

GALATIANS: THE ONE TRUE GOSPEL



WEEK 3 NOT MAN'S GOSPEL GALATIANS 1:11-17

Van Nuys Bible Study
Doulos Fellowship Group
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Galatians 1:11-17 – Not Man’s Gospel

The Text

For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man’s gospel.

For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

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

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.

But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son to me, in order that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; 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.

Introduction

- Paul has already reminded the Galatian churches that his apostolic authority comes from God and that there is only one true gospel.
- False teachers have infiltrated these churches and replaced God’s gospel with a lie.
- Abandoning God’s gospel for the Judaizers’ gospel is a big deal.
- Paul is burdened by holy love and righteous anger, but he is not a people-pleaser.

Principal Proposition

Paul reminds the Galatian churches that the one true gospel of Christ has not been revealed by men, but God.

Literary Context

- A. Paul's Gospel is God's Gospel (1:11-2:21)
 - 1. **Revelation from God (1:11-12)**
 - 2. Support for Paul's Claim (1:13-2:21)
 - a. **His Pre-Converted Life (1:13-14)**
 - b. **His Conversion (1:15-17)**

Literary Structure

Not Man's Gospel	(v. 11)
Revealed by God	(v. 12)
Support:	
Damascus Road	(v. 12)
Pre-Converted Life	(v. 13-14)
Paul's Conversion	(v. 15-16a)
Human Absence	(v. 16b-17)

Interpretive Comments

Not Man's Gospel

v. 11 For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel.

➤ “For I would have you know, brothers,”

- This phrase opens the rest of the letter after the introduction.
- The “for” indicates the following statement supports Paul's claim in verse 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 of Christ.

➤ “that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel”

- Paul argues that the gospel he received does not have human origins.

Revealed By God

v. 12 For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

- “For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it,”
 - Paul uses “for” again to support his previous claim – that the gospel he received is not man’s gospel.
 - Human tradition, religious background, and an overactive imagination had nothing to do with the true gospel’s formation.
- “but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ”
 - God revealed His Son to Paul.

Support:

The Damascus Road

v. 12b but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

- “through a revelation of Jesus Christ”
 - Prior to his experience on the road to Damascus, Paul knew much about Christianity.
 - *Paul could have accurately stated many of the central teachings of the gospel. But he did not believe those teachings were true and thus had no grasp of their spiritual meaning and significance. (MacArthur)*
 - It was not until his personal encounter with Christ that he received the truth of the gospel through divine revelation.
 - Paul was both converted and called on the Damascus road.

Pre-Converted Life

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

➤ “For you have heard of my former life in Judaism”

- Once again, Paul uses “for” to support his previous statement.
- *Paul received the truth of the gospel through a revelation given by Jesus Christ, since only a revelation from God could turn Paul away from his devotion to Judaism. (Schreiner)*
- Before receiving Christ, Paul was a very devout Jew (Philippians 3:2-6; Acts 26:4-5).

➤ “how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it”

- In his former life, Paul’s driving goal was the destruction of the early church (Acts 7:58-8:3; 9:1-2, 13-14, 21; 22:3-5, 19-20; 26:4-5, 9-11, 14-15).

v. 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.

➤ “And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people”

- Paul was the guy with straight As on his Jewish report card.

➤ “so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers”

- The ancestral traditions mentioned here should not be confused with the Old Testament Scriptures.
- Paul is referring to the Talmudic traditions that characterized the Pharisees’ way of life.



Paul's Conversion

v. 15 But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by His grace,

➤ “But when He who had set me apart before I was born”

- Paul's divine appointment to ministry was determined before he was born.
- Both Isaiah and Jeremiah were called from their mother's womb (Isaiah 49:1; Jeremiah 1:5).

➤ “and who called me by His grace”

- The only way for a man like Paul to become an apostle is by the overwhelming grace of God.

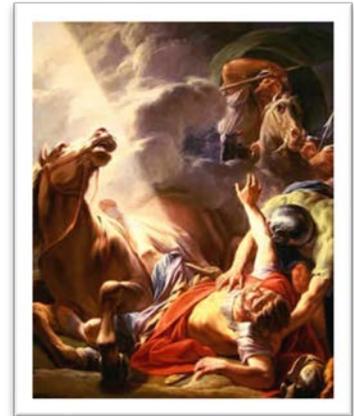
v. 16a was pleased to reveal His Son to me, in order that I might preach Him among the Gentiles,

➤ “was pleased to reveal His Son to me”

- God's revelation to Paul on his way to Damascus was a unique experience (Acts 9:3-6).

➤ “in order that I might preach Him among the Gentiles”

- Paul had the unique commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.



Human Absence

v. 16b I did not immediately consult with anyone;

➤ “with anyone”

- Paul did not quickly seek the confirmation of his calling with other men.
- He was confident that his calling as an apostle was legitimate.

v. 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.

➤ “nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me”

- Paul did not need affirmation from other apostles that his message was true.
- The revelation he received of the risen Christ had come from God Himself.

➤ “but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus”

- This description fits with the post-conversion account given in Acts 9.
- According to Acts 9:20, Paul immediately began proclaiming in the synagogues that Christ is the Messiah.
- He did not go to Arabia (and Damascus) to study the Hebrew Scriptures he already knew so well.
- Rather, He began confidently preaching the gospel that he had received from God... and not men.

Discussion Questions

- Why would anyone accuse Paul of being a people-pleaser?
- What makes Paul’s gospel better than anyone else’s?
- Is it possible to know the gospel without being saved?
- Can you personally testify to the transforming power of God’s gospel?

Concise Prayers

- Lord, thank you for giving us the glorious gospel of Christ (v. 11-12)
- Like Paul before his conversion, we were once your enemies (v. 13-14)
- Thank you so much for saving us by your grace (v. 15)
- Our hope and our confidence is found solely in you alone (v. 16-17)

**PAUL'S CONVERSION
AND EARLY MINISTRY**

ACTS 9:1-30; 11:19-30; 12:24-25
GAL. 1:11-24

- City
- ▲ Mountain peak
- () Pass
- Paul sent to Damascus
- Paul spends time in Arabia
- Paul returns to Jerusalem
- Paul flees from Hellenists
- Paul and Barnabas travel to Antioch
- Paul and Barnabas sent to Jerusalem
- Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch
- Kingdom of Agrippa I

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5. Paul returns to his hometown of Tarsus

6. Paul and Barnabas establish a strong church where believers were first called Christians

7. Paul and Barnabas travel to Jerusalem with aid for famine

8. Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch

3. Paul baptized and preaches about his newfound faith

2. Paul has a vision of Jesus and converts

4. Paul flees to Arabia then returns to Jerusalem

1. Paul sanctioned to arrest followers in Damascus

