

Exploring Galatians – Study 5 – Not a Churchly Message

Read Gal 1:16 – 2:1

The Divine Message

From where did the Apostle Paul get the gospel message?

The Logic of Paul's Argument in Galatians 1:16-2:1

1. *Premise:* he did not get his gospel from the Jerusalem apostles.
2. *First* he went to Arabia, then returned to Damascus (verse 17).
3. *Then:* after three years he traveled to Jerusalem, but only for 15 days (verses 18-20).
4. *Then:* he journeyed to Syria and Cilicia (verse 21).
5. *Then:* after 14 years he returned to Jerusalem for a second visit (2:1).
6. *Therefore:* there was no slot of time during which he could have been in Jerusalem for a long enough period for the apostles to instruct him.
7. *Therefore:* the argument of his opponents falls flat. His message came directly from God.

¹ Stott, J., Larsen, D., & Larsen, S. (1998). [*Galatians: Experiencing the Grace of Christ*](#) (p. 15). Nottingham, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press; IVP Connect: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press.

What was the purpose of this special revelation to Paul (Gal 1:16)?

How does this apply to us today?

“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

Time in Arabia

“A messenger from heaven bade him leave for a time, and he “went into Arabia” (Galatians 1:17), where he found a safe retreat. Here, in the solitude of the desert, Paul had ample opportunity for quiet study and meditation. He calmly reviewed his past experience and made sure work of repentance. He sought God with all his heart, resting not until he knew for a certainty that his repentance was accepted, and his sin pardoned. He longed for the assurance that Jesus would be with him in his coming ministry. He emptied his soul of the prejudices and traditions that had hitherto shaped his life and received instruction from the Source of truth. Jesus communed with him and established him in the faith, bestowing upon him a rich measure of wisdom and grace.”²

² White, E. G. (1911). *The Acts of the Apostles in the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ* (Vol. 4, pp. 125–126). Pacific Press Publishing Association.

What can we learn from how God directed Paul after his initial conversion?

Can you share a time when you took time away from everything to be with the Lord over an important event or decision in your life?

Radical Change

“Before his conversion Saul of Tarsus was a bigot and a fanatic, wholehearted in his devotion to Judaism and in his persecution of Christ and the church. A man in that mental and emotional state is in no mood to change his mind. No conditioned reflex or other psychological device could convert him. Only God could reach him—and God did!”³

A startling change in a person’s life can mean many different things. When has God made a radical change in your life, or in someone you know, which some people at first didn’t understand?

³ Stott, J., Larsen, D., & Larsen, S. (1998). [*Galatians: Experiencing the Grace of Christ*](#) (pp. 16–17). Nottingham, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press; IVP Connect: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press.

In Summary

“The apostle has made his point in Galatians 1:11-2:1. Not only had his radical transformation on the road to Damascus evidenced his direct apostolic commission from the risen Christ, but so did his lack of any opportunity to get his gospel from the Jerusalem leaders. Thus, both his apostolic credentials and his gospel message came directly from Jesus. And, that being so, to reject him and his message was equivalent to spurning Christ Himself.”⁴

Pray and Prayer Requests

What changes in your life would you still like the Lord to bring about? Pray for your will to be in cooperation with God’s workings.

⁴ Knight, George. Exploring Galatians & Ephesians (Kindle Locations 736-739). Review & Herald. Kindle Edition.