

“Not Man’s Gospel” – Part 2!

Galatians 1:11-24

September 15, 2024

Introduction/Organization

- Last time we learned that Paul is building an argument (verses 1:11 – 2:14) that he has authority to write about the controversy of circumcision being required for salvation
- He establishes his authenticity as an apostle by arguing:
 - The gospel message he preaches is of divine origin
 - This divine gospel resulted in his own transformation – and Gentile salvation
 - His message was received independent of the other apostles
 - His message was yet affirmed by those apostles
 - He has been given equal authority with the other apostles
- This time we’ll take a closer look at how he uses his own story to make these points

Paul’s message was received independently of the other apostles (Gal. 1:16b-2:1)

- Recall verse 12: *“For I did not receive [the gospel] from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.”*
- “I did not immediately consult with anyone...” (1:16b-17)
 - The Gospel entrusted to Paul was not ‘negotiated’ with other believers or the Apostles in Jerusalem
 - Paul doesn’t specify here why he went into Arabia
- “Then after three years I went to Jerusalem...” (1:18-19)
 - Paul didn’t visit Jerusalem until 3 years after his revelation and conversion
 - He visited Cephas (Peter) and James, and none of the others
- Note: Compare this account with Acts 9:18-26
 - Why mention his departure to Arabia here?
 - It’s normal when recounting events to emphasize certain details depending on the occasion for telling the story and the audience listening
 - You can also compare Paul’s own summary accounts of his conversion as recorded by Luke in Acts 22:3-21 and Acts 26:4-18 and note the differences in some of the details

Paul’s transformation story was used by the Holy Spirit to glorify God (Gal. 1:15-24)

- God was pleased to reveal Jesus “to” / “in” Paul (1:15-16)
 - Greek preposition (*en*) can mean either “to” or “in”
 - “...so I could preach him among the Gentiles.” (1:16) Preaching the gospel message of Jesus to the Gentiles is now his singular purpose
 - Paul is both the messenger *and* the message!
- “He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith...” (1:21-24)
 - While Paul traveled throughout Syria and Cilicia, the churches in the region of Judea would not have recognized him by face, but only in what they heard about him
 - “He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith [*euangelizetai* – to announce glad tidings, verb form of word usually translated “gospel”] he once tried to destroy.” (1:23)

- “And they glorified God because of me.” (1:24)
 - Paul takes the occasion to stress that the miracle of his conversion and his *euangelizetai* gave glory to God
 - Compare Matt. 5:14-16
“14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”
- Note: this is an excellent pattern for us to follow when sharing our own stories
 - Notice in verses 13-14 Paul emphasizes his own agency in his former life
 - Then in verses 1:15-16a the emphasis is all on God’s work in his life!

Next week we will begin to take a look at Paul’s interactions with the other apostles in Jerusalem