

LOSING MY RELIGION

"A SIMPLE STORY OF FREEDOM" GALATIANS 1:1-5

This Week's Core Competency

Worship – I worship God for who he is and what he has done for me. Psalm 95:1-7

- 1 *Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.*
- 2 *Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song.*
- 3 *For the LORD is the great God,
the great King above all gods.*
- 4 *In his hand are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain peaks belong to him.*
- 5 *The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.*
- 6 *Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;*
- 7 *for he is our God
and we are the people of his pasture,
the flock under his care.*

I remember singing the Doxology in my Baptist church as a teen. It was typically the first song the congregation sang in worship: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise him all creatures here below; Praise him above ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." These lyrics penned by Thomas Ken in 1674 are actually the last verse of a longer hymn, "Awake My Soul, and with the Sun." The term *doxology* is derived from the Greek word *doxa* meaning "glory" as in Luke 2:14, "Glory [*doxa*] to God in the highest." It's a

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

— the Apostle Paul

liturgical term that refers to giving glory or praise to God. The "Gloria Patri" is a similar doxology: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen." Paul scatters doxologies throughout his epistles (e.g., Ro 9:5; 16:27; Eph 3:21; 1Ti 1:17). An especially beautiful one is found in Romans 11:33-36:

- 33 *Oh, the depth of the riches of the
wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments,
and his paths beyond tracing out!*
- 34 *"Who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?"*
- 35 *"Who has ever given to God,
that God should repay him?"*
- 36 *For from him and through him and to him
are all things.*

To him be the glory forever! Amen.

The opening of the book of Galatians contains a *doxology*. In reference to "our God and Father," Paul says, "to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (1:5). About it one commentator writes: "The doxology here at the very beginning, followed by the stately confirmation of the Amen!, right from the start denominates the divine work of redemption as transcendent and beyond praise, high and lifted up above the realm of criticism and objection such as, at bottom, the churches of Galatia are directing against it. The doxology serves not only to declare that the heavenly glory is due to God, but also *to summon men to join in with it and to conduct themselves accordingly*. The objectivity of God's glory is, however, the

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dominant emphasis, as can be seen also from the for ever and ever" (Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*, NICNT, 44-45, italics added).

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God’s word to put yourself in touch with him.

Galatians 1:1-5

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

Cf., other translations

1From Paul, an apostle (not from men, nor by human agency, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead) 2 and all the brothers with me, to the churches of Galatia. 3 Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be glory forever and ever! Amen. (NET)

1This letter is from Paul, an apostle. I was not appointed by any group of people or any human authority, but by Jesus Christ himself and by God the Father, who raised Jesus from the dead.

2 All the brothers and sisters here join me in sending this letter to the churches of Galatia.

3 May God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. 4 Jesus gave his life for our sins, just as God our Father planned, in order to rescue us from this evil world in which we live. 5 All glory to God forever and ever! Amen. (NLT)

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Circle "apostle" in v. 1.
- * Box "from" indicating source and "by" indicating agency in v. 1.
- * Box "but" indicating contrast in v. 1.
- * Circle "brothers" in v. 2.
- * Bracket "churches in Galatia" in v. 2.
- * Underline "grace and peace" in v. 3.
- * Circle "gave himself" in v. 4.
- * Circle "for" in v. 4.
- * Box "to" indicating purpose in v. 4.
- * Circle "evil" in v. 4.
- * Highlight v. 5.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Put the *meaning* and *significance* of the term "apostle" in your own words.
2. Explain the *contrast* in verse 1 and why it matters.
3. Why mention the resurrection—what's Paul's point?
4. What are Paul's readers to infer, if anything, from "and all the brothers with me" in his salutation?
5. Identify the recipients of Paul's letter.
6. Paul's customary greeting, "grace and peace to you," is more than *customary*. Flesh out what it means.
7. *Grace* and *peace* come from *both* God and Christ. What does their close association suggest?
8. Describe the respective roles of the Father and the Son in the provision of salvation blessings.
9. This "rescue" Paul mentions—is it past, present, or future? Explain.
10. **Discussion:** Talk about what can be inferred regarding Paul's gospel from the opening to Galatians.

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Everyday letters, including ancient ones, are simply continuing conversations between people who are apart, which explains why first-century letter writers are instructed to write "to someone not present as if he were present" (William G. Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity*, 12). Nowadays letters have for the most part been replaced by emails, texts, tweets, Facetime, and Facebook, which serve the same purpose but better. Letters in Paul's day typically had three parts: an opening, a body, and a closing. To which, the apostle typically inserted a thanksgiving or blessing in the opening and various paraenesis, i.e., ethical exhortations, in the body. Galatians 1:1-5 contains the opening of Paul's letter to "the churches in Galatia" (v. 2).

Before examining these verses more closely, a few comments on the occasion and purpose of his letter are in order. The following brief summary is helpful: "Judaizers were Jewish Christians who believed, among other things, that a number of the ceremonial practices of the OT were still binding on the NT church. Following Paul's successful campaign in Galatia [Ac 13:13-14:28], they insisted that Gentile converts to Christianity abide by certain OT rites, especially circumcision . . . The Judaizers argued that Paul was not an authentic apostle and that out of a desire to make the message more appealing to Gentiles he had removed from the gospel certain legal requirements. Paul responded by clearly establishing his apostolic authority and thereby substantiating the gospel he preached. By introducing additional requirements for justification (e.g., works of the law) his adversaries had perverted the gospel of grace and, unless prevented, would bring Paul's converts into the bondage of legalism. It is by grace through faith alone that man is justified, and it is by faith alone that he is to live out his new life in the freedom of the Spirit" (*The NIV Study Bible*, 1779). Put differently, Judaizers argued that Gentiles had to become Jews by being circumcised in order to be Christians, and they had to obey the law of Moses in order to be sanctified. Paul rejected both notions.

The opening of Greek letters generally contained the standard salutation, "X" to "Y" followed by the greeting *kairein* (lit., "rejoice," colloquially,

"greetings" or "hello"), so in line with the literary convention of his day, Paul begins with his name (v. 1), an identification of his addressees (v. 2), and a greeting (v. 3). But he doesn't stop there. One commentator observes: "He also refers to those who join him in sending the letter (v 2), expands the greeting by the insertion of what appears to be an early Christian confession (v 4), and adds a doxology (v 5). More importantly, Paul goes beyond the epistolary conventions of his day by pouring into his salutation (1) affirmations regarding his apostleship (v 1) and Christ's salvific work (v 4), and (2) allusions to God the Father's activity and will (vv 1b, 4b) and his converts' salvation (v 4)—*thereby highlighting at the very beginning the central themes of his letter*" (Richard N. Longenecker, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 41, *Galatians*, 1-2, italics added). Made obvious by omission are any expressions of praise for these churches as found elsewhere in Paul's letters to other churches (cf., Ro 1:8; 1Co 1:4-9; 2Co 1:6-7; 1Th 1:2-3; 2Th 1:3-4). So while the usual elements are all there, Paul's abrupt restatement of his claim to be an apostle, coupled with his waste-no-words terseness, clearly points to the heart of the epistle's serious concern—the preaching of another gospel.

Paul's opponents, the Judaizers, cast aspersions on his apostleship everywhere they went, thereby making their strategy obvious: undermine Paul's authority, undermine Paul's gospel. So Paul begins his circular letter to the churches with a rigorous defense of his apostleship. "Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father" (v. 1) and then later adds, "I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ" (1:11-12). In verse 3, he alludes to that very gospel and its spiritual benefits using the shorthand expression "grace and peace." As one commentator explains, "Grace is God's unconditioned good will towards mankind which is decisively expressed in the saving work of Christ (cf. v 6; 2:21); peace is the state of life-peace with God (Rom. 5:1) and peace with one another (Eph. 2:14-18)—enjoyed by those who have effectively experienced the divine grace (cf. 5:22; 6:16)" (F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the*

Galatians, NIGTC, 74). Grace and peace relate as cause and effect: grace being the cause and peace its effect (Longenecker, 7). In a theological nutshell, justification comes by grace (through faith) and not by works of the law. The apostle makes it unmistakably clear that salvation is ours through Christ "who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age" (v. 4; cf., Mk 10:45), thereby highlighting the full sufficiency of Christ's work for our salvation apart from any works of the law. According to the New Testament, believers have been saved (Eph 2:5, 8), are being saved (1Co 1:18; 2Co 2:15), and will be saved (Php 1:28); likewise, one might say that believers have been rescued, are being rescued, and will be rescued from the present evil age. Consider the following

observation: "Temporally, the age to come, the resurrection age, still lies in the future; spiritually, believers in Christ have here and now been made partakers of it, because they share the risen life of Christ (cf. 2:19f.), who has already entered the resurrection age. They have thus been delivered from the control of the powers which dominate the present age . . . The indwelling Spirit not only helps them to look forward in confidence to the life of the age to come (cf. 5:5); he enables them to enjoy it even while in a mortal body they live in the present age" (Bruce, 76). All of which is "according to the will of our God and Father" (v. 4). No wonder Paul exclaims "to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (v. 5).

The Message of the Passage

Glory be to God for we enjoy the blessings of salvation only because Christ gave himself for our sins according to the Father's will.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

• **Journal your answers to the following *living* questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 1 **apostle** "In the NT the noun [*apostolos*], 'apostle,' connotes personal, delegated authority; it speaks of being commissioned to represent another . . . More narrowly, it is used of a group of believers in Jesus who had some special function (e.g., Luke 11:49; Acts 14:4, 14; Rom 16:7; Gal 1:19; Eph 3:5; Rev 18:20), with particular reference to the twelve disciples (Matt 10:2; Mark 3:14 [aleph B et al.]; Luke 6:13; 9:10; 17:5; 22:14; Acts 1:2, 26; passim). This narrower usage is how the term is usually used in its approximately seventy-six occurrences in the NT, and that is how Paul uses it of himself in all his letters: one with personal, delegated authority from God to proclaim accurately the Christian gospel" (Longenecker, 2). "If the NT [*apostolos*] bears some relation to Heb. *saluah* or *saliah* (which seems probable), then of the one as of the other it was true that . . . 'a man's delegate is like himself' (m. Ber. 5.5), i.e. the authority of the person commissioned is that of the person who commissions him. So, when Paul speaks or acts as an apostle of Christ, he does so with Christ's authority (cf. 2 Cor. 10:8)" (F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, NIGTC, 72; cf., Longenecker, 3).

v. 1 **from, by** "Paul affirms at the very beginning of his letter, in evident opposition to the claims of his opponents, that his apostleship was not derived from any human source [ouk ap' anthopon] nor received through any human agency [*oude di' anthropou*]. Others may have been appointed by one or the other of the then-existing congregations (cf. his later mention of such appointments in 2 Cor 8:23 and Phil 2:25). The source of his apostleship, however, was not any such body of Christians, whether at Damascus, Jerusalem, or Syrian Antioch. Nor was it received through the mediation of Ananias (cf. Acts 9:10-19; 22:12-16), Barnabas (cf. Acts 9:27; 11:25-26; 13:1ff.), Peter, James, or any other apostle" (Longenecker, 4).

v. 1 **but by** Or "but through" (ESV). The contrast "sets out the converse to Paul's denials with a positive statement as to the origin of his apostleship" (4). "Here the through [*dia*] has not merely an instrumental, but also a causative significance, in which the means can be regarded as being understood" (Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*, NICNT, 40); "so *dia* should be seen here more in terms of ultimate source than agency (e.g., Burton, Galatians, 5-6; Bruce, Galatians, 72-72, citing Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 1:9; Heb 2:10)" (Longenecker, 4).

v. 2 **brothers** "We cannot identify 'all' the Christian brothers ('brethren,' possibly included sisters) who were 'with' Paul when he wrote this epistle, but certainly Barnabas and the Christians in the church in Syrian Antioch were likely part of this group" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Galatians," 2015 ed., 9, www.soniclight.com). "Paul may wish to indicate to the Galatians that he is expressing no merely individual viewpoint, but one shared by his colleagues" (Bruce, 74).

v. 2 **churches in Galatia** "The 'churches of Galatia' were probably the churches in the southern Roman province of Galatia (Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, et al.), rather than those in northern, ethnic Galatia. This is the only one of Paul's inspired letters that he addressed, that was neither to Christians in one specific town, nor to an individual" (Constable, 9).

v. 3 **grace and peace** "The greeting Paul wrote in most of his epistles was a combination of the commonly used Greek (*charis*, 'grace') and Jewish (*shalom*, 'peace') salutations. The former, 'grace,' in the Christian context, refers to God's undeserved favor, that is the portion of (gift, blessing to) His children . . . The second word of greeting, 'peace,' defines not just the absence of hostility-but the totality of God's blessings. This word had become a standard Jewish greeting. Believers enjoy peace with God, and with other people, because God has taken the initiative in extending His grace to them in Christ (cf. Num. 6:24-26). 'Peace' always follows 'grace' in Paul's salutations, because that is their logical and temporal order" (Constable, 9; cf., Doty, 29).

v. 4 **gave himself** Cf., 2:20; Eph 5:2, 25; 1Ti 2:6; Tit 2:14. "The active verb suggests the voluntariness, and the reflexive pronoun speaks of the personal and the total in His surrender (cf. Mark 10:45)" (Ridderbos, 43). Jesus' statement [in Mk 10:45] seems to have been derived from Isaiah's fourth Servant Song (cf. esp. Isa 53:5-6, 12), which he used to highlight his own consciousness of being God's Righteous Servant" (Longenecker, 7).

v. 4 **for** The precise nuance of the preposition is difficult to determine. "For our sins' means 'for the forgiveness or expiation of our sins' (for the sense cf. Mk. 10:45) . . . but one may compare the use of *huper* in 3 Ki. (MT 1 Ki.) 16:18f., [lit., "died *huper* the sins of him"], where *huper* must mean 'because of': Zimri died as a penalty for his sins (hardly by way of an atonement for them)" (Bruce, 75).

v. 4 **evil age** "The deliverance of which Paul speaks is not out of the material world but from the evil which dominates it (cf. Jn. 17:15 where [*kosmos*] has much the same sense as Paul's [*aion*]). Similarly in Rom 12:2 Paul urges the Roman Christians not to be conformed to this age (to *aioni touto*) but to be transformed by inward renewal so as to prove by experience how good (by contrast) the will of God is" (76).

Family Time

Parents, our summer series in *PantegoKids* is called **True or False?** Like the adults, we will be studying the book of Galatians to discover how to live out true faith. *Our kids' lessons, however, will not textually align each week with adult teaching. Core competencies will also likely be different. We will be memorizing Gal. 5:22-26.*

In Galatians 1, Paul tells his readers that the gospel he preached to them is the truth. One of the ways he convinces them of this is by telling his personal story. Storytelling is a powerful means of communicating our experiences. Children are especially wired to learn from stories. As you've probably experienced, they often want the same ones told or read to them over and over. Hearing stories of our faith journey is encouraging to kids who are beginning to live their own. Make a plan this summer to sit down with your kids and tell them your God story. How did you come to faith? What was church like for you as a child if you attended? What were your family's beliefs and practices? It would be awesome to include grandparents or other older adults in this discussion too! Their experiences are likely very different from your child's! Your faith legacy will have a great impact on your children! Help them write their stories by hearing yours!

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Galatians 1

1. Who is the author of Galatians?
2. According to verse 6-7, why is he writing to the churches in Galatia?
3. How did Paul receive the gospel? (v. 12)

What Do You Think

Paul wasn't concerned about what they people thought of him. He simply wanted to tell the truth. Are there times when you are more concerned about what people think than what God thinks about you? What can you do in those times?

What R U Going To Do

We are going to memorize Galatians 5:22-26 all summer together. Get an early start by writing the whole passage out on a piece of paper and posting it where you will see it every day!

MEMORY TIME

Post the kid-friendly Core Competency and the Memory Verse throughout the house.

Core Comp

Salvation by Grace - I believe I become a child of God through faith in Jesus, not because of anything I do.

Memory Verse

Galatians 5:22-23 – But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC ____ and Verse _____. Family completed **Say** _____ **Think** _____ **Do** _____

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.