

The Baptist Examiner

A nation-wide, independent paper, standing foursquare for the distinguishing doctrines of Baptists, and shunning not to declare all the counsel of God.

"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20).

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Galatians And Its Message

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(Chapter One)

Vs. 1-9

The apostle Paul is the author of this book (Gal. 1:1). According to reliable historians it was written somewhere between A.D. 55 and 59. The theme of this epistle is "Grace." The object Paul had in writing it was to meet the false teaching which had stealthily crept into these churches (Gal. 1:6, 7). The whole book is keenly interesting in its practical application to modern times and teachings. We come at once to a verse by verse consideration of this epistle.

I. ITS INTRODUCTION (Verses 1-10).

1. Paul first sets forth the proofs of his right to speak with authority.

"Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia." In this section of his introduction to this book, Paul sets forth several facts which were very dear to him, and should be held dear by every other child of God.

(1) He calls himself an apostle.

An apostle is one who is sent. He may be sent by men (2 Cor. 11:13). So Paul declares that he is a sent man, a man with a message. That is the meaning of an apostle.

(2) He makes it clear that men had nothing to do with the filling of the office. The task of making preachers does not belong to men! This is some shot against the Campbellite position on the call to the ministry. Campbellism denies the Divine call to the ministry, and the personal work of the Holy Spirit!

(3) He affirms a clear call from God to this work.

Campbellites say that the work of the ministry is merely a matter of human choice. That is a lie! And the man who has no more reason than that for being in the ministry is not fit to be in the ministry! Paul says that his call came "by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead." That is the only kind of man who is fit to be in the work of the gospel ministry. (See 1 Cor. 7:17; Gal. 1:15; Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11).

(4) He avows authority in his apostleship.

Paul claims authority in his office on the grounds that he was called to it by Jesus Christ whom God "raised from the dead." He argues that the resurrection of Jesus establishes the authority of Jesus (Rom. 1:4). So Paul could speak with authority because of the very nature of his call. It was from "Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead." This call is more fully set forth in Acts 26:15-18.

(5) He establishes his apostleship by giving witnesses to it.

"And all the brethren which are with me." These brethren could gladly testify that Paul was an apostle, and that what he had to say received the heartiest "amen" from them. We see, in all these facts, how careful he was that the folks to whom he ministered might have all the proofs possible of his apostleship (2 Cor. 12:12).

2.....He next manifests the spirit in which he speaks of them.

In verses 3-5 he minutely describes this spirit.

(1) It is the spirit of grace.

"Grace be to you" is his first word of salutation. He covets for them the very grace of God. He wishes not hardships upon them, but mercies and grace from God. Grace is the source of every blessing (Jas. 1:17). By grace our sin is canceled (Eph. 2:8). Whatever good we may ever do, or whatever we may be worth to God and our fellowmen, it will be so by grace divine (1 Cor. 15:10). He says: "Grace be to you, and peace." Peace is the fruit of grace. It is the result of grace. Peace is quietness of the mind and heart (Rom. 5:1). This peace belongs only to those who have received of the grace of God (Isa. 57:21). Paul writes to these Galatians as one who knows the workings of sovereign grace!

(2) He speaks in the spirit of subordination.

"Grace be to you, and peace, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ." You don't get "grace and peace" from some heart-searching tale told by some high-pressure evangelist. You don't get "grace and peace" through the prayers of extra-devout saints at a sanctus-sanctorium, or, in modern language a "mourner's bench!" In this we see that Paul is not in any wise trying to get them to look to him for any of these things, but he is tremendously concerned that they look to "God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ" for all of these things! For indeed, that is the only source and supply of grace and peace.

(3) He speaks in the spirit of gratitude.

In v. 4 he says, "Who gave himself for our sins." He is here declaring the grounds upon which grace came to us. We have received of the grace of God, due to the finished work of Christ. John 1:17 says: "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." We are prone to have great love for some preacher who is used of the Lord in bringing us to see the Truth. They ought to be respected for their work's sake; but, in all, our respect should be for Jesus Christ who brought us grace! O, how grateful we all ought to be for Divine grace! Peter says, in 1 Pet. 2:21-24: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." That is the great truth Paul is here laying upon the hearts of these Galatians; that GRATITUDE TO CHRIST should inspire us TO UNDERTAKE FOR CHRIST! He presses the thought of gratitude further here as he says, "that he might deliver us from this present evil world." What purpose there was back of all the Divine goodness! We were bond-servants to sin and the devil. If we were ever to be free, deliverance must be wrought for us, and this was gloriously done by our