation of the Galatians for having deserted the grace of Christ and following after "another" false gospel (1:6-10) taught by false teachers, the Judaizers. Beginning in 1:11 (through 2:21), Paul defends his apostleship in two ways:

1. His apostleship was received by revelation (1:11-12). Thus, its source was divine, not human.
2. His apostleship was independent of the Jerusalem apostles (1:13–2:21), stressing its divine roots. He elaborates on this point by taking pains to show that he never even consulted with any other apostles in the first three years after his conversion (1:13-17). When he first visited Jerusalem, the visit was brief and only included time spent with Peter (1:18-24).

OUTLINE

- A. Paul Greet the Galatian Churches (Galatians 1:1-5)
- B. Paul Rebukes the Galatian Believers and the Judaizers (Galatians 1:6-10)
- C. Paul Proves the Divine Origin of the Gospel He Preached (1:11-24)

A. PAUL GREET THE GALATIAN CHURCHES (Galatians 1:1-5)

- In his greeting, Paul expands his official title into a statement of his direct commission from God, thus meeting at once the attack of his opponents against his apostolic authority; and by dwelling on the work of redemption in connection with the name of Christ, he protests against their doctrinal errors (1:1–5).
- He referred to himself as an apostle, similar to other letters.
- As an apostle, he had seen the Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 9:1). Apostle -- from two Greek words -- means "one who is sent with a commission." Paul is clear that his apostleship and he distinguishes himself from the false apostles who did not derive their commissions from God. .

- Here Jesus Christ is both the agent and the sources of His apostleship. The addition of the words God the Father to the name Jesus Christ, shows that Paul was commissioned in humiliation the resurrected

and glorified Christ.

- God's grace is directly connected to the gospel message of truth (Titus 2:11-12). Peace with God would come to the Galatians through their obedience to His will. When one is forgiven of his sins, he is in fellowship with God and thereby in peace with Him (I John 1:5-6). Grace and peace came to the Galatians only through the Savior's sacrifice on the cross for the remission of our sins (I Peter 2:24; 3:18). Blood would be the only means whereby men could be saved from sin (Hebrews 9:22). Christ's blood God's will is that all would be delivered from the bondage of sin (II Peter 3:9).

- That He might deliver us from this present evil world. Deliver is translated to pluck out, to draw out, to rescue, or to deliver. The word strikes the keynote of the letter. The gospel is a rescue, an emancipation from a state of bondage. The word here denotes, not a removal from, but a rescue from the power of the ethical characteristics of the present evil age. Evil is pernicious, which works mischief or destruction.

- Paul broke out in a doxology of praise to Jehovah God when considering the salvation that is available through Christ. Paul's objective in this epistle: Acts 4:12.

B. PAUL REBUKES THE GALATIAN BELIEVERS AND THE JUDAIZERS (1:6-10).

- Paul quickly addressed the reason he was writing the letter: Galatians had fallen for another teaching. One writer coined, "Bad News about the Good News." To "marvel" is to "be astonished, to look on with wonder and amazement. Paul was not marveling over the Galatians' faith but rather expressing amazement and shock that they were so "quickly" turning away from the teachings of Christ that he had established them in (cf. Acts 14:21-22). It conveys that Paul expected better from these believers.

- The word for desertion or revolt was frequently used to point out a change in religion, philosophy, or morals. The present tense indicates that when Paul wrote, the defection of the Galatians was yet only in progress. Had he used the perfect tense, it would have indicated that the Galatians had actually and finally turned against grace and had come to a settled attitude in the matter.

- So soon or quickly is used also in I Timothy 5:22 where Timothy is warned against "rashly, quickly," and here it speaks here of the rapidity with which the Galatians were in the process of turning away (and had not fully turned away) from Paul and his teaching of grace, to the requirements of the Mosaic Law.

- From him who called you into the grace of Christ. The One who called the Galatians was God. Called means to call, select, or choose a person for a definite purpose.

- For another or different gospel; which is not another. Paul uses two Greek words, both of which mean another, but which have a further distinct meaning: heteros, (a different kind); allos (of the same kind). When Paul speaks of the Galatians turning to a heteros gospel -- false in its doctrine.

The gospel message calls and "he that called you in the grace of Christ" can be none other than the Lord.

- Paul told the Thessalonian brethren that it was God that called them "through our gospel" (II Thess. 2:14).

Q: What was the cause of the Galatians' shift in faith? There were some (Judaizers) who had "troubled" the Galatians by "perverting or distorting the gospel of Christ." To "trouble" means "to trouble the mind, confound, agitate, disturb, disquiet... to cause mental confusion." Note that teaching that contradicts the truth 'troubles the mind and causes confusion.'

- The Judaizers spoke troubling words, but also "perverted," "distorted," "altered" the gospel of Christ.

- Those who taught a different gospel were to be viewed as an "anathema" i.e., "curse; anything devoted to

evil.” They were cursed because the doctrine brought a curse to those yielding to it, which caused destruction. See Jeremiah 23:32

- Note that Paul stated that even if “an angel from heaven, should preach to you any gospel other than that which we preached to you...” The standard is set for divine inspiration, and the separation must be identified by the saint so that he is not troubled and is not removed from truth.

C. PAUL PROVES THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE GOSPEL HE PREACHED (1:11-24)

- When Paul and Barnabas traveled to Galatia on their first missionary journey in the mid-AD 40s, the message they preached was confirmed as truth by the miracles they performed. The consequence of preaching a divine message was that four churches were established. Paul assured the Galatians that his preaching was “not according to man.” Paul explained by saying that it was not “received from man” and neither was he “taught” the gospel message of salvation.

- Paul revealed the source of the message he preached to the Galatians; through the revelation of Jesus Christ. The word “revelation” means “to uncover” or to reveal... to be set forth, announced.”

- The gospel message was literally “announced” to Paul by Jesus Christ (this is a definition of divine revelation given by inspiration to the prophets and apostles).

- Ezekiel 2:1-2) also illustrated what it meant to speak by divine revelation as opposed to speaking one’s mind or what another man taught. Revelation occurred the moment the Holy Spirit entered into Ezekiel and delivered to him words. See also II Peter 1:21. Divine revelation is complete, and therefore there is no need or validity to one who would lay claims to speaking new revelations (cf. I Cor. 13:9ff; Jude 3).

-Note the contrast Paul makes between the “Judaism faith” and the “church of God.” Paul preached a distinct message. That which he once defended is in contrast to that which he persecuted (vs. 13ff).

- The “Jewish faith would include the law and the “traditions of my fathers.” The word “traditions” means things handed down. The Pharisees accepted a separate teaching that was comprised of oral laws (not to be confused with the Law of Moses). These traditions of the fathers originated in the minds of men and not God (cf. Matt. 15:2; Mk. 7:3-5).

- Paul (when Saul of Tarsus) had made greater progress in these areas than most of the men his own age due mostly his being “more exceedingly zealous” to learn (cf. Phil. 3:4-6).

- The good pleasure of God” indicates the sovereign choice of God. It was God’s choice to separate Paul from birth to be an apostle of Jesus Christ. The route Paul took to get to the point of an apostle took nothing away from God’s choice and sovereignty. Interestingly, God chose both Jeremiah and John the Baptist in the same manner (cf. Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:8-38).

- At the time of God’s choosing, He “called me (Paul) through his grace.” This indicates Paul being called by the gospel message to become a Christian, and his call to be an apostle. Paul’s objective, however, is not under question. Paul was called of God to “preach him among the Gentiles.” Paul had a specific objective and that was to go to the lost Gentiles and preach to them (cf. Acts 26:16-18).

- Note that Paul obeyed the Lord’s request (cf. Acts 26:19). Paul, per verse 16, did not have to seek the counsel of any man after this incident. To “consult” (prosanatithemi) = “to put one’s self in free communication with, to confer with, upon, to propound as a matter of consideration.” Flesh and blood is in contrast to the divine instructions Paul had received. He was told to preach to the Gentiles, and this he

did rather than going to check with others (even other apostles). He needed the approval of no man because God Himself had given the instructions.

- After Paul obeyed the gospel (Ananias baptized him; Acts 9:17-19), he began immediately to preach that Jesus was the Son of God in the synagogues of Damascus (Acts 9:20-22).

- The Jews did not like to hear the things Paul was preaching and so made a plot to kill him (Acts 9:23-25).

- The Letter to the churches in Galatia gives us details as to Paul's travels from Damascus. Paul traveled to Arabia (no doubt to preach the gospel and escape the snares that had been set for him in Damascus).

- Please recall the purpose of such writing to the Galatian churches. They were leaning toward being removed from the one true faith by another false gospel, and Paul was explaining that there was no other true teaching than that of Christ. That which he preached to the Galatians was of divine origin and no other teachings could save them.

- Three years were spent in and around Damascus and Arabia. After these years, Paul traveled back to Jerusalem and visited Cephas (Peter) (Acts 9:26ff). Note that three years had passed, and Paul had been preaching the divine gospel message without the help or aid of any other apostles in Jerusalem.

- Here we find that Paul had not gone down to Jerusalem to learn the gospel but rather to "visit Cephas." The word "visit" translated "to inquire about one, to narrate what one has learned." Apparently, Paul simply wanted to get to know Peter because he was a fellow apostle of Jesus Christ. The only thing we are told in Acts of this part of Paul's life is that he tried to join himself to the disciples in Jerusalem and many were fearful of him because of his previous reputation of persecuting Christians (cf. Acts 9:26-30; 22:17-21).

- Paul affirmed that his trip to Jerusalem three years after he obeyed the gospel and preaching the forgiveness of sins through Christ was no lie. He received his message from the Lord and not any man.

- Paul left Jerusalem due to threats against his life (Acts 9:29-30). Acts 9 reveals Paul's travels to Tarsus, and this coincides with the above mentioned trip to Syria and Cilicia. Note that Paul's work was independent of the other apostles. He did not need them to tutor him or teach him how to be an apostle.

- And they glorified God in me. The verb presents continuous action, literally, they kept on glorifying. It designates that which constitutes the ground or basis of an action. This meaning comes from that use of the word which denotes the sphere within which the action takes place. Paul means that his example was the cause of the Judaeen churches glorifying God.

TAKE AWAYS FROM TODAY'S LESSON:

So, what are some practical truths for you to apply as a result of this lesson:

1. Be confident in Christ's sacrifice (via God's grace) for your sins as the source of your salvation; works are a result or evidence of your salvation.
2. Be aware that when you proclaim God's truth, others will oppose you but are ultimately attacking Jesus.
3. Be assured that there are always opponents to hearing God's truth especially the message and means of salvation in Christ (John 14:6), but proclaim it in love.
4. When you rebuke other professed believers for their sins, apply Gal. 6:1-5.
5. Be cognizant that your ministry should always result in glorifying God.