

Exegetical Notes – Galatians 1:1-10

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Galatians 1:1-10

Verses 1-5

¹ Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— ² and all the brothers and sisters with me,

To the churches in Galatia:

³ Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen

- The sender of the letter to the Galatians is the Apostle Paul and all those who are present with him at the time of the writing of the letter, both male and female.
- In the parenthetical remark which follows his name, Paul clearly says that he was sent by Jesus Christ and God the Father and not by men. We know that some men questioned Paul's right to claim the office of Apostle because he had not been with Jesus during the time of Jesus' earthly ministry. Apparently, some of these people were in Galatia. Paul makes this remark to repudiate their argument. He claims to be an Apostle appointed by God himself. This remark sets a strange tone for the letter from the beginning of the letter. There is something adversarial about the beginning of this letter.
- The letter is sent to the Church in Galatia. This church had been founded by Paul. He was its founding Pastor.
- Verses 3-5 are the traditional beginning of a Pauline letter. He wishes the Galatians the peace of God. He reminds them that they live to give glory to God. He reminds them that they have been rescued by the grace of God. Salvation by grace, as opposed to works, will become the theme of this letter.

Verses 6-7

⁶ I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁷ which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.

- Paul quickly gets to the point. Some people have convinced the Galatians to abandon the one who called them to live “in the grace of Christ.” Paul is the one they have abandoned. Paul preached that salvation was a free gift from God. It was given as an act of God’s grace, not because it was deserved or earned but because God so loved us. Salvation is received by faith alone. Those who confess with their lips that Jesus is Lord and believe that He was raised from the dead are saved by God’s grace. SALVATION IS A GIFT OF GOD!
- Paul is “astonished” that the Galatians had turned from the doctrine of grace so quickly and had received as correct doctrine a “different gospel” than the one he preached.
- It is the result of some people who have been teaching the Galatians a false doctrine.

Verses 8-9

⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God’s curse! ⁹ As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God’s curse!

- While Paul is astonished at the Galatians’ behavior, he is clearly angry with the ones who are teaching them incorrectly. He calls down God’s curse upon these false teachers twice in these verses!
- False teachers are not to be tolerated and false doctrine is harmful to the Church.

Verse 10

¹⁰ Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

- It seems that the false teachers were saying that Paul made salvation so easy, claiming that it was a free gift of God, in order to win personal favor

with those to whom he preached. He is asking how that reconciles with his harsh curse upon the false teachers. He is pointing out that “man’s empty praise” is not what he seeks.

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