



World Christian Fellowship

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Galatians

Lesson 08 Defending His Apostleship Post-Conversion

Galatians 1:17-20

After Conversion Paul became

- ✓ a missionary,
- ✓ a theologian,
- ✓ an evangelist,
- ✓ a pastor,
- ✓ a teacher,
- ✓ a preacher,
- ✓ an organizer,
- ✓ a leader,
- ✓ a thinker,
- ✓ a statesman,
- ✓ a fighter, and
- ✓ a lover of Lord Jesus Christ and
- ✓ all at the same time.

Paul was met by Jesus Christ on Damascus road.

Acts 9:19, *So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.*

What is going on?

Acts 9:20, *Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.*

He started going into the Jewish Synagogues proclaiming Jesus is the Son of God.

Acts 9:21-22, *Then all who heard were amazed, and said, "Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?" ²² But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ.*

The Jews in the synagogues knew he was a persecutor of Christians.

Acts 26:19, *he says, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision."*

Galatians 1:16, *"He revealed His Son to me."*

Three days of blindness he was receiving revelation concerning Christ from Jesus Christ.

For three days Jesus mentored him and then he came out and preached that Jesus is the Son of God and proved it. How could he have proved it so fast?

Because he was a very knowledgeable person about the Old Testament, and all the proof was there.

You are rescued from the kingdom of darkness in a moment and placed into the kingdom of God's dear Son, given a new nature. Only true gospel can do that!

For the apostles it was direct revelation from the lips of Christ. For us, for the rest of history, it falls to the preacher. And we're all witnesses, and we're all proclaimers of the gospel.

How did the original twelve learn about the gospel?
From the lips of Jesus.

That's exactly how Paul also heard the gospel as well.

Acts 9: 18, *"He removed the scales from my eyes,"*

In effect he says that "He removed the scales as well from my heart, and I saw His Son,"

Galatians 1:16, *"that He revealed His Son to me."*

Not Jesus, but he's already come to the conviction that Jesus is the Son of God, one in nature of God, the deity of Jesus.

Paul went from hating Jesus to believing He was the Son of God in a flash.

When we look at his pre-conversion there is no human explanation for his change.

How could you possibly believe anything else than that God invaded his life, when in a moment the transformation was so complete.

What happened after his conversion?

Galatians 1:16, *“I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood.”*

That’s really the heart of his testimony!

I didn’t go to anybody to get this gospel. I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. A few days in Damascus.

I didn’t sit at the feet of Ananias.

I didn’t get together with a group of Christian believers there to have them explain things to me.

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood.

I didn’t enter into any conversations with people in Damascus.

Galatians 1:17, *nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.*

The gospel I am preaching, the gospel of grace without circumcision and without law, is not something that I got from the apostles in Jerusalem. This gospel of grace came directly to me from God. Therefore, it is the true message.

I didn't go to Jerusalem.

Where'd you go Paul?

Galatians 1:17, *"I went away to Arabia."*

The bottom of the Sinai Peninsula, Nabataean Arabia.

Paul went into that wilderness somewhere probably near Damascus.

He went there alone.

How long the original 12 Apostles learned from Jesus Christ?

Three years!

Well how long did Apostle Paul learn from Jesus Christ?

Three years!

Galatians 1:17-18, *nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. ¹⁸ Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days.*

Three years in the desert communing with Jesus Himself.

This is his private, personal tutorial with Jesus for his own three years.

I used to wonder how come Apostle Paul could write such a deep, rich revelation in theology?

What made him to write majority of the New Testament books, 13 letters with such a vast revelation?

Here you will find the answer.

Paul spent so much time receiving divine revelation, which was given back to him to write these books.

“Only after that, after three years, I went to Jerusalem,”

Because the accusers of Apostle Paul were saying, you have bought into this message of the apostles who are also preaching this message of grace without circumcision and law. You got it from those preachers in Jerusalem.

Paul responds, and he says, no, I didn't.

I spent three years in the wilderness. Only then did I even go to Jerusalem.

Peter was the great preacher of the Church. He preached very powerful sermons in the book of Acts chapters 2,3,4,5,8 & 10.

So, Apostle Paul wanted to meet Peter.

“I wanted to meet Peter, the leader of the apostles.”

That is understandable.

That was not easy!

Acts 9:26-30, *And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabas took him and*

brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. ²⁸ So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out. ²⁹ And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists,^[1] but they attempted to kill him. ³⁰ When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus.

Because of the problem he was sent back to his home at Tarsus.

So, Paul says that I went to Jerusalem and only went there to see Peter. I couldn't get to the apostles, they were afraid of me.

Galatians 1:19, *"I didn't see any other of the apostles."*

Why?

Most likely they were scattered preaching.

But he did see James, the Lord's brother, who was the leader of the Jerusalem church.

What is he trying to tell us?

- I wasn't taught by the apostles.
- I wasn't there to be taught by the apostles.
- I had a brief two-week time with Peter.
- It would not have been possible to get the whole systematic theology.
- I didn't spend time with any other apostles, because they weren't around.

- The disciples wouldn't even accept me at first.
- I did spend my time preaching, so constantly, and with such effect, that they chased me out of town.
- I am not a product of any human teacher!
- My gospel came from heaven.

Paul gives a little sort of common Jewish vow!

Galatians 1:20, *"Now in what I'm writing to you, I assure you before God I am not lying."*

It's always hard when you have to say that, because somebody's accusing you of lying. I have been accused of I know the pain of that!

I am not lying!

I am telling you the truth.

I am boldly preaching Christ in the city of Jerusalem. Please do note that he is not saying that he was learning from them or he sat at the feet of Peter or at the feet of Apostles.

He preached so powerfully and boldly they tried to kill him. And the apostles and disciples grabbed him, rushed him to Caesarea, put him on a boat back to his home city.

Galatians 1:21, *After I left Jerusalem I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia."*

Finally, Barnabas takes me to meet them.

Syria and Cilicia are the region where Tarsus was.

Galatians 1:22, *And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ.*

I was in Jerusalem for a brief time. But outside of Jerusalem in all the other places in Judea where there might be churches, no one even knew me. No one had ever seen me. I didn't go anywhere else.

Paul is giving every possible, possible biographical argument against the notion that he had learned this from some other source than the mouth of the Lord.

Galatians 1:23, *But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy."*

They didn't know me, they hadn't met me, but they heard the story about me.

And because I was preaching the very message I once persecuted, they were glorifying God.

So here Paul gives his full biography and he is showing that there he had no room for him to be taught by men.

He went back to Syria and Cilicia and the churches in Judea didn't know him.

He visits briefly people in Jerusalem.

He went back.

Do you know how long he stayed there and preached?

Galatians 2:1, *“After an interval of fourteen years I went to Jerusalem with Barnabas.”*

What was he doing fourteen years?

He was still not connected to the leaders in Jerusalem.

He did not get his message from them.

Paul preached in that part of the world for 14 years. Only after fourteen years did I go back.

Paul wanted the churches in Galatia to know that he speaks for God!

Paul got his message directly from God when he preached it and when he wrote it down.

Galatians 1:11, *But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.*

Do we now understand that?

Peter knew that.

2 Peter 3:15-16, *and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,¹⁶ as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.*

What did Peter just say?

That what Paul wrote is Scripture!

Paul's writings are same alongside the rest of the Scripture.

2 Timothy 3:16-17, *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for ^[c]instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Holy men spoke for God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

You can accept the gospel because it came from heaven, and its most extensive explanation has been written in the thirteen letters of the apostle Paul. It is the true gospel not received from men, received from heaven. Any alteration of that gospel in any way brings about a curse on the one who propagates it. Those are apostolic credentials.

The Word of God are radiant, truthful glory shines on every page. It is a kind of supernatural experience to understand the Bible.

When we read the bible, we feel like we are having an encounter with heaven.

One should feel like that they have been literally sitting in a class taught by the Holy Spirit.

We should feel like we have been caught up into heaven.

The wonders of Scripture, the glory of Scripture is the radiating of God's own glory.

Scripture is the revelation of that truth.

Paul declares that when he says, "God is the justifier of sinners." That's salvation.

It is a gift that is not earned,
it is received.

It is a gift of grace undeserved, received by a simple act of faith.

The sinner says, "I believe in Jesus! Save me."

That is the gift that God gives, and the sinner receives.

- Transforming grace!
- This is the work of the Holy Spirit.
- This is the divine plan and purpose of God.
- ❖ God chose the apostle Paul.
- ❖ God called him to For His purposes.
- ❖ God commissioned him to bring the light of the glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations.

You have that same biography!

- ✓ Chosen,
- ✓ Called,
- ✓ Commissioned to take the gospel to the world.