



# World Christian Fellowship

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## Galatians

### Lesson 06 Defending His Apostleship Pre-Conversion

#### Galatians 1:10- 14

Most offensive statement you can make today is!

- ✓ There is only one God,
- ✓ One Saviour,
- ✓ One true religion,
- ✓ One Holy Book,
- ✓ One gospel,
- ✓ One way of salvation.

All other religious claims are lies, deceptions, doctrines of Satan and demons that lead people to eternal hell, along with all the immoral, irreligious, atheistic, hedonistic, naturalistic unbelievers.

That is the most offensive statement! But it just happens to be the truth!!

Apostle pronounced double curse upon the preachers who spread the false gospel by distorting the grace alone Gospel.

To establish that he is the true gospel preacher rest of the chapter Paul is going to authenticate his apostleship.

Chapter 1 and 2 of Galatians about his authority of his apostleship and chapter 3 and 4 he explains the gospel.

Remember Paul just pronounced the curse and immediately he is saying I am not here to please men.

**Galatians 1:10,**

The false preachers wanted to attack gospel by attacking the credibility of the messenger in this case it was Paul.

Elsewhere Paul was accepted as a

a true teacher,

God had called him,

God had given him the truth, and

Paul was speaking for God.

So, it was necessary for the false teachers to attack Paul and attack the gospel he preaches. They attacked his life and his past life. How would they discredit Paul?

Possible attacks on him we can get from this book.

1. He wanted to please people

2. He is not an apostle and all the 12 apostles had known us.
3. Message is from God not second hand
4. Preaching the false gospel by removing all the traditions and rituals came through the Mosaic covenant.

To answer this Paul decided to establish his authority as an Apostle with these three profound themes.

1. Paul's pre-conversion life
2. Paul's conversion
3. Paul's post-conversion

We will look in details all the three titles. This lesson we will look at the pre-conversion days of Apostle Paul.

### **1. Paul wanted to please Gentiles**

Accusations was that he wanted to please men.

Paul had stripped the gospel of the works so that it is not necessary for the Gentiles to work hard for their salvation. Because their main contention was that people who had come to know the Lord Jesus Christ must be circumcised and adhere to all the traditions of Judaism.

By doing that Paul made it easy for the Gentiles to accept the gospel.

But the truth is just the opposite, the false teachers were the people pleaser not Apostle Paul.

**Galatians 6:12**, *As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.*

The false teachers had added circumcision and the Mosaic tradition into the gospel so as not to be persecuted by the Jews.

Paul who was known as Saul before his conversion was non-believer.

Paul was a

- ✓ Pharisee,
- ✓ Pharisee of Pharisee,
- ✓ fanatic,
- ✓ zealous,
- ✓ blasphemer, and
- ✓ persecutor of Christ and Christians.

So, he starts at Galatians first two chapters about his authority as an apostle. If I may call it's like his autobiography.

**Galatians 1:10-14**, *For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ. <sup>11</sup> But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. <sup>12</sup> For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. <sup>13</sup> For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. <sup>14</sup> And I*

*advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.*

**V10**, he asks two questions.

1. For am I now seeking the favour of men, or of God?
2. Am I striving to please men?"

V7-9, he pronounced double cursing, so we know he is not trying to please men.

Having just pronounced curse upon the false teachers, he says, There, am I now seeking the favour of men?

Does that sound like a man-pleaser?

Do men-pleasers go around pronouncing curse upon people's head?

Does that sound like a popularity seeker?

Paul affirms that if I didn't do that and trying to please men then he can't be slave of Jesus Christ. To be slave of Jesus Christ one should not hesitate to pronounce curse upon the false teachers.

Paul does not seek the honour/ respect/ money from men, but he has the marks to prove it.

**Galatians 6:17**, *From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.*

What does he mean when he says he got scars on his body?

## **At Iconium**

**Acts 14:5-6**, *And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, <sup>6</sup>they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region.*

## **At Lystra**

**Acts 14:8-20** explains the whole incident

**Acts 14:19-20**, *Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. <sup>20</sup>However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.*

So, Paul had many events like this for the sake of gospel. He sums it up very beautifully in

**2 Corinthians 5:9**, *Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.*

In Galatians 6:12 he said the false teachers were the people pleasers.

**2. He is not an apostle and all the 12 apostles had known us.**

**V 11-12,**

Paul says, "I am a true apostle."

I received the truth of the gospel from a revelation that came to me through Jesus Christ.

We saw in Lesson 03 details of the qualifications of an Apostle.

Qualifications to be an Apostle

- ✓ Witness to Jesus Christ
- ✓ The apostle's student of Jesus Christ.
- ✓ Able to perform Miracles
- ✓ Have seen the risen Lord

How did the twelve apostles receive the gospel?

Not from the lips of Jewish rabbis but from the mouth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Whatever they have received everything over a period of three years from the lips of Jesus, which is unique to the apostles.

The Gospel was revealed by the father in Heaven which was confirmed Lord Jesus Himself.

**Matthew 16:17**, *Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.*

Apostles did not learn this from the people and not from the scriptures but from Father in Heaven.

But Paul was not part of that twelve apostles, he was blasphemer and persecutor at that time.

Obvious question is that since Paul isn't part of the original twelve apostles why should they believe the gospel from him?

Paul answers in V12,

Because I received the gospel the exact same way that the twelve received it from the mouth of Jesus Himself.

I didn't get it in Jerusalem.

I didn't get it second-hand.

It didn't come from believers wandering around or living in Damascus.

This came to me from Jesus Christ Himself.

What a statement.

What a claim?

A supernatural revelation exactly as the other apostles had received the gospel.

Let me go ahead and share one another information which is for the third question, but it will help you to have better understanding.

**Galatians 1:16-18**, *to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood,<sup>17</sup> nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.<sup>18</sup> Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days.*

Three years! The twelve Apostles also spent three years with Jesus and so did Apostle Paul.

In a way this open rebuke to the false teachers because all their message was passed down to them by men, Jewish Rabbis.

Judaism, at the time of Paul, even today, gave very little attention to the Scripture.

The Old Testament was a history that the rabbis had twisted, and perverted, and overruled with massive piles of tradition.

Jesus did rebuke them.

**Matthew 15:6-9**, *then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.<sup>7</sup> Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: <sup>8</sup> 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. <sup>9</sup> And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' "*

## **V 13-14,**

Two things marked my former manner of life.

1. I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it.
2. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many and zeal for my ancestral traditions."

## **Former life**

Saul was present at the death of the first Christian martyr

**Acts 7:57-58**, *Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord;<sup>58</sup> and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.*

**Acts 8:1 & 3**, *Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.*

<sup>3</sup> *As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.*

When Jesus appeared to Ananias, he was telling the Lord Himself how bad Saul was.

**Acts 9:13-14**, *Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name."*

Paul recalls the event later in his life when testifies.

**Acts 22:20**, *And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.'*

Saul had the zeal for God and traditions!

Saul was born in around AD 5 in the city of Tarsus in Cilicia now it's in modern-day Turkey. Both his parents were Jewish. He possessed Roman citizenship, a coveted privilege. Around AD 20 Saul began his studies of the Hebrew Scriptures in the city of Jerusalem. Studying under Gamaliel that Saul had acquired in-depth study of the Law with one of the famous rabbis.

**Acts 22:3**, *"I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.*

Saul, he was proud that he was the son of Abraham!

**2 Corinthians 11:22**, *Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I.*

Not only son of Abraham but also the tribe of Benjamin!

**Philippians 3: 5-6**, *circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;<sup>6</sup> concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*

I persecuted this "Way," Christ being the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Christianity became known as the "Way"!

**Acts 22:4**, *I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women,*

V 14, I was hacking down the Christians that I saw standing in the way of the advance of Judaism.

I was way beyond the other countrymen of mine.

Now how can you accuse me?

If I was more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions than anyone else, how in a moment of time did I stop and become a preacher of Jesus Christ and the gospel?

Not just the Mosaic law, but tradition,

'*halacha*': a body of Jewish oral law that surrounded the Torah.

The gospel had no attraction to him.

He wasn't seeking it.

A man in that mental and emotional state is in no mood to change his mind or be changed by men.

He heard the gospel from the all the Christians whom he persecuted.

Only God could change his heart and He did.

That's pre-conversion, evidence that he didn't get his gospel from men.

## **Conclusion:**

Do you have such a difference in your life before conversion and after conversion?