

Exploring Galatians – Study 1 - The Gospel of Deliverance

Read Gal 1:1-5.

This week's study is based on these first five verses of Galatians. They form the Greeting by Paul to the "Churches" (plural) of Galatia. Unlike today where we sign the end of a letter, the custom of Paul was to sign at the beginning of his letters. See Rom 1:1, 1 Cor 1:1, 2 Cor 1:1, Eph 1:1, Phil 1:1, Col 1:1, 1 Thes 1:1, 2 Thes 1:1, 1 Tim 1:1, 2 Tim 1:1, Titus 1:1, Philemon 1:1. Hebrews is the exception if you agree that Paul is the author.

Read Acts 1:1-3. What did Jesus do after his resurrection?

Read Acts 1:21-26. What is the key criterion for an Apostle?

Read Acts 9:1-6. Why is this important for Paul's statement and claim of Apostleship?

"It is no accident that Paul describes Jesus as the risen one in Galatians 1:1. After all, it was the resurrected Jesus who had personally commissioned him, and, in addition, one of the agreed-

upon marks of true apostles is that they had to be able to witness to the resurrection of Jesus".¹

Why was it key for Paul to defend his Apostleship?

Read 2 Cor 10:10-12. How was Paul being undermined?

While we cannot be sure that Paul's opponents in Galatia were the same as those he confronted in Corinth, there seems to be a common thread running through his defense against both sets of adversaries. In both Galatians and 2 Corinthians he advanced a theology of the cross in distinction from a theology of glory (of the "Super Apostles" or of the Flesh).

Read Gal 1:3-5. Paul repeats this form of greeting and blessing in most of his letters. Why and what does it mean for us today?

"It is no accident that Paul frequently combined grace and peace in his greetings. Both were at the heart of his understanding of the gospel... The very foundation of the gospel is that salvation rests on what God has done for us in Christ rather than on something we must do for Him. It is that teaching that the false teachers who have invaded the Galatian congregations now challenge".²

¹ Knight, George. Exploring Galatians & Ephesians (Kindle Locations 381-383). Review & Herald. Kindle Edition.

² Knight, George. Exploring Galatians & Ephesians (Kindle Locations 402-403, 411-413). Review & Herald. Kindle Edition.

In Conclusion

“The devil disturbs the church as much by error as by evil. When he cannot entice Christian people into sin, he deceives them with false doctrine”.³

Discuss the above statement?

“What the apostle has in fact done in these introductory verses of the epistle is to trace three stages of divine action of humanity’s salvation. Stage 1 is the death of Christ for our sins to rescue us out of this present evil age. Stage 2 is the appointment of Paul as an apostle to bear witness to the Christ who died and rose again. Stage 3 is the gift to us who believe of the grace and peace which Christ won and Paul witnessed to. At each of these three stages the Father and the Son have acted or continue to act together. No wonder Paul ends his first paragraph with a doxology”.⁴

³ Stott, J., Larsen, D., & Larsen, S. (1998). [*Galatians: Experiencing the Grace of Christ*](#) (p. 9). Nottingham, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press; IVP Connect: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press.

⁴ Stott, J., Larsen, D., & Larsen, S. (1998). [*Galatians: Experiencing the Grace of Christ*](#) (pp. 10–11). Nottingham, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press; IVP Connect: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press.