

Sunday, September 25, 2022—Galatians 1:13-14 Position, Tradition, & Entrenchment: Why More People Don't Embrace Dispensational Truth

Galatians 1:13

- **For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:**
- Last week we looked at Paul's past "conversation" in the Jew's religion.
 - Acts 2:2-4—" . . .brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God. . ."
 - I Timothy 1:13—" . . . Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious. . ."
 - Acts 7:58, 8:1—" . . . and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul." "And Saul was consenting unto his death. . ."
 - Saul was present at Stephen's execution and consented unto his death.
 - Philippians 3:4-6—according to Jewish religious customs, there was no more devoted follower than Paul. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews and blameless concerning the Law.
- We spent a lot of time looking at who the phrase "church of God" is not an exclusive reference to the "little flock" i.e., the Jewish kingdom church of early Acts that Paul persecuted.
 - The phrase the "church of God" needs to be understood within the context it is used. Paul uses the phrase to refer to both the body of Christ as well as the Jewish kingdom church i.e., the "little flock" that he persecuted during the early Acts period before his conversion. The context determines the meaning and usage.
- Galatians 1:13—Paul was doing exactly what the verse reports, persecuting the Jewish Kingdom Church.
 - Acts 8:1-3, 26:11, 9:1-2
 - Acts 9:13-14—Ananias had heard of Saul and was afraid to go and talk with him.
 - Acts 9:26—when Paul finally did make it to Jerusalem, they were afraid of him and did not trust him.
- Galatians 1:13—considering the context, why does Paul mention his past? It proves that he could not have received his message or apostleship from the twelve or any other human source because all the believers at the time were afraid of Paul and distrusted him because of his past actions.

Galatians 1:14

- **And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.**
- **And profited in the Jews religion above many my equal in my own nation**—when Paul says that he “profited in the Jews religion,” it means that he advanced. He made progress faster than any of his Jewish peers. Paul had found something he was good at. He was comfortable, respected, and a leader in his community. He possessed a position that commanded respect.
- In essence, Paul is saying, “Why would I leave my place of honor and prominence to follow the rejected Christ?” The explanation is that Christ Himself, the one he was persecuting, saved him and gave him a ministry to fulfill.
- Acts 19:23-27—through his preaching, Paul was hurting the business of those who were selling shrines of the goddess Diana. The spirit that prompted Demetrius to call a meeting of his guild still prevails amongst religious people. When people have a vested interest, especially financially, they will not easily change their minds.
- Paul was the same way; he possessed a profitable career as a Pharisee. No man could have persuaded Paul to leave such a prestigious and lucrative position. The fact that he forsook such a profitable career shows that his apostleship was the result of God’s work in his life.
 - “Paul now calls the religion in which he was brought up the “Jew’s religion.” Paul was saved, not *in* Judaism, not *by* Judaism, but *from* Judaism.” (McGee, 155)
- **Being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers**—for Paul, it had been more than a matter of temporal gain. He was persecuting the Jewish Kingdom Church because he was convinced that he was right.
 - We live in a microphone drop society and culture. Entrenchment is a huge problem.
- Notice what Saul was zealous of, not the Scriptures, but tradition.
- Mark 7:9, 13—Saul had been part of this group of people who were holding to the traditions of men. Paul had no reason to listen to anything the twelve had to say.
- Acts 26:9—this was Paul’s thinking within himself.
- This ends Paul’s three proofs of his apostleship:
 - He persecuted the church—Galatians 1:13
 - He profited in the Jew’s religion—Galatians 1:14
 - He was more exceedingly zealous—Galatians 1:14

- The only way Paul would have preached what he did is if verse 12 is true, that Christ revealed it to him. Humanly speaking, there was too much for Paul to lose, he had too much at stake. This is why many people do not leave their denominational tradition and embrace the word rightly divided. There is simply too much to lose such as friends, family, money, influence, prestige, and congregations.
 - Box Theology
- Verse 14 illustrates why verse 10 is so important. If Paul wanted to please men, he would have remained a Pharisee.