

## PAUL'S MESSAGE WAS FROM GOD

### **TEXT: GALATIANS 1:10-24**

#### **Introduction:**

1. Last week we started a new series on the apostle Paul's letter to the Galatians. We noted that Paul wrote this epistle to defend the Gospel of salvation by grace through faith apart from works.
2. Salvation by works is called "another gospel" (1:6-9).
3. False teachers were advancing a false gospel of grace plus law, and in doing so they were not only attacking the true Gospel, but were also attacking Paul's authority as an apostle (cf. 1:1, 11, 12).
4. Paul affirms that he did not receive his message from man. He received it directly from God (1:11, 12).

#### **I. PAUL'S REVELATION (1:12)**

1. Paul's revelation was not from man. It did not originate with man. Mormonism originated from a man, Joseph Smith. Islam originated from a man, Mohammed.
2. All other religions are man-made, but not Christianity. Paul's message came directly from God (1:11, 12).
3. Paul was not a "man pleaser" (1:10).
4. The *Scofield Study Bible* says, "The Galatians know Paul, that he is no seeker after popularity (1:10)...He puts his known character back of the assertion that his Gospel of grace was a revelation from God (1:11, 12)...As for the Judaizers, Paul had been a foremost Jew, and had forsaken Judaism for something better (1:13, 14)...He had preached grace years before he saw any of the other apostles (1:15-24)...When he did meet the other apostles they had nothing to add to his revelations (2:1-6)...The other apostles fully recognized Paul's apostleship (2:7-10)...If the legalizers pleaded Peter's authority, the answer was that he himself had claimed none when rebuked (2:11-14)."
5. Paul set out to please God, not man. Before my family and I started Bible Baptist Church, we had prayer cards made up with I Thessalonians 2:4 on them: "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts."
6. Too often, pulpits are filled with "man pleasers," instead of "God-pleasers" (e.g., Joel Osteen).
7. False gospels appeal to the unregenerate, worldly mind, but the true Gospel is fiercely opposed (cf. 5:11).

8. Paul reminded his readers that before his conversion to Christ he was "exceedingly zealous of the traditions" of his fathers. He "persecuted the church of God, and wasted it" (1:13, 14).
9. Notice Paul refers to Judaism as "the Jews' religion" (1:13). God wasn't in it. Scofield says, "The new dispensation of grace having come in, the Mosaic system, if still persisted in, becomes a mere 'Jews' religion.'"
10. In John 2:13 and 6:4, John refers to "the Jews' passover," because it was no longer "the Lord's Passover." And in John 5:1 he refers to "a feast of the Jews," and in John 7:2 to "the Jews' feast of tabernacles."
11. Paul knew and understood the law of Moses "above many" of his equals in "the Jews' religion" (1:14). This is why the Jewish leaders were determined to kill Paul.
12. I heard about a RC priest in the Philippines who was saved and became a Baptist. The RCC tried to have him killed.
13. Elsewhere Paul says he was a Pharisee and a "Hebrew of the Hebrews" (cf. Acts 26:4, 5; Phil. 3:4-8).
14. No one could question Paul's credentials. He knew what he left, and he knew what he was preaching.
15. Or better, he knew *Who* he was preaching (1:16).
16. How could a fanatical Pharisee like Saul of Tarsus preach a message so contrary to his religious background and his own natural inclination? There is only one explanation: Paul received his message from God. It was "by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:12).

## **II. PAUL'S SEPARATION (1:15, 16)**

1. Paul realized that before he was even born he had been separated -- set apart -- by God for a special work (1:15, 16).
2. God called him "by His grace" (1:15). Paul was saved by the grace of God, and he was called to preach by the grace of God.
3. Paul is referring here to his dramatic conversion and call on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-19).
4. The Lord confirmed that call to Ananias, when he said, "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15).
5. Back in Spurgeon's day, there were some who tried to explain what Paul experienced as nothing more than an epileptic fit. When that was told to Spurgeon, he said, "O, blessed epilepsy if it effects a conversion like this!"
6. "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb..." (1:15).

7. I read in the newspaper yesterday that a pregnant lady went into the bathroom at Elmhurst Hospital, gave birth, and then proceeded to throw the baby in a garbage can.
8. She has been charged with assault, reckless endangerment, abandonment of a child and endangering the welfare of a child and faces 15 years in prison.
9. However, she wouldn't be charged with a crime if she would have had her baby killed in an abortion clinic. The young woman told police that she was "confused."
10. It's no wonder she is confused! With legalized abortion, she is confused as to why she got in trouble for killing her baby.
11. David said in Psalm 139:13 and 14, "For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."
12. The prophet Jeremiah said, "Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jeremiah 1:4, 5).
13. Like the apostle Paul, Jeremiah was set apart by God before he was born.
14. So was John the Baptist. The angel of the Lord told Zacharias, John's father, "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15).
15. Luke 1:41 says, "And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost."
16. Elisabeth said to Mary, "For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy" (Luke 1:44).
17. God separated Paul and called him by His grace -- "To reveal" the Son of God in Paul, that Paul might preach him among the heathen (1:16).
18. God called Paul to preach the Gospel to the heathen (cf. 2:8, 9). But Paul never lost his great burden for his fellow Jews. In Romans 9:2 and 3, Paul said he had "great heaviness and continual sorrow" in his heart for his "kinsmen according to the flesh."
19. Paul's "heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Romans 10:1).
20. God called Paul so that Paul might "reveal his Son" (1:16). God calls all of us to do the same. We must present Christ to a lost and dying world.

### **III. PAUL'S PREPARATION (1:17-24)**

1. Every preacher needs preparation. A young man told the dean of a Bible college that he was going to skip Bible college and would just go out and start preaching.
2. The dean asked him what he would preach, seeing he would have no training. The young man quoted Psalm 81:10, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."
3. The dean answered him, "Yes, God will fill it...with hot air!"
4. My dean said, "A call to preach is a call to prepare."
5. Many young men cut short their preparation with the excuse, "The Lord is coming back soon. I need to get out there and win souls."
6. But they are hindering their effectiveness as preachers and soulwinners by cutting short their training. Besides, no one knows when the Lord will return. Especially Harold Camping!
7. Paul got his preparation for the ministry in Arabia and Damascus (1:16, 17).
8. The Bible does not say why Paul did not get his training in Jerusalem. Perhaps it would have been dangerous for him there. But nevertheless, it was dangerous for Paul in Damascus too (cf. Acts 9:20-25).
9. Like Moses on the backside of the desert, and David tending sheep on the quiet hills of Judaea, and John the Baptist in the wilderness of Judaea, perhaps Paul needed seclusion.
10. After three years of preparation, Paul went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and James, our Lord's brother (1:18, 19).
11. This James was the half-brother of our Lord (cf. Matt. 13:54-58). He is referred to by name in Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; I Corinthians 15:7; Galatians 2:9, 12; James 1:1; and Jude 1.
12. Paul did not visit Jerusalem seeking an assignment. That was not necessary since he received his orders directly from God (cf. Acts 9:6; 18:9, 10; 22:21; 23:11).

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. John Newton had been a wicked drunken sailor and slave trader, adamantly opposed to the things of God.
2. During one particularly rough voyage out at sea, he was gloriously saved.
3. Before he died, he wrote his own epitaph, now engraved on a plaque on the wall at St. Mary Woolnoth Church in London, England.
4. "John Newton, Clerk, Once an infidel and libertine  
A servant of slaves in Africa,  
Was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour  
JESUS CHRIST,  
restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach

the Gospel which he had long laboured to destroy.  
He ministered,  
Near sixteen years in Olney, in Bucks,  
And twenty-eight years in this Church."

5. Cf. Galatians 1:23.