

Galatians 1:11-24: “Not Man’s Gospel” —Part 1—Lesson 9

Introduction/Organization

- In verses 1:11–2:14, Paul is building toward his primary main argument, which will be introduced powerfully in 2:15-21.
- But first he will take time to provide some biographical background and establish his credentials to write with authority about the particular controversy.
- He will establish 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.

Paul’s message is of divine origin (Gal. 1:11-12)

- “[T]he gospel that was preached by me is not man’s gospel.” (1:11-12)
 - Galatians is probably one of Paul’s earliest letters.
 - It was important for Paul to emphasize the divine origin of the gospel, which was under attack.
 - Compare 2 Pet 1:16-21.

“16 For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,’ 18 we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 19 And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

This divine Gospel transformed his own life (Gal. 1:13-16a)

- “You have heard of my former way of life...” (1:13-14)
 - Paul identifies here with the very ones who are stirring up the controversy
 - Paul is saying, “you know those Judaizers? I used to be one of them. In fact, I was even more zealous than they are!”
- “But when God...” (1:15-16a)
 - Paul now contrasts his former proud zeal with God’s election and calling
 - He emphasizes that he was set apart by God before he was born
 - Why does this matter? Compare Rom. 9:10-12

“10 And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, 11 though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— 12 she was told, The older will serve the younger.”

- God was pleased to reveal Jesus “to” / “in” Paul
 - (We will return to these verses again next week)
- Next week we will see how Paul establishes his message as being given independently of the other apostles