

Grace and Peace from God: Galatians 1:1-5 Explained

Scriptures for Today

""Galatians 1:1-5

Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) 2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: 3 Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: 5 To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.""

Introduction to Galatians — A Letter Written in a Firestorm

Before we open Galatians 1, we need to know **where we are in the story of the Bible**.

The Book of Galatians sits in the middle of the book of Acts — **after Paul's first missionary journey in Acts 13–14**, when he traveled through the cities of **Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe**. These are the churches he refers to as **"the churches of Galatia"** (Galatians 1:2).

Scripture shows us that Paul personally:

- preached Christ in these cities
- won converts there
- ordained elders in their churches
- returned to strengthen them (Acts 14:21–23)

That's how these churches were born. That's what Paul is writing into. But something happened after Paul left.

Galatians shows us that believers were being **pulled away from the gospel**. Not back into idolatry. Not back into paganism. But back into **the works of the law**. This is why Paul writes with such urgency.

The tone of Galatians is not gentle like Philippians. It is not doctrinal like Romans. It is not corrective like Corinthians. Galatians is an **emergency letter** — a spiritual rescue. The churches Paul founded in Acts 13–14 were being told:

"Faith in Jesus is not enough. You must add works. You must keep the law. You must finish what Christ began."

Paul responds by defending the gospel with passion and authority.

Why This Book Matters in the Whole Bible

Galatians stands as one of the clearest books in all Scripture showing:

- salvation is by grace alone
- through faith alone
- in Christ alone
- without works, without law, without human effort

This is the same salvation preached:

- in Acts 13:38–39 (“all that believe are justified”)
- in Romans (“by grace... through faith”)
- in Ephesians 2:8–9 (“not of works”)

Galatians protects the very heart of the gospel. It fights for the freedom Jesus purchased on the cross. It confronts any teaching that adds human performance to Christ’s finished work.

This is why God preserved this book. It is a warning, a shield, and a declaration of liberty for every believer.

Now the Opening Verses — Galatians 1:1–5

- Before Paul rebukes the false doctrine invading Galatia,
- before he asks, “Who hath bewitched you?”
- before he says, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed...”

Paul begins by laying **the foundation of the entire letter**.

1. Paul’s authority is from God, not man (v. 1). This matters because the Judaizers attacked Paul’s apostleship. If Paul is not a true apostle, his gospel is not true. So Paul opens with heavenly authority.

2. This letter is to churches saved by grace (v. 2). These are real believers in real danger. Paul cares deeply for them.

3. Grace and peace come only from God (v. 3). Not from law. Not from works. Not from Moses. Only from Christ.

4. Christ gave Himself to deliver us (v. 4). Not to help us earn salvation but to **rescue** us fully and finally.

5. All glory goes to God (v. 5). Because salvation is His work from start to finish.

Summary of the Introduction to the Book of Galatians

Galatians takes place after Paul's first missionary journey in Acts 13–14, where he founded the churches of Galatia. After he left, false teachers crept in and convinced believers that salvation required works of the law.

Galatians is Paul's urgent, Spirit-filled defense of the gospel of grace — a letter protecting the freedom Christ purchased. And in the opening verses, Paul establishes his authority, reminds them of the true source of grace and peace, and lifts up Jesus Christ who delivered us from this present evil world. The entire book rests on these truths.

Verse 1 — Paul's Authority Did Not Come From Men

""Galatians 1:1

Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)"

Paul begins by defending the **source** of his apostleship. Why? Because the false teachers were attacking his authority. If they could undermine Paul, they could undermine his message. So Paul declares:

1. **“Not of men”** – No human council appointed me.
2. **“Neither by man”** – No individual ordained me.
3. **“But by Jesus Christ, and God the Father”** – My calling is divine, not human.

Paul's apostleship is rooted in:

- the risen Christ
- the authority of the Father
- the resurrection power of God

This matters because if God sent Paul, then to reject his message is to reject God's message. And this is exactly how most of the books written by Paul begin.

Verse 2 — This Letter Is for All the Churches of Galatia

""Galatians 1:2

And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:"

This is not written to a single church. It is written to a **region** — the entire area of Galatia. These were:

- young churches
- vulnerable churches
- newly planted churches

And they were being **attacked**. The gospel was being polluted. Grace was being mixed with works. Liberty was being replaced with bondage. Paul is not writing casually. He is writing to **rescue** them from false doctrine or false teaching.

Verse 3 — Grace Always Comes Before Peace

""Galatians 1:3

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

This is more than a greeting. This is the **order** of the gospel.

Grace → then Peace

You cannot have peace with God until you have received grace from God. Grace is God giving. Peace is God calming. Grace is the source. Peace is the effect. Grace deals with your sin. Peace deals with your heart.

And both come:

- from God the Father
- through the Lord Jesus Christ

Not from religion. Not from works. Not from human effort. Grace and peace are **God's gifts**, not man's achievements. Make sure you understand the difference. God's gifts and not by your own achievements.

Verse 4 — The Gospel in One Sentence

""Galatians 1:4

Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:""

This is the gospel distilled into one perfect verse.

1. "Who gave himself" – No one forced Him. He volunteered.

2. "For our sins" – The problem wasn't politics. The problem wasn't Rome. The problem wasn't society. The problem was **our sin** and Jesus gave Himself as the payment.

3. "That he might deliver us" – The gospel is not just forgiveness. It is **deliverance**. From what? **"This present evil world."**

Christ rescues us from:

- this world's corruption
- this world's system
- this world's deception
- this world's bondage

4. “According to the will of God and our Father” – The cross was not plan B. It was not a reaction. It was not a human tragedy. It was **the will of God**, designed in eternity, fulfilled in Christ.

Verse 5 — All Glory Belongs to God

""**Galatians 1:5**

To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.""

Paul ends this greeting with worship. Because when you understand grace, when you understand salvation, when you understand the gospel: You cannot boast in yourself. You cannot glorify your works. You cannot exalt your effort.

You bow. You worship. You give glory to God forever.

Application — What This Greeting Shows Us About the Gospel

- 1. The gospel stands or falls on authority.** If Paul's message comes from God, then salvation by grace alone is non-negotiable.
- 2. Grace always comes before peace.** Stop searching for peace in places grace never created.
- 3. Jesus gave Himself — willingly, fully, perfectly.** Your salvation rests on His sacrifice, not your performance.
- 4. The gospel rescues us from this evil world.** Christ doesn't just forgive sin — He delivers from its grip.
- 5. God gets all the glory.** Salvation begins with Him, is sustained by Him, and ends in praise to Him.

Closing — Grace Given, Peace Granted, Glory Forever

Galatians does not ease us in gently. It confronts us from the very first sentence. Paul is not simply greeting a church; he is **fighting for their souls**. And these opening five verses show us why.

We do not stand on our works. We do not stand on our goodness. We do not stand on our performance. We stand on **grace** — grace that comes from God the Father, through the Lord Jesus Christ, purchased by His blood, offered freely to sinners who could never earn it.

And when grace becomes unclear, peace disappears. When works creep back in, joy dries up. When the law replaces liberty, the Christian life becomes bondage.

Paul writes like a man refusing to let believers trade the freedom of Christ for the chains of human effort.

He reminds them — and us — that **Jesus gave Himself**, not partially, not reluctantly, but fully, so that we might be **delivered from this present evil world**. Delivered from its lies, its pull, its sin, and its hopelessness.

And because salvation is God's work from beginning to end, **all glory belongs to Him**. Not for a moment. Not for a season. But "for ever and ever. Amen."

Before Paul corrects anything, he centers everything:

Authority belongs to God.

Grace comes from God.

Peace flows from God.

Deliverance is accomplished by God.

And glory returns to God.

This is the foundation of Galatians. This is the freedom of the gospel.

Let's pray.