

**Galatians 1: 1-3; “An Apostle Through Jesus Christ”, Message # 1 in  
a series of Bible Studies entitled “Christ has Made us Free”,  
Conducted on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013,  
by Pastor Paul Rendall.**

The theme of this book of Galatians is that believing in the gospel of Christ makes you free. Free from the curse of the law, and free from the yoke of bondage; of thinking that you can by the works of the Law merit God’s favor. The main thrust of Paul’s thought, flowing from this theme, is that the saving and sanctifying truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ are all to be received because they are from God, not from men. Therefore we, the church of Jesus Christ must not allow the false doctrines of legalism to displace the truth of the gospel of grace in our thinking as believers. This evening we want to see that Paul felt very strongly that he needed to convince the Galatians of 3 foundational truths; truths which would prove that he was their true messenger of the true gospel; not these false teachers who had come in contradicting the things that he was saying when he preached to them. First, Paul would assert to them the truth that his Apostolic commission was from God through the risen Christ. 2<sup>nd</sup> – That a true apostle always will have a sincere desire that grace and peace might come to all the believers that he writes to. And the 3<sup>rd</sup> truth we will look at in our next study; that the Lord Jesus gave Himself for our sins in order to deliver us from this present evil age.

**But 1<sup>st</sup> of all, tonight – Paul asserted the foundational truth that his Apostolic Commission was from God through the Risen Christ.** (verses 1 and 2)

“Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead, and all the brethren who are with me.” We can see here what the nature of the accusation was against Paul by the false teachers who had come the churches in Galatia. They were asserting that Paul had not been appointed to preach the gospel to the churches of Galatia by the 12 Apostles in the church in Jerusalem, and therefore his ministry and his teaching should not be received. They were saying that Paul was perverting the gospel by his saying that “only faith in Christ” was necessary to be justified, whereas, actually, they were wrongly twisting the true gospel by saying that God did require believers in Christ to be circumcised, and to keep the whole law in order to be justified. To be justified means to be declared righteous. Either salvation is obtained by faith in Christ, or by the works of the law, but it cannot be both. And Paul demolishes their false assertions by declaring first off in this letter that his appointment to be an Apostle did not come from men or through men, but through Jesus Christ Himself and God the Father. We need to see this as it is related by another writer than himself; so turn over with me to Acts Chapter 9.

Acts Chapter 9, verses 1-22. “Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from

him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.” “As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.” “Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” “And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” “Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.” “It is hard for you to kick against the goads.” “So he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” “Then the Lord said to him, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” “And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one.” “Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one.” “But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.” “And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.” “Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, “Ananias.” “And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” “So the Lord said to him, “Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying.” “And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.” “Then Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem.” And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.” “But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.” “For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.” “And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” “Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.” “So when he had received food, he was strengthened.” “Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.” “Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.” “Then all who heard were amazed, and said, “Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?” “But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ.” “Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him.” “But their plot became known to Saul.” “And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him.” “Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket.” “And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple.” “But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.” “So he

was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out. 29 And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him.”

Notice some things here from this passage. Saul in his persecuting rage, at that time in his life, sought for his commission to persecute from a man; in this case the chief priest, who gave him letters “from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.” Now this was obviously morally wrong, but Saul thought it was right. Here we find this self-deceived man obtaining this authority through another sinful religious man to accomplish his sinful purpose. As to his zeal, he was a persecutor of the church, but his authority was not from God. When God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ decided to call Saul to Himself and appoint him as an Apostle, they handled the situation entirely differently. The Father, who dwells in unapproachable light, would strike Saul blind with His glorious light, to show him just how blind he was as to what He would have him to do with the rest of his life. He would raise Saul from his spiritual death in sins to new life in Christ, His Son. The Father’s raising the Lord Jesus from the dead is the basis of Christ’s being Head over all things to the Church. Ephesians 3: 19 – “...What is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.” “And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” The Father was, as He always is, together in His purpose with the Son, that the living, risen, ascended Christ would speak to Paul personally about his persecuting sins, and send to a him a man to give to him His exact words of what He (the God-Man, and Lord of His Church) wanted him to do. Ananias took no authority to himself. Saul took no authority to himself. Ananias was appointed to his work by God, even though at first he was a reluctant participant. And Saul was literally dragged into his work by God Himself; the Father and the Son teaching him how much he was going to have to suffer for his name’s sake. But the fact that there were false teachers who doubted Paul’s authority shows how ignorant they were of his actual call, and how blind they were to the true gospel. This is why the Apostle Paul so frequently used these words at the beginning of his letters.

You and I need authority for what we are believing and doing in living our Christian life. Otherwise we will be adrift on a sea of moral and spiritual relativism. We receive that authority to live a life, free from the commandments of men, from God. God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ have sovereignly appointed the apostles to be those through whom His authoritative Word was spoken and written down. We are truly disciples of Christ, if we hold to the gospel

of grace which they have defined in their letters, which are found in the Bible. Paul had received an authoritative appointment from God to become an apostle through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was not appointed by any man, or by any individual church. He was appointed an Apostle by Christ Himself. 1 Timothy 2: 3 – “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle –I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.” He had preached to these Galatians and he had planted churches among them. But false teachers (men without an authoritative commission to preach) had come to the churches in Galatia, and the words and opinions of men had supplanted the truth of the gospel and the Word of God. They were being told that circumcision and the works of the Law had to be added to faith in Christ in order to be saved. Therefore, these Galatians were in great danger of turning away from the true gospel of the grace of Christ. Notice also that Paul was not alone in having the support of true brethren in his writing this letter and asserting his authority. Verse 2 says, “...and all the brethren who are with me.” Paul had a number of people who helped him and supported him in the work that he was doing, and he appealed to that support to substantiate his claim to true apostleship. You can see an example of how he names some of these brethren in Romans 16: 21-23.

**2ndly – It is a foundational truth that a true Apostle always will have a sincere desire that grace and peace might come to all the believers that he writes to.**

(verse 3)

The Apostle Paul desires this even though the believers in these churches in Galatia were turning away from Christ and falling into legalism. He speaks to them of grace, because grace to receive the truth of God’s Word is the only hope for deceived sinners and saints alike. He preached grace because he had received grace. Turn with me over to 1 Timothy 1, verse 12. “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I did it ignorantly in unbelief.” “And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.” Paul was changed by the grace of Christ from being a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man into a man of faith and love. He found these graces beginning to work in his heart from the moment of his conversion. Christ “enabled” him to exercise his ministry. Please remember this dear believer. All the grace for you to change from the unbelieving, angry, unthinking, uncaring person that you might have once been, is found in Christ. And since He changed you, He can also change others. Therefore, why always be so skeptical about those people around you who

are only “thinking about” becoming Christians. You don’t see the evidence of their conversion yet, but if God is doing a work, you will see that evidence over time. Paul wished all men would come to Christ and he prayed for his own blind countrymen that they might be saved. (Romans 10: 1)

Paul also wishes God and Christ to give peace to those to whom he was writing in the Galatian churches. “Grace and peace to you”, he says, “from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.” I like what James Haldane in his commentary on Galatians says about this. “Peace is connected with grace, upon which, as its foundation, it securely rests.” “Our hearts condemn us; we know that in many things we offend, but the Gospel of the grace of God gives to believers the knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins, which are all washed away by the blood of Christ.” “He has made peace by the blood of His cross, and when he manifests Himself to us as He doth not to the world, we experience the peace of God delivering us from the spirit of bondage unto fear, and giving us the spirit of adoption whereby we cry , “Abba Father”. This peace springs from our perceiving the perfection of the atonement made upon Calvary, by which God’s anger is turned away from His people.” “Hence He is described as the God of Peace, who brought from the dead the Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant; and through the same blood shall all His sheep be brought, to share the glories of His everlasting kingdom.”