

#17 Galatians: Conclusion

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Gal. 6:11: 'See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.'

Paul, very likely dictated his letters to someone who would write them down for him, a secretary or clerk; examples would be: Onesimus and Timothy as well as others.

Usually, Paul begins and ends all his letters with some kind of blessing; he wrote 13 letters of the New Testament, far more than anyone else. He begins and ends each of them with a blessing of grace upon his Christian readers. Something like: "Grace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Then he would end them, like in his letter to the Philippians, with something like, 'Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you.²² All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household.²³ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.'

Galatians is different. His greeting was very short and his ending is shorter still; it's as if he was really in a hurry to get it off so he actually wrote to the Galatians himself, not waiting for whoever happened to be his secretary at the time.

He says, 'See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.' He's telling them how important this was to him and he says that he's writing with large letters because of his chronic eye problem; we studied earlier that it was probably from his conversion when Jesus Christ appeared to him with a blindingly bright light; he was without sight for a few days. He reminded the Galatians of just that, earlier in this letter; he wrote, 'You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first.¹⁴ And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus. What then was the blessing you *enjoyed*? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.' Gal 4

Now he's reminding them again how urgent he felt this letter was. He was far from them when he heard of the Judaizers who were seeking to draw them into the bondage of the Law. It took some time for the letter he received to be delivered and it would take some time for this letter to get back to them. It wasn't like today; he couldn't just pick up a phone or email it over; it had to have been very frustrating to Paul. Wolves had invaded the Galatian sheepfold and Paul was hundreds of miles away; imagine if it were your children. That's how Paul felt... worried and frustrated. It almost sounds like he was forgetting what he had written to the Philippians: 'Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!⁵ Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord *is* at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.' Phpp 4:4

It's the same with us... we forget that God is always in control; He never stops being in complete control of every situation: even the political situation in America... Rejoice! Be anxious for nothing! God is in complete control; everything that is happening is according to His will; nothing occurs outside His will and control, no matter what it looks like to us.

Verse 12: 'As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these *would* compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.'

False teachers want a large following; that's the proof, they think, of their new and special message; false teachers are always wanting to come up with something new; that is how we received the heresy of 'The Message' bible; that's how we received the heresy of 'The New Perspective on Paul,' from N.T. Wright and others, those who would seek to destroy the message of Paul and substitute their own false teachings; that's how we received to false message of Rick Warren; he is the one who says that Christians and Muslims worship the same god... maybe Muslims do worship the same god that Rich Warren does; he is the one who tells pastors to change their churches' names to something bland, nonthreatening and meaningless and to remove the crosses; crosses are offensive... we must become seeker sensitive even though the Bible tells us that there are no unsaved seekers, only spiritually dead people, in desperate need of the light and life which come only

through the Lord Jesus Christ and His Cross; they only seek God when He reveals Himself and draws them to Himself.

Everything 'new' is meant to lessen and remove any offense and persecution for the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is nothing new under Heaven and there is nothing new in God's Word; it is exactly the same as It has always been; It means exactly what It's always meant. We might see new things, things we've never seen before, gaining further understanding, but It, like God Himself, never changes and always remains the same. False teachers always want to remove the offense of the Cross and the persecution that follows.

Verse 13: 'For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.'

Every false teacher who seeks to bring us into the bondage of the Law never even keep the Law, themselves. Hebrew Roots teachers seek to bring us under the Law and yet, they never keep the Law completely. Seventh Day Adventists seek to bring us under the bondage of the Law and yet, they never keep the Law. Catholicism brings its people under bondage to the Law and yet no Catholic priest has ever kept the Law. The same is true for Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses and Holiness teaching. None of them have ever kept the Law except the Lord Jesus Christ and He is the One they seek to diminish.

The larger the group they can gather around themselves, the greater their legitimacy, they think. False teachers infecting the TV airwaves: they fill their mega-churches to the rafters and the poor fools who sit at home drinking in their every word, believe they've found their earthly messiah... unfortunately, many of them are right... that is the only messiah they will ever find.

Verse 14: 'But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.'

Paul is saying that unlike false teachers, and especially these Judaizers, he does not falsely boast in the Galatians in whom, by the way, he certainly could boast, in that they only have eternal life because Paul was willing to suffer persecution in order to bring the Gospel to them. His only boast is in the Lord Jesus Christ and His life, death and resurrection. The World and all that it offers have been shown to him for what they really are: worthless, meaningless shadows of futility; once he had been taken up to Heaven, once he had seen and heard what was there, everything of Earth became nothing but empty, useless vanity. The only thing on Earth which could hold his attention was telling what he knew of the Lord Jesus Christ and His offer of Salvation.

Verse 15: 'For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.'

Paul is saying something that's hard for some of them to hear and believe: that being a Jew and following the Law means nothing in regard to coming to God or being acceptable by God. No works of the flesh avail anything in seeking God's acceptance and forgiveness... nothing we can do, in the flesh, opens Heaven's door to us. Being a Jew or a Gentile means nothing; being male or female means nothing; being free or a slave means nothing; any kind of good works we might think to do means nothing until we have come to God in repentance and faith and are recreated into something brand new: we become a 'Heavenly child of God.' But we can only come to God by way of faith: 'For without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.' Heb 11:6 '... you will seek Me and find *Me*, when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you...' Jer 29:123 The problem is, no one seeks Him until He reveals Himself to them and draws them to Himself so that they can then actually hear His call. 'The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God. ³ They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; *there is none* who does good, No, not one.' Psa 124:2

But, you say, that is in the Old Testament: everything changed when Jesus came... Paul repeats the same thing to the Romans: ' "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one. Their throat *is* an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit; the poison of

asps *is* under their lips; whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery *are* in their ways; ¹⁷ and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes." Rom 3:11

No one does good and no one decides to seek God, the One True God; Jesus said, 'All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰ And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day... No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him... But there are some of you who do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. ⁶⁵ And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father." ⁶⁶ From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. ⁶⁷ Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" ⁶⁸ But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." John 6.

Notice what was the 'hard saying' that caused many disciples to turn back from following Jesus: it's that the natural man, in himself, is incapable of coming to God in faith and repentance, it is only when the Father draws a person to Himself, one whom He chose before the foundation of the World that one can come to Him. This is like Paul's telling the Galatians that there's nothing in being a Jew that gains favor with God.

Verse 16: 'And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God.'

As many as walk according to what rule? It's the rule that, the only way we can come to God and have fellowship with Him is when we are a new creation, born again unto Eternal Life. When we are born again, when our spirits have been made new and are one with God's Holy Spirit, we are invited to come to God. The fact is, we are seated with the Lord Jesus Christ Who is seated at the right hand of the Father; we are always in the presence of God.

Those who are born again are constantly in God's presence and the peace that passes all understanding and His Mercy and compassion, which are new every morning... are ours without measure, never-ending.

'Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord *is* at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.' Phpps 4:4

'This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. *Through* the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. ²³ *They are* new every morning; Great *is* Your faithfulness. "The LORD *is* my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!" Lam 3:21

After he refutes the Judaizers and all who would claim God's favor through their Jewishness, Paul includes, with those who are born again, but also sets them apart as the 'Israel of God.' Who are the Israel of God?

Paul writes in Rom 9: 'I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, ² that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, ⁴ who are Israelites, to whom *pertain* the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service *of* God, and the promises; ⁵ of whom *are* the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, *the* eternally blessed God. Amen. But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel, ⁷ nor *are* they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." ⁸ That is, those who *are* the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.'

It's the same thing we said above: with Jews and with Gentiles, with men and with women, with slaves and with free: only those who were chosen by God, the Elect, and called by Him, who come to Him in faith and are born again, are the true children of God and the true Israel of God.

During this present interval between the end of the 69th Week of Daniel 9, when the Lord Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem on a donkey, offering Himself as King... between that moment, a few days later when Israel rejected Him as their King, and the beginning of the 70th Week of Daniel 9, the 7 year Tribulation, during this time of God's overly abundant Grace poured out, the true children of God and the true Israel of God are one and the same. As much as we are told that Jews don't have to become Christians, that Jews have a special relationship to God... none of that matters or is even true; now, during the Age of the Church, all who have placed their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, who have been born again, are part of His Body and His Bride: the True Church of God... Jews and Gentiles alike.

When the Rapture occurs, one day very soon, all of the True Church of God will be removed in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye. Salvation will revert back to what it was during the Old Testament. Salvation will still, as always, be according to faith in God's Word and in His Son, but they, Jews and Gentiles alike, will no longer be 'born again,' no longer a new creation, with God's Holy 'Spirit living within them. Those who come to him will still have been part of the Elect, but they are the ones of whom Jesus said, 'Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. ¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ **But he who endures to the end shall be saved.** ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.' Matt 24:9 Now, during the time of the Church, our perseverance until the end, at death or at the Rapture, is God's responsibility, He is the One Who has promised to keep us safe until the end. Then, during the Tribulation, their staying strong will be their own responsibility... I'm glad that won't be true of me... I would hate for my staying 'saved' to depend on me... wouldn't you?

Verse 17: 'From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.'

Who had been troubling Paul? It was the Judaizers, those who were denying the Grace of God, through Faith, substituting works of the flesh. Paul had received many scars in his flesh in order to bring to these Galatians, and so many others, the true message of God's Gospel of Grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished Work on the Cross. Every scar from every beating was a vivid reminder of what Jesus Christ had done in order to pay the penalty for the sin of God's Elect.

He referenced that fact in his letter to the Colossians: 'I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, ²⁵ of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, ²⁶ the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. ²⁷ To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸ Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ To this *end* I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.'

Every false teacher was an insult to the Grace of God and to the suffering Paul had been willing to endure for the Elect.

Verse 18: 'Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.'

See how short his ending was to these Galatians, as if he was in a real hurry to get the letter off and also a symbol of his 'fed-uppedness' with the Galatians who had so quickly turned away from the truth of the Gospel to the false teachings of the Judaizers.

And that's how he ended this letter, short and to the point! Amen