

Galatians | Part 2 | 9/9/18

- Introduction
 - Today we will focus on a series of verses where Paul speaks to his conversion and purpose that God called him to.
 - Paul did this to repudiate the false teachings and to show that the Gospel that he was teaching was the only true Gospel because it came directly from Christ.
 - This is important because the false teachings that were infiltrating the churches of Galatia were the teachings of man.
 - We will also look at why God chose Paul and how he was used to further the Kingdom of God.
- The revelation of the Gospel to Paul and his great purpose | Galatian's 1:11-24
 - **Read Galatian's 1:11-24**
 - Jesus Christ (not man) revealed the true Gospel to Paul.
 - As Paul is using his letter to the churches of Galatia to repudiate the false teachers, here he proclaims that Jesus revealed to him the truth of the gospel that he is proclaiming.
 - **The Jews of the day had been taught by other Jews and had relied heavily upon their traditions and human interpretations.**
 - In addition to the Old Testament Scriptures they had numerous traditions and man-made laws that they heavily studied.
 - They had what was called the "Oral Law" which was legal commentary on how the commandments of God were to be carried out.
 - This had been passed down orally for generations until it was written down for the first time in A.D. 70 correlating with the destruction of the 2nd temple.
 - This written collection became known as the Mishna in 200 A.D. and became part of a larger work the Talmud in 400 A.D.
 - **The Jewish leaders and the Pharisee's actually relied more upon these than they did the actual Old Testament Scriptures.**
 - **When the Pharisees were zealous for their religion this is what they were so enamored with, not just the Old Testament Scriptures**
 - Jesus called them out on this, they were putting their traditions over God's commandments.
 - Mark 7:6-9
 - "And he said to them, Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men. And he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition!"
 - Paul however was not taught about the Gospel of Jesus Christ by any man, the Scripture was **REVEALED to Paul from the source** who is Jesus Christ.
 - **This in itself was a miracle** because while Paul **knew of Him** it wasn't until meeting Jesus Christ directly did **He truly know Him**.
 - **Before Paul's conversion he was bound to the Jewish traditions.**
 - The zeal of the Pharisees for their traditions and man-made laws was also the same for Paul.

- He studied this way under the great Jewish teachers and became a Pharisee. This was his devotion.
 - Acts 22:3
 - I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day.”
 - Gamaliel was a much-celebrated Jewish teacher
 - Galatians 1:14
 - “And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely **zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.**”
- **Before Paul’s conversion he was the “anti-Christian” and persecuted the church.**
 - He knew the Old Testament but certainly didn’t see the truth of what it revealed about Christ, he was blinded by his own intellect and understanding.
 - He persecuted the church and hated anything to do with Jesus.
 - Galatians 1:13
 - “For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it.”
 - Acts 22:4
 - “I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women,”
- **When Paul had his encounter with Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus Jesus revealed the truth of the Gospel to Paul and he immediately proclaimed the Gospel message.**
 - **He was able to immediately proclaim and prove that Jesus was the Christ, he didn’t have to go to seminary or study with any earthly teachers.**
 - Galatians 1:16b
 - “...I did not immediately consult with anyone”
 - Acts 9:20-22
 - “And **immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues**, saying, He is the Son of God.” And all who heard him were amazed and said, Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests? But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus **by proving that Jesus was the Christ.**”
- **Jesus had opened up Paul’s heart and revealed to Him exactly who He was and what He came to do.**
 - Jesus opened Paul’s heart and showed him the truth of the Gospel.
 - This is the Gospel that Paul was preaching and teaching to the churches.
 - This is the **ONLY** true Gospel.

- **Can Christ change someone today as he did Paul? Can someone quickly turn from a life that once was against God to one that embraces Him? If so how is this possible?**
 - **Does God today still open minds and hearts so that we can understand His Gospel? Or do we have to become “theologians” to understand its truths?**
 - **The Gospel is not a word from man, but it is a Word directly from God.**
 - As Paul was taught by Christ Himself, so then the Gospel is not of man.
 - Galatians 1:11
 - “For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man’s gospel.”
 - **It is common for the world (and even some Christians) to see the Bible as a Book ABOUT God. But this is not what the Scriptures are.**
 - The Scriptures are truly a direct Word FROM God, they are God breathed.
 - 2 Timothy 3:16a
 - “All Scripture is breathed out by God...”
 - **The human authors did not choose what to write, they did not choose how one is to be saved. The human authors of the Gospel wrote as they were led by the Holy Spirit.**
 - 1 Peter 1:21
 - “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.”
 - Note this does not mean that their personality was not also carried through in the writings because they were. They were not robotically writing word for word, but the Spirit guided their writings.
 - **There is power in the Scriptures.**
 - Romans 1:6
 - “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,...”
 - These are not empty words on a page, the Gospel has real power in its words since they came from God.
 - **The Scriptures are living**
 - Hebrews 4:12
 - “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. “
 - When you read the Gospel, the Holy Spirit moves in your heart. This gives the words their power and why they impact us so much.
 - **The Bible truly is the Word that comes from God that it alone has the power to bring one to salvation.**
 - God uses His Word to bring truth into the heart of the lost. He opens their hearts and when the truth of the Gospel is received God cultivates faith within them.
 - **How might you describe to someone how you know that the Gospel is living and that it is not just man’s account about God. That it is not “man’s gospel”?**
 - **God used Paul’s conversion as proof of the power of the Gospel and of Christ**
 - We might wonder “why did God choose Paul”.
 - **He was a sinner and even by his own admission unworthy to be an apostle.**
 - 1 Corinthians 15:9

- “For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.”
- One would think that someone who tried hard to have Christians killed and to stop the spreading of God’s Word would not be the ideal candidate.
- Surely someone else was more qualified.
- **Yet even so God chose Paul to be His witness to the Gentiles, even before he was born.**
 - Before Paul was even born God had a plan for Paul to be His chosen instrument to share the Gospel.
 - Galatians 1:15
 - “But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles...”
 - Acts 9:15
 - “But the Lord said to him, Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.”
 - **God chose Paul for this purpose, He knew exactly who He needed.**
 - God still does this today, He already knows what our purpose in life is even before we are born.
 - Psalms 139:16b
 - “...in your book were written, **every one of them, the days that were formed for me**, when as yet there was none of them.”
- **The “why” speaks for itself in the results of Paul’s witness.**
 - Gentiles came to Christ because of Paul’s witness.
 - The most obvious reason why God chose Paul is seen in the results of his witness. There are an unknown number who came to Christ during his ministry on earth and those that have come from reading the Scriptures.
 - Galatians 1:24
 - “And they glorified God because of me”.
 - God chose him because he was a powerful and effective witness for the Gospel. God knows exactly what He is doing.
 - Paul’s conversion showed the power of God.
 - **Only God, only some true “power” could have caused Paul to do a 180 from persecuting the church to then be its chief witness.**
 - Paul by **his own intellect** would not have had any reason or desire to make this change.
 - **He went from being the persecutor to the persecuted.**
 - Acts 9:16
 - “For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”
 - Acts 9:29
 - “And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to kill him.”
 - Hellenists = Jew from the dispersion who lived under the influence of the Greek culture.
 - **2 Corinthians 11:21-28**
 - 2 Timothy 3:11

- “my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra-which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me.”
 - These were the cities in which Paul established the churches of the Galatia.
 - **He had to endure persecution for every church he established.**
- Paul willingly allowed himself to be persecuted because He now understood the truth.
 - **The truth to Paul meant far more than the earthly discomfort he would have to endure.**
 - Paul know understood eternity and that was far more important to him than suffering for a time in his earthly body.
 - **Only the power of God could have turned Paul from his previous life to this one.**
- **Paul’s conversion showed the world that God can and will forgive anyone.**
 - God can and will forgive anyone no matter their previous sins.
 - Paul was about as bad as it came for a sinner, yet God used him in miraculous ways.
- **It was only by God’s grace that Paul was able to do the work of God.**
 - It was not Paul’s self-determination, or will that allowed him to endure the cause of Christ.
 - It was the grace of God.
 - 1 Corinthians 15:10
 - “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. ON the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.”
- **Does God still do this today? Does God take someone who has rebelled and caused harm for the cause of Christ, to then show them His glory so that they become a powerful witness for the Gospel?**
- **Is it possible that we too might have to suffer for the cause of Christ as did Paul?**
- **What hope does Paul’s conversion and subsequent use by God give us?**