

Galatians 1:1-2:14 (ESVUK)**1** Paul, an apostle

—not from men nor through man,
but through Jesus Christ and God the Father,
who raised him from the dead—

² and all the brothers^a who are with me,To the churches of Galatia:³ Grace to you and peace

from God our Father

and the Lord Jesus Christ

⁴ who gave himself for our sins

to deliver us from the present evil age,

according to the will of our God and Father,

⁵ to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

⁶ I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him
who called you in the grace of Christ

and are turning to a different gospel

— ⁷ not that there is another one,

but there are some who trouble you

and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven

should preach to you

a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you,

let him be accursed.

⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again:

If anyone is preaching to you

a gospel contrary to the one you received,

let him be accursed.

¹⁰ For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God?

Or am I trying to please man?

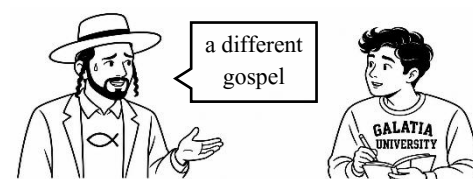
If I were still trying to please man,

I would not be a servant^b of Christ.¹¹ For I would have you know, brothers,that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel.^c¹² For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it,but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.**Sunday 25 October 2026**Author: Paul the apostle (1:1)

- suspicious of 'man'

Recipients: Galatians (1:2)Intro: greetings (1:3-5)

Context: The Galatians have turned
away from the true gospel (1:6-9)



- NB pronouns

**1. 'My God-powered conversion says
I'm the real deal!' (1:10-14)**

- 'man' could be corrupted now!

[cf. Acts 9:1-19]

^a Or *brothers and sisters*; also 1:11^b Or *slave*; Greek *bondservant*^c Greek *not according to man*

¹³ For you have heard of my former life in Judaism,
how I persecuted the church of God violently
and tried to destroy it.

¹⁴ And I was advancing in Judaism
beyond many of my own age among my people,
so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.

[cf. Acts 8:1-3]

2. 'Here's a complete history of who checked my message!' (1:15-2:10)

a. At first: no one (1:15-17)

¹⁵ But when he
who had set me apart before I was born,^d
and who called me by his grace,

¹⁶ was pleased to reveal his Son to^e me,
in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles,
I did not immediately consult with anyone;^f

¹⁷ nor did I go up to Jerusalem
to those who were apostles before me,
but I went away into Arabia,
and returned again to Damascus.

b. 3 years later: agreement with Peter & James (1:18-24)

[cf. Acts 9:26-30]

¹⁸ Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem
to visit Cephas and remained with him for fifteen days.

¹⁹ But I saw none of the other apostles
except James the Lord's brother.

²⁰ (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!)

²¹ Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.

²² And I was still unknown in person
to the churches of Judea that are in Christ.

²³ They only were hearing it said,
“He who used to persecute us
is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.”

²⁴ And they glorified God because of me.

c. 14 years later: agreement with Peter, James & John (2:1-10)

[cf. Acts 11:25-30; 12:25]

2 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem
with Barnabas,
taking Titus along with me.

² I went up because of a revelation
and set before them

(though privately before those
who seemed influential)

the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles,
in order to make sure

I was not running or had not run in vain.

^d Greek *set me apart from my mother's womb*

^f Greek *with flesh and blood*

^e Greek *in*

³ But even Titus, who was with me,
was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.

- ‘no circumcision back then!’

⁴ Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in
—who slipped in to spy out our freedom
that we have in Christ Jesus,
so that they might bring us into slavery—

⁵ to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment,
so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

⁶ And from those who seemed to be influential
(what they were makes no difference to me;
God shows no partiality)

- barbed words for the Jerusalem
apostles, pointedly unimpressed
by their prestige

—those, I say, who seemed influential
added nothing to me.

⁷ On the contrary,
when they saw that I had been entrusted
with the gospel to the uncircumcised,
just as Peter had been entrusted
with the gospel to the circumcised
⁸ (for he who worked through Peter
for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised
worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles),

⁹ and when James and Cephas and John,
who seemed to be pillars,
perceived the grace that was given to me,
they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me,
that we should go to the Gentiles
and they to the circumcised.

¹⁰ Only, they asked us to remember the poor,
the very thing I was eager to do.

¹¹ But when Cephas came to Antioch,
I opposed him to his face,
because he stood condemned.

**3. ‘I didn’t change, Peter and James
did!’ (2:11-14)**

¹² For before certain men came from James,
he was eating with the Gentiles;
but when they came he drew back and separated himself,
fearing the circumcision party.

¹³ And the rest of the Jews
acted hypocritically along with him,
so that even Barnabas was led astray
by their hypocrisy.

Small group discussions

1. Grateful Gentiles

Consider the lengths Paul goes to so that
people hear and retain the true gospel.
How does that strike you?

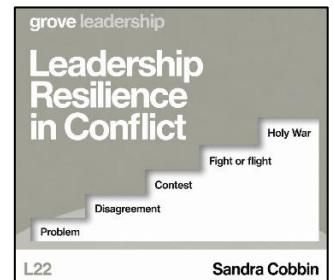
2. Correcting vs being ‘kind’

Would we rather watch someone abandon
Christ than risk being called unkind?
What would Paul make of the modern
evangelical preference for ‘niceness’?

¹⁴ But when I saw that their conduct
was not in step with the truth of the gospel,
I said to [Cephas](#) before them all,
“If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew,
how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?”

For reflection on Galatians 1:1-2:14

- 1:3-5 1. Why begin by describing Jesus as the one ‘who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age’? What does this add?
- 1:6-9 2. Why does Paul describe the Galatians as *deserting God* (1:6), rather than simply getting something wrong?
3. What does including ‘we or an angel from heaven’ contribute to Paul’s argument?
4. Paul repeats ‘let him be accursed’. To what extent are we tempted to dismiss Paul’s concerns, as many have done throughout history, as ‘a bit shrill’?
- 1:10-14 5. How do Paul’s *exceptional zeal* for Judaism contribute to his argument?
- 1:15-24 6. One could argue that 2:1-10 does far more work of defending the *truth of his message* than 1:15-24 and talking about (a) not going to Jerusalem (1:15-17) then (b) a seemingly uneventful trip to Jerusalem (1:18-24). Why then did Paul include 1:15-24? What are these verses adding?
- 2:1-10 7. Which details show how firmly Paul and the Jerusalem apostles agreed (before the apparent reversal in 2:11-14)?
8. In verses 2, 6 & 9, Paul uses very withering words to describe the Jerusalem apostles. What do you make of Paul’s willingness to be this critical of the other apostles, *in Scripture*?
- 2:11-14 9. Paul opposes Peter (a) in public before a crowd, then (b) reports having done so *in Scripture*. What level do you perceive this to be on the *Leadership Resilience in Conflict* chart?
10. What makes ‘even Barnabas’ significant in light of his earlier involvement?
11. What could Paul have lost by confronting Peter? What does this highlight as Paul’s priority?
- 2:15ff 12. Paul fought *hard* to preserve this message. How much do we want to hear it?



A. <u>True theology/worldview</u> e.g. ‘God promises a new creation!’	B. <u>Godly attitude</u> e.g. love, joy, patience	C. <u>Godly completable works</u> e.g. ‘go to church’, ‘read your Bible’ <i>If we only hear C from our pastors...</i>
D. <u>False theology/worldview</u> e.g. ‘This creation is all there is’ <i>...then we’ll end up thinking D...</i>	E. <u>Ungodly attitude</u> e.g. envy, malice, selfishness <i>...being E...</i>	F. <u>Ungodly specific works</u> e.g. lying, stealing, using porn <i>...and doing F!</i>

- Overview 13. Why do we struggle to believe that churches that state A accurately, but teach mainly C can be dangerous?
14. How do you feel about churches that focus on A often being called E?