

Galatians 1:1–5 (ESV)

¹Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— ²and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: ³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

(1:1-2) From Paul, apostle not my man but by God

- The importance of introductions for Paul in understanding the main content of his letters.
 - The introductory greeting will often carry in kernel form the main thrust of the letter that follows. This is especially true with respect to Galatians.
- **? What is noticeably different about this introduction than that which we find in other letters in the NT?**
 - Right out of the gate, Paul begins with a declaration regarding his apostleship - "not from men nor through a man."
 - **? What is an apostle and why is this significant?**
 - In this context, an apostle is "one with personal, delegated authority from God to proclaim accurately the Christian gospel." (Longenecker, 2)
 - Jesus is, first and foremost, the apostle of the Father - that is, the one sent by God to proclaim the message of the gospel. See, for example, Isa. 61:1 -

Isaiah 61:1–2 (ESV)

¹The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ²to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;
 - Jesus then commissions others to function as his apostles. After his resurrection, we see in John 20:21 Jesus telling his disciples, "As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."
- The term simply refers to someone sent as an ambassador or delegate. However, this term quickly also became used in a technical sense as a title for those who had received a specific, personal commission from Jesus Christ, with the following criteria:
 - They have seen the risen Christ (1Cor. 9:1; Acts 1:22)
 - They have been given a special commissioning by him to bear witness regarding his life, death, resurrection, and the salvation made available in him.

- This is originally the twelve apostles, and Paul later lays claim to the same title as well, and that's the sense in which he is using it here.
- **? Why does Paul emphasize receiving his apostleship from Christ, not men?**
 - Clearly (as we will see throughout the letter), there was an attempt by the opponents to picture him as either adhering to the lead of Jerusalem, or as receiving his authority from them (and potentially deviating from that authority on the issue of the law). Paul begins by countering that his source of authority is Christ Jesus himself.
 - The polemical effect: Paul's gospel and his commission come directly from Christ, as opposed to the agitators in Galatia. Likewise, as one who received his teaching from the Lord Jesus, Paul places himself on the same level of the twelve in terms of apostolic authority. He is second to no one in terms of getting his gospel directly from the source.
 - Don't miss an important point in this statement - Paul draws a clear distinction between "a man" and Jesus Christ. **Why is this? Does Paul not believe Jesus was truly a man?**
- **★ KEY POINT #1: The Divine Source of Paul's Apostolic Authority**

(1:3-5) Blessings from our deliverer by God's will

- After his somewhat unusual opening, Paul enters into his customary greeting wishing them "grace" and peace" from God the Father and King Jesus, the Messiah.
 - Throughout the NT, and especially in Paul, grace and peace capture the essence of the gospel, it's cause (grace) and effect (peace), speaking specifically of those promised and hoped for end-times blessings of God's favor and God's reigning justice.
 - **"Grace and Peace" - charis kai eireine vs. "Greetings" - charein**
- **★ KEY POINT #2: The nature of the gospel**
 - Paul does something else unusual in this greeting. He appends these descriptors, which are not throw away phrases, but carry a lot of freight.
 - **? What qualifying descriptors does he append to God the Father and to Jesus Christ?**
 - (v.1) God the Father - who raised Jesus from the dead
 - (v.4) Jesus the Messiah - who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age
 - So we have the core components of Paul's gospel and the burden he carries throughout the letter - Jesus, the Messiah, giving his life as a willing self-sacrifice for the sins of his people, raised from the dead by God the Father, accomplishing our deliverance from the present evil age.
 - **? Why might Paul choose to highlight these aspects of the gospel in his opening greeting?**
 - This is the first of many reminders to the Galatians of the significance of Jesus death, something that they had forgotten as they've taken in this false teaching. Furthermore, the false teachers would have likely either downplayed or rejected the necessity of Jesus' death and its atoning significance.
 - This self-sacrifice of the Messiah for sins was a stumbling block for Jews in Paul's day.

- Lastly, it is the purpose clause that Paul will return to and highlight throughout the letter - "to rescue us from the present evil age."
- ★ **KEY POINT #3: The dawning of the new creation**
 - ? **What is "this present evil age?" In what way are we delivered from that?**
 - The two ages of 1st Century Judaism
 - This age - the age of sin, of death, of exile, where wickedness and injustice seem to reign supreme.
 - The age to come - the time when he will establish his righteous rule on the earth, the righteous will be restored and vindicated, this is the age of eternal life, and the righting of what's wrong with creation.

This age	Age to Come
Death/Sin	Life/Righteousness
Flesh	Spirit
Slavery	Freedom
Old Man	New Man
Adam	Christ
Curse	Blessing
Promise	Inheritance
Slavery	Freedom
Condemnation/Exile	Forgiveness/Restoration
Old Covenant	New Covenant

- Paul and the NT adopt this "two-age" mindset, with a major modification - In the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, the "age to come" has begun to appear right smack in the middle of history. The hoped for new creation has dawned with the resurrection of Jesus. And what's more, when we are united to him we are delivered from "this age" and become participants in the "age to come," although in the present there is an overlap of ages.
- So the present evil age is "This age" vs. "The age to come" - the era of the "flesh" or "in Adam," depicted as one of bondage and slavery. Later we will see that, for Paul, the Law itself is a part of this age. Cf. 4:3,9
 - "In accordance with this purpose, the Prophets anticipate a new creation to take place when the people of God return from exile (e.g., Isa 2:2-4; 25:6-12; 26:19; 35; 60; 65:17-25; Ezekiel 36-37). This hope for the end-time was taken up and intensified by the Jewish apocalyptic movement (e.g., Jubilees; Joseph and Aseneth; 4 Ezra 7:50, 113; 2 Apoc. Bar. 31:5; 1 Enoch 91:15-17). But the "clout" of Paul's statement is that the anticipated "age to come" has already arrived with the first advent of Christ (1 Cor 10:11). Believers, because they share the risen life of Christ and partake of his Spirit, have already entered the resurrection age (Rom 6:4-11; Eph 2:5-7; Col 3:1-3 = Isa 26:19; Ezek 37:1-14; Hos 6:1-2). " (Garlington, 34)
 - <http://richardsibbes.com/temporary/resurrection-recreation.pdf>
- Some texts connecting Christ's resurrection with the dawning of the new age:
 - Col 1:15-20
 - 1 Cor. 15:20ff
 - Eph. 1:15-23
 - Rev. 3:14
 - 1 Cor. 10:11

- Some texts speaking of our connection to him in this regard:
 - Col. 3:9-10
 - Rom. 6:4-11
 - Eph. 2:5-7
- Understanding this paradigm, which in theological terms is called "inaugurated eschatology" or "already/not yet" is critical to tracking Paul's argument and his opposition to the false teacher. What he constantly comes back to is the fact that the false teachers, as well as the Galatians, have fundamentally failed to correctly answer the question, "what time is it?" They have missed that God is doing a new thing in their midst.
- All this takes place according to the will of God the Father
- ★ **KEY POINT #4: God the Father**
 - Three times in this sentence, Paul refers to God as Father and underscores to the Galatians what is at stake in this dispute.
 - It is the Father's will that is bringing about the grand salvation that Paul's speaks about, and the content of Paul's gospel reveal the very purposes of the creator God in this world.
 - ? **What are the implications of him saying "according to the will of God the Father"?**
 - None of this was by accident, it is not a plan B but has been the plan all along
 - "Very likely, he echoes Isa 53:10: "Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt-offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand." The "will of our God and Father" thus entails a (pre)determined purpose to subject his Son to suffering and death as a sin-offering, but thereafter to exalt and vindicate him. The Galatians themselves are "his offspring" as his days have been prolonged by virtue of resurrection; and it is through Paul's gospel exclusively that the will of the Lord is prospering in his hand." (Garlington, 36)
- **Implications for us:**
 - Paul's authority (and the authority of his writings)
 - Living life between the ages
 - Trusting the sovereign will of the Father

God is:

- Father
- The source of Paul's apostleship
- The one who raised Jesus from the dead
- The source of our Grace and Peace
- The one whose will and fatherly concern is the basis of Christ's work and mankind's salvation
- Worthy of our praise and worship