

GALATIANS CHAPTER 1

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;)

1:2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:

1:3 Grace *be* to you and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ,

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:

1:5 To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The first five verses of Galatians make up the salutation. In it we have the writer and the mention of his companions, the receivers of the epistle, and a greeting, all followed by a doxology.

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As he commences each of his epistles, Paul here begins with the mention of his name. In three of his epistles he likewise ends with his name in the closing benediction (1 Cor. 16:21; Col. 4:18; 2 The. 3:17). And although Paul refers to himself in all of his epistles, he mentions himself by name thirteen times (six in 1 Corinthians alone) in seven of his thirteen epistles. It should also be noted that Paul does not just begin with the mention of his name, but with the *bare* mention of his name; that is, he does not say Doctor Paul, Reverend Paul, Most Reverend Paul, Right Reverend Paul, Very Reverend Paul, Father Paul, Monsignor Paul, Cardinal Paul, Bishop Paul, Archbishop Paul, or Pope Paul, but simply Paul.

Paul's usual description of himself is that of "**an apostle**," the highest office in the Church. He uses the term in the salutation of

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nine of his epistles—the exceptions being Philippians, where he calls himself a servant; Philemon, where he calls himself a prisoner; and 1 & 2 Thessalonians, where he uses no description at all. However, in the body of 1 Thessalonians, Paul once refers to himself as an apostle (1 The. 2:6). It is only in the salutation of Romans and Titus that Paul describes himself as both a servant and an apostle. The word *apostle* signifies “one who is sent.” But like other ordinary words appropriated by the writers of the New Testament (like the words for “church,” “brethren,” “faith,” and “gospel”), the word *apostle* came to have a peculiarly Christian meaning, that of an office made up of those who were sent. The original apostles were twelve of the disciples of Christ (Mat. 10:1-2). They were called and “**sent forth**” (Mat. 10:5). After the defection of Judas from the apostleship (Acts 1:25), Matthias was chosen to replace him (Acts 1:26). That this was no hasty mistake on the part of the apostles, and that Paul was not supposed to be substituted for Judas, is apparent from three things. First of all, that no replacement was chosen for James after his martyrdom (Acts 12:1-22), shows that the number twelve was fixed. Secondly, the twelve foundations of the wall of New Jerusalem will have “**the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb**” (Rev. 21:14); Paul was the “**apostle of the Gentiles**” (Rom. 11:13). Thirdly, Paul did not meet the qualifications to be a replacement for Judas, since he had not been baptized by John, companied with the Twelve, or been a witness of Christ’s resurrection (Acts 1:21-22). And fourth, there are other apostles, both named and unnamed, besides Paul and the original twelve. James, “**the Lord’s brother**” (Gal. 1:19), is termed an apostle (Gal. 1:19; 1 Cor. 15:7, cf. 15:5), as are Barnabas (Acts 14:4, 14) and the unnamed “**all the apostles**” who are distinguished from the Twelve (1 Cor. 15:5, 7). In 1 Thessalonians, when Paul makes reference to his visit to Thessalonica, he speaks of himself and his fellow-laborers as “**apostles of Christ**” (1 The. 2:6). This would include Silvanus, who, besides being named with Paul in the salutation of 1 Thessalonians, is mentioned in Acts as being with Paul at that time (Acts 17:4), but apparently not Timothy, whom, even though he is named with Paul and Silvanus in 1 Thessalonians, and was also with them in Thessalonica (Acts 17:14), Paul

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seems to exclude from the apostleship (2 Cor. 1:1; Col. 1:1). It could also include Apollos (1 Cor. 4:6, 9). To say that God never recognized Matthias as an apostle because he is never mentioned again in the book of Acts couldn't possibly be true since most of the other original apostles aren't mentioned either. So, even though he was not one of the original twelve apostles, Paul claims equality with them. His apostleship stands or falls with them (cf. Gal. 2:7-8). To this might also be added that the extension of the apostleship to more than the original twelve was the only way that "**false apostles**" (1 Cor. 11:13) could have some pretension of legitimacy. This extension being the case, is the office of an apostle a legitimate office in the church today? There are four reasons why this cannot be so. First of all, the apostles were set first in the Church (1 Cor. 12:28), and are the foundation upon which the church is built (Eph. 2:20). Secondly, seeing the risen Christ was a necessary qualification to hold the office of an apostle (Acts 1:22), even in the case of Paul, as he himself mentions (1 Cor. 9:1). Third, Paul, in discussing the eyewitnesses to the risen Christ, puts himself as the last, implying that the apostolic office ceases with him (1 Cor. 15:8). And finally, Paul mentions the "**signs of an apostle**" being wrought "**in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds**" (2 Cor. 12:12). In this respect, apostles were like Christ, who performed "**miracles and wonders and signs**" (Acts 2:22). And like Christ, apostolic signs included healing (Acts 14:8-10) and raising the dead (Acts 20:9-11). Therefore, just as later the Apostle John mentioned apostles being tried and found liars (Rev. 2:2), so must we today denounce those who claim to be apostles as false (1 Cor. 11:13) and liars (Rev. 2:2). This would include both those in the Charismatic movement who make such assertions as well as the twelve administrative officials of the Mormon Church who claim to be apostles. And to make further application, the same denunciation would apply to those who assume counterfeit offices not found in the New Testament—whether it be pope, cardinal, archbishop, or priest.

As he does nowhere else in the salutation of any of his epistles, Paul here asserts his apostleship is no uncertain terms. In 1 Timothy only, Paul augments his title of apostle with the phrase "by the commandment of God" (1 Tim. 1:1) But in the Corinthian letters,

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Ephesians, Colossians, and 2 Timothy, he adds that his apostleship was by “**the will of God**” (1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:2) Here in Galatians, however, he first negatively and then positively asserts his apostleship. Paul’s apostleship had no human source—it was not “**of men**,” and it had no human agency—it was not “**by man**.” But in view of the circumstances of Paul’s apostleship, this should not be restricted to just man in a generic sense. Therefore, the change from the singular to the plural is no doubt because the idea of source would more naturally be connected with a group even as the idea of agency would better relate to an individual. The authority which emanates from a group can be conveyed through a single individual. The origin of Paul’s apostleship was not like that of Matthias, who was selected by men (Acts 1:26), or even like that of the original twelve apostles, who were chosen by the not-yet-risen Christ (Mat. 10:1). Neither was he made an apostle through the mediation of Ananias, who baptized him (Acts 9:17), nor through Barnabas, who first took him to the apostles (Acts 9:27), nor through the church at Antioch, which sent him out on his journeys (Acts 13:1-2). Paul’s language here anticipates similar language regarding his gospel later in the chapter (Gal. 1:11-12). And although there is a world of difference between the Apostle Paul and the ordinary Christian minister, there are two lessons to be learned here. There is a sense in which all preachers should not be “**of men**” or “**by man**.” A preacher should not, in the exercise of his ministry, be *of* men. He should be a God-called man—not self-called, father-called, mother-called, or preacher-called. Other preachers, though not *of* men, falter in that they minister *by* man—by other men’s traditions, labors, sermons, or reputations.

Paul next positively affirms that his apostleship was “**by Jesus Christ, and God the Father**.” The idea that his apostleship was of divine origin is not something that he only mentions here (cf. Rom. 15:15-19; 1 The. 2:4), as if he were merely defending the legitimacy of his apostleship against the charges of some opponents, but is a point raised by Paul himself. By associating Jesus Christ with God the Father, Paul sets him apart from and exalts him above all men, even though elsewhere Paul affirms his

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full humanity (1Tim. 2:5). This puts Paul's calling above that of even the original twelve apostles. To emphasize that there is no distinction between the calling of Jesus Christ and that of God the Father, since it is Christ who called him (Acts 9:5), Paul refers to Jesus Christ first, contrary to his usual order when the same thing is said to be from both God and Christ, as in the salutation of all his epistles, including Galatians, as in verse 3 discussed below. The phrase in question should be contrasted with "**not of men, neither by man**" in its entirety. Because there is no higher source than God, "**by Jesus Christ, and God the Father**" expresses both source and agency, as elsewhere Paul states: "**God is faithful, by whom ye were called**" (1 Cor. 1:9).

Paul then qualifies "**God the Father**" with the description "**who raised him from the dead.**" The resurrection of Christ is mentioned in all of Paul's Epistles, except 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, and appears in Galatians only here. Although it is the resurrection that distinguishes Christianity from all other religions, as is evident from the fact that Buddha, Confucius, and Mohammad never came up, the resurrection is not introduced here to substantiate this fact. Nor is it mentioned that Christ might be "**declared to be the Son of God**" (Rom. 1:4) or because without it our "**faith is also vain**" (1 Cor. 15:14). Rather, the mention of the resurrection of Christ emphasizes that it is the risen Christ who called Paul, again putting his calling above that of the other apostles, and establishing the fact of the independent nature of his apostleship.

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The word "**brethren**" is a generic term used in a fraternal sense to designate all believers. It is another word which came to have peculiarly Christian meaning. And although it is an archaic form of "brothers," it is fitting because "**brethren**" can include both males and females (Rom. 8:29; Phil. 4:1-2; 2 The. 1:3). Paul mentions the plural "**sisters**" but one time, and that to refer to literal sisters (1 Tim. 5:2). In the singular, however, he twice refers to a female Christian as a "**sister**" (Rom. 16:1; 1 Cor. 7:15). Paul refers

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to the “**brethren**” 101 times in his epistles. Occasionally, however, he applies the term to his fellow Jews (Rom. 9:3) or to physical brothers (1 Cor. 9:5). But beyond the fraternal sense, there is the doctrinal import that because all Christians have God for their father, they are brothers. All men, however, are not brothers. Consequently, the “brotherhood of man” is an anti-biblical teaching, for it is only “**by faith in Christ Jesus**” (Gal. 3:26) that men become the children of God and therefore brothers.

The number and identification of “**the brethren which are with me**” is not revealed elsewhere in the epistle. It is only here in Galatians that Paul includes others in the salutation without mentioning their names. In 1 Corinthians it is Sosthenes (1 Cor. 1:1), in 1 & 2 Thessalonians it is Silvanus and Timothy (1 The. 1:1; 2 The. 1:1), and elsewhere, where Paul does include others with himself, it is Timothy alone (2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1; Phile. 1:1). Sometimes it is at the end of his epistles that Paul mentions others as being with him (Phil. 4:21; Tit. 3:15). By “**with me**” Paul does not mean all the Christians living in the place from which he writes, but those brethren who are with him in his ministry work, as is evident by distinction made between “**the brethren which are with me**” (Phil. 4:21) and “**all the saints**” (Phil. 4:22). But even though Paul includes others with himself, it is he that is doing the writing (usually with an amanuensis—Rom. 16:22). Paul is mentioned first in every one of his epistles. He also closes his epistles with a “**salutation of Paul with mine own hand**” (2 The. 3:17). The regular occurrence of the first person singular in those epistles in which he mentions others is further proof that it is Paul himself who is responsible for their contents (1 Cor. 5:11; 2 Cor. 2:7; Gal. 3:17; Phil. 2:19; Col. 1:23; 1 The. 5:1; 2 The. 2:5; Phile. 4). However, this is not to say that Paul never uses the first person plural to include those who are with him (1 The. 1:2; 2 The. 1:3). A thing to be remembered here is that, just like Elijah found out (1 Kgs. 19:14, 18), the preacher who stands firmly for the Bible and against the world does not stand alone—there are other like-minded brethren with him, whether he knows it or not.

For the location of “**Galatia**,” and the reason for the identification of the Galatian churches as those established by Paul in the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia—namely, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe—see the introduction

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to Galatians. “**Galatia**” is mentioned twice in Paul’s other epistles. In his second epistle to Timothy, Paul reports that Crescens departed to “**Galatia**” (2 Tim. 4:10). In his first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul referred to “**the churches of Galatia**” (1 Cor. 16:1). The Apostle Peter also mentions the region of “**Galatia**” (1 Pet. 1:1). The Galatian churches are unique, though, in that they alone are referred to in Paul’s other epistles as churches instead of just their location being given, as is the case for Thessalonica (2 Tim. 4:10), Ephesus (1 Cor. 15:32), Philippi (1 The. 2:2), Corinth (2 Tim. 4:20), and Rome (2 Tim. 1:17).

There are two things about the designees of this epistle that should be noted. First, there are no words of affection or commendation to describe “**the churches of Galatia**.” The church of the Thessalonians is said to be “**in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ**” (1 The. 1:1) or “**in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**” (2 The. 1:1). The church at Corinth is described as being “**of God**” (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1). The Christians in Rome are “**beloved of God**” (Rom. 1:7). Those in Ephesus, Philippi, and Colosse are “**saints**” (Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1). But here in Galatians, no doubt due to the occasion of the letter, it is just “**churches**.” The second thing that should be noted is the fact that it is “**churches**” that are being addressed. This in itself brings up four things worthy of consideration. First of all, Paul’s letters to the Romans, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians do not say that they were written to a church, like the letters to the Corinthians and Thessalonians, or to a group of churches, like here in Galatians. Does this mean that the aforementioned groups were not organized into churches? Not at all. The “**saints which are at Ephesus**” (Eph. 1:1) are definitely a church because we read elsewhere that Paul “**sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church**” (Acts 20:17). Ephesus is also one of the “**seven churches which are in Asia**” (Rev. 1:1) that the Apostle John wrote to. The “**saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi**” (Phil. 1:1) should also be considered a church because Paul makes mention of “**the bishops and deacons**” (Phil. 1:1) there. And not only that, the church at Philippi would be included in the “**churches of Macedonia**” (2 Cor. 8:1; cf. Acts 16:12). It is also implied at the close of the Colossian epistle that an organized church was present because the Colossians were instructed to exchange their letter with that of “**the**

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church of the Laodiceans” (Col. 4:16). In writing to the Romans (Rom. 16:1), the Philippians (Phil. 4:15), and the Colossians (Col. 4:16), although they are not addressed as churches in the salutation, Paul makes mention of other churches. Therefore, it can satisfactorily be concluded that all Christians in the New Testament were connected with a local church. The application to this day and age is too apparent to call for further comment. Secondly, it should be noticed that this epistle was not written to a council, convention, fellowship, or association, but to local churches. Neither was it written to a session, presbytery, synod, or general assembly, but to local churches. The independence and autonomy of the local church is a forgotten truth in this age of denominations and parachurch organizations. Thirdly, the Bible usage of the word *church* is decidedly different from the modern vernacular. In common usage the word *church* is applied to a building for a religious observance, a national religious organization, the Roman Catholic Church, a religious service, a religious denomination, Christendom, and all of the redeemed throughout history. In contrast, the Bible mentions particular churches (Acts 13:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 The. 1:1), groups of churches (Acts 9:31; 1 Cor. 16:19; Gal. 1:2, 22), and all of the churches (Rom. 16:4, 16; 1 Cor. 11:16, 14:33). Most so-called churches in existence today, with their concerts, programs, recreation activities, day cares, garage sales, fish fries, fall festivals, seminars, car washes, and carnivals do not remotely resemble the church of the New Testament. The only other use of the word *church* is in the universal sense of all believers, as discussed below where it is mentioned in Galatians 1:13. The final thing of note about the designees of this epistle is that, unlike any of Paul’s other letters, Galatians is written to a group of churches. It is truly a circular letter. However, does this mean that Paul’s other letters were meant to be read *only* by the specific church addressed? Would not the contents of a letter to one church be relevant to another? In the case of Galatians, the letter was relevant to all the churches of Galatia (Gal. 1:6, 3:1). Yet, in Paul’s other letters, even though much in each individual letter would apply to the specific church addressed, the letters as a whole were still meant to be read by other churches. These two principles are illustrated at the close of the Colossian epistle:

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And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea.

And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it. (Col. 4:16-17).

Obviously, only the church at Colosse would say this to Archippus. However, Paul still enjoins the church of the Laodiceans to read the epistle from Colosse. And because all of Paul's epistles are Scripture (2 Pet. 3:16), we today are to do likewise.

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Paul's greeting of "**grace be to you and peace**" to the Galatian churches is the standard greeting used in all his epistles, except for the addition of "**mercy**" in the personal letters to Timothy (1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2) and Titus (Tit. 1:4). The word *grace* is yet another word appropriated by the writers of the New Testament and given a rich and fuller meaning. Grace is the Christian replacement for the standard Greek greeting (Acts 15:23, 23:26). It is God's unmerited favor toward sinful man. Someone has defined it as "God's Riches At Christ's Expense." Another has described grace as any move of God toward man. Paul mentions "**grace**" ninety-one times in his epistles, and besides beginning each one with grace, he closes all of them with a benediction of grace. We are both saved by grace (Acts 15:11; Eph. 2:8) and justified by grace (Rom. 3:24; Tit. 3:7). The result of receiving the grace of God is peace: peace with God (Rom. 5:1), peace with others (Eph. 2:14, 17), and peace within oneself (Phil. 4:7). Paul mentions "**peace**" forty-seven times in his epistles, but it is always grace first and then peace. The natural man is at enmity with God (Rom. 8:7) and is therefore considered his enemy (Col. 1:21). But peace with God can only be obtained on his conditions. It is only after we are "**justified by faith**" (Rom. 5:1) that we can be at peace with God. There can be no real peace with others until there is peace with God, whether on an individual or international level. All of man's efforts through the United Nations to bring peace on earth will only lead to more wars. The Christian who has peace with God is commanded to "**follow after the things**

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which make for peace” (Rom. 14:19), and to **“live in peace”** (2 Cor. 13:11) **“with all men”** (Rom. 12:18) and among his fellow Christians (1 The. 5:13). Inner peace can only exist in those who have obtained peace with God. Lacking this peace with God, the natural man substitutes things like alcohol, drugs, work, money, sex, or power. But even though the Christian has inner peace, he is further commanded to **“let the peace of God rule”** in his heart (Col. 3:15).

The source of grace and peace is **“from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.”** Although Paul traces grace and peace to the same source in all of his epistles, there are some minor variations in wording. The standard description is **“God our Father”** and **“the Lord Jesus Christ,”** found in all of the Pauline Epistles except those to Timothy, Titus, and here in Galatians. In 1 Timothy only it is **“God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord”** (1 Tim. 1:2). The phrase in Galatians closely matches those in 2 Timothy and Titus. But while both of those phrases begin with **“God the Father,”** in 2 Timothy it is followed by **“Christ Jesus our Lord”** (2 Tim. 1:2), and in Titus **“the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour”** (Tit. 1:4). The fatherhood of God is expressed a number of ways in the Bible. God is the Father in a general sense, as in the salutation of Paul’s epistles and elsewhere (1 Cor. 8:6; Phil. 2:11). God is the Father of the nation of Israel (Exo. 4:22; Deu. 32:6). God is the Father of Jesus Christ (2 John 1:3; Col. 1:3). God is the Father of the Church (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 3:26). The only way that God is the Father of mankind is by virtue of him being the creator (Acts 17:28-29; Heb. 12:9). As a consequence, the “fatherhood of God” joins the “brotherhood of man” as an anti-biblical teaching without foundation in the word of God. But it is not just God the Father who is the source of grace and peace. As he does in verse one regarding his apostleship, Paul here joins Jesus Christ with God the Father as the source of grace and peace. The **“grace of God”** (Col. 1:6) is connected with the gospel just as is the **“grace of Christ”** (Gal. 1:6). Likewise, the **“grace of God”** (Tit. 2:11) is connected with salvation just as is the **“grace of the Lord Jesus Christ”** (Acts 15:11). But just as the only way to obtain the grace of God is through Jesus Christ, so **“peace with God”** comes **“through our Lord Jesus Christ”** (Rom. 5:1) even as does the

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“**peace of God**” (Phil. 4:7). The triple designation “**Lord Jesus Christ**,” used by Paul at least once in all of his writings, indicates, first of all his deity, his humanity, and his messiahship; and secondly, his exalted rank, his saving significance, and his divine commission.

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:

In all of Paul’s epistles but here in Galatians, the salutation proper is followed by an assertion of thanksgiving (Rom. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:4; Phil. 1:3; Col. 1:3; 1 The. 1:2; 2 The. 1:3; 2 Tim. 1:3; Phile. 4), an ascription of praise (2 Cor. 1:3), or an instruction (1 Tim. 1:3; Tit. 1:5). Paul’s introduction here of the atonement of Christ is occasioned by the nature of the false teaching brought to the Galatians that in essence denied the sufficiency of an unaugmented atonement. That the Lord Jesus Christ “**gave himself**” is Paul’s usual mode of expression (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 5:2; 1 Tim. 2:6; Tit. 2:14). This is based on the words of our Lord himself, that he would “**give his life a ransom for many**” (Mark 10:45). Thus, his death was neither a tragic accident nor the sudden sacrifice of a martyr. But God is also said to have “**delivered him up**” (Rom. 8:32), like the familiar language of the Apostle John: “**For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son**” (John 3:16). And, in addition to these asseverations, Paul also relates the bare fact that Christ “**was delivered**” (Rom. 4:25), which could apply to not only both assertions, but to the fact that men also “**delivered up**” (Acts 3:13) the Lord.

The full declaration is that Christ “**gave himself for our sins.**” The nature of the giving is defined elsewhere as “**Christ died for our sins**” (1 Cor. 15:3). Unlike the priests of the Old Testament or some pagan religion who offered up sacrifices and then went about their business until the next appointed time, Paul declares that Christ was both priest and sacrifice. But since he gave himself, he could only make but one sacrifice. And it is the fact that this sacrifice alone is sufficient that is pertinent to Paul’s argument in Galatians, for the issue was not whether Christ’s atonement was

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necessary, but rather that it was *enough*. That Christ “**gave himself for our sins**” insinuates, first of all, that man has a sin problem, and all his efforts to extricate himself from his predicament are doomed to fail. Secondly, it is only the atonement of Christ that takes care of sin—no priest can forgive sin, and no there is no purgatory in which one can pay for his own sins. And third, it is impossible to preach the gospel without talking about men’s sins. Paul mentions “**sin**” or “**sins**” seventy-five times in his epistles. Only in Philippians, Titus, and Philemon does neither term occur. Paul did not hesitate to name specific sins (Gal. 5:19-21), unlike the positive-speaking charlatans in many pulpits today. But for Paul sin was not just murder, adultery, or the like. Rather, he considered that “**whatsoever is not of faith is sin**” (Rom. 14:23). And concerning man’s dilemma, to think that God “**spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all**” (Rom. 8:32) if there was some other way is to conclude, as Paul does in Galatians, that “**if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain**” (Gal. 2:21). Salvation is not obtained by trying to eliminate sin, but to recognize and accept what Christ did respecting sin. The explanation of how Christ “**gave himself for our sins**” is two-fold. The Bible says not only that he “**bare our sins**” (1 Pet. 2:24) and “**suffered for sins**” (1 Pet. 3:18), but that God “**hath made him to be sin for us**” (2 Cor. 5:21). There is an intrinsic connection between the death of Christ and our sins. The death of Christ was not a manifestation of the love of God or a denunciation of sin. It was an “**offering and a sacrifice to God**” (Eph. 5:2), accepted by virtue of the resurrection of Christ. Thus, Paul explicitly refers in the opening of this epistle to two of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

The bare fact of the atonement is further augmented by an expression of purpose: “**that he might deliver us from this present evil world.**” The fruits of Christ’s death are as numerous as the effects of sin. The results of Christ’s death are elsewhere expressed as:

That we might be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Cor. 5:21).

That he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the

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cross (Eph. 2:16).

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, (Eph. 5:26).

That he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Tit. 2:14).

That we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed (1 Pet. 2:24).

That he might bring us to God (1 Pet. 3:18).

Salvation does not remove the Christian from the world but it does deliver him from it. God has **“delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son”** (Col. 1:13). Jesus did not pray that believers should be taken out of the world, but that they be kept from the evil in the world (John 17:15). Therefore, the Christian is *in* the world but not *of* the world. This purpose clause connects the Christian’s sanctification with the atonement of Christ and not the law, an important relationship undergirding Paul’s arguments later in the epistle.

In contradiction to every evolutionist, humanist, scientist, educator, and politician, this world is characterized as **“evil.”** Paul elsewhere says that **“the days are evil”** (Eph. 5:16). He takes a negative **“world view.”** The word **“world”** signifies literally the age of man, and it is in this sense that it is used here. The moral and spiritual state of mankind is **“evil”** because it could not be otherwise, since the world is made up of evil men. Paul elsewhere says that **“the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God”** (1 Cor. 3:19) and that Satan is the **“god of this world”** (2 Cor. 4:4). In his opinion of the world, Paul is merely echoing the sentiments of Jesus, for he testified of the world that **“the works thereof are evil”** (John 7:7), and called Satan the **“prince of this world”** (John 12:31). The testimony throughout the Scripture is the same. The Apostle John insisted that **“the whole world lieth in wickedness”** (1 John 5:19). Because the world is evil, Christians are commanded to **“be not conformed”** to it (Rom. 12:2). In **“this present world,”**

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:

Christians are to live “**soberly, righteously, and godly**” (Tit. 2:12). Paul laments late in his ministry that “**Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world**” (2 Tim. 4:10). Once again, everything Paul says in the opening of this epistle is relevant to the situation in the Galatian churches, for the law which the Galatians were urged to add to grace is part of the “**elements of the world**” (Gal. 4:3).

The nature of Christ’s death is further confirmed by the declaration that it was “**according to the will of God and our Father.**” In the salutation of five of his epistles, Paul relates that his work as an apostle was by “**the will of God**” (1 Cor. 1:1, 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1). Here in Galatians, however, the will of God is connected with the work of Christ as a sacrifice. Just as the Lord Jesus freely gave himself of his own will, so the death of Christ was “**according to the will of God.**” The phrase in question most naturally goes back to the declaration that Christ “**gave himself for our sins.**” But as this is enhanced by “**that he might deliver us from this present evil world,**” the whole clause can be seen as being in accordance with the will of God. This underscores the fact that Christ died as a redeemer and not a martyr. That the Son gave himself but in conformity with the will of God unites Jesus Christ and God the Father once again. This is the third time in the opening of this epistle that this phenomenon occurs. First it was in reference to Paul’s apostleship. Then it was in the source of grace and peace. Here, it is in the Atonement. In this one verse we have various aspects of the Atonement succinctly presented: the cause—our sins, the means—the death of Christ, the purpose—to deliver us (from sin and the world), the basis—the will of God. The expression “**God and our Father**” obviously relates to one and the same person, even as Paul elsewhere says “**the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**” (Eph. 1:3). These are equivalent to “**God, even the Father**” (Rom. 15:6).

1:5 To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The relative pronoun “**whom**” is the fifth mention of God in as many verses, not counting references to Jesus Christ. With the

1:5 To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

exception of 1 Corinthians 13, there is not a chapter in all of Paul's epistles where God is not referred to at least once.

Although numerous doxologies can be found throughout the Pauline Epistles (Rom. 9:5; Eph. 3:21; Phil. 4:20; 1 Tim. 1:17; 2 Tim. 4:18), this is the only place where one occurs at the end of a salutation. Only God alone is worthy of glory. To add works to faith or law to grace as necessary for salvation or as a basis for the retention of salvation is to rob God of his glory. We are commanded by Paul: "**Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God**" (1 Cor. 10:31).

Paul's concluding "**amen**" is in English taken directly from the Greek,¹ which merely transliterated from the Hebrew. It is used as a solemn confirmation at the end of a statement, doxology, or prayer. It therefore has the meaning of "truly" or "so be it." Paul closes all of his doxologies and epistles with the word "**amen**." There is evidence in both the Old Testament (Neh. 5:13) and the New (1 Cor. 14:16) that congregations responded with a spoken *amen* much like takes place today in all churches but those that are by nature (or have become) formalistic and liturgical.

1:6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

1:7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

1:8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

1:9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

1:10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

Paul makes an abrupt transition from a doxology to a denunciation. In doing so we see the occasion for the epistle. Instead of

¹ἀμήν.