**The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians**

**Galatians Chapter 1**

OPENING GREETING (1:1-10)  
Salutation

1Paul, an apostle (not *sent* from *any group of* people, nor through any person, but through Jesus Christ[[1]](#footnote-13335) and God the Father, who raised him from among the dead), 2and all the brothers and sisters who are with me, to the churches of Galatia:

Prayer

3Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4who gave himself for our sins to deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

One True Good News

6I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ, *and are turning* to a different “good news,” 7(which is *really* not another). But there are some who are confusing you, and who want to change the good news of Christ. 8But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should proclaim to you a good news contrary to the good news we proclaimed to you, let him be accursed. 9As we have said before, so I now say again, if anyone proclaims to you a good news that is contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. 10Indeed, am I now trying to gain the approval of people, or of God? Or am I seeking to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

THE GOOD NEWS AND PAUL’S APOSTLESHIP (1:11-2:21)  
Divine Origin of Paul’s Message

11Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the good news that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin. 12For I did not receive it from *any* person, nor was I taught it, but *I received it* by revelation from Jesus Christ.

Paul’s Calling and Commission

13For you have heard about my former way of life in Judaism, how intensely I was persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it. 14And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many my own age among my people, because I was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. 15But when God, who set me apart, *even* from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, was pleased 16to reveal his Son to me so that I could proclaim the good news about him among the Gentiles, immediately I did not consult with flesh and blood, 17neither did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

18Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas and stayed with him 15 days. 19But I did not see any other apostles except James the Lord’s brother. 20(In what I am writing to you, look, in the sight of God, I am not lying!) 21Then I went to the regions of Syria and Cilicia. 22But my face was still unknown[[2]](#footnote-25098) to the churches in Judea that were in Christ. 23They were only hearing, “The one who once persecuted us is now proclaiming the good news of the faith[[3]](#footnote-22256) that he once tried to destroy,” 24and they glorified God because of me.

**Galatians Chapter 2**

Acceptance of Paul in Jerusalem

1Then after 14 years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus with me also. 2I went up by revelation and set before them the good news that I was preaching among the Gentiles; but privately before those who were held in high regard to make sure that I was not running, or had not run, in vain. 3But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. 4And *that issue came up* because of the false brothers *who were* secretly brought in, who came in secretly to spy on our freedom that we have in Christ[[4]](#footnote-24904) Jesus so that they could bring us into slavery. 5We did not yield in subjection to them for *even* an hour, so that the truth of the good news could continue with you.

6But from those who were held in high regard (whatever they were, it makes no difference to me, God does not show personal favoritism[[5]](#footnote-27000))—well, those held in high regard added nothing to my *message*, 7but on the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the good news to the Uncircumcised, just as Peter *had been* with *the good news* to the Circumcised 8(for the one who was at work in Peter for *his* apostolic ministry to the Circumcised was at work in me also *for my apostolic ministry* to the Gentiles), 9and when James and Cephas and John—those who were held in high regard as pillars—recognized the grace that was given to me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we *should go* to the Gentiles and they to the Circumcised. 10*They* only *desired* that we would continue to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do.

Recounting Peter’s Hypocrisy

11But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he was completely wrong.[[6]](#footnote-27836) 12For before certain *men* came from James, he ate with the Gentiles, but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, being afraid of those from among the Circumcised. 13And the rest of the Jews joined with him in hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. 14But when I saw that they were not walking uprightly according to the truth of the good news, I said to Cephas before *them* all, “If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?”

15We *who are* Jews by birth and not “Gentile sinners,” 16knowing that a person is not declared righteous by the works of the law but through trust in Jesus Christ, even we believed in Christ Jesus so that we are declared righteous by trust in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no flesh will be declared righteous.

17But if, while seeking to be declared righteous in Christ, we *Jews* are ourselves also found to be sinners, is Christ a servant of sin? Absolutely not! 18For if I build again those things that I tore down, I demonstrate that I am[[7]](#footnote-18393) a transgressor. 19For through law I died to law, in order that I could live for God. 20I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me! And *the life* that I am now living in the flesh, I am living by trust in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me. 21I do not reject the grace of God, for if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

**Galatians Chapter 3**

DEFENSE OF THE GOOD NEWS: JUSTIFICATION THROUGH TRUST (3:1-4:31)  
Righteousness and the Spirit through Jesus Christ

1O senseless Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ[[8]](#footnote-17305) was publicly portrayed *as* crucified? 2I only want to learn this from you: did you receive the spirit by the works of the law, or by trusting what you heard? 3Are you so senseless? Having begun in the spirit, are you now trying to be completed in the flesh? 4Have you suffered so many things in vain—if it really was in vain? 5Indeed, he who is supplying the spirit to you and working miracles among you, *does he do it* by the works of the law, or by trusting what you heard? 6Just as Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.[[9]](#footnote-15000) 7Know then, that those who rely on trust, they are children[[10]](#footnote-10341) of Abraham. 8And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would declare the Gentiles righteous by trust, proclaimed the good news to Abraham ahead of time, *saying,* In you all the nations will be blessed.[[11]](#footnote-11726) 9So then, those who rely on trust are blessed along with Abraham, the *man* of trust.

The Law is Not Based on Trust

10For as many as rely on the works of the law are under a curse, for it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not continue doing everything that is written in the book of the law.[[12]](#footnote-27270) 11But it is clear that no one is declared righteous before God by the law, because the righteous will live by trust,[[13]](#footnote-32330) 12and the law is not based on trust, but the one who does them will live by them.[[14]](#footnote-15837) 13Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree),[[15]](#footnote-27688) 14so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham could come to the Gentiles, *and* so that through trust we could receive the spirit that was promised.

The Promised Inheritance is Not through the Law

15Brothers and sisters, I am speaking in human terms: even a covenant that has been ratified by man, no one annuls or adds to *it*. 16Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. It does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your seed,”[[16]](#footnote-29442) which is Christ. 17Now I tell you this: the law, which came 430 years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. 18For if the inheritance *is* based on law, it is no longer based on a promise, but God has graciously given it to Abraham by a promise.

Temporary Purpose of the Law

19Why then *was* the law *given*? It was added because of transgressions, until the seed for whom the promise was intended should come, having been given through angels by the hand of a mediator. 20Now a mediator is not *for* one *party only*; but God is *only* one.

21Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that was able to give life, then righteousness would certainly have been based on law. 22But the Scripture has imprisoned all things under sin, so that the promise would be given based on trust in Jesus Christ to those who believe.

23But before the coming of the trust *in Christ*, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the trust that was about to come was revealed. 24So then, the law has been our guardian-tutor until Christ, so that we could be declared righteous by trust. 25But now that trust has come, we are no longer under a guardian-tutor. 26For you are all sons of God through trust in Christ Jesus. 27For as many of you as were baptized into *union with* Christ have put on[[17]](#footnote-11046) Christ. 28There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you all are one in Christ Jesus. 29Now if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, *and* heirs of what was promised.[[18]](#footnote-21133)

**Galatians Chapter 4**

1Now I say, as long as the heir is a minor, he does not differ from a slave, although he is lord of everything, 2but is under guardians and managers until the time appointed by the father. 3So we also, when we were minors, were enslaved by the elemental spirits of the world, 4but when the fullness of the time came, God sent his Son, born from a woman, born under the law, 5in order to redeem those who were under the law so that we could receive adoption as sons. 6And because you are sons, God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, “Abba! Father!” 7So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through *what* God *has done*.

Paul’s Concern for Backsliding

8But in the past, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those that by nature are not gods. 9However, now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you are turning back again to the weak and worthless elemental spirits? Do you want to be slaves to them all over again? 10You observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. 11I am afraid for you, lest perhaps I have labored over you in vain.

12I implore you, brothers and sisters, become as I *am*, for I also *have become* as you *are*. You have done me no wrong. 13But, you know that *it was* because of a physical illness I told you the good news the first time, 14and that which was a temptation to you in my bodily condition[[19]](#footnote-14693) you did not treat with contempt or disdain, but you received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ[[20]](#footnote-22279) Jesus *himself*. 15Where then *is* the sense of blessing you had? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me. 16So then, have I become your enemy by telling you the truth? 17They earnestly pursue you, *but* not *for anything* good. They want to cut you off[[21]](#footnote-28048) *from us*, so that you will earnestly pursue them. 18But *it is* always good to be earnestly pursued for a good *purpose*, and not only when I am present with you. 19My children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you— 20I would like to be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

Covenant Allegory: Sarah and Hagar

21Tell me, you who want to be under the law, do you not hear *what* the law *says*? 22For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and one by the free woman. 23But the *son* by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, while the *son* of the free woman *was born* as a result of the promise. 24These *women* are *now* being treated as an allegory, for these are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children into slavery, which is Hagar. 25Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. 26But the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is our mother. 27For it is written, Rejoice, barren one who does not bear; break out and shout, you who are not in labor; for the children of the desolate *woman* are more than of the one who has the husband.[[22]](#footnote-17838)

28Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise. 29But just like *back* then, *when* the one who was born according to the flesh persecuted the one *born* according to the spirit, so also it is now. 30But what does the Scripture say? Send away the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman will not share the inheritance with the son of the free woman.[[23]](#footnote-21691) 31So then, brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman but of the free woman.

**Galatians Chapter 5**

DEFENSE OF THE GOOD NEWS: FREEDOM IN CHRIST (5:1-6:10)  
Freedom Excludes the Law

1For *living in* freedom Christ[[24]](#footnote-30530) has set us free! Therefore, keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

2Listen! I, Paul, say to you that if you get yourselves circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you. 3I testify again to every man who gets himself circumcised, that he is obligated to do the whole law. 4You have cut yourselves off from Christ, you who are seeking to be declared righteous by the law. You have fallen away from grace. 5For by the spirit *and* based on trust, we eagerly wait for the righteousness for which we hope. 6For in *union with* Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value, but *what matters is* trust working through love.

Freedom Fulfills the Law

7You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? 8This persuasion *is* not from the one who calls you. 9“A little yeast leavens the whole lump *of dough*.” 10I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will not think otherwise, but the one who is troubling you will bear *his* judgment, whoever he is. 11But I, brothers and sisters, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the stumbling block of the cross has been removed. 12I wish those who are stirring you up would castrate themselves!

13For you, brothers and sisters, were called to freedom, only *do* not *use* the freedom for an opportunity to *indulge* the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement, in the *command*, Love your neighbor as yourself.[[25]](#footnote-28625) 15But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

Freedom in Living by the Spirit

16Now I say, walk by the spirit and you will absolutely not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17For the flesh sets its desire against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, with the result that you are not doing what you want. 18But if you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law.

19Now the works of the flesh are obvious, which are: sexual immorality, impurity, unrestrained behavior, 20idolatry, sorcery, hostility, strife, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, heresies, 21envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, just as I warned you before, that those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

22But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

24Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25Since we live by the spirit, let us also keep in step with the spirit. 26Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

**Galatians Chapter 6**

Freedom in Caring for Others

1Brothers and sisters, if a person gets entrapped in some transgression, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, watching out for yourself so that you also will not be tempted. 2Carry one another’s burdens, and in this way fulfill the law of Christ.[[26]](#footnote-20745) 3For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he is deceiving himself. 4But let each person examine his own work and then he will have *reason for* boasting in himself alone and not in another. 5For each person will have to carry his own load.

6The one who is being instructed in the word should share fully with the one who is instructing *him* in all good things. 7Do not be deceived: God is not mocked; for whatever a person sows, that will he also reap. 8For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the spirit will from the spirit reap life in the age *to come*. 9Now let us not grow weary in doing what is good, for in due season we will reap if we do not give up. 10So then, while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all people, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith.[[27]](#footnote-21484)

FINAL REMARKS AND CONCLUSION (6:11-18)  
Motivation of Paul’s Opponents

11See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. 12Those who want to make a good showing in the flesh are the ones who are trying to compel you to be circumcised, *but* only so that they are not persecuted for the cross of Christ. 13For even those who are circumcised do not keep the law themselves, but they want you to be circumcised so that they can boast in your flesh.

Paul’s Motivation

14But as for me, may it never be *that I* boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. 15For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, but a new creation *is everything*. 16And as many as will keep in line with this standard, peace and mercy be upon them—upon the Israel of God.

Conclusion

17From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

18The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.

1. Lit. “the Anointed One” [↑](#footnote-ref-13335)
2. Lit. “I was still unknown by face” [↑](#footnote-ref-25098)
3. “Faith” refers to the Christian Faith. [↑](#footnote-ref-22256)
4. Lit. “the Anointed One” [↑](#footnote-ref-24904)
5. Lit. “accept a person’s face,” an idiom for showing favoritism. [↑](#footnote-ref-27000)
6. Lit. “was standing condemned” [↑](#footnote-ref-27836)
7. Lit. “I demonstrate myself *to be*” [↑](#footnote-ref-18393)
8. Lit. “the Anointed One” [↑](#footnote-ref-17305)
9. From Gen. 15:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-15000)
10. Lit. “sons” [↑](#footnote-ref-10341)
11. From Gen. 12:3 (cp. Gen. 18:18; 22:18) [↑](#footnote-ref-11726)
12. From Deut. 27:26 [↑](#footnote-ref-27270)
13. From Hab. 2:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-32330)
14. From Lev. 18:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-15837)
15. From Deut. 21:23 [↑](#footnote-ref-27688)
16. From Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 22:18; 24:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-29442)
17. Lit. “clothed yourselves with” [↑](#footnote-ref-11046)
18. Lit. “according to the promise” [↑](#footnote-ref-21133)
19. Lit. “in my flesh” [↑](#footnote-ref-14693)
20. Lit. “the Anointed One” [↑](#footnote-ref-22279)
21. Lit. “shut you out” [↑](#footnote-ref-28048)
22. From Isa. 54:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-17838)
23. From Gen. 21:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-21691)
24. Lit. “the Anointed One” [↑](#footnote-ref-30530)
25. From Lev. 19:18 [↑](#footnote-ref-28625)
26. Lit. “the Anointed One” [↑](#footnote-ref-20745)
27. “Faith” refers to the Christian Faith. [↑](#footnote-ref-21484)