

## Only One Gospel

Galatians 1:1-10

Galatians 1:1 Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through 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: 3 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen. 6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, 7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. 10 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ. (NKJ)

In Galatians 1:1-10, Paul says that he is an apostle. And Paul notes that his apostleship came “not from men nor through men, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead” (v. 1).

The word *apostle* means “one who is sent,” and in the Bible *apostle* specifically refers to a God-ordained messenger who had seen the resurrected Christ.

The apostle Paul, along with the other Christian brethren who were with him, wrote to the churches of Galatia, seeking to warn them of false gospels that were being preached in their midst.

In verses 3-5, Paul offers a greeting to the Galatian churches, which includes a summary of the Gospel and a benediction (blessing) to God. “Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 3). Paul’s Gospel is a Gospel of true grace and a Gospel of true peace far different from the *hollow* grace and peace the world has to offer.

Who is the Lord Jesus Christ? Verse 4 tells us that He is the one “who gave Himself for our sins.”

What was Jesus’ purpose in dying for our sins? He died so “that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.”

Paul then offers up a benediction (blessing) to God: “to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

So the true Gospel of grace and peace speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ who came to save or “deliver” His children from sin and “this present evil age,” which

is in bondage to sin and the devil. Any other gospel falls short and should not be considered “good news.”

The Church of the new covenant had just begun. The apostle Paul was still alive here on Earth. And what had happened? The churches were already departing from the truth and being led astray by false teachers preaching false gospels.

In Galatians 1:6-9, Paul writes the Galatians: “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”

Shockingly, the Galatians were already “turning away” from the truth of God and departing from God-centered Christianity. They were exchanging their Christian liberty for bondage. They were exchanging the grace of Christ for a different gospel. However, Paul says there really is no other gospel; there is no other good news. Anything other than the Gospel revealed by God in Scripture is a false gospel.

Galatians as well as church history testify to the fact that since the beginning of the Church, false teachers, false pastors, false elders, and false evangelists have been “perverting the gospel of Christ.”

What does God think of this? Paul says in verse 8, “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. “Let him be accursed” means “let him be anathema, eternally condemned to hell, subject to the eternal curse of God.” God takes the purity of His gospel very seriously. In fact, it is such a big deal that Paul repeats himself for emphasis.

Verse 9: “As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”

For some, Paul’s sermon to the Galatians is not positive and encouraging enough. Some Christians today shy away from anything that seems negative or that might spark conflict or offend someone. But the apostle Paul wasn’t concerned about what criticism he might receive for his bold, confrontational letter to the Galatians.

For, as he explains in Galatians 1:10: “For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.”

Paul is a bondservant of Christ. He serves Christ above all and lives for Him. His sole concern is that he pleases God. He doesn't want to be a man-pleaser but a God-pleaser. So he says the Truth as God has revealed it and holds nothing back from us. All that matters to Paul is obedience and faithfulness to His master.

So, we, too, should have the same zeal for the Truth. We must beware of those who add to or subtract from God's Word. We must beware of those who twist the Gospel or mix in a little error or try to make it less offensive or more appealing to the world.

What is the one, true Gospel of Christ?

Paul tells us succinctly in Galatians 2:16: "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified" (NKJ).

**Justification by faith alone.** It is what John Calvin called "the main hinge on which religion turns." It is what Martin Luther called "the doctrine by which the church stands or falls."

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By faith alone, our sins are imputed or reckoned or transferred to Christ upon the cross and His perfect righteousness (gained by living a perfect life without sin) is transferred to our account. When we place our faith in Christ's perfect works alone, God imputes Christ's righteousness to us, He clothes us with His robe of righteousness and declares us to be "not guilty."

The Gospel teaches that we are sinners, spiritually dead on account of our trespasses and sins and without hope, except for God's gracious intervention. As a result of His sovereign mercy and grace, God became a man in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus, who was both God and man, lived a perfect life, but was unjustly put to death by crucifixion. Yet, the grave had no power over Him, for after three days He was physically and spiritually raised from the dead, ascended up into heaven, and is now seated at God's right hand, as King of kings and Lord of lords. And He shall come again!

When we place our faith in Him and in His works that He did on behalf of His chosen people, Christ saves us, He redeems us, He makes us a new creation.

The Protestant Reformation officially began on October 31, 1517. On that day,

Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenburg, Germany, and began a revolution that would soon transform the Western world.

**“The just shall live by faith,” said Luther, said Paul, said Habakkuk, said God.**

**Faith alone, grace alone, Christ alone, Scripture alone, to the glory of God alone.**

These 5 “solas” of the Reformation gave birth to the Lutherans, the Baptists, the Methodists, the Anglicans, the Puritans, and the Presbyterian and Reformed churches. And that Reformed heritage, although gradually extinguished to a lesser or greater extent in nearly every denomination, yet remains in many Bible-believing churches today. At the same time, the Biblical Gospel is under attack more today than at any time since the Reformation.

Today, sadly, far too many churches in our land have exchanged the pure Gospel for a counterfeit gospel—a social gospel, a man-centered, feel-good, self-esteem gospel, or a legalistic gospel.

The true Gospel is centered around God and His grace. It is centered around a sovereign God who desires true worshippers who will worship Him in spirit and Truth. And it calls us to humble ourselves, to deny ourselves, to take up our cross, and to follow Him. It calls us to shatter our self-esteem, to renounce our love of self, and to esteem Christ above all else.

The apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 2:8-10: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

Our salvation, from first to last, is the gift of God, graciously given to us by God’s grace. It is not of us; it comes from God. He must act first to regenerate us, to give us the new birth by His Spirit, to raise the spiritually dead and give us new life. When the Holy Spirit regenerates us, He makes us willing and able to believe and to do the good works He re-created us to do.

Are you trusting in Jesus Christ by faith alone? If not, God is calling you to confess your sin and to turn to Him by faith alone. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, bow down before Him humbly, and follow He who is Lord of heaven and earth.

There is only one, true Gospel. Be on the lookout for any who preach a counterfeit gospel, another gospel, which is no gospel, no good news, at all.