

LESSON 2: GALATIANS 1:1-10

The Man, the Message, and the Motive

1. What is an apostle (v. 1)? Are there any apostles today? Do Paul's words still bear apostolic authority for us? If so, in what way, and to what extent?
2. Some people argue that Paul's office and authority was limited to his particular time and place, that his letters are no longer "legally binding" on us now, that we are all apostles, and that no one but God has spiritual "authority" over us. How would you respond to this? Others (e.g., the Roman Catholic Church) teach the doctrine of "apostolic succession," according to which the authority of the apostles is not unique to the founders of the church, but has been passed down through the generations from bishop to bishop. What's wrong with this view? How might you explain and defend your own "biblical" position?
3. Paul emphasizes that his commission is not from man but from God. Compare this verse with the first verses in his letters to the Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians? What do you think accounts for the difference in Paul's tone here? What questions do you think are being asked concerning Paul's authority and position in the church? Does this problem manifest itself today?
4. Who are the "brothers" to whom Paul refers (v. 2)? Why does he use this term? If we are members of the "family of God," how are we to conceive of our own families in this context?
5. Though he is entering into an argument with the Galatian churches, Paul begins by sending a message of grace and peace. What is the "grace and peace" he sends (v. 3)?

6. In verses 3-5 Paul gives us a definition of the gospel. What are the elements of this gospel? (See also 1 Cor. 15:1-6.) Why do you think Paul includes this right at the beginning of his letter? What is the gospel, in your own words?
7. List five things that know about Christ from reading verses 1-5. Also, what can be learned about God the Father?
8. Paul writes that Jesus “rescued” us from this present evil world. Why did we need rescue? Is the world really that bad? And, while we’re at it: if Jesus rescued us two thousand years ago, why is there still so much misery in our midst...?
9. Why is Paul “astonished”? What is the “confusion” and how do you think the gospel was being “perverted”? How and why would the Galatians (and so many well-intentioned Christians today) turn to a “different” gospel? What should our response be? (See 2 John 1:7-11.)
10. What does Paul say about those who preach a different gospel (vv. 8-9)? Why does he feel so strongly about this? When, if ever, is it appropriate for Christians to use such strong language in correcting one another? Is it not wrong to “judge” anyone else, or to “impose our values” on others?
11. How does Paul explain his motives (v. 10)? Are these two things, pleasing God and pleasing man, necessarily opposed? Should we not be concerned with pleasing or serving people? How are we to please God? How do you know what’s pleasing to God? And finally, examine your motives. Are you really seeking to please God? How?

LESSON 1: GALATIANS 1:1-10

The Man, the Message, and the Motive (and the God-Man Dichotomy of this Passage)

THE MAN

An apostle = not from man, but from God

THE MESSAGE

The gospel = not what man has done for God, but what God has done for man

THE MOTIVE

The end in view = not for pleasing man, but for pleasing God, and serving God and man