

Greeting (1:1-5)

1. **Paul's Credentials. Verse 1** The author immediately identifies himself as Paul. He was formerly identified by his Hebrew name, Saul. He was of the tribe of Benjamin, and an expert in the law as a Pharisee. Prior to his conversion to Christ, he had been a persecutor of the church until he was confronted by the Lord Jesus Himself while travelling on the road to Damascus. (Acts 9:15)

Paul identifies himself as "an apostle". The word apostle can mean a messenger or Christian teacher. The word in this context is referencing an office— a specific place of authority to speak for God.

The office of apostle or prophet is foundational to the church. (Eph. 2:19-22; Eph. 4:11; Rev. 21:14).

The qualifications to hold the office of apostle were:

1. They had to have seen the risen Lord. (John 15:26, 27; Acts 1:21-22; ; 1 Cor. 9:1)
2. They were chosen by the Holy Spirit. (Acts 9:15-19)
3. They are able to perform signs and wonders. (2 Corinthians 12:11-12)

There are other offices given to the church by the Lord Jesus (Eph. 4:11-13) _____

What is the primary role of these offices? _____

What other Biblical office has been given by the Lord for the benefit of God's People? _____
(Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:8-13) _____

2. Greeting. Verses 2-5

"Grace and Peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"- A combination greeting. "Grace to You", was a common greeting for the Greeks, "Peace" is the common greeting for the Jews. Note Paul's statement that this letter is directly from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Tim 3:16-17)

Jesus gave himself for our sins (our wrongs in violation of God's law). He also came to *"Rescue us from the present evil age"*- the ability to overcome the present world system of evil— and live in obedience to Christ until he takes us to heaven. This is a powerful statement in the context of his letter, for Paul is making it clear from the beginning that salvation is accomplished by Christ's offering himself in the will of the Father and for His glory. Those who are corrupting the gospel are saying that adherence to the OT law (works) is essential for salvation. On the subject of eternal salvation the question of "Who gets the glory" is vital. If we are saved by works, we share in the glory. If it is by grace through faith in Christ— God gets the glory. (Eph. 2:1-9) _____