

By Whose Authority?

THE GOSPEL REVEALED • PART 1

Galatians 1:1-2 | Arvin Assembly of God | Pastor Brian Overturf | August 23, 2026

INTRODUCTION

For two Sundays we've been getting ready. We heard the story behind this letter. Then we took the flyover. Now we start walking. Verse by verse, right here in verses 1 and 2.

Two pieces of mail get handed to you. The first is a flyer. Some guy telling you what he thinks. You glance at it and toss it. The second is a **certified letter**. Official. Signed. With the weight of somebody real behind it. That one you can't toss. It was sent by someone with the authority to make you deal with it.

So when you open your Bible... which one are you holding? We live in a world that treats it like junk mail. The minute it says something we don't want to hear, out it goes.

When the Bible tells you something you don't want to hear... who says you have to listen?

Paul gives a three-part answer in these two verses. He will teach us that he and the message he preached (the gospel & God's Word) were:

1. Sent

| Paul, an apostle... (Gal. 1:1)

God never changed Paul's name. He had both names his whole life. Saul was his Hebrew name. Paul was his Roman name. He was born a Roman citizen in Tarsus with both.

Acts 13:9

⁹Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him

Both names in one verse. God didn't rename him. God sent him. From here on Luke calls him Paul, because from here on he's going to the nations.

| ...an apostle... (Gal. 1:1)

Apostle means a sent one. An agent carrying orders for somebody else. The rabbis said, "a man's representative is like the man himself." He didn't show up speaking for himself. He showed up as if it was you.

"Apostle" is not a word for anybody. Two qualifications nobody today can meet: he saw the risen Lord Jesus with his own eyes, and Christ commissioned him personally. A very small circle. Paul was one of them.

Ephesians 2:20

²⁰having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,

You don't lay a foundation twice. So when somebody today takes the title "Apostle" (or "Prophet" for that matter) and claims that authority over people's lives, reject it.

MY NOTES

| **...not from men nor through man... (Gal. 1:1)**

“Not from men” is the source. No committee dreamed him up. No council voted him in. He did not appoint himself.

“Nor through man” is the go-between. They (the Judaizers) said his gospel came secondhand. Paul says no. Not Peter. Not James. Not Ananias. No human relay. Straight from the risen Christ.

Acts 9:1-2

¹Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ²and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Here's the irony. There was a day Saul was sent by men. He carried letters from the high priest and used them to drag believers out of their homes. He traded those for a commission from the risen Christ.

2. Signed

| **...but through Jesus Christ... (Gal. 1:1)**

“But.” Everything before it was “not.” Now the sentence turns. There's the signature. He wouldn't let any man be the go-between of his gospel, but he gladly says his commission came through Jesus Christ.

Galatians 1:15-16

¹⁵But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, ¹⁶to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood,

God was pleased to reveal His Son in Paul, and to send him. No man handed him that.

| **...and God the Father... (Gal. 1:1)**

Catch what Paul just did. He put Jesus Christ and God the Father on the same level, as the joint source of his sending. That is the whole Christian faith, loaded into a greeting.

| **...who raised Him from the dead. (Gal. 1:1)**

The resurrection is God's signature. A check, a will, a deed, a contract... none of it means anything until there's a name at the bottom. God signed off on Jesus by raising Him from the dead.

Romans 1:4

⁴and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

Every other religious teacher who ever lived is still in a grave. Jesus isn't dead. Buddha, Mohamed, Krishna... Jesus is the living Lord!

1 Corinthians 9:1

¹Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

That's the mark of an Apostle. His whole authority goes back to a living Lord and an empty tomb.

3. Settled

| ...and all the brethren who are with me... (Gal. 1:2)

Normally Paul names his co-workers: Timothy, Silas, Sosthenes. Here he brings in a whole crowd. He's under attack as the supposed "lone voice", and wants them to know this isn't Paul off on his own. It's the united witness of the church.

| To the churches of Galatia: (Gal. 1:2)

Galatians 1:2

²and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:

Churches, plural. A circular letter, carried town to town and read out loud. Public. Official. Binding. And notice what's missing. No "saints." No warmth. He's too grieved to sugarcoat it.

So put the greeting together. Sent, not from men. Signed, by Jesus Christ and the Father who raised Him. The united, public witness of the whole church. Not up for debate. Not up for a vote. It's settled.

People have gotten clever about getting around it. "That's just Paul's opinion." "The church put this book together, so the church can change it"... as if the mailman gets to rewrite the letter.

2 Timothy 3:16

¹⁶All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

All of it. Not the parts you like. We don't get to treat the Bible like Baskin and Robbins. The Bible is settled.

Isaiah 40:8

⁸The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.

Make it real. When it corrects the way you talk to your husband or wife... do you obey it, or argue with it? When it names a sin you've made peace with... do you let it convict, or change the subject?

Matthew 24:35

³⁵Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

Not one word God has spoken will ever fall. It is settled. Forever.

CONCLUSION

And this is not bad news. A settled word from God cuts two ways, and the second is pure grace. The same authority you can't wiggle out of when the Bible corrects you is just as settled when it comforts you.

John 6:37

³⁷All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

Romans 8:1

¹There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Romans 8:38-39

³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The same Bible that speaks to your sin speaks to your redemption. Grace is not up for discussion either. Next week... Jesus “gave Himself for our sins.” That’s the word of grace. Who will bring to church with you next week?

So, who says you have to listen? God does. And it is settled. Read your Bible.