

A Practical Study of

GALATIANS: You Were Running Well

"Freedom vs. Legalism: The Truth Shall Set You Free"

Study #1 – Galatians 1:1-9

UNTIL: No Runs, No Hits, and a Big Error

Key Verse: Galatians 5:7

You were running well; who cut in on you that you should not obey the truth.

TEXT:

v. 1 Paul, an apostle, not from men nor through man but through Jesus Christ and God the father who raised Him from the dead (out from among the dead ones).

v. 2 And all the brethren with me to the churches of Galatia.

v. 3 Grace to you and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ

v. 4 who gave himself in behalf of our sins so that He might rescue us out from this present evil age according to the will of our God and father.

v. 5 To whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

v. 6 I am marveling that so quickly you are transferring yourselves from Him who called you in the sphere of Christ's grace unto a different gospel.

v. 7 Which is not another gospel except there are certain ones who are troubling your minds and are desiring to change (pervert) the gospel of Christ.

v. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel to you contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be Anathema.

v. 9 Even as we have said before, and now again I am saying, if anyone is preaching a gospel to you contrary to that which you received, let him be Anathema.

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDIES:

Let's begin the studies with a little bit of COWBOY POETRY.

(Cow Pies & Candle Lights by G. T. Burton) Benton, Arkansas: G. T. Burton.
Copyright - G. T. Burton, 1996.

RED RIDER

Bugger Red rode the trail one day
 'Neath a cotton candy dome.
A breath of spring was in the air,
And his thoughts began to roam.
 A paper blew across his path,
And the mustang stomped his feet,
And Red, unheeding in his thoughts,
 Fell from the saddle seat.

His foot slipped firmly through the stirrup,
 As he fell beneath the horse,
It seemed he'd soon be dragged to death,
 As the mustang ran its course.
The wild eyed horse, with snorts and squeals,
 Tried to kick the rider free.
And Red hung on the horses tail,
 And pulled most desperately.

In fear he loudly yelled for help,
 And tried to cover up his head.
His deeds of life ran through his mind
 'Cause he thought he'd soon be dead.
Down the shopping mall walked Randy Jones,
 And he grinned at Red quite smug.
Then slowly walked around behind,
 And pulled the electric plug.

p. 24

(Cowgirl Poetry: One Hundred Years of Ridin' and Rhymin' edited by Virginia Bennett) Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs-Smith. Copyright – Virginia Bennett, 2001.

THE HIRED MAN'S WIFE

Jody Strand

Baker, Montana – 1989

With the job, your housing's furnished,
 but your house is not your own,
 And every time you have to move,
 you grumble and you groan.
 'Cause you just got to know the neighbors,
 and your bedroom curtains came.
 Your seeds just came up in the garden,
 and now the preacher can call you by name.

You finally got the house fixed up,
 the leaky faucets and busted screens.
 You've shampooed the rugs and washed the walls
 and scrubbed and shined and cleaned.
 You trimmed the trees and mowed the yard
 and you've got some flowers growin'.
 But now that you've made this place your home,
 you'll be leavin' soon, you're knowin'.

'Cause when you get all settled in
 and start plannin' for next year,
 You know that he'll sit down one day
 and say, "You better start packin', dear.
 I heard about this better job
 where we can run cows of our own.
 The pay is good and the housing's furnished.
 So, pack up, and let's get going'!"

You take down all your pictures,
 pack your dishes and your clothes,
 Walk through your half-grown garden,
 wipe your tears and blow your nose.
 He's trying to make life better,
 trying hard to get ahead,
 And he will never understand
 the lonely tears you shed.

‘Cause the housing that was furnished
 was like unmolded clay.
 You worked and shaped it into your home
 and forgot you couldn’t stay.
 Now, it’s time for you to move again,
 and reluctantly, you’ll go.
 But part of you will stay behind
 to watch your garden grow.

“How can you start over again and again?”
 some other women ask.
 We simply smile because we know
 we’re equal to the task.
 You see, ranch hands’ wives have a special gift
 for accepting what we’ve been handed.
 And to live the cowboy life we love,
 we’ll grow anywhere we’re planted.

pp. 142-3

The Baptist & The Texas Cowboy!!!!

A Baptist Preacher was seated next to a cowboy on a flight to Texas.

After the plane took off, the cowboy asked for a whiskey and soda, which was brought and placed before him.

The flight attendant then asked the preacher if he would like a drink. Appalled, the preacher replied, “I’d rather be tied up and taken advantage of by women of ill-repute, than let liquor touch my lips.”

The cowboy then handed his drink back to the attendant and said, “Me too, I didn’t know we had a choice.”

(Received via email from Ron Miller, June 21, 2010)

GOD'S Rosebud

A new minister was walking with an older, more seasoned minister in the garden one day.

Feeling a bit insecure about what God had for him to do, he was asking the older preacher for some advice.

The older preacher walked up to a rosebush and handed the young preacher a rosebud and told him to open it without tearing off any petals.

The young preacher looked in disbelief at the older preacher and was trying to figure out what a rosebud could possibly have to do with his wanting to know the will of God for his life and ministry.

But because of his great respect for the older preacher, he proceeded to try to unfold the rose, while keeping every petal intact.

It wasn't long before he realized how impossible this was to do.

Noticing the younger preacher's inability to unfold the rosebud without tearing it, the older preacher began to recite the following poem . . .

"It is only a tiny rosebud,
A flower of God's design;
But I cannot unfold the petals
With these clumsy hands of mine."

"The secret of unfolding flowers
Is not known to such as I.
GOD opens this flower so easily,
But in my hands they die."

"If I cannot unfold a rosebud,
This flower of God's design,
Then how can I have the wisdom
To unfold this life of mine?"

"So I'll trust in God for leading
Each moment of my day.
I will look to God for guidance
In each step of the way."

“The path that lies before me,
Only my Lord knows.
I’ll trust God to unfold the moments,
Just as He unfolds the rose.”

Please share this poem with a friend if you enjoyed being reminded to let go and let God unfold your life.

(Received via email from Pat Burgess, February 23, 2010)

The Irony of Television

Television is an invention that permits you to be entertained in your living room by people you wouldn’t have in your house.

—*David Frost, English satirist and television host (1939—)*

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There are numerous references in the New Testament to life being likened to the race. For instance we read in:

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (DAV)

Are you not knowing that those who are running in a race are indeed all running, but one is receiving the prize? Be running in such a manner in order that you may win. Now everyone who is engaging in the contest is exercising self-control in all things. Those, to be sure, in order that they may receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable crown. As for myself, therefore, I am running that way, not aimlessly, as one who has no fixed goal; I am boxing that way, not as one who is punching the air. But I am treating my body roughly and making it serve me, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

Philippians 3:14 (DAV)

I am pressing onward toward the goal for the prize of the call from above of God in Christ Jesus

Hebrews 12:1-2 (DAV)

Therefore, since we are having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us be running with perseverance the race lying before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the originator and perfecter of faith, who for the joy lying before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The **BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE** to the Apostle Paul was a lot like the **BEGINNING OF THE RACE.**

His **CHALLENGE** is that we might:

RUN IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE PRIZE.

With Jesus he would say:

John 9:4 (NASB)

We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work.

John 4:35-36 (NASB)

Do you not say, "There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest"? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. Already he who reaps is receiving wages, and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

Luke 9:23 (NASB)

And he was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

Life to the Apostle Paul and to the Lord Jesus had a certain amount of stress involved in wanting to accomplish the maximum amount in the given period of time for the glory of God.

It was a longing desire of the Apostle Paul to be found as a faithful servant so that he might hear from the lips of the Lord Jesus, "Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joys which I have prepared for thee."

To him **LIFE WAS A RACE** and every day was a lap in that race. He longed to be a winner.

Psalm 90:12 (NET)

So teach us to consider our mortality,
so that we might live wisely

2 Timothy 4:6-8 (DAV)

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course; I have kept the faith. In the future there is reserved for me, the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge will award to me on that day and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Is it any wonder when he writes to the Galatian church that once again he would liken life to a race? In his charge to them he says in:

Galatians 5:7 (DAV)

You were running well; who cut in on you and thus hindered you from obeying the truth?

What haunting words these are. “You were running well.” There was a time when you were zealous, eager, and on fire for the Lord. There was a time when you were serving Him with fervency and growing daily in your grace and knowledge of Him. And now all is changed by the little statement: “You were running well.”

As we pursue this series of studies, we are going to be noting several of those things which keep us from “running well.”

How is it that we are kept from being all that we should be, performing at peak level maximum in our efficiency?

In our study of the **BOOK OF GALATIANS** we will be considering several of these hindrances.

Galatians 6:9 (DAV)

Now let us not be losing heart in doing that which is good, for at its proper season we shall reap if we are not being exhausted.

I love the way Peterson in *The Message* paraphrases verse 9:

Galatians 6:9 (MSG)

So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up, or quit.

The Net Bible translates:

Galatians 6:9 (Net)

So we must not grow weary in doing good, for in due time we will reap, if we do not give up.

The New Living paraphrases verse 9:

Galatians 6:9 (NLT)

So don't get tired of doing what is good. Don't get discouraged and give up, for we will reap a harvest of blessing at the appropriate time.

In my translation I am trying to preserve the **PRESENT TENSE**.

Galatians 6:9 (DAV)

Now let us not be losing heart while doing that which is good, for at its proper season we shall reap if we are not being exhausted.

INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL:

1. The **BOOK OF GALATIANS** was written by the **APOSTLE PAUL**. He is responsible for the authorship of at least **13** of the letters in the New Testament and **14** if you include the **BOOK OF HEBREWS**.

We read first of the **Apostle Paul** in the early chapters of the **BOOK OF ACTS** being **SAUL OF TARSUS**.

2. He tells a **LITTLE BIT ABOUT HIMSELF** when he writes to the Philippian Christians in chapter 3:4-7.

Philippians 3:4-7 (DAV)

although I myself could be having confidence also in the flesh. If anyone else is presuming to have confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; according to the Law, a Pharisee; according to zeal, persecuting the church; according to righteousness which is in the Law, become blameless. But whatever things were gain to me, these things I have considered as loss for the sake of Christ.

3. Because of his zeal for Judaism, he was very opposed to Christianity and was one of the **CHIEF PERSECUTORS** of the early Christians.
4. The biblical record tells us that when **STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR**, experienced his martyrdom, the men who were stoning him laid their **COATS AT THE FEET** of one Saul of Tarsus.

5. It was on the **DAMASCUS ROAD** while Saul of Tarsus was going towards the city of Damascus to apprehend more Christians, that he had the experience recorded in:

Acts 9:3-6 (DAV)

And it came about as he was proceeding on his journey, he was drawing near to Damascus. And suddenly there flashed around him a light out of heaven. And having fallen upon the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" And he said: "Who are you, Lord?" And He said: "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But arise and go into the city, and it shall be told you what you must do."

6. Through this experience with the risen Christ, **SAUL OF TARSUS BECAME PAUL THE APOSTLE**. Whereas he was a persecutor of the Christians, he became a propagator of the Christian message. He had an astounding effect upon all who heard him preach because as the Corinthian letter tells us, "he determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and that one crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2).

1 Corinthians 2:1-5 (DAV)

And when I came to you, brethren, I came not as a superior person in speech or wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and that One having been crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my word (message) and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, in order that your faith should not be resting on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

7. **THE MESSAGE** which he brought is recorded in:

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 (DAV)

For I delivered to you among the first things that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He has been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

8. As a result of this confrontation of Jesus Christ, the Apostle Paul was **CHALLENGED WITH THE MINISTRY** to all those who were not a part of the Jewish race.

He **TRAVELED EXTENSIVELY** to many cities and there began to teach and to share this Christ with others. As a result of his ministry, many little churches were formed in the cities where he visited.

The Apostle Paul did not conclude his ministry to these cities by just being there in person, but he continues to keep in touch with them and was involved constructively in their lives. Many of the epistles which he wrote were written to these various groups. So it is with the Book of Galatians.

9. The book was written by the Apostle Paul somewhere in **MACEDONIA** in approximately A.D. 56.
10. It is probably addressed to the **CHURCHES OF GALATIA** in the southern region of Galatia.
11. The reason the Apostle Paul is burdened to write this particular epistle is because many **FALSE TEACHERS HAD CREPT INTO THESE CHURCHES**. They were known as Judaizing teachers, telling these Gentile Christians that they could not be saved fully until they went through the rite of circumcision and other requirements of the Jewish religion. These teachers went about their tasks by undermining the character of the Apostle Paul and also his teaching that **SALVATION WAS BY FAITH ALONE**.
12. The character of the book is sizzling with **SHORT DIRECT PHRASES**. Paul is filled with righteous indignation over what is going on.
- I am sure that the message must have **STRUCK LIKE LIGHTENING** when it was received by these churches.
13. The major theme of the book is **LAW vs. GRACE**.

14. There are several **CONTRASTS** in the book:

LAW vs. **GRACE**,

WORKS vs. **FAITH**,

CURSING vs. **BLESSING**,

DEATH vs. **LIFE**,

SERVANT vs. **SONS**,

BONDAGE vs. **FREEDOM**,

OLD COVENANT vs. **NEW COVENANT**,

FLESH vs. **SPIRIT**,

HAGAR vs. **SARAH**.

15. Galatians is one of the most **BLESSED BOOKS** you will ever have the privilege of studying. It was the **MAGNA CARTA OF THE EARLY CHURCH**.

This was the letter that meant the most to **MARTIN LUTHER**. It was this letter that found him and revealed to him the true meaning of Christianity that made him the flaming prophet of liberty.

16. **GODET** says of Luther and this letter: "This was the pebble from the brook with which like another David he went forth to meet the mighty giant and smite him in the forehead."

17. **LUTHER** said himself: "The epistle of Galatians is my epistle. To it I am as it were in wedlock. It is my Kathryn."

He put this book to his lips as a trumpet and used it to blow the reveille for the reformation period of the church.

18. One of the writers points out that **LUTHER TREASURED GALATIANS** highly because it gets right to the heart of what the Christian faith is all about.

It sets forth salvation by the **FREE GRACE OF GOD WITHOUT HUMAN WORKS**.

It draws our attention to the **COMPLETE SUFFICIENCY OF JESUS CHRIST** and the adequacy of **SIMPLE FAITH** as an acceptable and proper response to the Gospel.

The **QUESTION** it answers is a perennial one: Are we saved by believing or achieving? Do we rest on human accomplishments on the finished work of Christ on the cross for salvation?

This is the question Paul, Luther, and all of us must face. There are in the last analysis only **TWO RELIGIONS**: one calls on men to impress God with their own deeds and one demands that they renounce all such pretensions and cast themselves on God's unmerited favor in Christ.

Even God's people are in constant danger of forgetting the beautiful simplicity of this alternative. Galatians was written to remind us of that.

19. There are numerous outlines for the epistle. We can discern for instance a basic **THREE-FOLD DIVISION**:

- I. The **PERSONAL** – chapters 1 & 2
- II. The **DOCTRINAL** – chapters 3 & 4
- II. The **PRACTICAL** – chapters 5 & 6

20. The **OUTLINE** that we are going to be using for this particular series of studies centers around:

Galatians 5:7 (DAV)

You were running well; who cut in on you that you should not obey the truth.

OUTLINE OF THE STUDY:

YOU WERE RUNNING WELL:

- Study #1: UNTIL: No Runs, No Hits, and a Big Error (1:1-9)
- Study #2: UNTIL: You Forgot what God was Doing in Your Life (1:10-24)
- Study #3: UNTIL: Divine Direction was not Discerned (2:1-10)
- Study #4: UNTIL: Peer Pressure Postponed Progress (2:11-21)
- Study #5: UNTIL: You Said I Do it Myself (3:1-14)
- Study #6: UNTIL: You Failed to Read the Instructions (3:15-29)
- Study #7: UNTIL: You Didn't Graduate (4:1-11)
- Study #8: UNTIL: You Got the PBA Disease (Pretty Bad Attitude) (4:12-20)
- Study #9: UNTIL: "Whew! I'm Free" Became "Boy! I'm in Bondage" (4:21-5:1)
- Study #10: UNTIL: You Said Don't Confuse Me with the Facts (5:2-15)
- Study #11: UNTIL: The Flesh Started Living on Law (5:16-26)
- Study #12: UNTIL: Body Functions Failed (6:1-18)

INTRODUCTION:

Anders says:

“This land will remain the land of the free only as long as it is the home of the brave.”

Elmer Davis

p. 2

Anders says:

Sadly, many Galatian believers began believing these false teachers. They submitted to circumcision and other Old Testament laws to win God’s approval, gain eternal life, and mature in Christ. With all the external regulations, they felt like slaves as they tried meticulously to obey the law. Therefore, they were no longer free in Christ.

Then “to the rescue” came Paul, the liberator. His “smoking gun” was a six-chapter defense of grace known to us as “Galatians.” In this letter, Paul went to the very fort of legalism and through closely reasoned biblical logic destroyed its errors. His bold defense of grace restored the Galatians and saved the early church from a cultic division. Because the message of Galatians frees Christians from the oppression of legalism, it has been called the “Magna Carta” of Christianity. Martin Luther, the father of the Reformation, loved Galatians and considered it the best of all books. He even compared his love for this book with his love for his wife, Katherine. Luther said, “The epistle to the Galatians is my epistle. To it I am, as it were, in wedlock. It is my Katherine.”

pp. 4-5

Arthur says:

This study is going to be wonderfully freeing!

When you study a book of the Bible, it is always best to first read it straight through without stopping. In doing this, you gain a sense of the entire message of the book, which provides you with a good overview.

p. 17

Arthur says:

When we seek to put people under a legalistic set of rules such as “do not handle, do not taste, do not touch” (Colossians 2:21), are we distorting the gospel of Jesus Christ? Do such rules put people under a form of bondage that keeps them from understanding and walking in the grace of God?

Is it by the law that someone gains favor in the sight of God? Is it by the law that someone maintains his Christian testimony? Is it by the power of the law that a child of God controls the desires of his flesh?

p. 21

Barclay says:

It is a strange thing to think that, if Paul’s opponents had had their way, the gospel might have been kept for Jews, and we might never have had the chance to know the love of Christ.

p. 1

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

Adopting the south Galatia theory and the identity of Gal 2:1-10 and Ac 15, the earliest the letter could have been written is A.D. 49 (the date for the council in Jerusalem). Since Paul does not appear to be in prison while writing this letter, the latest date it could have been written is A.D. 58, when he was arrested in Jerusalem. Within these limits there are roughly eight or nine years in which Paul made two missionary journeys and during which the letter could have been written. This range can be narrowed somewhat by assuming that Paul had visited the Galatians twice before writing to them, once on the first missionary journey and once as he was setting out on the second (cf. Gal 4:13); in that case, Galatians must have been written after Paul’s arrival at Corinth on his second journey (A.D. 50).

p. 707

Bickel & Jantz say:

Don't you wish sometimes that other people saw you for who you are rather than for what you do? Well, there is at least one person who sees you for who you are, and He's the one who really counts. We're talking about God, of course. People may look on the outside, but God looks at the heart.

Knowing that should be an encouragement to you, but it could also be a little unsettling. If you're like we are, you are so used to performing that you have probably done your share of performing for God. If that's the case, then you've come to the right book—the book of Galatians. Here is a book—a letter actually—that will open your mind and your heart to a very important and life-changing truth: God loves you and accepts you for the person you are, not for the things you do.

p. 5

Bickel & Jantz say:

When Paul got wind that the Judaizers were deliberately and systematically undermining his authority and discrediting his message, he responded with a stirring epistle, or letter, which he sent to the Galatians from his home base in Antioch of Syria. In his letter, Paul offered the Galatians a clear, concise, and convincing case for the true nature of the gospel of Christ—lived in the Spirit—and its superiority to the false gospel of the law—lived in the flesh.

p. 14

De Haan says:

Today the problem of the Galatians is still with us, in spite of the clear teaching of the Word of God. Men are made to believe they must DO something to be saved. Man adds to salvation by grace, religion, good works, church membership, ordinances, and the works of the law. But the Bible says:

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness (Rom. 4:5).

p. 32

Dunnam says:

After identifying himself, Paul gives his introductory greeting: “*Grace [be] to you.*” This key word, “*grace,*” appears over and over again in Paul’s writing. In Galatians, Paul’s *freedom* letter, he is calling these new Christians to retain the freedom given them by Christ. This freedom is the result of God’s grace which delivers us from the legalism and rigidity of the law and looses us for a Spirit-filled life of joy and fulfillment.
p. 19

Gaebelein says:

The Object of the Epistle.

The object of this epistle is the defence of the Gospel which Paul had received by the revelation of Jesus Christ. In order to do this successfully the apostle had first of all to defend his own apostolic authority. After he had done so he fully exposed the evil teachings by which the Galatians were being deceived and showed them the perniciousness of the doctrine to which they had listened. The work of Christ on the cross was at stake, “for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” The exposure is made by a number of contrasts between law and grace in which the apostle shows what the law could not do and what grace has done. The object of the epistle therefore is to defend the gospel, as he writes in the second chapter “that the truth of the gospel might continue with you;” to point out the seriousness of the false teaching which was, through Satan’s power, bewitching them, and in warning them to lead them back upon the foundation of grace from which they had fallen.
p. 198

Harrison says:

To our mind, as a result of wide observation, the most serious error of our day is the popular notion that the Christian life is a matter of conduct. Do certain things; don't do certain other things, and you are a Christian! This confining of Christian living to behavior is altogether shallow, superficial, and above all else futile.

What is a Christian? The answer runs somewhat thus: A Christian is one who accepts Christ, especially as the teacher of a way of life; he adopts a set of habits, such as church attendance, Bible reading, prayer; he associates with Christian people; he doesn't lie, steal, or get drunk; he is fair in his dealings with his fellowmen; he can be counted on to take a Christian attitude toward the questions of the day. A Christian is one who conforms to certain standards! Any essential change in the *person*, productive of such conduct, is ignored.

p. 9

Harrison says:

Turning to the Epistle to the Galatians we find the Apostle Paul defining and describing a Christian in such terms as these:

A Christian is one who has the living Christ living in him. (See Galatians 2:20; 4:19.) He has had a transforming experience.

A Christian is one who has the Holy Spirit (4:6). He begets *in* the believer new characteristics that are productive of Christian conduct (5:22, 23).

A Christian is one who has shared the Cross experience with Christ, as the basic solution of his personal problems. (See Galatians 2:20; 5:24; 6:14, 17.)

A Christian is one possessed of a life so divine, so ideal that it cannot be pressed into the mould of external regulations. (See Galatians 4:9-11, 19:21; 5:1-6.)

In other words, the Christian life consists not in *behaving* but in *being*, a life out of which behavior naturally proceeds; not something external, but internal, the root producing the fruit. It is a *life* that must be free to express itself; to impose regulations upon it is fatal to it.

p. 10

Hendriksen says:

4. It may well have been written, therefore, *on the second missionary journey, at Corinth, before the arrival of Timothy and Silas*. This would explain the omission of greetings from these two men, both of whom occupied a special place in the hearts and memories of the South Galatian churches . . .
p. 15

Hendriksen says:

This would fix the date of composition somewhere near the middle of the period A.D. 50-53 (second missionary journey), just previous to the writing of I Thessalonians.
p. 15

Lenski says:

The most acceptable date to which we are able to assign Galatians is near April in the year 53 while Paul was in Corinth. The whole subject is involved in much controversy, in which both German and English commentators are divided. The data here presented have produced conviction in the writer.
p. 17

Lucado says:

You may be decent. You may pay taxes and kiss your kids and sleep with a clean conscience. But apart from Christ you aren't holy. So how can you go to heaven?

Only believe.

Accept the work already done, the work of Jesus on the cross.

Only believe . . .

It's that simple? It's that simple. It's that easy? There was nothing easy at all about it. The cross was heavy, the blood was real, and the price was extravagant. It would have bankrupted you or me, so he paid it for us. Call it simple. Call it a gift. But don't call it easy.

Call it what it is. Call it grace. (From *A Gentle Thunder* by Max Lucado)
p. 6

MacArthur says:

Because neither Acts nor Galatians mentions any cities or people from northern (ethnic) Galatia, it is reasonable to believe that Paul addressed this epistle to churches located in the southern part of the Roman province, but outside of the ethnic Galatian region.
p. 1655

MacArthur says:

On the first missionary journey Paul and Barnabas established four churches in the southern part of the province, in the cities of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe (Acts 13:14-14:23), and those churches apparently came to form something of a regional body of believers. The Galatian epistle itself does not identify the specific local churches, but they were churches in which Paul had personally ministers (4:13-15). The fact that the book of Acts mentions the four churches established by Paul in south Galatia and mentions none in the rest of the province makes it probable that the epistle was addressed primarily to those southern churches.
pp. xi-xii

MacArthur says:

On his second journey Paul visited the Galatian churches with Silas, “delivering the decrees, which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe. So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily” (Acts 16:1-5).

p. xii

Machen says:

If, on the other hand, the South Galatian theory is correct, the former of the two visits to the churches addressed in the Epistle took place on the first missionary journey, when Paul founded the churches in Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe; and the second visit—at least so our first impulse would be to say—took place at the beginning of the second missionary journey, when the Book of Acts distinctly says that Derbe and Lystra were visited and when it apparently intends us to understand that Paul went on also to Iconium and Pisidian Antioch. On the South Galatian theory, therefore, the Epistle may have been written at any time after Paul’s passage through South Galatia at the beginning of the second missionary journey.

p. 23

McGee says:

2. In this epistle the heart of Paul the apostle is laid bare, and there is deep emotion and strong feeling. This is his *fighting epistle*—he has on his war paint. He has no toleration for legalism. Someone has said that the Epistle to the Romans comes from the head of Paul while the Epistle to the Galatians comes from the heart of Paul. A theologian has said, “Galatians takes up controversially what Romans puts systematically.”

p. 149

McGee says:

4. Galatians is the strongest declaration and defense of the doctrine of *justification by faith* in or out of Scripture. It is God's polemic on behalf of the most vital truth of the Christian faith against any attack. Not only is a sinner saved by grace through faith plus nothing, but the saved sinner lives by grace. Grace is a way *to* life and a way *of* life. These two go together, by the way.
p. 149

McGee says:

Three epistles in the New Testament quote Habakkuk 2:4, "The just shall live by his faith." Romans 1:17 emphasizes *the just*. Hebrews 10:38 emphasizes *shall live*. Galatians 3:11 emphasizes *by faith*.

In Romans the emphasis is upon the fact that man apart from the Mosaic Law is justified before God by faith. In Galatians Paul is defending the gospel from those who would add law to justification by faith. Faith plus law was the thrust of Judaism. Faith plus nothing was the answer of Paul.
p. 151

Pinnock says:

Paul's Epistle to the Galatians is spiritual dynamite. Its message has ignited theological revolutions and reformations. Martin Luther called the letter his own epistle "to whom I have plighted my troth." For he found in it the theological principles which were to transform his life and ground his mighty faith. During his reforming ministry, he undertook series of lectures on the epistle, the text of which has had a deep effect on an unnumbered host of believers ever since.

Luther treasured Galatians highly because it gets right to the heart of what the Christian faith is all about. It sets forth salvation by the free grace of God without human works. It draws our attention to the complete sufficiency of Jesus Christ and the adequacy of simple faith as an acceptable and proper response to the gospel. The question it answers is a perennial one: Are we saved by believing or achieving? Do we rest on human accomplishments or on the finished work of Christ on the cross for salvation? This is a question Paul, Luther, and all of us must face. There are, in the last analysis, only two religions. One calls on men to impress God with their own deeds, and one demands that they renounce all such pretensions and cast themselves on God's unmerited favor in Christ. Even God's people are in constant danger of forgetting the beautiful simplicity of this alternative. Galatians was written to remind us of it.
p. (intro.)

Pinnock says:

Paul's Letter to the Galatians deals with questions of fundamental importance then and now. In each case the answer is Jesus Christ. How can we know the truth? Jesus Christ teaching us by speaking through His apostles. How can we find peace with God? Jesus Christ redeeming us through His cross. How can we walk the way of Christian holiness? Jesus Christ sanctifying us through His Spirit. This is "mere Christianity." Galatians has put the gospel in a nutshell. It has as much relevance to Christians in the twentieth century as it had in the first. It is the charter of Christian liberty. If we will heed its message we will not become enslaved to any kind of bondage again.
p. (intro.)

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

IN THE WHOLE BIBLE, THERE IS NO MORE PASSIONATE, comprehensive, yet concise statement of the truth of the gospel than Galatians. Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ alone (2:16; 3:11, 12). No work can earn salvation. Paul's succinct refutation of the Judaizers in this letter has transformed the lives of many—from Martin Luther to John Wesley.
p. 1514

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

The introduction of the letter includes the three standard elements found in epistolary salutation sections: (1) the writer **Paul** (1:1); (2) the addressees—**to the churches of Galatia** (1:2); and (3) the greeting—**grace to you and peace** (1:3).
p. 1516

Ridderbos says:

He does so in a singularly passionate way, so that the letter to the Galatians, more than any other of the apostle's extant writings, gives us some idea of his fiery temperament. However, it gives us an insight also into the serious threat which this heresy spelled for the purity of the gospel and the welfare of the church.
p. 18

Ridderbos says:

In accepting the South Galatian hypothesis we arrive at an earlier date. On that basis the *terminus a quo* lies in Paul's second visit to these churches (cf. Acts 16:1-4; Gal. 4:13): that is, if we fix the year of the apostolic council in 48 or 49. Apparently the letter was written not long afterward (cf. 1:6), probably in Corinth, where the apostle stayed for a while during his second missionary journey. That would then be in 50 or 51.
p. 31

Tenney says:

Few books, however, have had a more profound influence on the history of mankind than has this small tract, for such it could be called. Christianity might have been just one more Jewish sect, and the thought of the Western world might have been entirely pagan had it never been written. Galatians embodies the germinal teaching on Christian freedom which separated Christianity from Judaism, and which launched it upon a career of missionary conquest.

p. 15

Tenney says:

Objectively and subjectively, then, Galatians is the charter of freedom from externalism in worship and from frustration in personal spiritual life. As the Lord Jesus Himself said: "If ye abide in my word [faith in the revelation], *then* are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know [experience] the truth [objective theology], and the truth shall make you free [subjective experience]" (John 8:31, 32).

p. 19

Wiersbe says:

GALATIANS 1

To Paul, the gospel was much more than a message he preached: it was a miracle he had experienced (vv. 1-5). The gospel is “the power of God to salvation” (Rom. 1:16) and it brings freedom. Christ died “that He might deliver us” (v. 4). When Paul trusted Christ, he became a free man. The shackles of sin and legalistic religion were broken!

But the gospel was also a treasure that Paul guarded (vv. 6-17). Paul did not invent the gospel or learn it from others; God gave it to him (1 Cor. 15:1-11). *There is no other gospel.* To add to this message, take from it, or substitute another message is to destroy it. No wonder Paul attacked those who attacked the gospel; when you lose the gospel, you lost everything.

The gospel is a tie that binds God’s people together (vv. 18-24). Saul the enemy became Paul the brother, and he was able to fellowship with people he once had persecuted.. Christians may disagree on minor matters of interpretation and organization, but they agree on the message of the gospel.

*“The gospel is neither a discussion nor a debate.
It is an announcement.”*

Paul S. Rees

pp. 766-67

Wiersbe says:

Saving Private Ryan is one of my favorite World War II movies. Three out of four brothers are killed in action, and then a search is launched to find the fourth, Private James Ryan, so that he is not killed, leaving his mother childless. Eight men are sent out to find Private Ryan, who is missing somewhere in Normandy. As these men wander through the French countryside, they have a running dialogue of angst: “Why is the army risking the lives of eight men to save one?” Their anger and frustration only increases as they experience one life-threatening situation after another. Then, one evening, before they sack out for the night, Captain John Miller says to his sergeant:

This Ryan better be worth it, he better do something important with his life, he better become a doctor and cure some disease or invent a longer-lasting light bulb or something.

Captain Miller hopes Private Ryan will be worthy of the risks that he and his men are taking to find him. Eventually, Miller and his Rangers locate Ryan, but he is duty bound to stay and defend an important bridge from German forces. Miller agreed to join Ryan and his makeshift unit, but in the battle Miller and most of the men who came to find Ryan are killed. In the final moments before Captain Miller dies of his wounds, he says to Ryan in a low and shaky voice: “Earn this. Earn it.” In essence, Captain Miller is telling Ryan to live his life from that moment on in such a way that it is worthy of their sacrifices.

At the end of the movie, an elderly Ryan is seen visiting the graveside of Captain Miller and the other Rangers who sacrificed everything for him. Turning to his wife, he says, “Tell me I’ve led a good life. Tell me I’m a good man.” As the scene fades out you realize that Private James Ryan has lived his entire life with Captain Miller’s words echoing in his mind: “Earn this. Earn it.”

The end of the movie is powerful because it strikes a chord deep inside that many of us struggle with in our journey with Jesus. We often feel like we have to earn God’s love or do something that makes us deserve what Jesus went through on the cross. Yet these feelings contradict the clear teaching of the Bible that God’s love is unconditional and that our salvation is free. But we sure struggle with that, don’t we?

pp. 9-10

Wuest says:

This is another of Paul's letters of a highly doctrinal nature and therefore demands a meticulously accurate rendering of the Greek text, for doctrine is the foundation and cornerstone of the Christian system of belief. And what is more, it deals with a heresy, namely, justification by faith plus works. And this must be clearly defined.
p. 197

Wuest says:

The inroads of the Judaizers into the Galatian churches took place during Paul's third missionary journey, for Paul had visited them again on his second journey, and at that time there were no evidences of their destructive work. It was during his third journey, when Paul was either in Macedonia or Greece, and about A.D. 55, 56 (Thiessen) that Paul received word of the serious danger which the Galatian churches were in, and recognized in that danger, a serious threat to the whole Christian system.
p. 22

During my running years there was the story of a young Canadian by the name of **TERRY FOX** who was stricken with cancer. Life was a real race for him. He hit upon the idea of running a marathon of hope across Canada after cancer had taken his leg at the knee. Having learned how to run with a prosthesis, he ran halfway across the country before the disease finally claimed another victim.

(Terry Fox: His Story by Leslie Scrivener)

At five miles Doug and I talked about it for a while. I cried because I knew I was going to make it or be in a hospital bed or dead. I want to set an example that will never be forgotten. It is courage and not foolishness. It isn't a waste.
p. 74

(Terry Fox: His Story by Leslie Scrivener)

We slept well last night. It was quite cold in the van. The wind howled again all day. Right in my face. It is very difficult constantly running into the wind. It zaps it right out of your body and head.

p. 88

Another day he read part of a poem that was given [to] him by a Nova Scotia admirer named Mrs. Fox. He kept the poem tacked on the van's wall and he read it every night before bed. Here's one verse:

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
 There are thousands to prophesy failure;
 There are thousands to point out to you one by one,
 The dangers that wait to assail you.
 But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,
 Just take off your coat and go to it;
 Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing
 That "cannot be done," and you'll do it.

"It Couldn't Be Done," Edgar Albert Guest

p. 93

We are now prepared to do our expositional study:

Study #1: You Were Running Well Until:
 No Runs, Not Hits, and a Big Error
 – Galatians 1:1-9

John writes in:

1 John 4:1 (DAV)

Beloved, stop believing every spirit, but keep on putting the spirits to the test to see if they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

The Lord Jesus says in:

Matthew 24:24 (NASB)

“For false christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.

Paul is writing to the Corinthians in:

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 (DAV)

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan is disguising himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if also his servants are disguising themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

2 Timothy 3:5 (DAV)

While having an outward form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and turn away from such men as these.

1 Timothy 4:1-2 (DAV)

But the Spirit explicitly is saying that in latter times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and to teachings of demons (demonic teachings), by the hypocritical preaching of liars, seared (with a red hot branding iron) in their own consciences,

2 Peter 2:1-2 (DAV)

But there arose also false prophets among the people, just as there will be also false teachers among you, who will bring in destructive opinions, even denying the Master who purchased them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their inclination to sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;

Jude 3-4 (DAV)

Beloved, while I was making every effort to write to you concerning our common salvation, I felt I had to write to you urging you to contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. For certain men have secretly slipped in, who for a long time have been marked out for this judgment, ungodly persons who are turning the grace of our God into a license for immorality and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

As you can see, the scriptures are filled with warnings with regard to false teaching.

One of the biggest problems a new Christian encounters is the problem of:

sticking to the **TRUTH**,

the ability to sift **TRUTH FROM ERROR**,

to discern the **VOICE OF THE SPIRIT** through the human vehicle.

Countless are the numbers who have made shipwreck of their faith because they have not been careful in this area of their life.

How it behooves us to accept the challenge of Paul to young Timothy in:

2 Timothy 2:15 (DAV)

Make every effort to present yourself to God, approved, as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, guiding the word of truth along a straight path.

The **TWO KEY FACTORS** in steering along a proper course toward truth is:

1. The **CENTRALITY OF JESUS CHRIST** and
2. The **INSPIRATION AND THE AUTHORITY OF ALL OF SCRIPTURE.**

v. 1 Paul, an apostle, not from men nor through man but through Jesus Christ and God the father who raised Him from the dead (out from among the dead ones).

The NET Bible translates verse 1:

From Paul, an apostle (not from men, nor by human agency, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead)

Peterson paraphrases verse 1:

I, Paul, and my companions in faith here, send greetings to the Galatian churches. My authority for writing to you does not come from any popular vote of the people, nor does it come through the appointment of some human higher-up. It comes directly from Jesus the Messiah and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The opening of the Galatian epistle is both typical and atypical. Though the salutation includes the usual identification of author and recipient together with a customary greeting, the usual expression of thanksgiving and praise for believers is totally absent. Further, there is an abruptness about the opening words which plunges the reader immediately into one of Paul's major concerns, namely, that his apostolic credentials had been challenged. Though not one of the original Twelve, **Paul** claimed equality with them as **an apostle**. The word *apostolos* connotes authority and refers to a person who has a right to speak for God as His representative or delegate

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says further:

Paul's apostleship did not originate with men (it was **not from men**), that is, he was not appointed an apostle by any official body such as the leaders in Jerusalem or Antioch. Neither did his apostleship originate with any one man, however important (**nor by man**) not even Ananias, who assisted Paul in Damascus . . . nor Barnabas, who played a strategic role in opening doors of ministry for Paul in both Jerusalem and Antioch . . . Rather, Paul made the bold claim that his call was of heavenly origin, from **God the Father** and the risen Lord **Jesus Christ**. This is the only direct mention of the resurrection of Christ in the epistle. It emphasizes the importance of that event to Paul's apostleship, for he was not called during the earthly ministry of the Lord but by the resurrected Christ

These **FIRST FIVE VERSES** form an **INTRODUCTION** to the letter.

The Apostle Paul starts right in and **DEFENDS HIS APOSTLESHIP** because these false teachers were speaking against him. Because he was not one of the original twelve, they felt he was not, therefore, a genuine apostle.

1 Corinthians 9:1-2 (DAV)

Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

2 Timothy 1:9 (DAV)

The one who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.

SAUL not only **BECAME PAUL** that day on the Damascus Road, but he also **BECAME AN APOSTLE**.

Luther points out that the Apostle Paul boldly defends his apostolic authority and ministry:

. . . because people need to be assured that the words we speak are the words of God.

p. 12

Right away in this verse the Apostle Paul uses the **NEGATIVE** and **POSITIVE APPROACH**:

**“PAUL, AN APOSTLE”—NEGATIVELY—“NOT FROM MEN”—
NEGATIVELY—“NOR THROUGH MAN,”**

**“BUT”—IN CONTRAST, POSITIVELY—“THROUGH JESUS
CHRIST AND GOD THE FATHER WHO RAISED HIM FROM THE
DEAD.”**

Paul begins by sharing the fact that he is:

“AN APOSTLE, NOT FROM MEN NOR THROUGH MAN.”

Man did not have anything to do with. **GOD MADE HIM AN APOSTLE.**

His salvation and apostleship are granted by God.

As an old Jew **EBED TOB** used to say of the office he held:

It was not my father or my mother who installed me in this place, but the arm of the mighty king gave it to me.
(source unknown)

Psalm 75:6-7 (NASB)

No one from the east or the west
or from the desert can exalt a man.
But it is God who judges:
He brings one down, he exalts another.

NEGATIVELY—I did not get my title of apostleship **“FROM MEN NOR THROUGH MAN BUT”**—**POSITIVELY**—**“THROUGH JESUS CHRIST AND GOD THE FATHER WHO RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD.”**

According to this verse, all that Paul was came through Jesus Christ:

Who is responsible for the change in his life?

Who is responsible for stopping him in his tracks and turning him in a completely new direction?

Who is responsible for changing him into a child of God?

The person responsible for the way Paul was, was Jesus Christ.

We might note together that:

all that Paul **WAS** came through Jesus Christ,

in verse 12, all that he had to **SAY** came through Jesus Christ, and

in Galatians 2:2 we will note further that all that he **DID**, he did through Jesus Christ.

1. His **WAY** of life,
2. His **WORDS**, and
3. His **WORKS**

were all through Jesus Christ.

Oh that God could impress this upon us that:

ALL THAT WE ARE,

ALL THAT WE HAVE TO SAY, AND

ALL THAT WE DO COMES THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

This is what He wants to do for you and for me.

1. Our **CHARACTER**,
2. our **CONVERSATION**, and
3. our **CONDUCT** are all Christ-centered.

John 15:5 (DAV)

I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who is abiding in me, and I in him, this one is bearing much fruit; because apart from me you are not able to be doing anything.

You could join the men of the world and say:

all that **I AM** I owe to my talents and special abilities,

all that **I HAVE** to say I owe to my superior intellect and wisdom,

all that **I DO** I owe to my superior skills, and

when you reach the end of life **IT AMOUNTS TO NOTHING.**

What a thrilling thought when we realize that it is the Lord Jesus who wants to:

CHANGE US,

SPEAK THROUGH US, and

ACT THROUGH US in displaying to the lost and dying world what He can do in the life of one who has learned the secret of joyous Christian living.

And that is:

ALL THAT I AM,

ALL THAT I HAVE TO SAY, and

ALL THAT I HAVE TO DO comes from Him.

The Christian life is a life which:

He lived then,

lived now,

by Him,

in you.

When you are willing:

Christ will take your **NOTHING,**

fill it with Himself, which is **EVERYTHING,** and

then you will have **SOMETHING.**

Why does the Apostle Paul in this final phrase in verse 1 mention the **RESURRECTION**?

“WHO RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD.”

It is to show us that the Lord is alive and that He could call Paul to the apostleship.

It is the resurrection that is the Father’s **FINAL SEAL OF APPROVAL**, His **ENDORSEMENT** upon the completed work of His Son in providing salvation. It is the resurrection that makes Christianity distinctive among the religions of the world.

1 Peter 1:3-4 (DAV)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance imperishable and undefiled and unfading, which has been reserved in heaven for you,

Anders says:

The opening of Galatians is unusual for Paul. In most of his letters, he begins with a thanksgiving for the recipients, but in Galatians he omits this customary praise. Why is this omission significant? Because Paul was alarmed that the Galatians had fallen into the lethal trap of legalism. He was astonished that they questioned his authority as an apostle. Therefore, as a surgeon going after the tumor, Paul avoided small talk and cut in immediately to declare his case.

p. 5

Barclay says:

To the people of Galatia there had come people saying that Paul was not really an apostle and that they need not listen to what he had to say. They based their belittlement of Paul on the fact that he had not been a member of the original twelve apostles, that, in fact, he had been the most savage of all persecutors of the Church, and that he held, as it were, no official appointment from the leaders of the Church. Paul's answer was not an argument; it was an unanswerable statement. He owed his apostleship to no man; he owed it to a day on the Damascus Road when he had met Jesus Christ face to face. It was Paul's claim that his office and his task had been given to him direct from God.

p. 6

Calvin says:

1. *Paul, an apostle.* In the salutations with which he commenced his Epistles, Paul was accustomed to claim the title of "an Apostle." His object in doing so, as we have remarked on former occasions, was to employ the authority of his station, for the purpose of enforcing his doctrine. This authority depends not on the judgment or opinion of men, but exclusively on the calling of God; and therefore he demands a hearing on the ground of his being "an Apostle."

p. 21

De Haan says:

Evidently God never recognized the choice of Matthias, for he is never mentioned again in the rest of the Bible. God ignored man's ordination, and after the Holy Spirit came, He chose a man by the name of Paul to be an apostle. But it was not by man's choice, but an outright ordination by Christ. He was ordained for his office by God. He says in I Timothy 2:7 that he was "ordained a preacher, and an apostle, . . . a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity."

p. 30

Eadie says:

THE apostle's standing had been challenged by a faction in the Galatian churches, in order that his distinctive teaching might be disparaged or set aside. To undermine his doctrine, they denied or explained away his apostleship. It seems to have been alleged against him, that as he had not been a personal disciple of Jesus, he could not claim the inspiration enjoyed by those on whom He breathed, as He said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" that his gospel had been communicated to him through a human medium, and therefore was not primary and authoritative truth; and that his position in the church was only of secondary or intermediate appointment, and on that account quite subordinate in rank and prerogative.

p. 1

Fergusson says:

Free-grace doth often light upon the most unworthy, not only by giving grace and salvation to themselves, but also making them sometimes instrumental for the kingdom of Christ, and for bringing about the salvation of others: for Paul, once a wicked persecutor, 1 Tim. i. 13, is now made an eminent apostle . . .

p. 12

Hendriksen says:

The spiritual atmosphere is charged. It is sultry, sweltering. A storm is threatening. The sky is darkening. In the distance one can see flashes of lightning; one can hear faint muttering sounds. When each line of verses 1-5 is read in the light of the letter's occasion and purpose (see Introduction III B, pp. 16-19) the atmospheric turbulence is immediately detected. The apostle, though in perfect control of himself, for he is writing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is greatly agitated, deeply moved. His heart and mind are filled with a medley of emotions. For the perverters there is withering denunciation springing from holy indignation.

p. 29

Hendriksen says further:

. . . “My apostleship is genuine: hence, so is *the gospel* which I proclaim, no matter what the Judaizers who disturb you may say! I am a divinely appointed emissary.”

p. 30

Hendriksen says further:

The implication is clear: since Paul and his message are backed by divine authority, those who reject him and his gospel are rejectors of Christ, hence also of the Father who sent him and **who raised him from the dead.**

p. 30

Ironside says:

But as Spurgeon said, “Ordination can do nothing for a man who has not received his call from God. It is simply a matter of laying empty hands on an empty head.”

p. 18

Lenski says:

Paul’s first drop of ink is a decisive, challenging contradiction: “Paul, an apostle *not* from men *nor* by means of man.” Men did not send and commission him. He is not the ambassador or representative of men. What he utters is not the word and the wisdom of men. The authority back of him and his message is not human.

p. 21

Luther says:

Paul loses no time in defending himself against the charge that he had thrust himself into the ministry. He says to the Galatians: "My call may seem inferior to you. But those who have come to you are either called of men or by man. My call is the highest possible, for it is by Jesus Christ, and God the Father."
p. 11

Luther says further:

In this whole epistle Paul treats of the resurrection of Christ. By His resurrection Christ won the victory over law, sin, flesh, world, devil, death, hell, and every evil.
p. 12

MacArthur says:

In this brief salutation Paul summarizes his authority (his right to speak), his message (the truths he speaks), and his motive (his reason for speaking).
p. 1

McGee says:

Paul was an apostle. How? He was an apostle by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead. Jesus laid His hand upon Paul, called him, and set him apart from the office (see Acts 9:15-16).
p. 151

Ridderbos says:

And so his mission and his full authority were determined by the glory of the One who sent him.
p. 41

Wiersbe says:

. . . the evidence seems to indicate that Paul wrote to churches in the southern part of the province of Galatia—Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe—churches he founded on his first missionary journey (Acts 13-14).
p. 21

Wuest says:

Paul an apostle, not from man (as an ultimate source), nor even through the intermediate agency of a man, but through the direct agency of Jesus Christ and God the Father, the One who raised Him out from among the dead.
p. 30

(Same Kind of Different as Me: A Modern-day Slave, an International Art Dealer, and the Unlikely Woman Who Bound Them Together by Ron Hall, Denver Moore, and Lynn Vincent) Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group. Copyright – Ron Hall, 2006.

“I know you is hurtin and questionin God,” I told him. “I’m hurtin, too. And you is probably wonderin why a saint like Miss Debbie is in that room sufferin when all them street bums she ministered to seem to be gettin along just fine. Well, let me tell you somethin: God calls some good ones like Miss Debbie home so He can accomplish His purposes down here on the earth.”

Mr. Ron just stared at me. That’s when I noticed his eyes was all red and swoll up. His throat was just a-workin, like he was fixin to break down on me, but I went right on anyway, ‘cause I felt like if I didn’t, he was gon’ turn his back on God.

“I ain’t sayin God can’t use the bums and the addicts to work His will down here—He’s God, and He can sure ‘nough do anything He wants. I’m just tellin you He sometimes needs to call the good ones home to bring glory to His name. And I can tell you something else—I don’t care what no doctors say, Miss Debbie ain’t goin nowhere till she finished the work here on earth that God gave her to do. You can take *that* to the bank.”

p. 170

In measured, quiet tones, Dr. Redrow explained. When he finished, she asked him, “How long can I live on ice chips and water?”

“Days . . . maybe a couple of weeks.”

He expressed his sorrow, businesslike, and left just as Alan arrived. The room grew still and quiet. Then Deborah let a question slip into the silence: “How do you live the rest of your life in just a few days?”

p. 172

v. 2 And all the brethren with me to the churches of Galatia.

The NET Bible translates verse 2:

and all the brothers with me, to the churches of Galatia.

Peterson paraphrases verse 2:

I'm God-commissioned.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Joining with Paul in the sending, though not the writing, of this letter were **all the brothers with** him. These were the apostle's fellow workers, perhaps Barnabas as well as the prophets and teachers with whom Paul ministered in Antioch . . . Mentioning these co-laborers emphasized the fact that the teachings of this epistle were not peculiar to Paul but were held in common with others.

The recipients of the letter were **the churches in Galatia**. (See map before Rom.) This was then a circular letter probably directed to the churches founded during the first missionary journey of Paul and located in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and (Pisidian) Antioch.

The fact that **"ALL THE BRETHREN"** stood behind the Apostle Paul in this letter which he is writing lends authority to his words.

"ALL THE BRETHREN" referred to Peter, James, John, and the other Christian brothers who are part of God's family and involved in Paul's ministry, either directly or indirectly.

The phrase **"TO THE CHURCHES OF GALATIA"** helps us see that this is not a letter to one church but is a **CIRCULAR LETTER** to be distributed among several of the churches in that area.

In the other epistles that the apostle writes, he usually has some warm **PERSONAL GREETINGS** and expressions of **THANKSGIVING** for their faithfulness, or he speaks of his **PRAYERS** for them. However, you can feel the **TONE OF TENSION** in this letter by the absence of these customary remarks.

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

From Paul's normal habit of including the names of his fellow missionaries at the beginning of his letters, it would appear that "the brothers" mentioned here are his fellow missionaries, though their actual identity cannot be known for sure. The interesting point is that Paul does not name these fellow missionaries, as he does elsewhere, not wanting to give the impression that his Gospel requires additional support. It was, after all, received directly from God. At the same time, he wishes to remind the Galatians that the Gospel that had been preached to them, far from being a Pauline oddity, is actually the received doctrine of all the Christian church and its missionaries. p. 708

Eadie says:

It denotes an inner circle of friends, in special companionship with the apostle—at one with him in opinion at the present moment; . . . emphatic—referring not so much to number, though it must include several, as to unanimity, —no exception among them, all of them in the crisis sympathizing with the Galatian churches, and sharing his anxiety to deliver them from imminent jeopardy. p. 8

Hogg & Vine say:

In view of these facts, these words are best understood as referring to his fellow-workers. Apparently the Apostle was usually accompanied on his journeys by a little band of helpers, cp. Acts 20. 4, *e.g.*, where seven are named, beside Luke who was also with him, v. 5. This was a special occasion, however, for some of these had been delegated by certain churches to carry their offerings to Jerusalem, cp. 1 Cor. 16. 3; ordinarily, the number may not have been as large. Here he mentions that his companions, without exception, are with him in what he is about to say; but he leaves them unnamed, because the responsibility, and the arguments, are his own.
p. 19

Ironside says:

In chapters 13 and 14 of Acts we read of Paul's ministry in Antioch of Pisidia, in Iconium, in Lystra, and Derbe. While Antioch is said to be in Pisidia and these other three cities are located in Lycaonia, according to the best records we have, both the provinces of Pisidia and Lycaonia were united to Galatia at this time, so that these were really the cities of Galatia where Paul labored and where God wrought so mightily.
p. 11

Lange says:

Hardly his companions in travel at that time merely, especially helpers in his office (MEYER), but rather all the Christians of his place of residence at that time. This addition has, at all events, the special purpose of adding the authority of others to his own. He wishes the Galatians to understand, that he has on his side all the brethren in the midst of whom he writes, that these have the same opinion of their conduct, and thus indicates that the Galatians, unless they came to another mind, would sever themselves from the great communion of the brethren, who stand and abide upon the foundation of faith which Paul had laid.
p. 12

Lenski says:

All these brethren are at Paul's side, all of them know about the situation in Galatia, all of them know what Paul is writing, all of them agree with him and support him in all that he is writing. The Galatians are not to suppose that Paul is alone and writing by himself in a sort of private way. Nay, all the brethren with him, down to the last one, and "all" implies a goodly number, are backing Paul.

p. 25

Luther says:

He adds for good measure the argument that he does not stand alone, but that all the brethren with him attest to the fact that his doctrine is divinely true. "Although the brethren with me are not apostles like myself, yet they are all of one mind with me, think, write, and teach as I do."

p. 13

MacArthur says:

The churches Paul founded at Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe during his first missionary journey . . .

p. 1657

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

and all the brethren who are with me: Paul implies that there were with him a goodly number of Christian believers, members of the household of faith. Paul associates these unnamed fellow workers with him in sending greetings. **churches of Galatia:** Galatians is a circular letter, intended for several churches.

p. 1516

v. 3 Grace to you and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ

The NET Bible translates verse 3:

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,

Peterson paraphrases verse 3:

So I greet you with the great words, grace and peace!

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The traditional Greek and Hebrew forms of greeting, **grace and peace**, were always used by Paul in his salutations to express the hope that the believing readers might be sustained by daily portions of these blessings. “Grace and peace” find their source in **God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**.

Whenever the Apostle Paul speaks of **“GRACE”** and **“PEACE”** they are always in that order.

When the grace of God has found its way into the human heart there will be peace.

The measure of PEACE ENJOYED = the GRACE ACCEPTED.

We learned that this grace and peace comes from God, the fountain or reservoir of grace and peace. It is conveyed to us through Jesus Christ, the conduit pipe.

It is not only an act of God’s grace that brings peace in the salvation experience, but grace and peace are the daily portion of those who walk with God.

2 Corinthians 12:9 (DAV)

And He has said to me, “My grace is adequate for you, for power is finding its consummation (reaching perfection) in the presence of weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Philippians 4:7 (DAV)

And the peace of God, which is surpassing all comprehension, shall hold in custody your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Anders says:

Grace and peace summarize Paul’s gospel of salvation. Grace, God’s unmerited favor, is the source of salvation (Eph. 2:8-9). When a person believes in Jesus Christ, he or she receives salvation and peace with God, others, and self. Thus, grace leads to peace. Peace represents life in its wholeness or fullness, a life filled with a sense of satisfaction that only God can give.

p. 6

Lange quotes Luther who says:

LUTHER:—Paul wishes the Galatians grace and peace, not from the emperor or kings and princes; for these are wont oftentimes to persecute the godly: nor does he wish them grace and peace from the world, for in the world they shall have tribulation; but from God our Father, that is, he wishes them a godly and heavenly peace.

p. 16

The Rigor of Grace

Grace is opposed to merit, but it is not opposed to effort.

—Bradley Nassif, professor of biblical and theological studies at North Park University (Chicago, Illinois)

Bradley Nassif, "The Poverty of Love," ChristianityToday.com

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v. 4 who gave himself in behalf of our sins so that He might rescue us out from this present evil age according to the will of our God and father.

The NET Bible translates verse 4:

who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age according to the will of our God and Father,

Peterson paraphrases verse 4:

We know the meaning of those words because Jesus Christ rescued us from this evil world we're in by offering himself as a sacrifice for our sins. God's plan is that we all experience that rescue.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Paul concluded his salutation with a magnificent statement regarding the work of Christ on the cross and its delivering power, another major emphasis of this epistle. Christ **gave Himself for our sins** . . . His death was voluntary and final. It satisfied God's righteous demands against sinners, reconciled people to God, and provided for human redemption. One purpose of Christ's death is **to rescue us from the present evil age**. The gospel is an emancipating message. It delivers believing sinners from the power of the present world system through the power of the indwelling Christ just as certainly as it delivers them from eternal judgment to come. Was Paul hinting that the Old Testament Law, so strongly promoted by the Galatian legalizers, would be impotent to accomplish such great things?

Here in verse 4 is stated the **TRUE GOSPEL**. There is no need to add the works of the law to the tremendous work of God in the giving of His Son as a payment for our sins.

The occasion for giving Himself was for our sins and the **PURPOSE** was to **DELIVER US**.

This is one of the clearest statements in the Scripture on the **SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT OF JESUS CHRIST**:

“WHO GAVE HIMSELF ON BEHALF OF OUR SINS.”

Isaiah 53:4-6 (NIV)

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (DAV)

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, in order that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

1 Peter 2:24 (DAV)

Who himself carried our sins to the cross in His body, in order that we having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by His wound you have been healed.

“[HE] GAVE HIMSELF IN BEHALF OF OUR SINS.”

Psalm 49:7-8 (NIV)

No man can redeem the life of another
 or give to God a ransom for him—
 the ransom for a life is costly,
 no payment is ever enough—

Matthew 20:28 (NASB)

just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to
 give His life a ransom for many.”

Notice in the first phrase:

“WHO GAVE HIMSELF IN BEHALF OF OUR SINS”—that is, all of us.

TAKE THEM FIRST TO THE CROSS!

WE ARE ALL GUILTY OF SIN.

Romans 3:23 (DAV)

for all sinned and are falling short of the glory of God,

Romans 6:23 (NASB)

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in
 Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 John 1:8 (DAV)

If we say that we are not having sin, we are leading ourselves astray,
 and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:10 (DAV)

If we say that we have not sinned, we are making Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.

Genesis 4:6-7 (NIV)

Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”

(Welcome to the Family by Stephen W. Brown. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company. Copyright — Fleming H. Revell, 1990.

The Christian life is no place for rationalization. No Christian can afford the luxury of assumed goodness; he knows better. When you become aware of gossip in your life don't call it “an honest assessment of situational facts.” It is sin and you ought to deal with it. When you become aware of a racist attitude in your life don't call it “an honest feeling of fear brought on by the white/black/brown people you have known.” It is sin and ought to be treated as sin. When you become aware of sexual sin in your life don't call it the “natural fulfillment of physical need.” It is sin and you ought to be honest about it. When you can't find it within yourself to love another person don't blame it on that person's “unlovely qualities.” It is sin and God's holiness is not satisfied with a rationalization.
p. 71

(When Being Good Isn't Good Enough by Stephen Brown. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers. Copyright - Stephen Brown, 1990.

I think it would be a great gift to the church if God were to make us all wear neon signs listing our ten greatest sins for all the world to see.

You say, “You've got to be kidding! Everyone would know. It would be horrible for people to look at me and see all my sins!”

No, as a matter of fact, they wouldn't even be looking at your neon sign. They would be too busy trying to hide theirs. And then we would finally get honest. That wouldn't be half bad.

p. 131

(Hope Has Its Reasons: From the Search for Self to the Surprise of Faith
 Rebecca Manley Pippert. San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row,
 Publishers. Copyright - Rebecca Manley Pippert, 1989.

In theory, I have always agreed with C. S. Lewis that for anyone to insist on one's own innocence is about as reasonable as a "divorcee pretending to be a virgin." Nonetheless, that was exactly what I was guilty of. For how else could you account for my attempts to justify, excuse, or flat-out deny things brought to my attention about myself that were unflattering or cast me in a bad light? I sensed a fear of discovering myself as flawed; and this had led me toward a self-deception that liked to ignore the roots of my behavior while focusing on more minor problems.
 p. 8

John Stott points out:

For the essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man. Man asserts himself against God and puts himself where only God deserves to be; God sacrifices himself for man and puts himself where only man deserves to be. Man claims prerogatives which belong to God alone; God accepts penalties which belong to man alone.
 p. 98

(When Being Good Isn't Good Enough by Stephen Brown. Nashville, TN:
 Thomas Nelson Publishers. Copyright - Stephen Brown, 1990.

I love the little boy who prayed, "Dear Jesus, forgive all the bad things I did today, and forgive all the bad things I thought about but didn't get around to doing."
 p. 215

John Calvin points out:

. . . no other satisfactions can lawfully be brought into comparison with that sacrifice of himself which Christ offered to the Father; that in Christ, therefore, and in him alone, atonement for sin and perfect righteousness, must be sought . . .

p. 26

He was the only one who could give **"HIMSELF IN BEHALF OF OUR SINS."**

Psalm 49:7-8 (NIV)

No man can redeem the life of another
or give to God a ransom for him—
the ransom for a life is costly,
no payment is ever enough—

(Knowing God by J. I. Packer) Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
Copyright – J. I. Packer, 1973)

On the cross, God judged our sins in the person of His Son, and Jesus endured the retributive come-back of our wrongdoing. Look at the cross, therefore, and you see what form God's judicial reaction to human sin will finally take. What form is that? In a word, withdrawal and depravation of good. On the cross Jesus lost all the good that He had before: all sense of his Father's presence and love; all sense of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, all enjoyment of God and of created things, all ease and solace of friendship, were taken from Him, and in their place was nothing but loneliness, pain, a killing sense of human malice and callousness, and a horror of great spiritual darkness. . . .

So, too, those who reject God face the prospect of losing all good, and the best way to form an idea of eternal death is to dwell on this thought. In ordinary life we never notice how much good we enjoy through God's common grace until it is taken from us. We never value health or steady circumstances, or friendship and respect from others, as we should till we have lost them.

p. 176

John 3:16 (DAV)

For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, in order that everyone who is believing in Him may not perish but may be having life eternal.

He, Christ, became sin for us that we might experience the righteousness of God in Him.

And Did the Holy and the Just

by Anne Steele (1716-1778)

And did the Holy and the Just,
The Sovereign of the skies,
Stoop down to man's estate and dust
That guilty worms might rise?

<http://www.stempublishing.com/hymns/ss/432>

He became the **LAMB OF GOD** in that He shed His own most precious blood in behalf of our sins.

The **RESULT** of His giving of Himself is seen in the next phrase:

"SO THAT HE MIGHT RESCUE US OUT FROM THIS PRESENT EVIL AGE."

The **KEY NOTE** of the whole epistle hangs on this word:

"RESCUE."

The Gospel is a “RESCUE” from:

a state of BONDAGE,

being SOLD under sin.

When we use the term “RESCUE” we refer to an action whereby we are saving someone who cannot help himself.

Perhaps it is someone who has fallen on a mountain climbing expedition and is no longer capable of bringing himself back down the mountainside because of his injury.

I can long remember when I was the program director at The First taking my Red Cross Senior Life-Saving Course. We had it hammered into our heads over and over again on how to effect a rescue in a water emergency.

God the Father, the great Life-Savior of the universe, has thrown the Ring-buoy of His Son into the sea of human sin. You can choose to drown in the waters of sin or to allow God to effect a rescue by taking hold of His Son, Jesus Christ.

God doesn't send. You go by choice!

The false teachers were wanting to put the Galatians back under bondage to the law. God looks on sin as a state of bondage from which man needs to be rescued.

God, looking down upon the children of Israel in bondage to Egypt, through His miraculous intervention, delivered them under the leadership of Moses and Aaron.

The hymn writer has it right:

Jesus, I Come

by William T. Sleeper

Out of my bondage, sorrow, and night, . . .
 Into Thy freedom, gladness, and light, . . .
 Out of my sickness, into Thy health,
 Out of my want and into Thy wealth,
 Out of my sin and into Thyself,
 Jesus, I come to Thee.

<http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/o/u/outofmyb.htm>

The words **"TO RESCUE"** are used in Acts 23:27 where Claudius, in his letter to Felix about Paul, states the following:

Acts 23:27 (DAV)

When this man had been arrested by the Jews and was about to be slain by them, having come upon them with the troops, I rescued, having learned that he was a Roman.

Our feet had well nigh slipped;
 We were going down into the pit,
 But Jesus rescued us.

We were going down to our death when the strong arm of the Lifesaver, Jesus Christ, reached out and drew us to the shore. No one has ever witnessed a rescue operation like this before.

The Father always takes the initiative. Mankind is drowning in the waters of sin, not knowing there is One who can rescue and who can save. God the Father has thrown the Life-ring of His Son into the sea of sin and death, providing the means of rescue in His Son. And who are we to blame God when we refuse to take hold of that which He has provided to effect the rescue? Man accepts the full responsibility when he rejects the means of the Father for the salvation of man.

Why did Jesus Christ give Himself on Calvary's cross?

“[HE] GAVE HIMSELF IN BEHALF OF OUR SINS SO THAT HE MIGHT RESCUE US OUT FROM THIS PRESENT EVIL AGE.”

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 (DAV)

And even if our gospel is covered, it is covered to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

James 4:4 (DAV)

Adulteresses, are you not knowing that your friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would desire to be a friend of the world is being made an enemy of God.

1 John 2:15-16 (DAV)

Stop loving the world, neither the things which are in the world. If a man keeps on loving the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Because everything which is in the world, the passionate desire of the flesh, and the passionate desire of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Richard C. Trench in his book Synonyms of the New Testament defines the word “AGE” in this way:

All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitute a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral, atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale.

<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/trench/section.cfm?sectionID=59>

“THIS PRESENT EVIL AGE” is not content to perish by itself but desires to drag man down with it to the same destruction.

There is a powerful undertow of **“THIS PRESENT EVIL AGE”** endeavoring to sweep us away from the potential safety that can be ours in the Savior. Satan, the god of this world, uses:

DRUGS,

DRINK,

DIVORCE,

DESPAIR,

DISCOURAGEMENT,

DEPRESSION

and whatever else is at his disposal to accomplish his purpose.

The last phrase of our verse says that this is:

“ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF OUR GOD AND FATHER.”

God would not have us in bondage but in freedom and life in Him.

2 Peter 3:9 (DAV)

The Lord of the promise is not delaying, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not desiring for any to perish but for all to make room for (come to) repentance.

Ephesians 1:9 (DAV)

Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Him

Anders says:

Grace not only saves us from the penalty of sin; it also delivers us from the power of sin. We have been rescued from the enslaving power of this present evil age—a world ruled by Satan, full of cruelty, tragedy, temptation, and deception.

p. 6

Barclay says:

Finally, here Paul, when he speaks of Jesus, sums up in one sentence of literally infinite meaning the heart and the work of Jesus Christ. “He gave Himself . . . to rescue us.” (i) The love of Christ is a love *which gave and suffered*. (ii) The love of Christ is a love *which conquered and achieved*. In this life the tragedy of love is that it is so often frustrated: that it must bear the pain of loving and yet being unable to rescue the one it loves. But the love of Christ is the perfect love because it is backed by that infinite power which nothing can frustrate and which can rescue its loved one from the bondage of sin.

pp. 8-9

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

Most surprisingly, there is no expression of praise for these churches, a normal procedure in his other letters. In these few verses the three major themes of the letter—the source of his authority, the doctrine of grace, and the promise of full deliverance from sin’s power—are tied together in a way that relates all to the sovereign and gracious will of God.

p. 707

Bartlett says:

Christ was both the Priest who offered the sacrifice and the Sacrifice that was offered. Let it never be forgotten that the value of the blood shed on Calvary rests upon the nature of the One who gave it. Unless Jesus Christ be indeed the very Son of God, His death on the cross can avail no more than that of any one or all of the long line of heroes and martyrs through the centuries. The cross of Christ is the one and only bridge of reconciliation between God and man.

p. 15

Bartlett says:

As we experience ever sweeter joys in our friendship with Jesus, we do well to remind ourselves from time to time that Christ had to give Himself for us as the Author of our redemption before He could give Himself to us as the Object of our devotion.

p. 15

Calvin says:

These words, *who gave himself for our sins*, were intended to convey to the Galatians a doctrine of vast importance; that no other satisfactions can lawfully be brought into comparison with that sacrifice of himself which Christ offered to the Father; that in Christ, therefore, and in him alone, atonement for sin, and perfect righteousness, must be sought; and that the manner in which we are redeemed by him ought to excite our highest admiration.

p. 26

De Haan says:

But here we read that Jesus gave HIMSELF. His sacrifice was voluntary. He offered Himself to die in the place of sinners. This verse does not say, "He gave Himself for sinners," but rather it says, "He gave Himself for our sins." Human words fail completely to convey the depth of the meaning of the expression, "He gave Himself, for OUR SINS." It suggests a TRADE, an exchange. He offers us Himself, in exchange for our sins. He wants to save us. He loves the sinner so much that He will pay any price the Father demands. The price is the penalty of the law. God is a holy God and cannot condone sin. It must be put away before He can accept the sinner. But God is also a just God, and for sin to be put away, the penalty must be exacted. But the penalty was eternal death, eternal separation from God. Man could not pay it. It would take him an eternity in Hell to make satisfaction to a broken law.

And here the Saviour steps in. The law said the sinner is cursed, damned, condemned and must die the eternal death. But Christ offers to save that sinner. But the law must be satisfied before God can do so. A loving God cannot violate His justice. He cannot ignore His Word, "the soul that sinneth it shall die." How then can it be done? Jesus said, "I will take man's sin and make it my responsibility. I will bear its penalty, I will take the sinner's place." That is the meaning of our verse, He "gave Himself for our sins." When Jesus offered to take our place, God transferred to Him our sin.

p. 37

Gutzke says:

In these words to the Galatians is the answer to the question: Why did Jesus of Nazareth go to Calvary? Here it is: "who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world." This is the heart of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the particular truth which Christians tell the world. Too often people think Christians are telling them they ought to do good and be good. People in the world seem to expect the church to be preaching at them, that they should be doing better than they are doing. They should be nicer, sweeter people. They should all live together happily and improve things around them. Of course none of that is bad, but that is truly not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

p. 18

Harrison says:

Deliver! If ever you feel depressed or discouraged and need a thrilling uplift, trace the use of “deliver” through the Bible. In the Hebrew and Greek some forty words are used to get the idea across to us. Sin has created such an “evil world,” with so many by-products of suffering, physical, mental, spiritual, circumstantial—yes, financial, that men are its victims at every turn. How gracious that our Saviour delivers from such “according to the will of God and our Father.”

p. 16

Henry says:

This present world is an evil world: it has become so by the sin of man. Jesus Christ has died to deliver us from this present evil world, not to remove his people out of it, but to rescue them from the power of it. This, the apostle informs us, he has done *according to the will of God and our Father*.

p. 1838

Hogg & Vine say:

The verb is in the middle voice, suggesting that He who thus delivers us has an interest in the result of His own act.

p. 21

Hogg & Vine say:

The words may be paraphrased, ‘Who gave Himself for our sins, in order that He might deliver us out of this present evil age that so we might belong to Him’.

p. 21

Hogg & Vine say:

This deliverance may be understood in two ways:—*a* that it refers to present salvation from the evil tendencies and influences which characterise the world, *kosmos*, in this age or period of its history; *b*, that it refers to deliverance out of it when the saints are caught away at the coming of the Lord Jesus, 1 Thess. 4. 17.
p. 23

Ironside says:

“According to the will of God and our Father.” In these words he sums up the purpose of our Lord’s coming into the world. He came to die for our sins that we might be delivered from the power of sin and be altogether for Himself.
p. 23

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

The Galatians in desiring to return to legal bondage are, he implies, renouncing the *deliverance* which Christ wrought for us.
p. 1258

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

according to the will of God and our Father—*Greek*, “of Him who is at once God [the sovereign Creator] and our Father (John 6:38, 39; 10:18, end.) Without merit of ours. His sovereignty as “GOD,” and our filial relation to Him as “OUR FATHER,” ought to keep us from blending our own legal notions (as the Galatians were doing) with His will and plan. This paves the way for his argument.
p. 1258

Lange says:

Who gave Himself for us.—In this clause the Apostle anticipates the other main point which he has to unfold. Instead of regarding the cross of Christ alone as the ground of salvation, the false teachers had influenced the Galatians to seek salvation again in observance of the law.

p. 13

Lange says:

. . . to tear away from a power. The evil world is viewed as possessor by force, as a tyrant, who brings destruction, and in whose power we are by nature.

p. 13

Lange says:

According to the will of God and our Father.—It is best to connect this with the whole of ver. 4. It refers the redeeming work as a whole to the gracious will of the Father, and thus cuts off every ground of objection against this work from the legal point of view.

p. 13

Lange says:

. . . If Christ has for our sakes given His all, ah! should not we surrender ourselves with all that in us is, to Him? Man! keep thyself from sin, on account of which Christ hath endured so much, lest thou thyself bring to nought for Him this great work, for which He came.

p. 16

Lange says:

. . . See how availing and certain is our redemption and salvation, because it proceeds from the will of the Father: how can that be unavailing, which has come to pass according to His will.

p. 17

Lenski says:

All this is “according to the will of our God and Father.” . . . does not mean the act of willing but what God willed. When Christ gave himself he did what God wanted; when he delivered us he again did what God wanted. This is God’s good and gracious will (Luther). One article combines the two names “our God and Father” and designates one person. But in this combination “God” brings out all his greatness and his majesty, “Father” all his love and his tenderness to us who are delivered by Christ.
p. 30

Lightfoot says:

A declaration of the true ground of acceptance with God. The Galatians had practically ignored the atoning death of Christ . . .
p. 73

Lightfoot says:

. . . ‘*deliver*’ strikes the keynote of the epistle. The Gospel is a rescue, an emancipation from a state of bondage.
p. 73

Luther says:

Paul sticks to his theme. He never loses sight of the purpose of his epistle. He does not say, “Who received our works,” but “who gave.” Gave what? Not gold, or silver, or paschal lambs, or an angel, but Himself. What for? Not for a crown, or a kingdom, or our goodness, but for our sins. These words are like so many thunderclaps of protest from haven against every kind and type of self-merit. Underscore these words, for they are full of comfort for sore consciences.
p. 18

Luther says:

This sentence also defines our sins as great, so great, in fact, that the whole world could not make amends for a single sin. The greatness of the ransom, Christ, the Son of God, indicates this. The vicious character of sin is brought out by the words “who gave himself for our sins.” So vicious is sin that only the sacrifice of Christ could atone for sin. When we reflect that the one little word “sin” embraces the whole kingdom of Satan, and that it includes everything that is horrible, we have reason to tremble. But we are careless. We make light of sin. We think that by some little work or merit we can dismiss sin.

p. 19

MacArthur says:

The statement **who gave Himself for our sins** affirms that the purpose of Christ’s coming was to be a sin offering (cf. 3:13).

p. 6

MacArthur says:

The source of the saving gospel of Jesus Christ is the sovereign, loving, compassionate, gracious **will of our God and Father**, who “so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

pp. 6-7

McGee says:

Jesus Christ “gave himself for our sins.” There is nothing that we can add to the value of His sacrifice. Nothing! He gave Himself. What do you have to give, friend? Anything? Can you add anything to His sacrifice? He gave Himself. How wonderful and glorious that is! I am speechless when I read a verse like this. He gave Himself! When you give yourselves, you have given everything—who you are, what you have, your time, your talent—everything. He gave Himself. He couldn’t give any more. Paul just couldn’t wait to say it. Having mentioned Him, he says, “Who gave himself for our sins.” This is the germ of Paul’s subject.

p. 152

McGee says:

Notice that his deliverance is “according to the will of God and our Father.” He *can* deliver us—and it will not be according to law. But it must be according to the *will* of God, my friend. The will of God is that, after He has saved us, we are not to live in sin. How wonderful this is! He *can* deliver us. He *wants* to deliver us. He *will* deliver us, and He will do it according to the will of God. It is God’s will that you be delivered.

p. 152

Patrick & Lowth say:

These words may refer to our deliverance, . . . (Ecum., from the evil manners of this world; this being “the will of God, even our sanctification” (I Thess. iv. 3), and the great end of our Lord’s salutary passion, “who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and bare our sins in his body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, might live to righteousness” (1 Pet. ii. 24, 2 Cor. v. 15, Eph. v. 25, 26): . . .

p. 723

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

Deliver us from this present evil age is similar to Col. 1:13, which states that Christ “has delivered us from the power of darkness” into His kingdom. Both passages develop this truth based on Christ’s redemptive work (Col. 1:14), implying that the word *deliver* refers to sanctification in the face of the temptations of this present age.
p. 1516

Ridderbos says:

By way of exception to the usual pattern of the salutation, the apostle attaches a long description of the work of Christ to his mention of the name of Christ. This at once thrusts the purpose of the letter to the fore: the issue between Paul and the Galatians is the significance of Christ. It is He *who gave himself for our sins*. The active verb suggests the voluntariness, and the reflexive pronoun speaks of the personal and the total in His surrender (cf. Mark 10:45). It is above all Christ’s death that the apostle chooses to stress. This death was necessary because of our sins: Christ’s self-surrender had a reconciling significance.
p. 43

Ridderbos says:

And all this happens *according to the will of our God and Father*. He is the author of the reconciliation and redemption in Christ. His revealed will is the norm for it.
p. 44

Wiersbe says:

We must never forget that the Christian life is a living relationship with God through Jesus Christ. A man does not become a Christian merely by agreeing to a set of doctrines; he becomes a Christian by submitting to Christ and trusting Him (Rom. 11:6). You cannot mix grace and works, because the one excludes the other. Salvation is the gift of God's grace, purchased for us by Jesus Christ on the cross. To turn from grace to law is to desert the God who saved us.

p. 23

Ephesians 1:9 (DAV)

Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Him

(The Furious Longing of God by Brennan Manning) Colorado Springs, CO:
David C. Cook. Copyright– Brennan Manning, 2009.

The death of Jesus Christ on the cross is His greatest single act of unwavering trust in His Abba's love. He plunged into the darkness of death, not fully knowing what awaited Him, confident that somehow, some way, His Abba would vindicate Him.

Twenty years earlier, Jesus spoke these words to His panicked parents: "I must always be where My Abba is." Surely these words must have surfaced in Mary's mind as she stood at the foot of the cross watching her son die.

p. 49

St. John of the Cross said it will never ever be given to any human heart to understand the depth of desolation, utter abandonment, indescribable loneliness, and complete forsakenness that lay behind Jesus' cry. But even in that cry, there is no indication that Jesus ever lost trust or hope or confidence in His Abba.

p. 50

(Love Beyond Reason by John Ortberg) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
Copyright – John Ortberg, 1998.

How many sparrows would it take to equal the value of your life in God's eyes? Put every sparrow that has ever flown on one side of the scales, you on the other, and God will take you every time. If God attends to every mishap in any moment of every sparrow's life, try to imagine how closely he attends to you.
p. 34

Man at Odds with the World

In a world where success is the measure and justification of all things, the figure of him who was sentenced and crucified remains a stranger.

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer, German theologian, pastor, and martyr (1906-1945)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Ethics (Touchstone, 1995), p. 77

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More Mind-boggling Than the Virgin Birth

The virgin birth is far less mind-boggling than the power of all Creation stooping so low as to become one of us.

—U.S. author Madeline L'Engle (1918-2007)

Madeline L'Engle, unknown

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(A Year With Jesus: Daily Readings and Meditations by Eugene H. Peterson)
 San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins. Copyright– Eugene H. Peterson,
 2006.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for going all the way for me, to the cross and to death, making there a “full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the world” and for my sins. Amen.
 p. 299

(If God Is Good: Faith in the Midst of Suffering and Evil by Randy Alcorn)
 Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah. Copyright– Eternal Perspective
 Ministries, 2009.

Satan’s work is evil and suffering—exactly what the messianic promise of Genesis 3 is said to ultimately defeat. “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work” (1 John 3:8). From the beginning, God planned that his Son should deal the death blow to Satan, evil, and suffering, to reverse the Curse, redeem a fallen humanity, and repair a broken world.
 p. 51

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts:
 Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

God our Father is here, and will be here all through the lonely hours; He is an almighty Watcher, a sleepless Guardian, a faithful Friend. Nothing can happen without His direction, for even hell itself is under His control. Darkness is not dark to Him. He has promised to be a wall of fire around His people—and who can break through such a barrier? Worldlings may well be afraid, for they have an angry God above them, a guilty conscience within them, and a yawning hell beneath them; but we who rest in Jesus are saved from all these through rich mercy.
 p. 227

Firefighters Are for Weak People

Recently a firefighter in our church was told by one of his colleagues that belief in Jesus was for weak people. I found that ironic coming from a firefighter.

I have a fire hydrant in the yard that runs along the side of our house. I have never looked at the fire hydrant and felt any shame. I drive by a firehouse every day, and I never think, *If this community didn't have weak people, we would never need firehouses.* And when I pay my property taxes every month—taxes that help finance fire departments—I never get angry at myself, thinking, *If I could just handle fires on my own, I wouldn't have to write this check.*

Imagine a person whose house is on fire. The fire is raging out of control, and soon a fire truck pulls up, sirens blaring. The person runs out of their house in a rage and says, “How dare you come to my house and think that I can't handle this fire myself! Firefighters are for weak people—not for me!” What would you think of someone like that? You would think they were insane.

We know that fire departments are for “weak” people because a power exists that we simply can't deal with on our own: fire. Actually, we admire firefighters because they are people who have committed themselves to take on the power of fire at personal expense.

Christians are weak in the same sense that a community is “weak” for having fire departments. They are people who acknowledge that a power exists that they can't confront and live—the holiness of God. This, however, is not cause for shame, because there was a man, Jesus, who dealt with that power at his own personal expense on a cross. When someone is rescued from the flames, they're not thinking about their weakness; they're overjoyed that someone would risk it all to save them.

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*Dave Dorr, Cincinnati, Ohio, on Resurgence.com.
To read more thoughts from Dave, visit his personal blog.*

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What More Can God Do to Show He Loves Us?

Author and speaker Brennan Manning has an amazing story about how he got the name “Brennan.” While growing up, his best friend was Ray. The two of them did everything together: bought a car together as teenagers, double-dated together, went to school together and so forth. They even enlisted in the Army together, went to boot camp together and fought on the frontlines together. One night while sitting in a foxhole, Brennan was reminiscing about the old days in Brooklyn while Ray listened and ate a chocolate bar. Suddenly a live grenade came into the foxhole. Ray looked at Brennan, smiled, dropped his chocolate bar and threw himself on the live grenade. It exploded, killing Ray, but Brennan’s life was spared.

When Brennan became a priest he was instructed to take on the name of a saint. He thought of his friend, Ray Brennan. So he took on the name “Brennan.” Years later he went to visit Ray’s mother in Brooklyn. They sat up late one night having tea when Brennan asked her, “Do you think Ray loved me?” Mrs. Brennan got up off the couch, shook her finger in front of Brennan’s face and shouted, “What more could he have done for you?” Brennan said that at that moment he experienced an epiphany. He imagined himself standing before the cross of Jesus wondering, *Does God really love me?* And Jesus’ mother Mary pointing to her son, saying, “What more could he have done for you?”

The cross of Jesus is God’s way of doing all he could do for us. And yet we often wonder, *Does God really love me? Am I important to God? Does God care about me?*

Lee Eclow, Vernon Hills, Illinois; source: adapted from James Bryan Smith, The Good and Beautiful God (IVP, 2009), p. 142

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(Grace Notes: Daily Readings with a Fellow Pilgrim by Philip Yancey) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright—Someone Cares Charitable Trust, 2009.

In the heat of an argument my wife came up with an acute theological formulation. We were discussing my shortcomings in a rather spirited way when she said, “I think it’s pretty amazing that I forgive you for some of the dastardly things you’ve done!”

Since I’m writing about forgiveness, not sin, I will omit the juicy details of those dastardly things. What struck me about her comment, rather, was its sharp insight into the nature of forgiveness. It is no sweet platonic ideal to be dispersed in the world like air-freshener sprayed from a can. Forgiveness is achingly difficult, and long after you’ve forgiven, the wound—my dastardly deeds—lives on in memory. Forgiveness is an unnatural act, and my wife was protesting its blatant unfairness.

p. 189

Before the Throne of God Above

(Charitie Bancroft, 1863)

Before the throne of God above
I have a strong and perfect plea.
A great high Priest whose Name is Love
Who ever lives and pleads for me.

My name is graven on His hands,
My name is written on His heart.
I know that while in Heaven He stands
No tongue can bid me thence depart.
No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair
And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look and see Him there
Who made an end of all my sin.

Because the sinless Savior died
My sinful soul is counted free.
For God the just is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me.
To look on Him and pardon me.

Behold Him there! The risen Lamb,
My perfect spotless righteousness,
The great unchangeable I AM,
The King of glory and of grace,

One in Himself I cannot die.
My soul is purchased by His blood,
My life is hid with Christ on high,
With Christ my Savior and my God!

<http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/b/e/beforetg.htm>

(Pearls of Great Price: 366 Daily Devotional Readings by Joni Eareckson Tada) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright – Joni Eareckson Tada, 2007.

Rescue the Perishing

Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

—JUDE VV. 22–23

The movie *Titanic* launched me into one of the liveliest—and longest—prayer times I’ve ever had. With images of that great sinking ship in my mind . . . and the frantic families trapped by locked hatches down in second class . . . and men resigned to the inevitable, drinking brandy and toasting their fate . . . I left the movie crying to God to show mercy to those who didn’t know him. “Oh Lord,” I prayed, “rescue the perishing! Please remember my neighbor, the lady at the salad counter in Gelson’s, the checkout guys at the drugstore, and . . .” On and on I went, listing men, women, and children, some who I knew by name, but most, only by face.

The movie was a powerful metaphor of a frightening reality. This tiny planet has absorbed a moral blow, a gash in its side. Rebellion against God has set it on a crash course with hell, and whether we like it or not, it’s going down—dragging a vast multitude of people with it. Stop and listen. Do you feel the tremor? The down-deep rumbling of something gone terribly wrong?

God didn’t make hell for people. Jesus said it was “prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). It’s unnatural for humans to be there—as unnatural as our turning our backs on a Creator who loves us. God takes no joy in anyone heading for eternal misery. His Son, Jesus, is the lifeboat, the ark, big enough and wide enough to rescue the perishing.

If you had the opportunity to warn people who were about to board the *Titanic* in England, what would you do? Shrug your shoulders and go back to your novel? Ask the Lord to open your eyes to the urgency of telling men, women, and children about the Lifeboat that will bear them safely into eternity.

Lord, forgive my for my nonchalant attitude toward the eternal destiny of my friends, neighbors, coworkers, and family.
(August 17)

Rescue the Perishing

Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
Weep o'er the erring one, Lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save.

Refrain

Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying;
Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.

Tho they are slighting Him, Still He is waiting,
Waiting the penitent child to receive;
Plead with them earnestly, Plead with them gently,
He will forgive if they only believe.

Down in the human heart, Crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;
Touched by a loving heart, Wakened by kindness,
Chords that are broken will vibrate once more.

Rescue the perishing, Duty demands it;
Strength for thy labor the Lord will provide;
Back to the narrow way Patiently win them;
Tell the poor wanderer a Saviour has died.

("Rescue the Perishing" by Fanny J. Crosby. *The New Church Hymnal*,
Lexicon Music, Inc., 1976. #227)

The word "WHO" in verse 4 **REFERS BACK** to the Lord Jesus Christ in verse 3:

"[HE] GAVE HIMSELF IN BEHALF OF OUR SINS"—all of our sins.

His **PURPOSE** in that:

**"SO THAT HE MIGHT RESCUE US OUT FROM THIS PRESENT
EVIL AGE ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF OUR GOD AND
FATHER."**

v. 5 To whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The NET Bible translates verse 5:

to whom be glory forever and ever! Amen.

Peterson paraphrases verse 5:

Glory to God forever! Oh, yes!

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

In His redemptive work Christ accomplished **the will of . . . God . . .** Further, in that obedience the Savior brought **glory** to God . . . Redeemed saints will in addition give glory to God **forever** because of the redeeming work of Jesus Christ.

Thus Paul had already drawn the lines of battle by touching on two vital concerns. He had affirmed his own apostleship and had declared that the basis of man's salvation lies solely in the work of Christ and not in any human works.

Because of what Christ has done, the apostle breaks forth into a doxology of praise.

The only appropriate response to such grace is praise and thankful worship and adoration.

As the apostle considers what great things God has done for His people, his heart is filled with this expression of thanksgiving and praise.

Paul is magnifying the grace of God when he points to an all-sufficient Savior who has effected a rescue from the bondage of sin this present evil world.

With the conclusion of verse 5 we come to the **END OF THE INTRODUCTION** and now prepare to launch into the epistle itself.

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

Paul does not usually include a doxology at the beginning of a letter, but the doxology here serves an important purpose. It sets the Gospel, centering in the preeminence of the Lord Jesus Christ and his work, above any human criticism or praise. The fact that the glory of God and the giving of glory to God will last forever contrasts markedly with “the present evil age,” which is passing away (cf. 1 Co 7:31; Eph 2:2-7).
p. 709

Pinnock says:

“To whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.” The only appropriate response to such grace is praise and thankful worship. Paul does not generally employ a doxology in the opening sentences of his letters. But as he considers what great things God has done for His people, his heart is filled with thanksgiving. For in the last analysis the issue at stake in his controversy with the Galatians is the glory of God. By their insistence on human achievement, the false teachers were downgrading and minimizing what God had done. By pointing to the all-sufficiency of Christ and His finished work, Paul was magnifying God’s grace.
p. 17

(Love Beyond Reason by John Ortberg) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
Copyright – John Ortberg, 1998.

This facet has to do with the heart of the one who loves. When I love you, it is not something I do simply out of duty or obligation.

I remember hearing a Christian speaker say that you should always love your spouse with an *in spite of* love, never with a *because of* love—but who wants to be on the receiving end of that? If, when I was proposing to my wife, I had said, “Well, there’s certainly nothing about *you* that any reasonable person could ever warm up to, but because of my noble character I will hold my nose and love you anyway” the proposing process would not have gone nearly as well as it actually did.

No, when we love someone the mere sight of them causes our eyes to light up. This is beautifully expressed in Exodus at the burning bush when God tells Moses his brother Aaron is on his way: “Even now he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you *his heart will be glad*.” When you see someone you love, it makes your heart glad.

p. 22

If we could **SUMMARIZE THESE OPENING FIVE VERSES** in a sentence it would be:

EVERYTHING PAUL WAS OR HAD TO SAY OR DID CAME THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

v. 6 I am marveling that so quickly you are transferring yourselves from Him who called you in the sphere of Christ's grace unto a different gospel.

The NET Bible translates verse 6:

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are following a different gospel—

Peterson paraphrases verse 6:

I can't believe your fickleness—how easily you have turned traitor to him who called you by the grace of Christ by embracing a variant message!

The Bible Knowledge Commentary titles verses 6-10 and then says:

The denunciation . . .

Conspicuous by its absence is Paul's usual expression of thanksgiving to God for his readers. Instead he vented his astonishment and anger over the Galatians' defection. When compared with the opening of 1 Corinthians this is even more striking, for despite the Corinthians' deep moral defection Paul nonetheless expressed commendation. But here in the face of theological departure he did not express thanks, thus emphasizing the more serious nature of doctrinal apostasy.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says further:

Paul's astonishment was over an almost inconceivable turn of events— the Galatian believers were in the process of turning away (**deserting**, *metatithes*, as in a military desertion) from the truth. Part of the apostle's amazement was because it was happening **so quickly** after his last visit to them, or so soon after the false teachers began their insidious work. The departure was not simply from a system of theology but from God Himself, **the One who had called them by the grace of Christ** (the dominant theme of the epistle). In exchange they were embracing **a different gospel**, one that was false.

The Apostle Paul is amazed here at their action, that so quickly they are transferring themselves from the **"SPHERE OF CHRIST'S GRACE UNTO"** what he calls **"A DIFFERENT GOSPEL."**

Obviously at the first they were so **ENTHUSIASTIC**, and now they have **COOLED OFF** and are beginning to **MOVE IN ANOTHER DIRECTION.**

One of the things that the evil one often does is to get us to fall into a position of doubting the truth of the Gospel. How quickly he swoops down and takes the seed of the Word of God or mixes in the tares so that grace never has an opportunity to operate in our lives.

1 John 5:10-12 (DAV)

The one who is believing in the Son of God is having the witness in himself; the one who is not believing God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness which God has witnessed concerning His Son. And this is the witness, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. The one who is having the Son is having the life; the one who is not having the Son of God is not having the life.

The word “GOSPEL” is going to occur in all of the remaining verses. There will be FIVE REFERENCES to the “GOSPEL”:

Here in verse 6,

Twice in verse 7,

Once in verse 8, and

Once in verse 9.

Satan never bothers to mess around with the trivial. He wants to get to the main issues—the issues that affect eternal destinies. Here he has hit at the “GOSPEL.”

Pinnock says:

The full gravity of their decision is indicated by the fact that God Himself is the one being deserted. “You are so quickly deserting *him* who called you.” It was not simply a case of exchanging one theological opinion for another. It was not some technical mistake concerning an abstract point of doctrine. They were in process of abandoning a personal, loving God who had called them to salvation by His grace. The Galatians themselves certainly did not see it that way. No doubt they believed it was God leading them to a higher plateau of Christian experience. But Paul told it like it was! Had not he himself once sought to destroy the church, believing he was doing God a service? He was aware of the danger of putting religious feelings above the revealed truth of God. However sincere they were, the Galatians were wrong. Even their enthusiasm for God’s law was mistaken and actually an act of rebellion against God. In a day like ours which places so much emphasis on existential experiences, it is especially important to measure our feelings by the objective truth of God’s Word.

p. 19

I have chosen this verse as my **KEY VERSE** to the first study:

“You Were Running Well Until: No Runs, No Hits, and a Big Error.”

You can feel in this verse that Paul is shocked by the suddenness of change that is taking place in their attitudes toward the gospel of Christ’s grace. They are in the process of transferring themselves “from God who called them in this sphere of Christ’s grace, unto a different gospel”—a legalistic type of gospel.

One is amazed at the shortness of memory when it comes to God’s dealings with us as His people.

When we read the history of Israel in the Old Testament, you are amazed at how fickle the people become, and how quick they are to complain and to gripe, and to want to be free to go back into bondage in Egypt rather than to follow out the plan of God which is going to lead to their ultimate blessing in the land which He has promised them.

So these Galatians were **“TRANSFERRING”** themselves back into the bondage of the law and legalistic requirements rather than to live in the freedom which can be theirs through an experience of receiving Christ as Savior.

This gracious provision of the Father has been given to deal with the problem of sin so that we might become His sons and daughters.

Jeremiah 2:13 (NIV)

“My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

Ephesians 4:14 (DAV)

In order that we no longer may be immature, being tossed here and there by the waves, and being carried here and there by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming;

(The Grace of God by Dr. Charles C. Ryrie) Chicago, IL: Moody Press.
Copyright – Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1963.

The Judaisers had perverted the gospel by adding circumcision as a requirement for salvation and fleshly works as a necessity for sanctification. To support themselves in their position they appealed to the historic faith of the Old Testament, to their prestige as coming from headquarters in Jerusalem, and to the natural inclinations of everybody's flesh to want to earn a reward.
pp. 64-65

This kind of preaching is popular because it makes man feel that he can do something to earn merit before God. What he needs is, not a Savior, but someone or something to help him save himself.

This also becomes a very real temptation to a person who has come into a relationship with Christ: to satisfy the same inclinations of gaining acceptance in the presence of God in living the Christian life, a living by certain legalistic standards of do's and don'ts that they follow, and thus make themselves acceptable and approved by God.

If you have ever had the opportunity of teaching water-skiing at camp, you find that one of the biggest problems with the beginning water-skier is that they pull back on the rope because they want to help the boat get them up. There is all the power in the world in the boat to get them out of the water, and yet, they insist on helping instead of depending on the boat to do what it is supposed to do. It is only when the skier learns to be totally dependent upon the boat to do for them what they are not able to do themselves that they begin to experience some success in the art of waterskiing.

The words “**TRANSFERRING YOURSELVES**” has the idea of a deserter from the ranks. He is a turncoat.

These Galatians were AWOL. Instead of pursuing their walk with the Lord they had fallen into fallacy.

The greatest protection against falling into error is to concentrate on one’s personal relationship with the Lord.

Follow the advice of:

1 John 4:1 (DAV)

Beloved, stop believing every spirit, but keep on putting the spirits to the test to see if they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

The Lord Jesus warned in His **SERMON ON THE MOUNT** and also in His **OLIVET DISCOURSE** that we are to:

Matthew 7:15 (DAV)

Beware of the false prophets, who are coming to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

Matthew 24:11 (NASB)

“And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many.

How careful we must be to protect our position in Christ by keeping our priorities straight. First of all, we need to be concentrating on our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and getting to know Him better and better on a daily basis through a consistent systematic study of the Scriptures.

(Hope Has Its Reasons: From the Search for Self to the Surprise of Faith by Rebecca Manley Pippert) San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers. Copyright - Rebecca Manley Pippert, 1989.

Wouldn't it be refreshing to hear over the television airwaves what the apostle Paul claimed: "I am the chief of sinners"? When Paul talked about his "thorn in the flesh," I do not recall Jesus saying to him, "Oh, Paul, for crying out loud! Just buck up and be a man! It's so embarrassing how you share this with everybody. And have you ever stopped to consider how it makes me look?" No, that is not what Jesus said. Rather, he told Paul, "I will not take this thorn away from you because I am glorified in your weakness."

The man on television had done what most of us do without realizing it. He took a secular, popular American myth and simply spiritualized it. He took the Lone Ranger cowboy image and added some god-talk. What he was really saying was, "All I need in life is God and my horse, and we'll ride out in the sunset together. If I've got a problem I'll tell my horse." But that is the gospel according to Louis L'Amour.

p. 174

They are "TRANSFERRING" themselves from the Father who called them:

"IN THE SPHERE OF CHRIST'S GRACE UNTO A DIFFERENT GOSPEL."

Anders says:

Paul was astonished the Galatians were **so quickly deserting** (like a military desertion) from the gospel of grace. This meant they were deserting God, turning their backs on him. It was almost beyond Paul's comprehension that they, having once been delivered from the bondage of law, would go back into this religious prison. Paul calls the Judaizer's blend of law and grace a **different gospel**, thus declaring that mixing law with the gospel is a distortion of truth. Even today, this Galatian error is repeated when people say, "This is what you have to do to be saved; join our church, obey our rules, submit to our baptism, practice our liturgy, worship the way we do, work hard, prove your worth, and earn God's love. In the end, if you are good enough, God will accept you." A works-based gospel is different from the message of grace.

pp. 6-7

Barclay says:

THE basic fact behind the situation of this epistle is this—Paul's gospel was a gospel of free grace. He believed with all his heart that nothing a man could do could ever win the favour of God. He believed passionately that no one could ever earn the love of God. He therefore believed that all that was left for a man to do was to fling himself on the love and mercy of God in one great act of faith. He believed that all that a man could do was to take in wondering gratitude what God offers; and that the important thing was not what we could do for ourselves but what God had done for us. It was this gospel of the free grace of God that Paul had preached.

p. 9

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

At this point Paul would normally introduce an expression of praise for the Christians of the church to which he is writing. Instead, there is an abrupt and indignant cry of astonishment at what seems to be happening among the Galatians. Paul had delivered to them the one Gospel of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and they had received it. But now, according to reports that had come to him, he has reason to believe that the Christians of Galatia are turning from this Gospel to embrace something that was no gospel at all, but only legalism. Paul pronounces a judgment upon any who would pervert this one Gospel of salvation by grace.

p. 709

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

There is a tragic personal element in the way Paul describes their desertion. They are not just departing from an idea or a movement but from a person, from God the Father who had called them to faith. Embracing legalism means rejecting God, because it means substituting a human being for God in one's life.

p. 709

Bartlett says:

"I marvel . . ." The apostle's soul is a seething caldron of wonder, horror and anger as he beholds his Galatian converts being swept from their moorings by a legalism that contradicts and nullifies all that Christ died to procure for them. Oh, that we were more concerned over the peril of souls yielding to the deceitful snares of any form of works-righteousness!
p. 18

Bartlett says:

This is deeply significant; it attaches the stigma of ingratitude to backsliding. Disgrace lies in forsaking His grace. A deepened love for our Saviour will result in a strengthened hold on His doctrine. Let us prayerfully ask ourselves this pertinent question: Would there not be less wandering from the truth of Jesus if there were more wondering at the love of Jesus?
p. 19

Eadie says:

. . . "I marvel that you are so soon turning away (are removing yourselves) from Him who called you in the grace of Christ." The apostle now rushes, as one may say, on the main subject of the epistle, disclosing in a moment the feeling of disappointment which he could not repress or modify.
pp. 18-19

Fergusson says:

In the second part of the chapter, that the apostle may reclaim those Galatians from their errors, he falleth upon them with a sad, though most gentle reproof; wherein, by way of admiration at their inconstancy, he chargeth them with the sin of suffering themselves to be so easily and so soon seduced by their false teachers from the truth, which they had once embraced: whereof he mentioneth three dangerous consequences. First, That hereby they had made defection from God, who called them; and consequently were ungrateful, as walking unworthy of their heavenly calling, Eph. iv. 1. Secondly, That herein they had deserted the doctrine of free grace through Jesus Christ, without which they could not be saved, Eph. ii. 8. And thirdly, They had embraced another gospel and way of salvation, held forth by the false apostles, concerning which he declareth his judgment in the following verse.

p. 15

Hendriksen says:

In Galatians, however, we are confronted with the very opposite. What we find *here* is not satisfaction but stupefaction: overwhelming amazement, painful perplexity. Says Paul: **I am amazed that you are so quickly moving away from him who called you (and turning) to a different gospel, which (in reality) is not (even) another.** Paul could be stern.

p. 37

Hogg & Vine say:

The present tense of the verb suggests that the defection of the Galatians from the truth was not yet complete, and that it would continue, unless of course they were brought to a better mind by this letter. Whether or [not] this was the case is not known.

p. 27

Hogg & Vine say:

These words reveal in a flash the gravity of the situation. The Galatians were not merely exchanging one set of opinions for another, they were not merely preferring an alternative way of access to Him. If they left the grace of God they left God Himself.

p. 28

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

I marvel—implying that he had hoped better things from them, whence his sorrowful surprise at their turning out so different from his expectations. **so soon**—after my last visit; when I hoped and thought you were untainted by the Judaizing teachers.

p. 1258

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

Thus he softens the censure by implying that the Galatians were tempted by seducers from without, with whom the chief guilt lay: and the present, “ye are *being* removed,” implies that their seduction was only in process of being effected, not that it was actually effected.

p. 1258

Lange says:

More exactly: to another kind of gospel . . . A *gospel*, either because the Galatians naturally took the doctrine which the false teachers brought them for the Gospel, or primarily in the general sense of Doctrine of Salvation, which the legal doctrine also claimed to be.

p. 19

Lenski says:

Instead of saying that he is delighted with this or that in the Galatians when he begins the body of his letter, Paul declares that he is shocked at what the Galatians are on the point of doing. The very first paragraph is stunning.
p. 32

Lenski says:

The tone of this section is tense and dramatic. Paul is not swept away by passion. He writes with perfect self-control. He knows the weight of every sentence. Every statement is deliberate and straight to the point. The very first sentence reveals the fact that he is completely informed; all hesitation of uncertainty is absent.
p. 33

Lenski says:

Nothing in the world should ever make the Galatians change away from him who had called them in grace and at the price of his death delivered them from this present world which was wicked and doomed (v. 4). They should have resisted the most powerful and the most persistent efforts to the last breath. Yet they are quickly beginning their apostasy! Paul might have used a stronger word than "I marvel."
p. 35

Lightfoot says:

An indignant expression of surprise takes the place of the usual thanksgiving for the faith of his converts. This is the sole instance where St Paul omits to express his thankfulness in addressing any church.
p. 75

Lightfoot says:

'I marvel that ye are so ready to revolt from God who called you, so reckless in abandoning the dispensation of grace for a different gospel. A different gospel, did I say? Nay, it is not another. There cannot be two gospels. Only certain men are shaking your allegiance, attempting to pervert the Gospel of Christ.
p. 75

Lovett says:

SURPRISE. Paul knew the Galatians well. Yet now he finds himself shocked at how quickly they can change their minds about the Gospel. Instead of the customary words of praise, with which he begins his epistles, he turns to a rebuke. It is an ominous omission. Yet he is fatherly about it. He simply expresses surprise. The Greek indicates their shift from Christ has not yet occurred, but is in progress. Paul is shocked at two things: (1) that they would so quickly forsake freedom in Christ to follow teachers who want to place yokes about their necks, and (2) that they would willfully embark on a course sure to take them from Christ. Paul knew the Galatians could change their minds quickly, but this shift is shockingly fast.

p. 15

Luther says:

How patiently Paul deals with his seduced Galatians! He does not pounce on them but, like a father, he fairly excuses their error. With motherly affection he talks to them, yet he does it in a way that at the same time he also reproves them.
p. 24

MacArthur says:

1:6 *turning away*. This is better translated “deserting.” The Greek word was used of military desertion, which was punishable by death. The form of this Greek verb indicates that the Galatian believers were voluntarily deserting grace to pursue the legalism taught by the false teachers . . .
p. 1658

MacArthur says:

The Galatian Christians not only were being confused and weakened in their confidence to live by grace but were actually **deserting**. The term behind **deserting** (*metatithēmi*) was used of military desertion, which was punishable by death during time of war, much as in modern times. The Greek verb is reflexive, indicating that the act is voluntary. The believers were not passively *being* removed, as the King James translation suggests, but were in the process of removing themselves from the sphere of grace. The false teachers were accountable for their corruption of God’s truth, but the Galatian Christians were also accountable for being so easily misled by it to pursue legalism.
p. 13

McGee says:

This is one of the oldest heresies known, and it is still with us today. It is adding something to the gospel of grace; it is *doing* something rather than simply believing something. It is faith plus something rather than faith plus nothing. Every cult and “ism” has something for you to *do* in order to be saved.
p. 153

Parker says:

... “I marvel that ye are so soon removing.” He catches them in the act. He does not allow a man to complete the wrong, and then run miles after him to reproach him: he seizes the thief’s hand while it is in his pocket; he says, I am surprised at you, stealing in this way. It is always so with the criticism of heaven; it falls upon us in the very middle of the deed. We have so covenanted with our memory as to have let out most of it to our treachery that we might constitute of our recollection a large acreage of cemetery: there we have buried our little children, vows half uttered; there we have buried our evil deeds, thinking we could dig down far enough to have them burned by some under-fire: but the Lord will not blow the blast of his trumpet over that cemetery; he comes to us in the very act and deed, and says, I marvel at you, killing Christ again, selling the Cross once more, making a merchandise of Golgotha: I marvel, “so soon removed,” or, removing—a word which conveys the idea of treachery, apostasy; it is not a change of the mental stand-point, but a change of the heart loyalty. We speak in our day of turncoats, and perverts—men who have given up all that once dignified their manhood, and added beauty to their character; when we so speak we use in effect the word which Paul used when he said “removed,” or removing.
p. 430

Parker says:

Look at this matter of religious fickleness as one of surprise—“I marvel,” I wonder, I am amazed. What is the Apostle amazed at? He is amazed at such shallowness of character; there is nothing in these people; you can sound the depths of the water in which they sail with your finger-tip; there is no water to swim in; a river for a boat? impossible. An ocean for a navy? impossible! You cannot find in such people even the very first element of healthy progress, wise and modest self-respect. We are amazed at fickle religious people, because they make such fools of themselves. They are always finding some new little piece of paper, on which there is written something they cannot make out, but which perfectly entrances them by the brilliance of its genius.
p. 432

Ridderbos says:

Right at the beginning the apostle raises the issue of the threatening apostasy of the churches of Galatia. It is the matter with which his heart is full. There is no occasion to express gratitude for the loyalty of the churches. For an expression of interest in the fortunes and the struggle of those, this is not the place. The painful and dangerous alienation between the apostle and the churches must be discussed forthwith and headon.
p. 46

Simpson says:

. . . a desire for ceremony and outward form instead of spirituality and holiness. This was the delusion which had drawn away the once fervid and evangelical churches of Galatia.
p. 7

Vos says:

“I marvel,” or wonder (the verb frequently implies wondering at something blameworthy) “that ye are so soon removed from him.” *Removed* is in the Greek present middle tense and should therefore be translated “you are in the process of removing yourselves.” In other words, they were responsible for their own defection and the process was not yet complete. As the argument of the epistle progresses, however, the apostle makes it clear that the Galatians were not entirely to blame for their apostasy; false teachers (Judaizers) had come among them with their enticing message. “So soon” is variously interpreted. If translated “so quickly” or “so soon,” it may apply to the short time that had elapsed after the arrival of false teachers, or after the departure of Paul or after their salvation before they turned away from the true faith. Perhaps a better translation is “so readily.” Possibly the apostle is accusing them of something akin to fickleness: “I marvel that you are so readily shifting your ground.” The shift or removal was “from him that called you.” The one who calls in grace must be the Father, for so He is commonly represented in the epistles (e.g., Gal 1:15; Eph 1:3-5). The assertion of turning from God may have startled the Galatians. No doubt they thought they were pleasing the Father by keeping the law, as did the Jews and Paul before his conversion. But the Father now calls in Christ’s grace, the instrument by which, or the element of which, He calls us to salvation.
pp. 24-25

Wuest says:

I am marvelling that in such a manner suddenly you are becoming of another mind and deserting from Him who called you in the sphere of Christ's grace to a message of good news diametrically opposed to the gospel,

...
p. 201

(The Best of A. W. Tozer by A. W. Tozer, compiled by Warren W. Wiersbe)
Camp Hill, PA: Wing Spread Publishers. Copyright– Zur Ltd., 1978,
2000.

The problem is not to persuade God to fill us, but to want God sufficiently to permit Him to do so. The average Christian is so cold and so contented with his wretched condition that there is no vacuum of desire into which the blessed Spirit can rush in satisfying fullness.

p. 38

(Inside the Revolution: How the Followers of Jihad, Jefferson & Jesus are Battling to Dominate the Middle East and Transform the World by Joel C. Rosenberg) Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House. Copyright– Joel C. Rosenberg, 2009.

It is difficult to put into words the reign of terror the Taliban unleashed on the people of Afghanistan. To talk to Afghans who suffered through the hellish conditions these Radicals created, as I had the opportunity to do a research trip to Kabul in October 2008, is to wind up in tears at the nearly unbelievable stories they tell. Wives were beaten by their husbands without reason, with the regime's encouragement. Women were forbidden to style their hair. They were forbidden to wear nail polish. They were forced to wear blue burkas that covered them head to toe and were practically suffocating in hot weather.

Children were beaten by their fathers and psychologically abused. Their schools were shut down. Their toys were taken from them. Movies were forbidden. Television was forbidden. Radio was forbidden, except for a station that continuously taught from the Qur'an. Games were forbidden. Kite flying was forbidden. Concerts were forbidden. Playing music in public was forbidden. New Year's celebrations were forbidden. Christmas decorations were forbidden. Christianity was most certainly forbidden.

Museums were closed. Zoos were closed. Dissenters were jailed. Others were murdered. Apostates were executed. "If you ever wanted to see Satan operating in the open, Afghanistan was it," said a friend of mine who used to travel to Kabul frequently before 9/11. "The Taliban was true evil, unmasked, unrestricted. I have never seen anything like it."¹

1. Author interview with a Christian relief worker on the condition of anonymity, summer 2008.
pp. 254-5

(A Year With Jesus: Daily Readings and Meditations by Eugene H. Peterson)
San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins. Copyright– Eugene H. Peterson, 2006.

What distracts you from God?

I have a difficult time, God, silencing the competing voices, shutting out the seductive images. I want you, but I want a lot of other things, too. "Unite my heart to fear thy name" (Psalm 86:11). Amen.
p. 39

2 Corinthians 11:1-4 (NET)

I wish that you would be patient with me in a little foolishness, but indeed you are being patient with me! For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy, because I promised you in marriage to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I am afraid that just as the serpent deceived Eve by his treachery, your minds may be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus different from the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit than the one you received, or a different gospel than the one you accepted, you put up with it well enough!

v. 7 Which is not another gospel except there are certain ones who are troubling your minds and are desiring to change (pervert) the gospel of Christ.

The NET Bible translates verse 7:

not that there really is another gospel, but there are some who are disturbing you and wanting to distort the gospel of Christ.

Peterson paraphrases verse 7:

It is not a minor variation, you know; it is completely other, an alien message, a no-message, a lie about God. Those who are provoking this agitation among you are turning the Message of Christ on its head.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Paul insisted that a gospel of legalism which adds work to faith is not the same kind of gospel that he preached and by which they were saved. It was actually an attempt **to pervert the gospel of Christ**. And Paul was aware of the fact that at the very time he was writing this epistle the false teachers were at work troubling or **throwing** the Galatians **into confusion** . . .

The Apostle Paul goes on to say this Gospel **"IS NOT ANOTHER GOSPEL."** The Gospel is **GOOD NEWS** and the message these Judaizers are bringing is not good news. It is:

A YOKE OF BONDAGE TO THE LAW and

AN ABOLITION OF GRACE.

If I had **TWO \$1 BILLS**—one real and one counterfeit—you could get the picture:

They look alike.

There is one that is good and one that is not.

The counterfeit lacks quality, authority, and usefulness.

One is worth 100 cents, vs. nothing.

There is similarity without reality.

In Isaiah 14 we read that it is the desire of Satan to be like the most high God. Part of his most effect ministry is to counterfeit that which is genuine.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 (DAV)

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan is disguising himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if also his servants are disguising themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

John 10:7-9 (DAV)

Jesus therefore said to them again, “Truly, truly I am saying to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and he shall go in and he shall go out, and he shall find pasture.

Acts 20:29-30 (DAV)

I am knowing that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking things which have been distorted to draw away the disciples after them.

This **“IS NOT ANOTHER GOSPEL”** because Jesus made it clear in response to Thomas’ question when He said in:

John 14:6 (NASB)

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.

Isaiah 43:11 (NIV)

I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from me there is no savior.

From the **PRESENCE TENSE** of **“TROUBLING,”** evidently they were still there in Galatia. They were battling for the minds of the Galatians as so often seducers will do. When they came in, they disturb the peace.

Satan’s attack here in verse 7 is **TWO-FOLD**. He is:

1. **“TROUBLING [THEIR] MINDS”**—He is **“DESIRING TO CHANGE (PERVERT)”**—twist—**“THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.”**
How is it that he troubles their minds by sowing seeds of doubt about the validity of the message?
2. **TRYING TO CREATE WITHIN THEM A DESIRE “TO CHANGE”**—to water down the message of the Gospel of Christ.

Make no mistake about it, Satan is in the business of attacking our thought life because “as a man is thinking in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7).

Thinking

Feeling

Acting

The centipede was quite happy
 Until a frog in fun said,
 “Pray, which leg goes after which?”
 That worked her mind to such a pitch,
 She lay distracted in a ditch,
 Considering how to run.
 (source unknown)

This happening all about us today where men are twisting the Gospel message so that it is not even the same as that recorded in the Scriptures. Who of us is capable to discern the wreckage of those who have made shipwreck of their faith through a troubled mind or a twisted Gospel?

(When Being Good Isn't Good Enough by Stephen Brown. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers. Copyright - Stephen Brown, 1990.

Someone has said that Satan will use ninety-nine parts truth to float one lie. That is true and that is usually what happens with heresy.
 p. 70

2 Corinthians 10:5 (NET)

and every arrogant obstacle that is raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to make it obey Christ.

The only cure for a **TROUBLED MIND** and a **TWISTED GOSPEL** is to turn to Christ and to trust in His ability to do what He has promised. That is to provide **ETERNAL SALVATION** for all those who would call upon His name.

Acts 4:12 (DAV)

And Peter, having seen this, he replied to the people, “Men, Israelites, why are you marvelling at this, or why are you fixing your attention upon us, as if by our own power or piety we have made him to be walking about?”

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

Paul now wants to explain or correct his phrase, “a different gospel.” If left without any comment, that phrase might suggest that there are various gospels from which a Christian may choose. This is the opposite of what Paul is saying. So he adds that actually there cannot be another Gospel besides the one that describes God’s way of salvation in Christ. The Gospel is one, and any system of salvation that varies from it is counterfeit.
p. 709

Baxter says:

And *what* was the main Galatian error? Paul calls it “*another* gospel, which is *not another*” (i. 6, 7), and then adds: “There be some that trouble you and would *pervert* the Gospel of Christ.” It is unfortunate that our Authorised Version puts the word “another” twice here, for Paul uses two different Greek adjectives (as the R. V. indicates). The first adjective (*heteros*) means “another of a *different* kind”; whereas the second adjective (*allos*) means “another of the *same* kind.” Paul would have the Galatians definitely to understand that they were being drawn away, not to a superior form of the same Gospel (as they gullibly supposed), but to something which was essentially different. And then, to make his meaning finally clear, he adds that the real bent of these troublers was to “*pervert*” the “Gospel of Christ.” The Greek verb here translated as “pervert” means, literally, to twist a thing round, or reverse it. In reality these troublers of the Galatians were not giving them merely “another Gospel of the same kind,” with supposedly superior features: they were twisting the *one and only* “Gospel of Christ,” and reversing its meaning into something which it never meant at all.
pp. 141-2

Eadie says:

Whatever would derogate from the sufficiency of Christ’s gospel, or hamper its freeness, is a subversion of it, no matter what guise it may assume, or how insignificant the addition or subtraction may seem.
p. 24

Gutzke says:

“Pervert” is to “twist,” to make it different. This means these others were preaching the facts about Christ in some other way than the way in which Paul had preached.

p. 21

Haldeman says:

a. Certain men from Judea.

These men purported to come from the mother Church in Jerusalem. They came to Antioch and preached to the Gentile converts that in order to be saved they must do something more than believe on our Lord Jesus Christ; they must actually become Jewish proselytes, take Jewish ground, be circumcised and keep the law of Moses.

This intrusion of the legalists among the Gentile disciples cause great trouble, and the Church forthwith commissioned Paul and Barnabas to go up to Jerusalem that they might consult the apostles and elders about the question.

p. 251

Henry says:

You will find it to be no gospel at all, but the perverting of the gospel of Christ. Those who go about to establish any other way to heaven than what the gospel of Christ has revealed will find themselves wretchedly mistaken.

p. 1838

Hogg & Vine say:

Guided by Paul’s usage elsewhere the words may be paraphrased, “Unto a gospel which differs so radically from that which I preached to you that it is not another gospel, for it is not a gospel at all”.

p. 29

Hogg & Vine say:

pervert—*metastrephō*, to transform into something of an opposite character, as the sun into darkness, Acts 2. 20, laughter and joy into mourning and heaviness, James 4. 9.

p. 30

Lange says:

. . . Where Satan cannot persuade men to open sins, he seeks to perplex their consciences, and pervert the gospel, which is the only means of salvation; in this too he very easily succeeds, because the doctrine of works appears quite agreeable to the reason.

p. 21

Lenski says:

When Paul writes, “to pervert (aorist, actually to pervert) the gospel of Christ,” he is not thinking of what these perverters actually teach. That is an actual and a complete perversion and not merely a willingness to pervert. Paul is thinking of the gospel of Christ which the Galatians had received from him. This gospel these perverters wanted to upset in the hearts of the Galatians so that the Galatians should no longer believe it. Yet thus far they only wanted to do this damnable thing, they had not yet succeeded. Paul is writing in order to prevent their success.

p. 37

Luther says:

To paraphrase this sentence: “These false apostles do not merely trouble you, they abolish Christ’s Gospel. They act as if they were the only true Gospel-preachers. For all that they muddle Law and Gospel. As a result they pervert the Gospel. Either Christ must live and the Law perish, or the Law remains and Christ must perish; Christ and the Law cannot dwell side by side in the conscience. It is either grace or law. To muddle the two is to eliminate the Gospel of Christ entirely.”

p. 31

MacArthur says:

pervert. To turn something unto its opposite. By adding law to the gospel of Christ, the false teachers were effectively destroying grace, turning the message of God's undeserved favor toward sinners into a message of earned and merited favor.
p. 1658

McGee says:

The word *pervert* is the Greek word *metastrephō*. It is a strong word, used by Dr. Luke in speaking of the sun *turned* to darkness (see Acts 2:20), and by James, speaking of laughter *turned* to mourning (see James 4:9). To attempt to change the gospel has the effect of making it the very opposite of what it really is. This is important to see.
p. 153

Wuest says:

Only, there are certain ones who are troubling your minds and are desiring to pervert the gospel of Christ.
p. 201

(Exploring the Mind & Heart of the Prince of Preachers: Five-thousand illustrations under one-thousand topical headings from the works of C. H. Spurgeon by C. H. Spurgeon) Oswego, IL: Fox River Press. Copyright– Fox River Press, 2005.

O prejudice, prejudice, prejudice, how many hast thou destroyed! Men who might have been wise have remained fools because they thought they were wise. Many judge what the gospel *ought* to be, but do not actually enquire as to what it is. They do not come to the Bible to obtain their views of religion, but they open that Book to find texts to suit the opinions which they bring to it. They are not open to the honest force of truth, and therefore are not saved by it. 3205.327
p. 29

(The Gospel for Real Life: Turn To The Liberating Power Of the Cross ... Every Day by Jerry Bridges) Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.
Copyright – Jerry Bridges, 2002.

The curse falls on everyone who does not continue to do *everything* written in the Book of the Law. This is an impossibly exacting standard. At the U.S. Air Force Academy near my home, the minimum requirement for graduation is a C average (commonly known as a 2.0 grade point average (GPA) on a maximum scale of 4.0). Civilian institutions may vary in their requirements, but no university or college demands a perfect 4.0 GPA for graduation. If they did, only a scant few would graduate. But Paul tells us this is what the Law of God demands. The old Ivory soap slogan, “99 44/100 percent pure” apparently denotes quite an accomplishment in the manufacture of soap, but such a percentage is not good enough to satisfy the Law of God.

p. 77

(My God Is True!: Lessons Learned Along Cancer’s Dark Road by Paul D. Wolfe) Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust. Copyright– Paul D. Wolfe, 2009.

Let us all be reminded of the good counsel that the *Westminster Larger Catechism* provides about hearing sermons:

Question 160: What is required of those that hear the word preached?

Answer: It is required for those that hear the word preached, that they attend upon it with diligence, preparation, and prayer; examine what they hear by the scriptures; receive the truth with faith, love, meekness, and readiness of mind, as the word of God; meditate, and confer of it; hide it in their hearts, and bring forth the fruit of it in their lives.

p. 98

Earning a Free Gift

This morning I received the latest promotional e-mail from a clothing provider I really like to patronize: L. L. Bean. I read the subject line with interest: “Double Coupon Dollars: Our Gift to You.”

The old sales trick worked. The promise of something free compelled me to open the e-mail. But the first words I read from the e-mail itself gave me a different message: “Earn Double Coupon Dollars.” Wait. Didn’t the subject line say it was a gift? Now they want me to “earn” their gift?

Theological spirit that I am, I lost interest in L. L. Bean’s promotion and instead began thinking about all the ways throughout history that churches have pulled that same “bait and switch” trick: Salvation is God’s free gift; here’s how you earn it.

David Neff, editor in chief and vice-president, Christianity Today International

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(PreachingToday.com)

(Our Lord Prays For His Own: Thoughts on John 17 by Marcus Rainsford)
Grand Rapids, MI.:Moody Press. Copyright – Kregel Publications,
1985.

We sometimes question whether God accepts the blood of Jesus for our sins; the Lord Jesus never doubted Jehovah’s acceptance of His blood for all the sins of His people.

p.40

(Seize the Day with Dietrich Bonhoeffer by Charles Ringma) Colorado Springs, CO: Piñon Press. Copyright – Charles Ringma, 2000.

Temptation to Forgetfulness Hebrews 10:22

“Satan does not here fill us with hatred of God, but with forgetfulness of God.”

—TEMPTATION

The greatest form of punishment that can be handed out to another human being is not acts of aggression, but to be ignored and to be subject to the slow, painful effect of neglect. This destroys the other person. It makes the other a nonperson. Similarly, the greatest temptation is not to be angry with God, but to gradually ignore Him to the point where He is no longer relevant for those things that are important features of our lives.

Prayer

*Father, grant that when my relationship
with You becomes problematical, my
I continue to actively engage You in
an attempt at resolution and not
simply begin to ignore You.
Amen.*

(October 4)

(The Me I Want to Be: Becoming God's Best Version of You by John Ortberg)
Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright– John Ortberg, 2010.

If I think God's aim is to produce rule-followers, spiritual growth will always be an obligation rather than a desire of my heart.
p. 27

(Just Like Jesus Devotional: A Thirty Day Walk with the Savior by Max Lucado) Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson. Copyright – Max Lucado, 2002.

I saw an example of this the other day in the grocery store.

There is one section in the supermarket where I am a seasoned veteran: the sample section. I'm never one to pass up a snack. Last Saturday I went to the back of the store where the samplers tend to linger. Bingo! There were two sample givers awaiting hungry sample takers. One had a skillet of sausage and the other a plate full of cream cheese covered celery. You'll be proud to know I opted for the celery. I wanted the sausage, but I knew the celery was better for me.

Unfortunately, the celery lady never saw me. She was too busy straightening her sticks. I walked past her, and she never looked up. The sausage lady, however, saw me coming and extended the plate. I declined and made another circle past the celery lady. Same response. She never saw me. She was too busy getting her plate in order. So I made another loop past the sausage lady. Once again the offer came, and once again with admirable resolve I resisted. I was committed to doing the right thing.

So was the celery lady. She was determined to get every celery stick just so on her plate. But she cared more about the appearance of her product than the distribution. I stopped. I coughed. I cleared my throat. I did everything but sing a song. Still no response. The sausage lady, however, was waiting on me with sizzling sausage. I gave in; I ate the sausage.

The celery lady got off target. She was so occupied with the small matters (i.e., celery organization) that she forgot her assignment (i.e., to help needy, hungry, pitiful shoppers like me).

How do we keep from making the same mistake in life? God wants us to be just like Jesus and have focused hearts.
pp. 75-76

(The Beautiful Fight: Surrendering to the Transforming Presence of God Every Day of Your Life by Gary Thomas) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright– Gary L. Thomas, 2007.

His worst trouble is blindness, for he cannot see all this. Then the whole love of God Almighty . . . gives him eyes to see himself.

Julian of Norwich

Disregard the study of God, and you sentence yourself to stumble and blunder through life blindfolded, as it were, with no sense of direction and no understanding of what surrounds you. This way you can waste your life and lose your soul.

J. I. Packer

“I have come to judge the world. I have come to give sight to the blind and to show those who think they see that they are blind.”

Jesus, in John 9:39 NLT

p. 57

God-sight is a God-gift. We depend on God for his mercy to give us what we lack: “Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law” (Psalm 119:18). Begin praying with the psalmist, “Look on me and answer, O LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death” (Psalm 13:3).

This is a simple verse to memorize and a prayer worth praying every day. You might want to personalize it a bit, perhaps like this: “God, help me to see. Give light to my eyes. Overcome my blindness, lest I fall asleep to your ways.”

As part of your daily worship and as an act of self-offering, plead with God to graciously give light to your eyes.

p. 68

v. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel to you contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be Anathema.

The NET Bible translates verse 8:

But even if we (or an angel from heaven) should preach a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be condemned to hell!

Peterson paraphrases verse 8:

Let me be blunt: If one of us—even if an angel from heaven!—were to preach something other than what we preached originally, let him be cursed.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

To emphasize the fact that the true **gospel** of the grace of God cannot be changed, Paul first stated a hypothetical case. **If** he (a divinely called apostle) **or an angel** (a heavenly messenger) were to alter the gospel message—a highly improbable situation—then **let him be** accursed or **eternally condemned** (*anathema*).

Here Paul says even if we should change our minds and:

“PREACH ANOTHER GOSPEL” or

“AN ANGEL FROM HEAVEN, SHOULD PREACH A GOSPEL TO YOU CONTRARY TO THAT WHICH WE PREACHED TO YOU, LET HIM BE ACCURSED”—Let him be set aside for judgment and destruction.

There is no other way.

The Way of the Cross Leads Home

by Jessie B. Pounds

I must needs go home by the way of the cross,
 There's no other way but this;
 I shall ne'er get sight of the gates of light,
 If the way of the cross I miss.

I must needs go on in the blood-sprinkled way,
 The path that the Savior trod,
 If I ever climb to the heights sublime,
 Where the soul is at home with God.

Then I bid farewell to the way of the world,
 To walk in it nevermore;
 For my Lord says, "Come," and I seek my home,
 Where He waits at the open door.

<http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/w/a/waycross.htm>

Paul is **STERN** and **DOGMATIC** here.

He is **POSITIVE** because he is **STANDING ON FIRM GROUND.**

C. S. Lovett says:

The addition of anything to the Gospel of Christ destroys it. As the adding of 1% strychnine to a glass of pure grape juice turns it into a fatal drink, so does the addition of works to the Gospel of Christ turn it into a soul-destroying teaching.

p. 16

Our intentions may be the very best and our efforts the greatest, but if it is contrary to the Gospel it will be to no avail.

You can be very sincere, but at the same time, be sincerely wrong.

Matthew 7:21-23 (DAV)

Not everyone who is saying to me, 'Lord! Lord!' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who is doing the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many shall say to me on that day, 'Lord! Lord! did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never came to know you. Be going away from me, you who are practicing lawlessness.'

I once was watching a grade school ball game and this kid hit a foul ball. One of the kids sitting on the sidelines jumped up and caught it before the fielders could get to it. It was a great catch that he made, but it did not count because he was not in the game.

This same thing has happened in football games. When a player on the sidelines has become so overcome by what is happening on the field of play that he has darted in to make a critical tackle. It does not count because he is not in the game.

The **PROPHETS OF BAAL** in 1 Kings 18 really are dedicated and committed to calling fire out of heaven to prove to Elijah that Baal is a real god. But as they call from 9:00 in the morning until noon and get no answer, they begin cutting themselves with knives and lances and running around the altar, crying upon a figment of their imagination.

Paul says, whether it is us or an angel that **“PREACH A GOSPEL CONTRARY TO THAT WHICH [was] PREACHED”**:

“LET HIM BE ANATHEMA”—ACCURSED.

The **“ANGEL FROM HEAVEN”** coming to **JOSEPH SMITH** sure renders Mormonism in this particular category, doesn't it?

“LET HIM BE ANATHEMA”—ACCURSED.

What is meant by **“ANATHEMA”**?

Machen points out:

The fundamental idea, when a thing is called an *anathema*, is that the thing has been taken from ordinary use and has been handed over to God. If it is a good thing, it has been handed over to Him for His use; if it is a bad thing, it has been handed over to Him for destruction: but in either case men have no more to say about it; it is taken out of ordinary relationships and is “devoted” to God.

So here Paul says—if the original sense of the word is to be regarded as still in view—that the punishment of the man who attempts to lay violent hands upon the gospel of Christ should be in God's hands: that man should be regarded as beyond men's power to help; he should be regarded as having fallen into that state about which the Epistle to the Hebrews says: “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” [Hebrews 10:31].
p. 48

Vos points out:

Just as Paul called down a curse on any who added to the requirements of the gospel, so John hurled a curse at those who added or subtracted from the message of Revelation (see Rev 22:18-19).
p. 26

Revelation 22:18-19 (DAV)

It is I who am testifying to everyone who is hearing the words of the prophecy of this book; if anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues which have been written in this book. And if anyone shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his portion from the tree of life and out of the holy city, which have been written in this book.

“ANATHEMA” in the Old Testament is used of a person or thing set apart and devoted to destruction because it is hateful to God.

It is a serious responsibility to be charged with the message of the Gospel of Christ and to be certain that that which is being taught is true.

(The Agony of Deceit by Michael Horton, editor. Chicago: Moody Press. Copyright - The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1990.

The often-reported immediate “conversations” with God seem to give the impression not only that they possess a source of truth beyond the Bible, but also that they are exempt from following acceptable methods of biblical interpretation. This should evoke a protest. Not only is the Bible sufficient. But also the proper principles of interpretation are universal and, therefore, binding upon all.
p. 64

Writes Pat Robertson, “I can hardly think that the Bible, which was transmitted through human beings, is totally perfect. I believe it to be the Word of God and a fully inspired book, but not perfection.”
p. 65

It exhibits a glaring deficiency in both to claim, as does Charles Capps, that Job “was sure not under the anointing” when he said, “The Lord gives and the Lord takes away.” Capps calls this statement a “lie.” Similar quotations can be multiplied.
p. 66

(The Agony of Deceit by Michael Horton, editor. Chicago: Moody Press.
Copyright - The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1990.

The objective of both groups is to secure success and happiness for man rather than to present the biblical message of sin and grace. Forget “glorifying God and enjoying Him forever”! The goal of the Christian life is to “name it and claim it.”
p. 71

The possibility thinker makes self-esteem the material principle of the interpretation of Scripture and therefore the ultimate determinant of its meaning and of the theology built upon it. The net effect is “another gospel.” The contention that Jesus came into the world to save from the shame of a low self-image and to instill self-esteem hardly warrants any other conclusion.

The positive confessor has a similar problem. For him health and wealth is the material principle of the interpretation of Scripture. The upshot is that he believes that every Scripture passage and every Scripture doctrine affirms that the believer may anticipate, indeed decree, success. This is “another gospel” as well.
p. 87

Two Foundational Facts of Human Enlightenment: (1) There is a God;
(2) You are not He!

So reads the caption of a popular poster.
p. 107

During a crusade, Copeland gave his audience a familiar lesson: “I say this and repeat it so it doesn’t upset you too bad. . . . When I read in the Bible when He [Jesus] says, ‘I Am,’ I say, ‘Yes, I Am, too!’” But when Shirley MacClain [sic] is shown in a television movie giving in to her New Age instructor’s charge to repeat, “I am God” (which is what is meant by “I AM”), evangelicals get up in arms! Why the reaction to the one but not to the other?
pp. 115-16

(The Agony of Deceit by Michael Horton, editor. Chicago: Moody Press.
Copyright - The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1990.

It is appropriate that a prosperity gospel be born in the hedonistic, self-centered, get-rich-quick milieu of modern American society. We are, by nature, pagan. Either our religion will transform us or we will transform our religion to suit our sympathies.
p. 123

James 3:1 (DAV)

Stop becoming many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive a greater condemnation.

Anders says:

A hypothetical case shows the seriousness of legalism's perversion of grace. Through hyperbole (a deliberate exaggeration for emphasis), Paul declares that anyone who preaches a mixture of grace and law is worthy of eternal condemnation. A teacher who requires others to obey the law as a requirement for salvation is leading others to a Christless eternity. Paul uses strong language because he is dealing with a life-or-death situation. You must choose: the gospel of grace Paul preached or the gospel of works the perverters preached.
p. 7

Bickel & Jantz say:

In our politically correct culture, it's unfashionable to condemn anyone for wrongdoing, especially if it involves a wrong viewpoint. Rather than holding people who distort the truth accountable, we would rather let them off the hook by saying something like, "Well, you're entitled to your opinion." Not the apostle Paul. He isn't about to let the Judaizers off the hook, and so he pronounces a curse on them, and not just any curse. This is the major league of curses—God's curse. And just to make sure the Galatians know he isn't singling out any one person or group, Paul includes himself and the angels in the mix. In effect Paul is saying, "Let God's curse fall on *anyone* who preaches a different gospel."
p. 30

Harrison says:

In these words the apostle establishes for all time the authority and validity, the finality and fixity of the Gospel he was called to preach, the Gospel that is handed down to us by inspiration in the sacred Scriptures.

So assured is Paul that he pronounces a curse upon those who proclaim any other gospel. This is not personal pique, spoken in a spirit of revenge upon those who were disturbing his converts in these churches of Galatia. No indeed. They were perverting the Gospel of Christ and thereby offering affront to God and to “the grace of Christ.” He denounces them with the anathema of God. Let all such stand in awe: God Himself will safeguard His Gospel, so dearly purchased.
p. 22

MacArthur says:

accursed. The translation of the familiar Greek word *anathema*, which refers to devoting someone to destruction in eternal hell . . .
p. 1658

MacArthur says:

The New Testament speaks of two general categories of people whom God devotes to destruction. The first category is “anyone [who] does not love the Lord” (1 Cor. 16:22). The second is false teachers, who in Galatians 1:8-9 Paul twice calls accursed. Jesus warned His disciples that “false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect” (Matt. 24:24). False teachers are children of their “father the devil, and . . . want to do the desires of [their] father,” who “whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies” (John 8:44). Paul reminded Timothy that such people in the leadership of the church at Ephesus he had “delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme” (1 Tim. 1:20).
p. 10

Machen says:

The word *anathema*, here translated “accursed,” is an interesting word. The derivation of it is very simple: *ana* means “up”; *the* is a root meaning “to place” or “to put”; *-ma* is a noun ending with a passive significance. Hence an *anathema* is “a thing that is placed up.” The word came to refer especially to what is “placed up” in a temple as a votive offering to a god. So the word is used in Lk. 20:5: “And when certain men said concerning the Temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and *offerings* . . .” The spelling is a little different in this passage, a long *e* standing for a short *e* in the *the* of *anathema*; but essentially it is the same word.

How then can a word that means “votive offering” possibly come to have the bad sense, “accursed”? The answer to that question seems fairly clear. The fundamental idea, when a thing is called an *anathema*, is that the thing has been taken from ordinary use and has been handed over to God. If it is a good thing, it has been handed over to Him for His use; if it is a bad thing, it has been handed over to Him for destruction: but in either case men have no more to say about it; it is taken out of ordinary relationships and is “devoted” to God.

So here Paul says—if the original sense of the word is to be regarded as still in view—that the punishment of the man who attempts to lay violent hands upon the gospel of Christ should be in God’s hands: that man should be regarded as beyond men’s power to help; he should be regarded as having fallen into that state about which the Epistle to the Hebrews says: “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

pp. 47-48

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

If even the apostles or an **angel from heaven** were to **preach** a false gospel, they would be **accursed**. That being the case, **anyone** who proclaimed a perversion of the message that the Galatians had **received** from Paul fully deserved eternal destruction.

p. 1517

Wuest says:

The word *accursed* is from *anathema*. It is a word used in the LXX, of a person or thing set apart and devoted to destruction, because hateful to God. Hence in a spiritual sense it denotes one who is alienated from God by sin.
p. 40

Vos says:

“Anathema” is the Septuagint (GK translation of the O.T.) rendering of Hebrew *cherem*, a thing devoted to God for preservation or destruction. While in some rabbinic and modern contexts it signifies simply excommunication, Paul uses it here as the strongest possible form of a curse. Just as Paul called down a curse on any who added to the requirements of the gospel, so John hurled a curse at those who added or subtracted from the message of Revelation (see Rev 22:18-19).

On the face of it, verse 9 seems to be largely a repetition of the curse enunciated in verse 8. But there are important differences. In verse 8 the subjunctive is used—“should preach.” In verse 9 the Greek suggests that at least one person is actually preaching this false gospel. Another difference is that in verse 9 Paul observes, “As we said before.” This is too emphatic to refer to the previous verse and is assumed to refer to the apostle’s last visit among them. At that time he felt the need of warning them against possible false teaching which apparently had not yet actually come among them. Moreover, while verse 8 refers to Paul’s preaching among them, verse 9 alludes to their reception of his message. So this verse is really quite strong language. It recalls the apostle’s warning in person of impending apostasy, alludes to an actual outbreak of heretical teaching among them, reminds them of their genuine reception of the truth at his hands, and pronounces a curse on the false teachers who are subverting them.
pp. 26-27

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 (DAV)

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan is disguising himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if also his servants are disguising themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts:
Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

Ah! believer, it is safer always for you to be led of the Spirit into gospel liberty than to wear legal fetters. Judge yourself at what *Christ* is rather than at what *you* are. Satan will try to mar your peace by reminding you of your sinfulness and imperfections: you can only meet his accusations by faithfully adhering to the gospel and refusing to wear the yoke of bondage.
p. 501

(My Utmost For His Highest by Oswald Chambers) Grand Rapids, MI:
Discovery House. Copyright– Oswald Chambers Publications
Association, 1992.

The most difficult person to deal with is the one who has the prideful self-satisfaction of a past experience, but is not working that experience out in his everyday life. If you *say* you are sanctified, *show it*. The experience must be so genuine that it shows in your life. Beware of any belief that makes you self-indulgent or self-gratifying; that belief came from the pit of hell itself, regardless of how beautiful it may sound.
(August 27)

Americans Believe in a Flexible Jesus

In his book *Jesus Mean and Wild*, Mark Galli references his interview with Stephen Prothero in 1994. During that interview, Prothero said:

Christians traditionally, as they've shaped Jesus, have been worried about getting it wrong, including the Puritans. Americans today are not so worried. There isn't the sense that this is a life-and-death matter, that you don't want to mess with divinity. There's a freedom and even a playfulness that Americans have . . .

The flexibility our Jesus exhibits is unprecedented. There's a Gumby-like quality to Jesus in the United States. Even turning Jesus into a friend among born-again Christians—that kind of chutzpah is something that was unknown even to Americans in the Colonial period.

Mark Galli, Jesus Mean and Wild (Baker, 2006), p. 16

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(The *Preces Privatae* of Lancelot Andrewes, Bishop of Winchester selections from the translation by F. E. Brightman) London: Methuen & Co. Ltd. Copyright – unknown, 1920.

Let not noisome delights oppress me:
 at leastwise let not perverted habit crush me.
 From evil and unlawful desires,
 from vain noisome unclean thoughts,
 from deceits of malignant spirits,
 from pollutions of mind and body.
 p. 145

(My Utmost For His Highest by Oswald Chambers) Grand Rapids, MI:
Discovery House. Copyright– Oswald Chambers Publications
Association, 1992.

The fact that we insist on proving that we are right is almost always a clear indication that we have some point of disobedience.

June 30

(What Difference Do it Make?: Stories of Hope and Healing by Ron Hall, Denver Moore, and Lynn Vincent) Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson. Copyright – Ron Hall, Denver Moore, Lynn Vincent, 2009.

Listen, if the devil ain't messin with you, he's already got you.
p. 45

v. 9 Even as we have said before, and now again I am saying, if anyone is preaching a gospel to you contrary to that which you received, let him be Anathema.

The NET Bible translates verse 9:

As we have said before, and now I say again, if any one is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let him be condemned to hell!

Peterson paraphrases verse 9:

I said it once; I'll say it again: If anyone, regardless of reputation or credentials, preaches something other than what you received originally, let him be cursed.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

In this verse Paul seemed to repeat himself, but he actually advanced his thought. Paul and Barnabas had given a warning of judgment when they had preached to the Galatians. Now Paul repeated it. A zealous champion of the purity of the gospel of grace, Paul said it again: **If anybody** were **preaching** a different **gospel** (which the false teachers were), he would come under God's eternal judgment. It is not difficult to understand why Paul reacted so strongly, because the Judaizers were impugning the Cross; for if works were necessary for salvation, then the work of Christ was not sufficient . . . Furthermore a great deal is at stake for lost people. When the gospel message is corrupted, the way of salvation is confused and people are in danger of being eternally lost.

We have the same statement as was made in verse 8 with a couple of **EXCEPTIONS**:

1. In verse 8 it was:

“we or an angel from heaven.”

In verse 9 it is:

“ANYONE.”

2. In verse 8 it was:

“should preach.”

In verse 9 it is:

“IS PREACHING.”

We need to always remember that when the Scripture gives a warning and makes a statement, we would do well to heed its message. But it becomes even more important and significant when that warning or message is repeated a second time.

The Apostle Paul in verse 9 is making reference to another time that he had given them the warning rather than just what was given in verse 8.

Vos points out:

This is too emphatic to refer to the previous verse and is assumed to refer to the apostle's last visit among them. At that time he felt the need of warning them against possible false teaching which apparently had not yet actually come among them. Moreover, while verse 8 refers to Paul's preaching among them, verse 9 alludes to their reception of his message. So this verse is really quite strong language. It recalls the apostle's warning in person of impending apostasy, alludes to an actual outbreak of heretical teaching among them, reminds them of their genuine reception of the truth at his hands, and pronounces a curse on the false teachers who are subverting them.
pp. 26-27

(The Agony of Deceit by Michael Horton, editor. Chicago: Moody Press.
Copyright - The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1990.

“But these people love the Lord,” we are told. “They are zealous for God’s work. Just because they aren’t theologians doesn’t mean they should be outcasts.” But is a doctrine like justification nothing more than a pet project for theologians, concerning which well-meaning Christians may disagree, so long as they love the Lord and have zeal? Evidently, not, according to the apostle: “For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness [i.e., justification]” (Romans 10:2-3).
p. 145

When Kenneth Copeland can make the comment, “The Bible commands ministers to be faithful, not correct,” ignorance once again becomes the rule. The modern popes tell us, “Touch not the Lord’s anointed,” with threats of divine punishment for calling them into question. It’s just easier to play the game and not rock the boat. But one wonders if it isn’t better to rock the boat than to miss the boat. The issues at stake are not trivial, but basic to eternal life.

What is perhaps more discouraging to me than the televangelists themselves is the response I have heard time and time again from well-meaning brothers and sisters: “Don’t cause strife. Let the Lord take care of it.” What if we treated unbelievers that way? “Don’t bother telling your best friend he is God’s enemy and can be reconciled only through faith in Christ’s substitutionary sacrifice. Let the Lord take care of it.” God takes care of it through our responsible, loving, but bold confrontation.
pp. 247-48

Anders says:

Ditto! Paul repeated his curse for effect. Any person who preaches a gospel that requires more than God's grace for salvation deserves to suffer in hell for eternity.

p. 7

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

No doubt Paul repeats the *anathema* primarily for the sake of emphasis. But the restatement involves three alterations that tie it more closely to the situation in Galatia: (1) "The one we preached" is changed to "what you accepted"; (2) the element of improbability is lessened—"we or an angel from heaven" being changed to "anybody"; and (3) the thought of future possibility—"if we . . . should preach"—is replaced by present supposition.

p. 710

Fergusson says:

That the apostle may show what he spoke proceeded neither from rage nor rashness, he doth again denounce the former terrible curse more generally against all whomsoever guilty of the forementioned sin.

p. 18

Lange says:

As we said before.—Referring probably to his last visit, not to ver. 8.—The Apostle repeats the curse, which he has pronounced ver. 8, in order to show that he "speaks deliberately."

p. 19

McGee says:

In strong language Paul says, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed," which literally means let him be damned. Friend, I cannot make that statement any stronger.

The gospel shuts out all works. Romans 4:5 says, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." I find a great many folk who think they have to become good enough to be saved. The other day a man said to me, "McGee, I want to become a Christian. I am going to try to be a little better, and if I improve, I am going to become a Christian." I said to him, "If you improve, you will never become a Christian. The only class that God is saving is the ungodly. The Lord Jesus said He didn't come to call the righteous; He came to call sinners. The reason He said that was because there is none righteous, no, not one. Even the righteousness of man is as filthy rags in God's sight. Law condemns us, and it must make us speechless before grace can save us." p. 154

Wuest says:

Even as we have said on a previous occasion, indeed, now again I am saying, If as is the case, anyone preaches a gospel to you which goes beyond that which ye took so eagerly and hospitably to your hearts, let him be accursed. p. 42

Vos says:

“Anathema” is the Septuagint (GK translation of the O.T.) rendering of Hebrew *cherem*, a thing devoted to God for preservation or destruction. While in some rabbinic and modern contexts it signifies simply excommunication, Paul uses it here as the strongest possible form of a curse. Just as Paul called down a curse on any who added to the requirements of the gospel, so John hurled a curse at those who added or subtracted from the message of Revelation (see Rev 22:18-19).

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pp. 26-27

(10 Lies About God: And The Truths That Shatter Deception by Erwin W. Lutzer) Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications. Copyright— Erwin W. Lutzer, 2009.

There are some sacrifices God will not accept. One is the gift of *sincerity*; some think God should receive them because they mean well. Another is the gift of *service*; some remember all the good they have done and think God owes them acceptance for their basic decency. A third is the gift of their own *spiritual quest*. And many bring the gift of *guilt*; they flagellate themselves, believing that if they feel sorry enough, they will pay for their own sins and God will accept them.

Martin Luther has a word for such people: “What makes you think that God is more pleased with your good deeds than he is with his blessed son?” Yes, we must bring an offering, a sacrifice to God, but it cannot be of our own making if we are to win His approval. *It must be the sacrifice He Himself made for us.*
p. 35

(10 Lies About God: And The Truths That Shatter Deception by Erwin W. Lutzer) Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications. Copyright– Erwin W. Lutzer, 2009.

Augustus Toplady had it right:

Not the labors of my hands
 Can fulfill thy laws' demands
 Could my zeal no respite know,
 Could my tears forever flow
 All for sin could not atone;
 Thou must save and Thou Alone.
 (*Rock of Ages*)

p. 36

But the angels at the gate of the dwelling place of God look at Jesus, then they glance at us and say, “*You’re with Him . . . Go on in!*” And so it is that Christ ushers us into the presence of Almighty God.

Don’t ever think that there are many ways to the divine. Jesus is the one qualified mediator, the only qualified sacrifice, and the only qualified Savior.

pp. 38-39

Buechner on the Coming Day of Judgment

Whenever we speak of the end times, our hearts often quicken—partly out of joy, yet also out of fear. To speak of end times is to speak of somewhat uncertain times. “No one knows about that day or hour,” Christ says, “not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son.” But the uncertainty of calendars and dates isn’t what troubles us most. It’s the notion of final judgment. So perhaps these words from author and pastor Frederick Buechner can offer us a bit of comfort—words that both acknowledge the reality of coming judgment and the grace-filled love of the Judge:

The New Testament proclaims that at some unforeseeable time in the future, God will ring down the final curtain on history, and there will come a Day on which all our days and all the judgments upon us and all our judgments upon each other will themselves be judged. The judge will be Christ. In other words, the one who judges us most finally will be the one who loves us most fully.

Brian Lowery, managing editor, PreachingToday.com; source: Frederick Buechner, Wishful Thinking: A Seeker’s ABC (Harper Collins, 1993), p. 58

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Aquinas on Explanations

To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible.

—*Thomas Aquinas, Italian Roman Catholic priest, philosopher, and theologian (c. 1225-1274)*

Thomas Aquinas, source unknown

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(A Year With Jesus: Daily Readings and Meditations by Eugene H. Peterson)
 San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins. Copyright– Eugene H. Peterson,
 2006.

I hear thunder in your speech, O God; I see lightning in your acts. Storm through this soul of mine, wake the sleeping parts of me; raise the dead parts of me; stand me on my feet, alert and praising in your presence. Amen.
 p. 259

Have mercy on me, Christ. I see myself in the mirror of your word and see so much that I have done that is wrong, and so much that I have not done that is essential. I don't want to just get by with the approval of my peers, but to become whole by your grace. Amen.
 p. 115

O God, I don't want to bring a bookkeeper's mind to the life of faith, anxiously adding up columns of what I must give, columns of what I might get. I give all, and accept all. Amen.
 p. 133

2 Corinthians 13:14 (NLT)

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Salvation is ours by believing, not achieving.

LESSON #2: The centrality of Christ and the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures will keep us on the right path.

LESSON #3: After we become Christians our character, conversation, and conduct are all Christ-centered.

LESSON #4: All that we are, all that we say, and all that we do comes through Jesus Christ.

LESSON #5: Salvation is a rescue.

LESSON #6: If God thought you could do it, He would not have sent Jesus Christ into the world.

LESSON #7: Satan troubles the mind and twists the Gospel.

LESSON #8: The greatest protection against falling into error is to concentrate on one's personal relationship with the Lord.

LESSON #9: Remember always, the Lord is longing for a relationship not a performance.

LESSON #10: Christ's death would be unnecessary if we could accomplish salvation through the performance of the law.

Hebrews 6:19-20 (DAV)

This hope we are having as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and secure and one which is entering within the veil, where Jesus entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Error has crept into these Galatian churches by the additions to the true Gospel. The attack of the evil one was in troubling the minds of these new believers and twisting or changing the message which had been preached. The Apostle Paul has given us a serious warning about those who preaching “another gospel.”

It is my prayer that God would grant to each of us a spirit of discernment to know the difference between truth and error. May our lives have a singleness of purpose to cultivate our relationship with Jesus Christ, to want to please Him, and through the process of being dependent on Him and submissive to His Spirit, our lives begin to reflect the qualities of Christ Himself.

These Galatians had made the mistake of transferring themselves, or were at least in danger and were beginning the process of moving away from the gracious relationship which was theirs in Christ to this gospel of legalism and bondage under law.

Perhaps today you find yourself in a similar situation. You are moving away from the Gospel of the grace of God and the open intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus.

Someone has said:

IF YOU FEEL AT A DISTANCE FROM GOD, GUESS WHO MOVED.

He waits with loving arms to draw you close to Himself. It is His supreme desire to have a fellowship and communication and oneness with us as His children.

May it **NOT** be said of you that:

**YOU WERE RUNNING WELL UNTIL: NO RUNS, NO HITS,
AND A BIG ERROR.**

De Haan says:

How precious the song by the late Dr. James M. Gray, former president of the Moody Bible Institute:

Naught have I gotten but what I received;
 Grace hath bestowed it since I have believed;
 Boasting excluded, pride I abase;
 I'm only a sinner saved by grace!
 Suffer a sinner whose heart overflows,
 Loving his Saviour to tell what he knows;
 Once more to tell it would I embrace—
 I'm only a sinner saved by grace.

If it is not all of grace, then we are without a shred of hope or light for eternity.
 p. 47

Haldeman says:

LESSON POINTS

1. False teaching is the Devil's counterfeiting.
 2. Salvation is by grace and not merit.
 3. The believer under the law is a believer fallen from grace.
 4. To begin with grace and end with law is to begin in spirit and end in flesh.
 5. The law says, "do"; grace says, "done."
 6. The law says do that you may become sons of God; grace says become the sons of God that ye may do.
 7. The law reveals what we cannot do; grace what God has done.
 8. Law brings a yoke; grace brings life.
 9. What the Jew under law could not do, the Gentile without law is not called to do.
 10. A church in accord with the Holy Ghost are in accord with one another.
 11. Where the Holy Ghost presides, grace and not law decides.
- p. 262

Ironside says:

I remember reading a story of a woman who with her little babe was on a train going up through one of the eastern states. It was a very wintry day. Outside a terrific storm was blowing, snow was falling, and sleet covered everything. The train made its way along slowly because of the ice on the tracks and the snow-plow went ahead to clear the way. The woman seemed very nervous. She was to get off at a small station where she would be met by some friends, and she said to the conductor, "You will be sure and let me know the right station; won't you?"

"Certainly," he said, "just remain here until I tell you the right station."

She sat rather nervously, and again spoke to the conductor, "You won't forget me?"

"No; just trust me. I will tell you when to get off."

A commercial man sat across the aisle, and he leaned over and said, "Pardon me, but I see you are rather nervous about getting off at your station. I know this road well. Your station is the first stop after such-and-such a city. These conductors are very forgetful, they have a great many things to attend to, and he may overlook your request, but I will see that you get off all right. I will help you with your baggage."

"Oh, thank you," she said. And she leaned back greatly relieved.

By-and-by the name of the city she mentioned was called, and he leaned over and said, "The next stop will be yours."

As they drew near to the station she looked around anxiously for the conductor, but he did not come. "You see," said the man, "he has forgotten you. I will get you off," and he helped her with her baggage, and as the conductor had not come to open the door, he opened it, and when the train stopped he stepped off, lifted her bag, helped her off, and in a moment the train moved on.

A few minutes later the conductor came and looking all about said, "Why, that is strange! There was a woman here who wanted to get off at this station. I wonder where she is."

The commercial man spoke up and said, "Yes, you forgot her, but I saw that she got off all right."

"Got off where?" the conductor asked.

"When the train stopped."

"But that was not a station! That was an emergency stop! I was looking after the woman. Why, man, you have put her off in a wild country district in the midst of all this storm where there will be nobody to meet her!"

There was only one thing to do, and although it was a rather dangerous thing, they had to reverse the engine and go back a number of miles, and then they went out to look for the woman. They searched and searched, and finally somebody stumbled upon her, and there she was frozen

on the ground with her little dead babe in her arms. She was the victim of wrong information.

If it is such a serious thing to give people wrong information in regard to temporal things, what about the man who misleads men and women in regard to the great question of the salvation of their immortal souls? If men believe a false gospel, if they put their trust in something that is contrary to the Word of God, their loss will be not for time only but for eternity.
pp. 25-27

Lucado says:

Grace is what sets Christianity apart from every religion in the world. God's unearnable salvation, forgiveness, and eternal life offered, not as a reward, but as free gifts. Nothing—absolutely nothing—required on our part, except to believe. No fine print and no strings attached. When we trust in what Christ has done, when we rely solely on his promises, all the treasures of heaven are ours. It doesn't matter how miserably you've failed in the past. It's irrelevant how messed up your life is right now. Grace is true and certain no matter what you might do or fail to do in the future. It sounds too good to be true, doesn't it? But that, in a nutshell, is the simple gospel. The only question is this: Have you received Christ's remarkable gift?
p. 9

(When Being Good Isn't Good Enough by Stephen Brown. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers. Copyright - Stephen Brown, 1990.

All you have left is Jesus. Of course, you don't realize Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you've got. When He is all you've got, then you know that He is all you need.
p. 58

(Tough Times Never Last, but Tough People Do! by Robert H. Schuller. New York: Bantam Books. Copyright - Robert Harold Schuller, 1983.

Let Go and Let God

As children bring their broken toys
with tears for us to mend,

I brought my broken dreams to God,
because He was my Friend.

But then, instead of leaving Him
in peace to work alone,

I hung around and tried to help
with ways that were my own.

At last I snatched them back and cried,
“How can You be so slow?”

“My child,” He said, “what could I do?
You never did let go.”

p. 236

(A Year With Jesus: Daily Readings and Meditations by Eugene H. Peterson)
 San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins. Copyright– Eugene H. Peterson,
 2006.

*Create, shape, and bring to maturity, Mighty God, the new life that you will
 for me in Jesus Christ. I want to be known as your child, be recognized as
 your child, and grow up into eternity as your child. Amen.*
 p. 222

(The Loveliness Of Christ: Extracts from the Letters of Samuel Rutherford
 selected by Ellen S. Lister) Carlisle, PA.: Banner of Truth Trust.
 Copyright – Banner of Truth, 2007.

I am every way in good case, both in soul and body; all honour and
 glory be to my Lord. I want nothing but a further revelation of the beauty of
 the unknown Son of God.
 p. 76

All Roads Lead to God?

In a video based on his book *3:16 Stories of Hope*, Max Lucado illustrates the odd nature of the statement that “all religions lead to God”:

All roads lead to heaven. Well, the sentence makes good talk-show fodder, but does it make sense? Can all approaches to God be correct? How can all religions lead to God when they are so different? We don’t tolerate such logic in other matters. We don’t pretend that all roads lead to London or all ships sail to Australia; all flights don’t lead to Rome. Imagine your response to a travel agent who proclaims they do. You tell him you need a flight to Rome, Italy. So he looks on his screen, and he offers, “Well, there’s a flight to Sidney, Australia, at 6:00 a.m.”

“Does it go to Rome?” you ask.

“No, but it offers great food and movies.”

“But I need to go to Rome,” you say.

He says, “Well, let me suggest Southwest Airlines.”

“Southwest Airlines flies to Rome?”

“No, but they win awards for on-time arrivals.”

You’re getting frustrated, so you reiterate: “I need one airline, to carry me to one place—Rome.”

The agent appears offended: “Sir, all flights go to Rome.”

Well, you know better. Different flights have different destinations. That’s not a thickheaded conclusion, but an honest one. Every flight does not go to Rome. And every path does not lead to God.

*3:16 Stories of Hope (Lionsgate, 2007), directed by Karl Horstmann;
submitted by Van Morris, Mount Washington, Kentucky*

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(Addresses by Phillips Brooks) Philadelphia, PA.: Henry Altemus. Copyright – Unknown.

There is no soul so black in its sinfulness, so determined in its defiant obstinacy, that God has abandoned his throne room at the centre of the sinner's life, and every movement is the God movement and every effort is the God force, with which man tries to break forth from his sin and come forth into the full sunlight of a life with God.
p. 69

(The Furious Longing of God by Brennan Manning) Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook. Copyright– Brennan Manning, 2009.

Do you hear what Paul is saying? The love of Christ is beyond knowledge. We've got to let go of our impoverished, circumcised, traditionalist, legalistic, human perceptions of God and open ourselves to the God in Jesus Christ. If we will, the promise is that we will be filled up with the fullness of God. That is truly good news!
p. 37

(Exploring the Mind & Heart of the Prince of Preachers: Five-thousand illustrations under one-thousand topical headings from the works of C. H. Spurgeon by C. H. Spurgeon) Oswego, IL: Fox River Press. Copyright– Fox River Press, 2005.

Recollect that every man who is only born once will have to die twice; but the man who is born twice will only have to die once, and even that once dying will be no moribund experience, for it will only be the gate into eternal life.
3079.77
p. 46

(The Best of A. W. Tozer by A. W. Tozer, compiled by Warren W. Wiersbe)
Camp Hill, PA: Wing Spread Publishers. Copyright– Zur Ltd., 1978,
2000.

O God, I have tasted Thy goodness, and it has both satisfied me and made me thirsty for more. I am painfully conscious of my need of further grace. I am ashamed of my lack of desire. O God, the triune God, I want to want Thee: I long to be filled with longing; I thirst to be made more thirsty still. Show me Thy glory, I pray Thee, that so I may know Thee indeed. Begin in mercy a new work of love within me. Say to my soul, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." Then give me grace to rise and follow Thee up from this misty lowland where I have wandered so long. In Jesus' name, Amen.
p. 19