

Sunday, November 8, 2009—Grace Life School of Theology—Understand Galatians and the Law—Galatians 1:16-24

Galatians 1:16

- *“To reveal his Son in me”*
- We see in verse 16 the reason Christ called Paul by his grace in verse 15. It was for the purpose of revealing himself in Paul.
- The way God reveals himself to the world today is through the word of God working in the lives of the saints.
- I Corinthians 3:16—in the Old Testament, Solomon built a temple for God to dwell in. Today God has the believer as his dwelling place.
- Galatians 4:19—Paul wanted Christ to be formed in the Galatians. Paul wanted the Galatians to know what it means to have Christ revealed in them.
- Colossians 1:27—part of the mystery that Paul preached to the gentiles had something to do with Christ being formed and made manifest in and through them.
- II Corinthians 4:8-11—where is Christ’s life being lived out and made manifest today? Through is word in the believer.
- I Thessalonians 2:13—the thing that unlocks the life of Christ in our lives is when we believe and act upon God’s written word.
- *“that I might preach him among the heathen”*
- Notice that Paul was sent by Christ to preach to the heathen. Who are the heathen? The Gentiles.
 - Acts 9:15
 - Romans 11:13
- This commission is clearly different from the one Christ gave the 12 during his earthly ministry.
 - Matthew 10:5-8—when Jesus Christ commissioned the 12 they were sent to Israel only.
- Almost every modern translation of the word of God changes heathen to gentiles in this verse. The reason for this is that people in modern Western Civilization don’t want to think of themselves as heathen. The heathen shop at Meijer, Walmart, and Sam’s Club everyday. We work with them, live with and next to them, eat with them, and hopefully minister to them everyday.

- *“immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood”*
- Once again Paul is stressing that he did not have a conference or meeting of the minds with another human being to double check whether or not the information given to him by the revelation of Christ was accurate or not.

Galatians 1:17

- *“Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me;”*
- At the end of verse 16, Paul says that immediately following his conversion he did not confer with flesh and blood. Now in verse 17 Paul elaborates by stating that he did not go to Jerusalem to speak with the 12 who were apostles before him.
- *“but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.”*
- If we follow the flow of the context, immediately following the restoration of his sight Paul leaves Damascus for the deserts of Arabia. When Paul was done in the desert he returned unto Damascus.
- Now we have a bit of a problem to deal with, there seems to be a discrepancy between what Paul says here in Galatians and what Paul records in Acts 9.
- Acts 9:19-20—seems to indicate that Paul went and preached Christ in the synagogue right after his conversion.
- In comparing the record in Acts with that in Galatians we must keep in mind that the Holy Spirit had a given purpose for writing what is included in the book of Acts and it does not contain details that are irrelevant to the fulfillment of that purpose. In other words, the account in Acts does not purport to give a detailed history of Paul’s movements.
- Therefore, based upon Paul’s own account in Galatians 1:17, I think that this verse fits into the middle of Acts 9:19.

Galatians 1:18-19

- *“Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. 19) But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother.”*
- According to verse 18, Paul stayed in Damascus for three years and then went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and only stayed with him for 15 days. So Paul had already been saved for three years before he even met Peter.
 - Acts 9:20-25—this is the three year period that Paul spent in Damascus.
 - II Corinthians 11:32-33
 - Acts 9:26-27—is when Paul finally makes it to Jerusalem after having been saved for three years.

- Acts 9:27—people think that Paul meet with all 12 of the Apostles. Galatians 1:18-19 tells us which Apostles Paul meets during this visit to Jerusalem, namely Peter and James.
- All you need is two of something before you can refer to it using the plural. In Acts 9 Paul did visit with the Apostles, Galatians 1 tells us which two he visited with.

Galatians 1:20

- *“Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.”*
- In large measure this verse concludes Paul’s certification that the gospel he preached was received by the direct revelation of Jesus Christ. In verses 11-20, Paul emphatically affirms that no human being made any contributions to his gospel. In support of this claim Paul offers a brief summary of his actions immediately following his conversion.
- Furthermore, Paul offers his writing before God as a testimony of the truthfulness of what he says.

Galatians 1:21

- *“Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;”*
- After Paul left Jerusalem he went back to his hometown of Tarsus. This was the main Biblical city of Cilicia, while Antioch was the main Biblical city of Syria.
- Acts 22:17-21—in the context Paul is recounting the things that happened to him after his conversion. Paul had wanted to begin his ministry where the 12 had at Jerusalem, but was sent “far hence,” to the gentiles instead.
- Acts 9:29-30—this is why Paul goes into the region of Syria and Cilicia after he leaves Jerusalem.
- All of this is important because it clearly proves that Paul and his ministry were separate from that of the 12.
- Acts 11:22-26—this explains why when Paul shows up again in the Acts narrative, Barnabas finds him not down at Jerusalem but in Tarsus the chief city of Cilicia.

Galatians 1:22-24

- *“And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: 23) But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. 24) And they glorified God in me.”*
- These are verses that critics of the mid-Acts position will point to in an attempt to trip us up. Their argument states that when Paul says that those in churches of Judea where in Christ it means that they were in the Body of Christ.

- These Judean churches were in Christ in the sense that they believed Jesus was the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Son of God, and the Christ foretold in the Old Testament.
- The fact that none of the believers in Judea know who Paul was is further proof that no Jewish believer contributed anything to Paul's gospel. The only thing they knew of Paul was that he used to be a persecutor of the Jewish Kingdom Church.
- What Paul mean when he says that he preached the faith which once he destroyed?

- “Does this mean that Paul was, after all, preaching the same gospel which the twelve had been preaching? Some men have sued this verse to seek to prove that this was the case. Paul used the greater part of Chapters One and Two to prove that his message was different, but this does not mean that what the twelve had been preaching was not true. They had preached Christ as the prophesied King, now risen from the dead. Paul had once denied this and had persecuted those who believed it.

Then one day Christ Himself had appeared to Saul, and he saw that He was alive, and Israel's rightful King. Thereafter, wherever he went, he sought to convince the Jews of that fact. After all, how could they trust Christ as Lord and Savior if they did not know that He was their true Messiah, risen from the dead? And how could they trust Him as the exalted dispenser of the grace that Paul presented, if He were an impostor whose dead body now lay in a Judean grave? Paul confirmed what Peter and the twelve had been preaching. In that sense, and to that degree, he preached the faith which once he had destroyed.

But even though he confirmed the message of the twelve, never once do we find him preaching the good news of the Kingdom—the good news that the Kingdom was about to be established. He never, like Peter, offered the Kingdom and the return of Jesus Christ if the Jews would repent.” Cornelius R. Stam *Commentary on Galatians*. Page 96.

- Galatians Chapter One lays the groundwork for the entire book. In it Paul teaches that the gospel that he preached is the only one man should be preaching today. He also lays out the certification of his ordination and apostleship. Paul presents many proofs that He received his gospel by the revelation of Jesus Christ and that it was different from the Gospel of the Kingdom.