

Sunday, October 2, 2022—Galatians 1:15-16 The Purpose of Paul's Separation

### Introduction

- Last Sunday around the 1 hour 2-minute mark of my message I said that “Paul had no choice, no option but to believe when he encountered Christ on the road to Damascus.” I would like to clarify what I was intending to say. I was trying to comment on the overwhelming nature of Paul's encounter with Christ.
- Based upon some discussion with one of our saints I think it would be more accurate for me to state the following,
  - I suppose Paul could have refused to believe although the evidenced was overwhelming. I think that everyone is given enough light to be held accountable, but some are given more light, and Paul was given a vast amount. It would be like being given the correct answer on a True and False test and still intentionally making the incorrect answer.

### Galatians 1:15

- **But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,**
- The Calvinist is quick to jump all over this verse to prove sovereign election to salvation in eternity past.
- **But when it pleased God who**—in other words, when the time was right. God had a plan for what He was going to accomplish with the Body of Christ before the world began. It was that plan and program that was predestinated, not each person's individual salvation.
- I Corinthians 15:8—Paul was born when the time was right. When it pleased God.
- I Timothy 2:6—Paul testified about the Gospel of the Grace of God when the appropriate time came.
- Romans 16:25—the revelation of the mystery takes us back into the mind of God before the world began.
- Ephesians 1:4-5
  - Isaiah 42:1—Jesus Christ was God's elect. Was he ever lost? Did he need to be chosen for salvation.
- **who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,**
- The real issue the Calvinist has is what is meant by the term “separated.”
  - Separated— to mark off from others by boundaries, to limit, to separate

- a) in a bad sense: to exclude as disreputable;
  - b) in a good sense: to appoint, set apart for some purpose.
- Not once in either Testament does the word refer to an eternal act or decree, nor does the text say that Paul was separated **before** he was born. Paul was separated **when he was born**; he was not elected until he accepted Christ.
  - Paul is the perfect person to be made the Apostle of the Gentiles. He was both a Roman Citizen and a member of the nation of Israel. Therefore, in Paul himself, you have a type of the Body of Christ, Jews and Gentiles being reconciled to God in one body by the cross.
  - Galatians 1:15—Paul was called by the grace of God.
    - 1 Corinthians 15:10
    - I Timothy 1:12-16
  - This is not a salvation verse; it is part of Paul’s defense of his apostleship which began in verse 11. In the context, Paul’s point is simply to say he did not choose this for himself. The risen Christ appeared to Saul, interrupted his wild career, saved him, and gave him both an apostleship and message to preach to the entire Christ-rejecting world of which Israel was now a part.

### **Galatians 1:16**

- **To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:**
- **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 His 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 Law.

- **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. The Greek word (*ethnos*) rendered “heathen” is elsewhere translated as gentile(s) 93 times by the King James translators.
  - Acts 9:15
  - Acts 26:17
  - Romans 11:13
  
- This commission is clearly different from the one Christ gave the twelve during His earthly ministry.
  - Matthew 10:5-8—when Jesus Christ commissioned the twelve, they were sent to Israel only.
  
- People in modern Western Civilization do not want to think of themselves as heathen. The heathen shop at Meijer, Wal-Mart, and Sam’s Club every day. We work with them, live with and next to them, eat with them, and hopefully minister to them every day.
  
- **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 the information given to him by the revelation of Christ was accurate or not.