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<u>A0949 – December 6, 2009 – Galatians 1:10-12 – The Revelation Of</u> <u>The Gospel</u>

Alright, so far we've worked through Paul's salutation to the Galatians, Gal 1:1-5. It's a strange salutation because in verse 1 he adds something you won't find in any of Paul's other salutations: he defends his apostolic authority. He has to do this because the Judaizers questioned his apostolic authority in an attempt to undermine Paul's gospel. So Paul says, not from men, (that is not sourced in men), nor through a man, (that is not through the agency of a man, but, contrasting conjunction), but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, (who raised Him from the dead), and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia. In verse 3 we have a confession wellknown to the Galatians that Paul cites up front to remind them of the gospel that he preached and they believed when Paul was still with them. "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins," that's the substitutionary blood atonement of Jesus Christ followed by the purpose clause, "so that He might rescue us from this present evil age," that is, from the fallen world that is under the domination of the world, the flesh and the demonic forces. The substitutionary blood atonement of Jesus Christ has as it's goal in history to eliminate the threefold enemies of the believer, all, he says, "according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forevermore." That tells us that the cross of Christ and His rescue mission happened only because God the Father sovereignly determined for it to happen, otherwise no human being would be rescued and therefore to Him be the glory, great things He hath done.

Verses 6-9 pronounce Paul's astonishment that they had departed so quickly from this gospel of grace. The gospel being the substitutionary blood atonement of Jesus Christ in verse 4 and His resurrection from the dead in verse 1. And so Paul has reminded them of the gospel he preached and they

believed and from which (verse 6), they had departed. Now we have doctrinal deviation, a departure from the truth and this just amazes Paul -that they would depart from the grace of the gospel of Jesus Christ over to a works gospel of the Mosaic Law that is fundamentally at odds with Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ cannot be reconciled with the Mosaic Law. Either you follow the Mosaic Law or you follow Jesus Christ but it can't be both. There are a lot of Christians today who want to put themselves under the Mosaic Law and it's just foolish to do so because it's a denial of the sufficiency of Jesus Christ. If Jesus Christ has done all that is needed in His death and resurrection then what place does the Mosaic Law have in that equation? None, zero. Either Jesus has done it all or Jesus hasn't done it at all. And that explains why Paul is so upset to the point he would call down a curse on anyone who preaches contrary to the gospel he preached to them, let them be damned. Because to say that the law of Moses is required for justification before God or sanctification in the Christian life is to say that Jesus Christ is the damned of God. There is no room for the law of Moses alongside of Christ. That's the whole point of vv 6-9 and why Paul is so explicit in his denunciation of anyone who tries to come in and change the gospel of grace. There can be no change, he says in verse 8, even if he comes in later and says I was wrong, this is really the gospel. Then Paul says I don't have authority to do that because once the word of God comes into history it is immutable, it can't be changed, it has authority over even those who first spoke it. So this answers the question of authority. Does the Church have authority over the Scriptures since the Church gave us the Scriptures? No, absolutely not, once the Scriptures came into being through men of the Church, the Church was under the Scriptures and they are not at liberty to change it. The Scriptures are the final authority, not traditions of men, not Pope's, not angels but the Scriptures. And just to make sure the point got across Paul repeats the point in verse 9, let him be damned!

Now on the heels of those harsh words Paul asks two questions in verse 10, For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? And we have to work with these questions because there's background to the questions. Obviously, whatever the questions mean they are allegations leveled against Paul by the Judaizers. So let's look at the first question For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? seeking the favor is one word, the Greek word *peitho*. Now, this verb is applied to men and to God in two different ways. When it was applied to men in the

ancient world it was a tool of rhetoric. The rhetoricians of the day studied the principles and rules of communication and they formulated slick ways of speaking to persuade men. Turn to 1 Cor 2:1. What they had accused Paul of was using rhetoric to persuade and what rhetoric does is it avoids substance, it's a lot of hot air and highfalutin' language and everyone goes wooow. And this is what they're accusing Paul of. They're saying Paul duped you through rhetoric. Notice what Paul says, in 1 Cor 2:1, apparently these rhetoricians were all over ancient Rome but look that he says to the Corinthians, "And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech," what he's saying is I didn't come to you as a rhetorician. So we know Paul distinguished himself from the rhetorician, Paul didn't do this. And the Galatians knew he didn't do this and he's just reminding them that I didn't do this. Now secondly, when the word is applied to God or the gods in the ancient world, as it is here in Gal 1:10, then it took on the meaning of magic and trying to persuade God or the gods through magic. Apparently they had accused Paul of trying to persuade God to accept the Galatian converts on less than the full gospel, on simply faith alone without circumcision or the works of the Law. And Paul is obviously saying I didn't do that. I'm not a rhetorician trying to trick you people and I'm not a magician trying to persuade God to accept you on terms less than the true gospel.

The second question also has some ancient background. The question here is **Or am I striving to please men?** The words here are *zeto areskein*, **striving to please**, and this was the term for a familiar figure in antiquity called "the flatterer." And the technique of "the flatterer" is to kiss up, to say what everybody wants to hear. This is the technique they accused Paul of using to win them over to his truncated gospel. Did Paul do this? Turn to 1 Thess 2:4, "but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts. 5For we never came with flattering speech..." There it is: we didn't use flattery. And Paul obviously is saying the same thing in Galatians. How could I be a flatterer and say let people be damned. That's not flattering speech, that's rough language.

So what he's getting at in verse 10 with these two questions is that these allegations fly in the face of all the evidence, they're false accusations. We could translate verse 10 something like this, "For am I now using rhetoric to

persuade men or magic to persuade God? Or am I a flatterer of men?" Answer, no.

Then he comes to the logical conclusion. See, Paul is a lawyer; he was trained as a lawyer under top legal authorities in Jerusalem so you have to catch what this man is saying. He's a top legal mind and this is why I have a hard time understanding what Paul is saying all the time. This man is brilliant, he's absolutely brilliant and it's very difficult to follow his argument and I have to spend days mulling over what this man is saying. Paul is about 45 years old when he writes this, he's been a believer for about 15 years. He was converted on the Damascus road around 30 years of age. But before that, from infancy, this guy was trained in the Hebrew Scriptures. He was raised in Tarsus and they had a leading university in Tarsus and so all the big Greek ideas that were so prevalent in Rome were known by Paul. Then he went down to Jerusalem to the school of Gamaliel and Gamaliel was the top legal expert in all Israel and he trained Paul. And Paul, as we'll see, was his top student. He had access to all the cutting edge ideas. After that he was converted on the Damascus road and he spent 3 years getting personal training from the Lord Jesus Christ out in the Arabian desert. And another 12 or 13 years trying out what he had learned. So we're talking about a man that is very educated, a man who is absolutely one of the most brilliant people in the entire history of humanity. So brilliant that his fellow Jew Peter said, guys, Paul said a lot of things very hard to understand. And I can just see Peter pulling out Galatians and saying, now Paul, hey could you come here, I've been over you're book here but I still don't get what you're saying, can you explain this? And that's how I feel in my office back there rooting around like a dimwit trying to figure out what this man is saying. And I'm convinced that what God the Holy Spirit was doing through Paul was writing a set of documents through Paul that would keep the church busy for 20+ centuries trying to figure out what he said. This is not easy stuff to figure out.

So here's this brilliant lawyer and at the end of verse 10 he sums things up with this, If I were still trying to please men, that's our word for a flatterer again, If I were still trying to flatter men, I would not be a servant of Christ. Now look, there's a little crack here in the verse that opens the door for us to peer into Paul's former life. And the crack is found in the two adverbs of time in this verse. If you look at the verse carefully, right

up front in the first question he uses the adverb **now**; **now** is obviously the present time, the time when he is writing "let anyone who comes with another gospel be damned." Then in this third sentence he uses the adverb **still** and there he's referring back to his former life, how he once was. And we know he's doing this because he uses the imperfect and the imperfect means ongoing action in the past, so he's implying that his continual behavior in the past was to flatter men, but now he's not like that anymore. So **now** is his present life, he was not a flatterer of men, but in his former life he was a flatterer of men. He's saying I used to be in my former life, I no longer am in my present life. There's a contrast between Paul's two lives and all believers in one sense we have two lives, your life when you were dead and under the penalty of sin and power of sin and the life where you're actually alive and free from the penalty of sin and as we live by the Spirit we're set free from the power of sin in our lives. So all believers have these two lives and Paul is saying my former life as an unbeliever was characterized as being a manflatterer, but now in my present life as a believer I'm not longer characterized that way, now I'm a bond-servant of Christ. And it's simply impossible that I'm still a flatterer because I just said let men be damned and flatterers don't say that kind of a thing.

So let's look at these two periods of Paul's life, his former life and his present life. In his former life, and this is shining a big spotlight on his former life as an unbeliever that we don't get anywhere else, he was a man pleaser. One of his sin patterns, and we all have them, but the one that dominated his life was the sin of approbation lust. Paul was trying to impress everybody so they'd give him kudos. He was always trying to impress his professors, he was always trying to outdo his fellow students, and he was always trying to one up everybody else because Paul was interested in everyone looking at Paul. Paul wanted to be number one and get his name in flashing lights.

Now I imagine there are many of us who are always trying to be number one and our real life goal is not to please God but to please men. We want everyone to come up and pat us on the back and say we're the best because we have this same pattern in the sin nature that really what counts is everybody praising me. And when everybody praises me then my approbation lust is satisfied. So this may not be your sin pattern but don't worry, everyone's got a sin pattern. Paul's just happened to be approbation lust; he was interested in human praise. Human praise fed his flesh and made Paul

feel good about himself and so Paul worked and worked and worked to get man's praise. That was Paul's former life. And probably the Judaizers were using Paul's former life to show that Paul had this tendency to be a man pleaser and therefore Paul had lessened the requirements of the gospel to please them. They're saying his sin pattern corrupted the gospel message. And Paul admits, yes, in my former life I was a man pleaser, but...and that's the important point, but now I'm not for if I was I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

So in his present life, Paul is a different man. Paul is arguing that I'm no longer that former man, now I'm a new man I am a bond-servant of **Christ**. Some of the translations say "servant of Christ." that's not what he's saying; a servant has the idea that you're a free individual serving another. That's an American concept not Paul's concept. Paul wasn't an American, Paul was a Jew and for a Jew this word doulos meant "someone who sold himself into slavery to another." Paul is saying he sold himself into slavery to Christ. You say, why would you want to sell yourself into slavery? Because to be a slave of Christ is get a promotion in life. If you're not a slave of Christ the only alternative is to be a slave of sin. Everybody is a slave either to sin or to Christ. And obviously to be a slave to Christ is a promotion and that's what he's saying. He's saying I'm in a privileged position now that I am a slave of Christ. In the Jewish way of thinking this was an honor, a privilege. Men in the OT that were slaves of God were Moses and David and Elijah. And Paul says I'm a slave of Christ. If I was still a man flatterer and constantly concerned about saying the politically correct thing then I would no longer be a slave of Christ, I would be a slave of sin.

Now the application for you and me is clear. Here's Paul and Paul says some very hard things in verses 6-9 that cut him off from impressing men. It's not politically correct to say let men be damned. What about you? Are you afraid to say hard things because it might offend someone? Paul said, I don't care, I'm not going to adjust my message to man, I'm not interested in what men think of me. I'm interested in what God thinks of me, and if what I have to say gets men upset, so be it because if I don't say it I'm not being a slave of Christ. Every believer has to mentally decide, am I going to be a slave of Christ and do what I should do and say what I should say and please Christ or am I going to say what pleases men and do what pleases men? You can't do both. It's just not going to work. Either you serve Christ or you serve man.

There is no middle ground. And you may have to stand there and say, the gospel of Rome is false, the gospel of Lordship Salvation is false, the gospel of the Crossless Gospel is false, and people aren't going to like that. You're going to rub with people if you say those kinds of things. But don't worry; Paul rubbed with people everywhere he went. If you didn't learn that from the Book of Acts you didn't learn anything. People either loved Paul or they hated Paul but nobody was non-committal on Paul. And I hope it's that way with me. I hope people either love me or hate me because if they all love me then I've compromised my loyalty to God. So I hope there is controversy over what's going on here at this church. If there's no controversy then we're not being loyal to Christ. We're not inviting controversy; we're just cognizant of the fact that the word of God divides people.

Now let's come to Gal 1:11-12, key verses. 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. Now the introductory words of verse 11 For I would have you know, brethren are an ancient formula for establishing a proposition. Literally he says "For I declare to you..." and then he makes the declaration. It's a declaration about the gospel he preached. There are two negatives and one positive. The two negatives are it is not according to man and it is not received from man. The positive is it is through a revelation of Jesus Christ. So he's making the declaration and this declaration is the argument of the rest of the book. There is only one argument in this book and it is this; the gospel I preached to you is divine in origin. Repeat that with me, the gospel I preached to you is divine in origin, namely Jesus Christ. Now that is the point the Judaizers attacked, that's what's going on in verse 1 where Paul starts defending his apostleship right out of the box. Why does he do that? Because he's got to establish his credentials. The Judaizers attacked his credentials. They said Paul is just an apostle from men and therefore Paul's gospel is just a gospel from men, it originated in men and so the whole book is a legal defense that no, the gospel I preached to you is not human in origin, it's divine in origin, that's the argument of Galatians.

Now, the way he presents this in verse 11-12 is first of all, verse 11, **that the gospel which was preached by me is not** *kata anthropou*, it is not **according to man**, nor verse 12 **is it** *para anthropon*, **from man**, neither

according to man nor from man. That is two separate accusations, they are not the same thing, and they are different. Paul was accused on two counts by the Judaizers. So, Paul being a lawyer, what do you think he's going to do for the rest of the book? He's going to defend himself. This is a legal brief. And I'm convinced that most people can't read the Bible because they're looking for something subjective, they're looking for something that tantalizes their emotions and if you put a legal case in front of them, which is basically what the Bible is, they'll be asleep in five minutes because it's objective, it's full of logic and argument and that requires me to think. Paul is going to defend the proposition that the gospel I preached to you is divine in origin, it is not according to man nor is it from man.

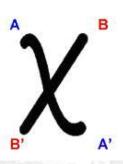
Here's a quote from F. F. Bruce. Bruce is one of the pre-eminent scholars on Paul's epistles. They used to say at Dallas Theological Seminary that if Bruce wrote a commentary on one of Paul's epistles you didn't need to buy any other commentaries. And here's what he says, "It has been suggested that the criticisms of Paul's gospel, to which he makes reference in vv 11–12, have controlled the structure of most of the letter. In v 11 his gospel is accused of being κατὰ ἄνθρωπου, while in v 12 it is said to be derived παρὰ ἀνθρώπον. Both these criticisms, it is suggested, are now to receive detailed rebuttal, but in reverse order: in 1:13–2:21 Paul shows that his gospel was not derived παρὰ ἀνθρώπου, and in 3:1–6:10 he argues that it is not κατὰ ἄνθρωπον. The bulk of the letter could then be viewed as an elaborate chiasmus."iii

What he's saying, and I agree with this analysis, is that vv 11-12 control the rest of the epistle. Everything is being set up right here so that everything that follows relates back to these two verses. Now it took me about ten hours to figure this out. I could tell something was going on here but I couldn't tell what? And that's because Paul is so brilliant or the Holy Spirit is infinitely brilliant through Paul, however you want to put it, but in any case Peter said the guy is hard to understand and boy let me tell you, he wasn't kidding. Peter was a Jew and if he was struggling to understand Paul what kind of problems do you think we Gentiles have? This is tough stuff and if you read the text at 60mph you miss it.

So let's look at a chiasm. Scholars have suggested the book is an elaborate chiasm. This wouldn't be the only book; some have suggested Exodus is an elaborate chiasm. So what is chiasm? Chiasm is a literary pattern. It comes

from the Greek letter *chi* which looks like an X. What you have is four elements and elements 1 and 4 are parallel in thought and elements 2 and 3 are parallel in thought so in their minds the argument could be depicted by the letter chi. It looks something like this. If this is our X, at this corner we have the first element we'll call A, then we have element B, we put B here, then we have B', B' is parallel in thought to B, and then we have A', A' is parallel in thought to A. So the flow of thought goes A to B to B' to A'. See the pattern? It's an inverted thought pattern.

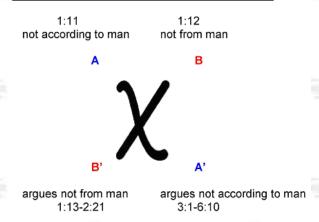
Chiastic Literary Structure



Let's turn to Rom 10:9 to see this structure. First we want to catch what chiasm is, and it's easy to see in Rom 10:9-10, then we'll come back and apply what we learned to Galatians because the chiasm of Galatians is complex. Very simply watch the words mouth and heart, "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord," so mouth is A, if it helps you put letters over these, put an A over the first mouth, now pick up and read more, "and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead," alright there's heart, put a B over heart, now watch the order invert in verse 10, "for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness," so there's B', write B' over the second heart, "and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." There's the mouth again, that's A'. Now look at what you have, you should have A, B, B', A'. And that's a chiasm because Paul moves from mouth to heart; he stays with heart and then goes back to mouth. This has nothing to do with walking an aisle by the way.

Now that's what Galatians is doing, this is an elaborate structure. Here's the chiasm in Galatians.

Paul's Argument for Divine Origin of the Gospel



Proposition A. A is Gal 1:11 where he says my gospel is **not according to** man. Then he goes to Proposition B. B is Gal 1:12. And B is verse 12 where he says my gospel is **not from man**. Then he argues it's **not from man**, that's B' in 1:13-2:21. Finally he argues it's **not according to man,** that's A' in 3:1-6:10. So the structure is A in 1:11, B in 1:12, B' in 1:13-2:21 and A' in 3:1-6:10; it's an elaborate chiasm. Now you see what I mean when I say Paul is smart. I don't know if Paul was cognizant he was doing this or not but he was a very well-educated lawyer and we know that God the Holy Spirit in inspiration utilizes personal education and vocabulary. If He didn't then the Bible would all read like it had one author and it doesn't read that way. There's a continuity of ideas but there's not a continuity of writing style. Paul doesn't read like Peter and Peter doesn't read like Moses and that shows you that under the doctrine of inspiration God the Holy Spirit, while ensuring that every word was His word, preserved the personality, education and vocabulary of the human authors. So I don't know if Paul meant to put this chiasm in there himself or not but it's my inclination that he did.

So let's tie this together and conclude. The argument of the book is that Paul's gospel is of divine origin. To establish that he's got to defend Proposition A and Proposition B. Proposition A is that the gospel is not according to man, *kata anthropou*. What does that mean? It means that his gospel is not agreeable to the standards of man or man's way of thinking. Man's way of thinking is that we can please God, if we do enough good works then God will look down at me and He will be satisfied by what He sees and so He will accept us. Wrong. That is a human gospel which is not gospel at all. So if Paul is arguing that his gospel is not in agreement with man's thinking how might Paul prove that? There are a number of ways; Paul uses a series of arguments in 3:1-6:10 to answer this argument. I'll just show you

the first one. Gal 3:1-5. If the gospel is agreeable to man's way of thinking and man thinks that he can please God by good works, then Paul simply asks the question in 3:2. "This is the only thing I want to find out from you:" obviously laying heavy emphasis here, "did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?" They would have to conclude from this that they received the Spirit by hearing with faith. They knew it was by faith. Why then were they turning back to works of the Law? He appeals to their first hand knowledge that they had received the Holy Spirit by the hearing of faith and that shows his gospel is not a human gospel because the gospel of faith is the opposite of what man envisions as the way to please God. So he goes on, verse 3, "Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" Verse 5, "So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?" Obviously, He had done it by hearing with faith and that's the divine gospel not a human one. Only a divine gospel could impart the Holy Spirit. So now let's turn to proposition B and see how he argues that.

Proposition B is in Gal 1:12, that the gospel is not **received from man, nor was I taught it**, *para anthropon*. Receiving it from man and being taught it are two sides of the same coin, they're the same thing. In our terms what he's saying is I wasn't taught the gospel by a fellow human being and so it's not from man in that sense either. How does he prove that? He gives his autobiography in 1:13-2:21. He goes back and he sketches his history. If I was taught this do you think I was taught this in the school of Gamaliel? Are you crazy? I hated the Christians, I persecuted them, and I didn't get it taught to me by my professors. And after I was converted out on the road to Damascus I didn't go to Jerusalem and talk to the apostles, I went away into the Arabian Desert for three years. So he goes through his whole life history up till he came to them and preached the gospel. And the whole point he's trying to make is, show me where in my history I could have been taught this gospel by a man? Go ahead, here's my history, you show me. There's no evidence.

So here's how Ramsay concludes. Sir William Ramsay was a professor of classical art and archaeology at Oxford at the turn of the 20th century. He did extensive exploration of antiquities in the Mediterranean world and his works are very important for ancient culture and geography. He says this, "The line of proof," and he's talking about the line of evidence that his gospel

is of divine origin, "The line of proof is, first an autobiographical record of the facts bearing upon his original gospel to the Galatians [cf 1:13-2:21], and thereafter [second] an appeal to their own knowledge that through this first gospel they had received the Spirit [cf 3:1-6:10]. Nothing could give them the Spirit and the superhuman power of the Spirit except a divine gospel." iv

Now what I want you to do for next week is go back and read Gal 1:11-12, then read these two sections again, read Gal 1:13-2:21 in light of Gal 1:12 and ask yourself, how is Paul's argument proving his point? See if you can figure out how Paul thinks. You'll have to discipline yourself to do this but if you get into the text and ask questions of the text this is when the Holy Spirit teaches you. You don't really learn just reading it at 90mph; the Holy Spirit meant us to think about the word of God and ask Him questions. And if you do this it will shape your thinking to His thinking and I think it will shed a lot of light on how Paul thought. Then read Gal 1:11 again and ask yourself how are Paul's arguments in Gal 3:1-6:10 proving the point, his point? And see what you find. I think you'll be surprised, I think you'll find that you're dealing with one of the most brilliant minds ever to walk the planet. Paul's going to challenge us to think objectively. Paul's going to challenge us to think in terms of a legal case that is being presented in a court of law. He's not just spouting off, he's building a very carefully constructed and rigorous defense of the gospel.

So let's conclude what Paul is saying. In verse 10 he comes on the heels of his harsh curse with two questions. For am I now using rhetoric to persuade men, or magic tricks to persuade God? Or am I seeking to flatter men? If I were still trying to flatter men (as I was when I was in Judaism and enslaved to the sin pattern of approbation lust, then I would not be a slave of Christ (which I am now). For such is evident by the harsh words leveled in verse 8 and 9 that anyone who preaches a gospel contrary to what I preached to you which is justification by faith alone through the grace of Christ, let him be damned. Verse 11, For I declare to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not in agreement with the thinking of men. Verse 12, neither did I receive it from men through teaching, but through a revelation of Jesus Christ on the Damascus Road. That's the argument Paul's making and we'll expand it next time. Read according to the structure of the chiasm and see if you can understand Paul's arguments, see how the Holy Spirit is thinking when He goes to defend the gospel.

For those of you who want to get an update on what's happening in prophecy studies I'll be at the pre-trib Rapture conference this week and I'll be giving an update on Wednesday night.

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¹ Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, Includes the Text of Galatians from the New English Bible., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 49.

ii Verse 12 unequivocally teaches the deity of Jesus Christ. If Jesus Christ were only a man then Paul could not say this verse. Of course, his point is not to argue that Jesus Christ isn't true humanity, that's not what he's saying, he's simply pointing out that when it comes to the question of the ultimate origin of his gospel it was not from man but from God.

iii F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, Includes Indexes. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982), 89.
iv Sir W. M. Ramsay, *Historical Commentary on Galatians*, (Kregel, 1997), 39.