

Galatians 1: Paul's Defence of the Gospel of Christ

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Key phrase of the epistle - "*the truth of the gospel*" (ch2v5,14)

Romans – *the doctrine of the gospel*

Galatians – *the defence of the gospel*

Judaizers were seeking to "*pervert the gospel of Christ*" (ch1v7) by demanding circumcision, law keeping & man's works in addition to Christ (see also Acts 15vs1,5).

Ch1-2: Justification by faith defended (personal / apostolic argument)

Ch3-4: Justification by faith defined (scriptural / doctrinal argument)

Ch5-6: Justification by faith applied (moral / practical argument)

Ch1v1-5: Paul's apostolic authority affirmed by divine appointment

Ch1v6-10: Paul's apostolic authority asserted in relation to the false teachers

Ch1v11-24: Paul's apostolic authority approved by divine revelation to the apostle

Ch2v1-16: Paul's apostolic authority acknowledged by the other apostles

v1: Paul's Apostleship

"Paul, an apostle, (not of [from, Gk apo] men, neither by [through, Gk dia] man, but by [through, Gk dia] Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead;)"

Paul establishes his apostolic authority; the source & agency of his apostleship was totally independent of men altogether, but was by divine appointment, linked with the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul was an apostle of Christ, a witness of Christ's resurrection (1st Cor 15), he had seen the risen Lord Jesus on the occasion of his conversion on the Damascus Road, when he was ordained to apostleship, and sent forth directly by the risen & exalted Christ in heaven (see also Acts 26v16-18).

So Paul is defending the truth of the gospel with all the authority of his apostleship & divine revelation (v12). All NT apostolic writings have equal authority to that of Christ who commissioned them (see John 13v20), and their teaching is of foundational importance for the Church age (see Acts 2v41, Eph 2v20).

v2: Paul's Associates

The apostle was in fellowship with "*all the brethren which are with me*" in the defense of gospel truth.

Paul is writing "*unto the churches of Galatia*", those local churches in the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia, which Paul & Barnabus had established in his 1st missionary journey (Acts 13-14), places such as Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, and possibly Antioch in Pisidia (modern day Turkey).

v3: Paul's Salutation

Paul gives his customary salutation, but without specific thanksgivings or prayers, "*Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ*".

It is only the delivering & liberating power of the gospel in a believer's life that brings the enjoyment of such blessings, to know by experience of God's rich grace, and of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

v4: The Death of Christ & The Believer's Deliverance

1. The substitutionary sin-atonement death of our Saviour, "**Who gave Himself for our sins**".
2. Our deliverance from this present evil age, "**that He might deliver us from this present evil world**".
3. The sovereign will & purpose of our God to bless us, "**according to the will of God and our Father**".

Galatians 1v4, He "**gave Himself for our sins**" sacrificially, as a sacrifice for our sins.

Galatians 2v20, "**the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me**" personally, for Paul individually.

Ephesians 5v2, "**Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us**" fragrantly; to God His sacrifice was "**an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour**".

Ephesians 5v25, "**Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it**" nuptially, giving Himself for His bride the Church collectively.

1st Timothy 2v6, "**Who gave Himself a ransom for all**" provisionally, on behalf of all of humanity.

Titus 2v14, "**Who gave Himself for us**" purposefully, "**that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works**".

The Cross of Christ in Galatians

Ch2v20 – "**I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me**". The cross & the end of self, self must be judged, self must be displaced by Christ.

Ch3v1 – "**Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?**" The cross & the end of disobedience, wrong doctrine must be judged, error must be displaced by the pure truth of the gospel.

Ch3v13 – "**Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree**". The cross & the end of the curse, Christ bore the curse of a broken law for us, at the cross sin was judged, and thus the law has been displaced by the pure grace of God.

Ch5v24 – "**they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections & lusts**". The cross & the end of the flesh, the flesh has been judged, the works of the flesh must be displaced by the fruit of the Spirit.

Ch6v14 – "**the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world**". The cross & the end of my relationship with the world, the world must be judged, the world must be displaced by the things that are in Christ Jesus.

Ch1v4 – "**Who gave Himself for our sins**". In Christ's death & the judgment of our sins in Christ our Substitute, we see the end of our condemnation as sinners, and the basis for the forgiveness of our sins.

The truth of ch1v4 would be a complete rebuttal to the false teachers who were saying that the death of Christ alone was not enough, and that it must be Christ + the law, Christ + circumcision.

The Father's will, in the death of His Son, was our deliverance; "**to deliver us from this present evil world**", to completely dissociate us from this present evil & ungodly age, and all its corrupting principles & practices. There is spiritual happiness & blessing for the believer who knows of this separation of faith.

v5: Paul's Ascription of Praise

"**To whom be glory for ever & ever. Amen**", as all the work in salvation is God's alone, and all of His grace.