

Fact Sheet for **“Hints”**  
**Galatians 1:1-10**

Pastor Bob Singer  
10/13/2019

This is the first of nine sermons in Galatians. I was introduced as a child to two famous verses from Galatians on the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). But other than these two verses, Galatians is not a book that is often referred to. It doesn't address how to have a better marriage or how to raise children. It doesn't speak to how to have a better relationship with your co-workers. If you're looking for how to use your spiritual gifts you're looking in the wrong place. But it's a very important tool to have in our spiritual toolbox, and is designed very well by God for its purposes.

Paul's main theme in this book is that our salvation is by faith, not by obedience to the Old Testament Law. This seems simple enough, but you will see many other things as we go through Galatians.

The authority of Paul's apostleship

A huge problem the early church was facing and what bearing it has on us today.

How to identify errant and problematic theology about a works-based salvation, even in Cottage Grove

Paul's insistence on justification by faith and his influence on the church

Some important nuggets that will add to your overall theology

Some of the interesting ways Paul uses the Old Testament

An alternative to dividing the Mosaic Law between the moral law and the ceremonial law, and how to properly use the OT Law

If you know what to look for Paul gives several hints as to where he will be going.

**ESV 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 who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:**

In verse one Paul is beginning to lay out his apostolic authority and the resultant authority of his message. Paul received his call as an apostle directly from Jesus Christ (Acts 9:1-19). As you will see in the next sermon Paul did not get his training about the Gospel from the early church leaders. He received it directly from God. In verse two Paul is adding to the authority of what he will be saying. The Galatians were out of touch with the rest of the church in their thinking.

**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 forever and ever. Amen.**

First off, our salvation is based in what Jesus Christ did, not on what we do. Then also pay attention to the words **“to deliver us from the present evil age”**. Is this by our obedience to the OT Law? No! But the OT Law can still inform us of what He holds to be righteous behavior. Part of our salvation involves the Holy Spirit, but we will get to that in sermon #8.

Notice that Paul's tone is not one of encouragement or teaching. His tone is that of rebuke.

**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.**

Here is where you need to understand a huge problem that faced the early church. The church began on the day of the Jewish feast of Pentecost in Acts 2. The first converts to Christianity were Jewish. The Gospel did not come to the Gentiles until several years later with the salvation of Cornelius in Acts 10. Now think about it. If you were a good Jewish boy or girl before that day of Pentecost, how would you

have been trained in the Mosaic Law? All Jewish boys had to be circumcised, because that was the sign of God's covenant with Abraham and his offspring (Genesis 17). All Jews had to obey the Mosaic Law. The Pharisees even added to the Mosaic Law with rules that were designed to keep people from even getting close to disobeying that Law. Your everyday spiritual life would have been focused on keeping the OT Law as well as the oral law of the Pharisees. The Gentiles, unless they were proselytes to Judaism, didn't try to keep those laws, or even learn them. So the church gets started on the day of Pentecost, a nice Jewish church. But then the Gentiles start coming to faith in Christ in Acts 10, without obeying the OT Law. Then Paul comes on the scene with the absolute message that our eternal salvation is gained through faith in Jesus Christ, not by works of the Law. The oral law of the Pharisees is out! The Mosaic Law is out! Even the sign of God's covenant with Abraham (the circumcision of every male) is out! Faith is in! Talk about a radical change in culture! And some found that they couldn't bring themselves to make that much of a change. What happened is that some began teaching that male circumcision and some measure of obedience to the OT Law must be followed by all Christians if they truly wanted to be saved. Their message was that our eternal salvation is based both on our faith *and* our works.

Now let me switch to today. The big issue today with some churches, and some Christians, is not circumcision, but still is some measure of obedience to the OT Law. They may focus on the dietary laws, the Sabbath, the seven Jewish feasts of Leviticus 23, etc. Their message is that if you want to be right with God, or even if you want to be saved, you must keep certain of those OT Laws. But no one says, "all of them."

The current discussion of "Lordship Salvation" comes close to this usually without going over the line.

What follows is from the [Grace Community Church Distinctive on Lordship Salvation](#). It is from John MacArthur's material on the topic of lordship salvation.

"The gospel that Jesus proclaimed was a call to discipleship, a call to follow Him in submissive obedience, not just a plea to make a decision or pray a prayer."

I can readily agree to this, but be careful to not go over the line to a works-based salvation.

Paul is not kind in his words to those who preached that a certain amount of rule-following was ***necessary*** for salvation. Listen to his words and think about those today who have slipped over in part to a works-based salvation message.

**<sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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.**

Those words stand just as true today. If a certain amount of OT Law keeping is taught by some churches or individuals as a required component to a person's eternal salvation, then Paul's rebuke in these two verses would apply.

**<sup>10</sup> 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 of Christ.**

Paul's detractors were telling the Galatians that Paul only wanted to curry their favor by saying that they did not need to follow all the commands of the OT Law. If Paul had wanted to curry the favor of his detractors instead he would have remained zealous for following the OT Law, and would not have pronounced a curse against them.

Paul has already hinted as to where he will be going. But he has a lot more to say. Next week we will be looking at Galatians 1:11-2:10.

Salvation is by true faith in Jesus Christ. Where do you stand?