

Exploring Galatians – Study 4 – The Call of God – Study 5 – Not a Churchly Message

So far in his letter to the Galatians, Paul has explained that there is only one gospel, the criterion by which all human opinions are to be tested.

We now come to the next part of Exploring Galatians. It covers Gal 1:11-2:21. And includes this Study 4, through Study 8. Paul gives a brief history or autobiography of his call and authority as an Apostle of Liberty.

Read Gal 1:11-17.

Paul's Autobiography

Read Acts 22:3, Acts 5:34-39 and Gal 1:13-14. How did Paul's former life prepare him for his calling?

If Peter was the rock that the early church was built on (Matt 16:18), Paul is its leading theologian. This is due to his former life in Judaism and direct inspiration from the Lord (Gal 1:16).

In what ways can God use our autobiography for his glory? Does this require some vulnerability?

¹ Stott, J., Larsen, D., & Larsen, S. (1998). [*Galatians: Experiencing the Grace of Christ*](#) (pp. 14–15). Nottingham, England; Downers

“Paul claims that his gospel, which is being called into question by the Judaizers and deserted by the Galatians, was neither an invention (as if his own brain had fabricated it) nor a tradition (as if the church had handed it down to him), but a revelation (for God had made it known to him). Paul dared to call the gospel he preached “my gospel,” not because he had made it up but because it had been uniquely revealed to him.” ¹

What is the evidence of the genuine gospel in a person's life?

To prove that he received his gospel directly from Christ, Paul offers evidence from his own autobiography—his radically changed life. The best possible evidence.

The Divine Call

Two Divine Calls Demonstrating a Continuity of God's Delegated Authority

Jeremiah

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations” (Jer. 1:5, RSV).

Paul

“He who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles [i.e., nations]” (Gal. 1:15, 16, RSV).

Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press; IVP Connect: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press.

Knight compares the call of Paul with the Call of Jeremiah. He points out that the word “Nations” in Jeremiah, “goy” in Hebrew, “ethnos” in Greek LXX, can be translated Gentile. The Greek “ethnos” is used 161 times in the NT and used extensively by Paul in his letters, including here in Gal 1:16.

“Paul’s divine call, as noted above, was a summons to service—that I must preach Him among the Gentiles” (Gal. 1:16). We find an important lesson here. Like Paul, each of us as converted Christians also find ourselves called to serve and to preach Christ in one form or another.”²

What is meant by the Priesthood of all Believers?

“Thus, the New Testament doctrine of the priesthood of the believers implies more than the fact that we have direct access to God’s throne without the mediatory function of a human priest (Heb. 4:16). It also means that we have a God-given priestly function for other people. Every Christian in this sense is a minister or servant of God to other people. Every Christian, like Paul, is to preach the gospel to the nations.”²

Read Gal 1:18 – 2:1

² Knight, George. Exploring Galatians & Ephesians. Review & Herald. Kindle Edition.

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