

## ***From Persecutor to Preacher*** Galatians 1:11-24

**Read 1:11-24**

Ch 1-2 Paul defends his apostleship; Ch 3-4 deals w/ correct doctrine; Ch 5-6 practical application to what Paul has been saying. Paul's conversion is a study in the grace of God turning a persecutors to preachers; sinners to saints. The Galatians started out in grace then drifted into works righteousness. Paul seeks to bring them back. His critics attack his authority as an apostle. *If you can doubt his authority you can doubt his teaching.*

*11 For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ*

Paul was taught by the Lord Himself. His Gospel was heaven sent. He didn't learn it from man but by God himself. That is why he could say *2Tim 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.* Lit all scripture is 'God breathed'

When committees get hold of the bible they try to make it acceptable to all, watered down (*gender neutral-non offensive*) You cannot learn about God in a comparative religion class or Seminary (*some call it cemetery-a place where a person's faith is buried*) We can't put God under a microscope—we can't study the historical Jesus & expect to discover Him. God defies mans scrutiny or speculation. *Job 11:7 says 'Can you by searching discover God? Answer is no!* It is only by a revelation of HS

God raises up teachers in the church but your true teacher & final authority is God the Holy Spirit given when you were born again.

*John 14:25,26 "These things I have spoken to you, while abiding with you. 26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.*

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*13 For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure, and tried to destroy it; 14 and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.*

*Phil 3:6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.* Paul was blameless yet empty—Two vanities in life **1** pursuit of a thing that will not satisfy & leave empty. **2** Attaining that thing & finding after a lifetime of pursuit you are still not satisfied & empty.

Paul was ashamed of his life as a Pharisee & persecutor of the church (**for all the world to see**)—*Acts 9:1 Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, 2 and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.*

Advancing beyond his peers as he studied under Rabbi Gamaliel- one of the greatest teachers in all the annals of Judaism: "*Since Rabban Gamaliel the Elder died, there has been no more reverence for the law, and purity and piety died out at the same time*". *Acts 22:3 ...strictly according to the Law of our Fathers being more zealous for God.* Only problem--**Couldn't supply him w/ enough books**—knowledge puffs up love edifies **1Cor 8:1...smart but not wise**—Applied himself to all teaching--result suspicion & hate & closed mind.

*15 But when He who had set me apart, even from my **mother's womb**, and called me through His grace, was pleased 16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to **Arabia**, and returned once more to Damascus.*

Paul was set apart from his mother's womb. **Omniscience** – all knowing God. *Isaiah 49:1 Listen to Me, O islands, And pay attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called Me from the womb; From the body of My mother He named Me. Jer 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."*

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C.H. Spurgeon speaking about the all knowing God & electing us to salvation, wittily said ***I am quite certain that He chose me before I was born, or else He never would have chosen me afterwards***

It was God's doing to make a persecutor **of** the church a preacher **to** the church. When God is the one who raises up there is no room for boasting on our part. If there is boasting it is to ***boast in the Lord great things He has done***. Some put themselves forward. They have a psychological need for attention. They put themselves in a place that God has not. **BG of Hawaii**

***Wilderness of Arabia*** we see it between Acts 9:25 lowered in a Basket over the wall in Damascus escaping a conspiracy by the Jews to kill him and then :26 arriving in Jerusalem 3 years later(1:18)

All God's men & women who are called & used of God experience a wilderness time. It may be health, financial, loss of loved one, maligned & slandered, loss of reputation or dealing w/ your sinful past & consequence.

**Moses**-somebody, nobody, called by God; **Elijah**-in cave in "***what are you doing here Elijah***" **1Kings 19:9**, **David**-running from jealous king Saul-**1Sam 26:20** "***Now then, do not let my blood fall to the ground away from the presence of the LORD; for the king of Israel has come out to search for a single flea, just as one hunts a partridge in the mountains.***" **Jesus**-**Isaiah 53:3** ***He was despised & forsaken of men, A man of sorrows, & acquainted w/ grief; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, & we did not esteem Him.--40***

days/nights tempted by devil--**Wilderness experiences are God's providence before/after salvation to form us & use us**

***18 Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days. 19 But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother. 20 Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.***

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Having to assure the churches Paul started *'I'm not lying'* says a lot—to lack of maturity on part of those believers--easily susceptible to rumor & false accusation. Falling prey to false teachers a sign of **gullibility**. **And** humility-lowering himself for their sakes. To question integrity is to question character. Accused of lying by liars--those w/o integrity questioning Paul's integrity. *A poison tongue will poison minds' James 3:5,6 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.-----Six things the Lord hates 7 are an abomination--the 7<sup>th</sup> 'a false witness who utters lies and one who spreads strife among the brethren' pr 6:19*

*Cephas Aramaic-rock*—Simon-Jesus changed to *Gk petros-Peter-rock*.

*James* who authored the book of James—leader in early church. Not James the fisherman, brother of John. He was beheaded by Herod Acts 12:2 This James--Lords half brother, same mother different fathers (God-Jesus F) *21 Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. 22 And I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ; 23 but only, they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy." 24 And they were glorifying God because of me.*

Paul is preaching as he went thru Syria, arriving in Cilicia his hometown & went back to making tents. It is thought that he remained there about 7 yrs until Barnabas went and got him for a work in Antioch Acts 11:19-26.

Paul had no close relationships w/ Jerusalem believers. They were uncertain about his conversion & afraid of him because of his past. Fearful he might be a double agent—get close w/ believers then arrest them. So he emphasizes his conversion and the rejoicing of other believers for his salvation. Though not trained and schooled by the apostles or any man but his Gospel came by direct revelation of Jesus Christ.