

Galatians Class 3 Transcript

[Prayer]

Alright, we were able to finish the background yesterday for **Galatians** and we need to start into **chapter 1**.

I'll probably skip some things that I do cover sometimes. But that's because we've been through **Acts chapter 15** and so I don't know that I necessarily need to go back and read all through that as I often do when going through **Galatians**.

We're going to find that this epistle begins in a very different way than most of Paul's epistles. He begins in the typical epistolary form, identifying the author and the recipients.

[**Galatians 1:1**] *Paul, an apostle—*

And then we find this parenthetical expression:

— (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead),

Now it would be very easy, again, to kind of read right over that. But you will compare that to the other epistles, and you'll find that he doesn't say things like that. There are things that are implied in this introduction—the introductory comments that he gives. First of all, he identifies himself as an apostle. This is not something that he does to aggrandize himself or: "Look at me I'm important." But it is important for them to be able to understand and address the issues that have Paul very, very concerned.

He makes the statement that his apostleship is *not from men nor through man*. Now there are two different Greek prepositions that are used there. The one that is translated "from" is *apo* and it means—it refers back to the source. It says: "The source of my apostleship is not men." And the aspect of *through man* indicates that: "It wasn't something that a group of men decided and placed upon me either." So, the source of the apostleship is not man. "Nor was it conferred upon me through a group of human beings, but instead through Jesus Christ and God the Father."

Okay. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. He is the One who "apostles" people, who sends them out with the apostolic responsibility. So he says: "My apostleship came through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who by the way, raised Jesus from the dead." Why are we talking about that?

We're going to see that how you gain salvation—which obviously involves resurrection from the dead for the vast majority—is a very key part of this book. So, Paul is reminding them—from the very first part of this book, before he's completed his first sentence of introduction—he's reminding them that there is one pathway to salvation. It comes through Jesus Christ. There is no other pathway. And that God is the only one who has the power to raise *from the dead*. So, He is highlighted here at this point.

[3:06]

We also ought to note that—this is kind of a side point, but it's one to keep in mind—when you begin to study such things as: Who's an apostle—many spent a great deal of time on that, not that it's really all that relevant for us, but they do—there are many who say: "Well, the only ones who could be apostles were those who saw Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry." That isn't what Scripture says. And Paul asserts right here that he is an apostle, and yet he never makes the claim of having seen Jesus during his earthly ministry.

Now maybe he did, because he studied in Jerusalem, and Jesus was there at certain times. So is it

possible? Yes, it is. But he never makes that claim. He never claims to have been taught by Jesus during his earthly ministry. But as we'll see very quickly, he *does* make a claim of being taught in a very special way.

We also probably should note here that in talking about his apostleship, he says it's *from Jesus Christ and God the Father*. What happened to the Holy Spirit? Again, if he's going to talk a great deal about the Holy Spirit, and the work of God's Spirit, as we go through this book. For him to claim apostleship from two thirds of the Trinity would've been a ridiculous thing to do. It would make no sense. Especially as he shows us further what the role of the Holy Spirit truly is. So, he says his apostleship comes from the Godhead—the complete Godhead—*God the Father and Jesus Christ*, both. But he reminds us of the role of God in raising Jesus from the dead.

He then goes on to say, again, typical normal form of doing things:

[**Verse 2**] *and all the brethren who are with me, —*

Okay. So, it's Paul the apostle writing, and: "There are number of others *who are with me*." He describes them as *brethren* here. Most of the resources would say this probably refers primarily to the elders who are involved, but I don't see where it has to be limited to that. There are people, wherever Paul is, who've heard about issues going on in Galatia, and likewise, are supportive of what Paul is sending to them. They are, in essence by mentioning them here, it's kind of like an "amen." It's kind of like, you know: "We agree. We're part of this. We're behind Paul in this."

[5:31]

And then he says they go:

—*To the churches of Galatia:*

This is really the only one of Paul's epistles specifically addressed to a group of congregations. He very clearly makes it plural here: *the churches of Galatia*. It is true—in **Colossians**, if you tied in **Colossians 4 verse 16**—that he does instruct that the book of **Colossians** be read in the congregation in Laodicea as well. So, he does that. And there actually is—we'll see when we get to the book of **Ephesians**—there actually is some thought that the book of **Ephesians** was likewise sent to a group of Churches surrounding the Ephesus area. But we can't even prove that—it isn't clear from the manuscripts.

This one is absolutely clear—he is writing *to the churches of Galatia*. We talked about who those Churches—which Churches those were yesterday—primarily: Psidion Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe. But it certainly could have included some of the others as well, that were in the area of southern Galatia.

He begins again, with a standard greeting that we've read a number of times:

[**Verse 3**] *Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,*

Now, again, we have emphasized the meaning of *grace* and *peace* as we look at some of the other epistles, so I don't need to necessarily spend a lot of time on it. But it is an important concept. *Grace* is going to be very important in the book of **Galatians**. We must understand what it is. So please keep in mind the basic definition I've given you: a gift given from the goodness of the giver without regard to the worthiness of the recipient. *Grace* emphasizes the "giver" rather than the "gift" and rather than the "recipient." The emphasis is upon the giver, and the attitude, and the heart, that the giver has in giving. So that's going to be an important thing to keep in mind as we go further.



It is a reminder—and of course, it isn't just to the Galatian Churches. Paul always uses this at the beginning and often at the end of his epistles, to remind all of us that we need from God, something we're not worthy of. And that it's something we should not take for granted. Our calling, the gift of God's Spirit, the knowledge that He gives us—none of those things should be taken for granted, because they are a *gift* from God. And we need to recognize that we, unworthily, have received that gift.

Now, he goes on to say, again: *peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ*. He reverses the order of the names. Now, again, does that have significance? Perhaps.

[8:24]

There is—one of the commentaries—*Expositor's*, says that by reversing this, he talks about the divinity of Jesus Christ. But I think there's something else there, besides *Lord* that is there. We don't find the word *Lord* in **verse 1**, but we do here. Remember that the word *Lord* has a sense of "rulership," the one who is in charge. And we're going to see, very quickly, the other side of this. Paul uses—when we talk about *Lord*—the typical Greek word is *kurios*, which again is a word that would've been applied to Nero. It would apply to any ruler. It could be applied to a slave owner, who owned his slaves and had absolute authority over them. Jesus Christ is portrayed here, not simply as divine, but as "the One in charge." That again, is something that, I think, it's very important for us to keep in mind in the Church today. Jesus Christ is not the Founder—I mean He is, in that sense—but He isn't *just* the Founder, He isn't the Head Emeritus, the picture that we put on the wall and say: "Well yeah, there's our Founder, now we go on from there." He is active, alive, heading the Church today. He is the CEO of the Church today.

Years ago, people would sometimes who—they meant well—but they might speak to Mr. Armstrong, and say: "Oh well, he's the head of the Church." And he was very quick to say: "No. I am not the head of the Church. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church." And I'm sure you would find Mr. Franks, likewise, never claiming that he's the head. That's not the way we do—or understand. We look to Jesus Christ as the active Head. We pray and ask for His guidance through the Holy Spirit so that we can do what needs to be done.

Now he goes on to talk about *Jesus Christ* who is *Lord*, Ruler, the One who's in charge over—not just the Church—but us individually.

[Verse 3] *who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,*

Again, there is so much packed into this that it's very easy to read right past. There is one way to address sin—through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It is a sacrifice which He willingly *gave*. He *gave Himself*. He was not forced into it. He was not required to do this by the Father. This was a choice Jesus Christ made—to give Himself for our sins. But by that, it also makes the statement very clearly: there is only one way to address sin. There is only one way. Remember our question we talked about yesterday, from Dr. Kirkpatrick? "What can I do on Tuesday to make up for the mistakes I made on Monday?" You *can't* do anything on Tuesday that's going to change what happened. There's only one way to address the sins of Monday, and that's through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

[11:24]

Paul is establishing that here. Now we're going to see as we go through the book: why does he have to be so strong about that? Well, there are those who are going to come along and try to say that: "Oh well, maybe there's another way that we can do this."

So, Jesus Christ *gave Himself*. Why? Simply as: The Sacrifice for sin. In other words, a lot of times,

again, in Protestantism, you'll hear this: "Well, Jesus gave His life for your sins." Okay. That's true. Now what? Well, the "now what" is explained here: *that He might deliver us from this present evil age*. We're not simply being forgiven sins so that we can kind of drift along and coast into the Kingdom. We are to be *delivered from this present evil age*. Well, those of you who've come under the sacrifice of Christ, you've pretty well figured out: you're still living here. Okay. You didn't change your location as far as *this present evil age* is concerned. So, what does he mean?

Well, the commentaries bring out—and I think it's a good way to put it. *Expositor's*, for example, says this:

Not deliverance *out of* the age, but deliverance from the *power* of this evil age. The deliverance is conceived of here, not as a deliverance out of the present evil world (though that will also be true eventually), but as a deliverance from the power of evil and the values of this present world-system through the power of the risen Christ within the Christian.

So, it makes the point that Jesus Christ' sacrifice has—yes, it has an ultimate effect in taking away the death penalty—it also has an effect **now**. And that effect now is, it moves us—it breaks the power of sin, and enables us to live—even in this world—but removed from the power of sin. The power of sin's been broken.

It's even a graphic term that he uses: *this present evil age*. It is literally "the being present." It is the idea that this age isn't just 2000 years ago. This age is at all times, down through all that we experience. The word that's used for *evil* is an important word as well. There are two words that are translated *evil* in the New Testament from the Greek: *kakos*, which means "evil in its, kind of, abstract sense," and *poneros* which has the sense of "evil which seeks to corrupt others."

Again, one of the commentaries says:

The *kakos* man may be content to perish in his own corruption. (He doesn't care what anybody else does; he just wants to be able to do what he wants.) But the *poneros* man is not content unless he is corrupting others as well.

So, he has that impact of wanting to pull others down. It is interesting that when you examine the New Testament that Satan is never described—he is described as *the evil one*. He is described as *being evil*. But the word *kakos* is never applied to him. He is always described as "the *poneros* one"; the one who wants to corrupt and pull-down others. So this is a characteristic of this *present age*. *Poneros* is the word that's used here, *ponerou*, in this case. The o-u ending is what's called "genitive" and it generally shows possession. So, in a sense you could translate this as: this *age*, which is controlled by, owned by, *evil*. And I think, again, that's a very graphic representation of what's going on.

[15:03]

He also then adds one other thing, which was a bit of a stumbling block to some of the Jews. And that is that this giving—Jesus Christ giving of Himself—was God's *will*. It was not something that happened. It was not like things got out of control and this is what had to take place. It was *according to the will of God*. God chose that this is the way sin would be addressed, and how it would be removed. The Godhead together agreed. Jesus Christ willingly gave Himself, but it was a decision that the Father had made.

You know, if you read through the commentaries—especially as you start talking about the various covenants—there is a belief that's called "dispensationalism," which basically says that: God can't figure out exactly how to get this mess straightened out. That He gives one dispensation and says:

“Okay. Do this.”

“Well, that didn’t work well. So let’s do a different thing. Let’s try a different covenant. Let’s give them the 10 Commandments.”

“Well, they didn’t do that very well. So let’s try something else.”

And it’s like God is really not very bright, you know. That He creates all these people, sets things in motion, and then every once in a while, it’s like: “Oh man! What am I going to do now?” God doesn’t function that way. This was a part of God’s plan—as Scripture tells us—*before* creation. Jesus Christ is described in the book of **Revelation [13:8]** as the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. Now, obviously, the sacrifice didn’t come for a couple thousand years, or actually, about 4000 years after that. But the sacrifice was already determined from the *foundation* of this world. So, Paul emphasizes that forgiveness and salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is *exactly* what God’s plan was.

He goes on to say: **verse 5** *to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

God the Father and Jesus Christ are worthy of all the glory that anyone could ever give because of what They have provided for us. And the *amen* basically says; “You know, I think we all agree on this.”

[17:17]

That’s at that point—five verses—the tone of this message becomes very, very direct and corrective because Paul is very concerned about what’s going on.

He says: **verse 6** *I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,* (now I want to go on to the next verse) **7** *which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.*

Now, there are several things to note here. If you’re reading in the old *King James Version*, you will find it says: you turn to another gospel, which is not another. And that sounds rather confusing. *New King James* actually captures the sense fairly well. We’ll look at that as we go just a little further. But first of all, let’s consider this thing of *turning away*.

The word literally means “to transpose two things; place one in the place of another.” Now, in other words, here these people have been taught the truth. And he says: “What you’re doing is you’re turning *from* what you were given, *to* something entirely different.” That’s not just kind of stumbling on the pathway. That’s not just veering off a little bit. That’s making a deliberate turn in another direction. And if you go in another direction, you’re not going to arrive at the destination you’re supposed to have. The word literally, in classical Greek, was applied to “a turncoat,” or refers to “desertion,” or “revolt.” So, it’s a very powerful word that Paul uses when he talks about “turning away.”

And then he talks about it being *so soon*. How do we explain that?

It can be taken in a couple of different ways. It can be taken as: “I was just there. It wasn’t that long ago that I was there and taught you these things. How can it be that now, in a relatively short time, you’re going in another direction?” But there’s another way, this phrase can be used as well, that describes the *suddenness* of it. One has suggested the term: how could you abandon it so precipitously?

For those who were around years ago when the Worldwide Church of God began to introduce certain doctrinal changes, we saw in a few cases, this kind of precipitous, sudden, change. Where people had lived a certain way for a period of time, they heard one thing, and suddenly abandoned *decades* of living in a certain way, to change. We’ve referred before to the example that took place, where the Church has taught for many years: “You should not eat unclean foods.” Then we got a video sermon or an audio

sermon—I forget which it was, but whichever it was—the speaker from headquarters said: “Well, that’s not really all that necessary. It’s not a big problem.” And literally, we had people stop on the way home from services to get unclean food.

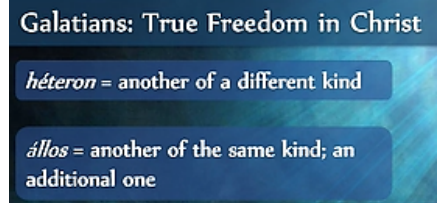
[20:26]

Now, for many of us, this was an absolute shock. We didn’t believe it in the first place. But then, to have people who we knew and trusted, who had lived this way for many years, to *suddenly*, in a matter of *minutes*, turn from what they had done for decades. I think that’s similar to what Paul is saying here: “I am *shocked* at the *suddenness* of your *turning away*.”

I’m reminded, a number of years ago Mr. Kilough gave a sermon where he was talking about Christ’s return. And his emphasis was that what the Scripture talks about is not “nearness,” in the sense of time, but that when it comes about, it will be so *sudden* and *everything* will go so quickly, that people will not be prepared. And I think that’s kind of the sense of what Paul is saying here.

He goes further and he doesn’t say: you’re *turning away* from *what* I taught you. He goes to the core of it: *you are turning away from Him who called you*. Now Paul didn’t call them. Jesus Christ—God the Father called. “You’re *turning away* from them.” So, in the process, Paul is saying: “I want you to understand this is not some small thing. This is not someone coming along and probably what they’re saying is: ‘Well, Paul didn’t give you the whole story. Let us tell you the rest of what you really need to do.’” And it sounds like: “Well, they’re really just adding a little bit to what Paul had said. They’re just giving us a deeper level of understanding than what we had before.” Paul says: “No. You’re taking a turn away from the One who called you—turning your back on Jesus Christ.

And then he describes this as *a different gospel which*, again, going into **verse 7** *is not another*. There, we look at the two words. Now you see the one on the slide: *héteron*. It means “another of a different kind.” *Héteros* in its basic form means “another of a *different* kind.” It does often include the connotation of evil. There is a second word which is also used in these two verses: *állos*, which means “an additional one; another of the *same* kind.” Okay. So if I said: “Okay. Here is a pen, a ballpoint pen.” If I had another one just like this, it would be *állos*. It would be “another just like this.” But if I pull out my other pen, which is quite different, then this one is *héteron*. It’s another, of a *different* kind. It’s not an “additional.”



[23:10]

So, Paul is referring to the gospel in this way. These individuals are coming along, and he said: “I want you to understand what you’re turning to is a *different kind*. It’s not what I brought you. It’s something different.” And again, there is the connotation of evil. It’s—and as he says here, in **verse 7**—it’s not an “additional one.” It’s not “in addition” to what you got. It’s not “adding on” to what you got. It is a *different gospel*. Now remember what we read back there in **2 Corinthians 11 [verse 4]**, where Paul talked to the people in Corinth and said: “I’m afraid if somebody brought you another gospel, you’d bear with it.” And now, sure enough, that’s what’s happening. People have brought another gospel, and the brethren in Galatia are being swept up with this.

Then Paul goes on to say, at the last part of **verse 7**—*but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert* (which means to “change, to reverse, to twist”) *the gospel of Christ*.

Now, let’s look at a couple of things there. First of all, when it uses the term *the gospel of Christ*, we’re going to find a very important aspect of Greek as we go through the book of **Galatians**. And that concerns the use of the definite article: “the.” In English, we use the word “the,”—the definite article—

fairly consistently. If we talked about, for example: “On the way in today, did you see a dog?” Okay. There could be any number of dogs that you saw today on the way in. If we say: “Did you see the dog,” then obviously we have a specific dog in mind, and we’re asking if you saw that. Likewise, in Greek, many times there is not an indefinite article used at all. It just simply—I guess you would say: “Did you see dog?” And that would be perfectly understandable in Greek. You translate it to English, and you would put in the “a”— “Did you see a dog?” But the use of the definite article is less common. It’s not uncommon. I don’t want to give the impression that it’s uncommon. It’s not uncommon at all. But when it is used, it does define one specific thing, as opposed to anything else.

So when he uses the term here—*the gospel of Christ*—he is talking about “the one and only specific gospel.” There are not others, There’s not a whole variety of gospels. We will see different *titles* for the gospel, as we go through Scripture. We see: the gospel of the kingdom of God [**Mark 1:14**]. We see: the gospel of Christ [**Mark 1:1**]. We see: the gospel of your salvation [**Ephesus 1:13**]. All of those terms are used, but *the* gospel is one gospel, and not different ones. So Paul is saying these people want to twist, pervert, even go in the opposite direction of *the* gospel.

[26:15]

But now we also note something else here: *There are some who trouble you*. The question came up yesterday—one of the students asked me yesterday about this in a sense:

Why is it that in some places Paul will name a specific individual and warn about them? Whereas in this case, we never get any names at all.

I think there are a couple of things involved here. Example of naming someone—Paul warned Timothy: Beware of *Alexander the coppersmith*; he’s done *me much harm*. [**2 Timothy 4:14**] And there are others, you know, he [of] talks of Hymenaeus and Philetus, [**2 Timothy 2:17**] and so on—he talks about individuals. In that case he is not particularly telling Timothy, or anyone else, that their doctrine, their teaching, is the danger. He’s telling him: “These *people* are the danger. Don’t trust them. These people who’ve shown their willingness to do the wrong thing.” So, he is warning them about that. But, in a case like this, it’s really not *who* it is that’s the concern. It’s what they’re doing, what they’re saying the damage that they’re causing. So Paul is focused instead of, on the names, and “who are these people,” he is instead focusing on what they’re teaching. That’s what he’s concerned about.

It appears as we get further in this book—I believe it’s up in **chapter 5**—it appears that he still doesn’t know who they are. That he talks about these people, “whoever they are.” And so, he really is not trying to focus on attacking people. That’s not the approach that he should take. And he doesn’t. He focuses on what they’re teaching.

So he comes to this—he’s just said: “These people are coming and they’re troubling you. They’re stirring up the Church.” Again, this ought to create some concern in people’s minds. “When I came there and preached the gospel, I didn’t create problems in the Church. We had peace. We worked together. We grew together. God brought people into the truth. Now, here are some people who are producing turmoil in the Church.”

Why is it turmoil? Well, probably, just as we saw many years ago—and we have historically many times seen—someone comes along with a false doctrine, and there are some people who don’t have the ability to address that doctrine properly. You know, yesterday in class we talked about the “cyclical doctrines” that come through the Church of God community. And how every time they come up—even though they’ve been thoroughly disproven—*every* time they come up, they take people away because they’re not ready to deal with those issues.

[28:51]

Well, Paul is very concerned about that. And he's concerned in the Churches of Galatia, there are some people who are just: "Wow! This is really great." Remember what we read about the Athenians: they always want to hear some new thing? Well, sometimes we're that way too. "Oh, I want to hear some new thing. Wow! Here is someone coming along with 'new truth.' I've never heard this before." And they get very excited. Then there are others who are saying: "Wait a minute. That's not right." And we then have turmoil in the Church. We end up with situations—as again, and sadly we've seen—where you come to Church services, everybody's meeting in the same place, but there are two different groups there. There are people who stand together and talk to each other, about people who are standing together talking to each other! And it creates this turmoil. Paul says: "That's not the way the Church is to be." So he gets very strong.

[Verse 8] *But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.*

The term *accursed* here in the Greek is *anathema*, which basically means "let them be set aside for destruction." A death penalty placed on them, so to speak. The term Paul uses is very, very strong, and it indicates that he did not see "teaching false doctrine" as a small matter. He saw it as a serious matter that is, in a sense, a capital offense. You teach God's people something that's wrong—you answer for that. And it's a very serious thing before God.

Again, he uses: "you bring *any other gospel*." Now, I think it's interesting as well, to note this: *if we*—Paul includes himself—"If I come on the scene and I teach you something different—" Now sadly, again, Church history has shown us that that's happened. We've had ministers who, again, were faithful ministers for decades, who suddenly came along teaching those things that are not true. So Paul includes himself. "Now, I'm not excluded from this. What I taught you was the truth. And if *I* come and try to teach you something different, then let me be accursed."

[31:05]

He also talks about *an angel from heaven*. Now, why does he mention that? We're not really sure. There are some indications that Gnosticism was beginning to have an influence in this area of the world. I mean Gnosticism—if you study Gnosticism—which we'll do a little bit more in the book of **Colossians**—you basically find that the those who write about it say: "Well, it really couldn't have been Gnosticism because that didn't come on the scene until later in the second century." Well, Gnosticism didn't spring forth full-blown in the second century. There were ways of thinking that were leading to this system. And there's even indication there was a level of Jewish Gnosticism that was involved. And Gnosticism involved—at times at least—a worship of beings lesser than God. They might've been called different things. In Judaism it probably—and again, I don't mean to portray *all* of Judaism; it was a relatively small group that embraced this—but there would've been, in that sense, thinking of the spirits as "angels." So maybe that's a part of it. But I think the broader thing that Paul is saying is: "The truth is the truth, and it doesn't matter who brings you something else. If I bring it, if an *angel* from God brings it, if it's contrary to the truth that you've learned—it's **wrong**. Don't accept it." So the source of the message is irrelevant. Personalities, no matter how nice or how un-nice—I guess we can say—don't change the message. It is: that's what matters.

So, then he goes on—and again, it sounds a little funny to us probably—but he says:

[Verse 9] *As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.*

Why does he say it twice? Well, he's not really saying it twice. What he's saying is: "When I was with you, I warned you about this. I told you before, and now I'm reminding you, 'This is what I told you.' The standard didn't change. When I was there, I told you, 'This is the truth. Don't let anybody teach you something else.' And I'm still saying that."

He goes on to say then—and we can at this point, start reading between the lines a little more:

[Verse 10] *For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.*

What's he talking about here? Well, another translation again—well, as he puts it here: "*Do I now persuade men, or God. Who is it that I'm trying to get to change? Am I trying to get God to do something different? Does God need to change?*" No, that isn't what happens. We kind of express that sometimes, when we talk about fasting. That people have something in mind that they want God to do, and they fast and ask God to do it. No. Fasting isn't it intended to change God. Fasting changes *us*, humbles *us*—it enables us to draw close to God. God doesn't need to change. He never gets anything wrong. He always gets it right. So, God doesn't need to change here. Paul is saying: "What God gave you—this truth, this gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of the Kingdom—God doesn't need to change that. He doesn't need to alter the rules. He doesn't need to come back and say, 'Well, you know, this thing about sacrifice of Christ—wow, that's pretty harsh. Maybe we can find another way.'" No. God doesn't change. He said: "I'm not trying to persuade God; I'm trying to help you to see."

[34:50]

Now again, remember the word we talked about in **2 Corinthians [5:11]** where it talks about "persuading." That the word that's used doesn't necessarily mean "you *successfully* persuaded." It means "you tried to." He said: "That's what I'm trying to do. I'm trying to present this in a way you can understand and respond to it."

What are we reading between the lines here? Well, apparently, there's an accusation that Paul is trying to please men. That what he preaches is: a kind of what you need to say so that people will come along and you may not tell them other things. In the cases we're going to see here—though it hasn't come up yet—it won't come up until the next chapter—these individuals were teaching the people of Galatia, the Gentiles of Galatia, that they needed to be circumcised and keep the whole law of Moses—or the law that's listed there, as we'll talk about—that this is what they needed to do. So, apparently the accusation was: "Well, Paul didn't tell you guys that when he was here, because you know, the Gentiles would've just rejected him immediately if he had said that. So he didn't tell you. But now we've come on the scene and we're going to fill in the rest." Paul says: "Do you really think that's my message? That I'm just giving this message to please men?"

And then he goes back and looks at his past. "If I still pleased men,"—there was a time when Paul was seeking to please men. It was when he was in Judaism, and it was when he was persecuting the Church. That was *very* pleasing to the religious leaders of Judaism. They thought it was great. Paul thought it was great. And ultimately, he came to realize that all he was doing was not pleasing God; he was pleasing men. He was trying to do what men thought was good. And, he could probably include himself in that, but he realized he was wrong.

He said: "If that's what I did, then I wouldn't *be a bondservant of Christ.*" Okay. What do we mean by that?

Remember what Christ said? "You cannot *serve two masters.*" So, I can't be a *bondservant of Jesus Christ*, and a *bondservant of men* at the same time. Doesn't work. I can't do it. I have to choose one or

the other. So, I've chosen to be a bondservant of Jesus Christ. That's my intention. That's what I'm going to do."

[37:18]

So, he goes on to **verse 11** and he says:

But I make known to you, brethren, —

He's calling them *brethren*. And again, there's going to be a couple of times—especially as we get into **chapter 3**—we're going to see that he pulls away from that term, not because he doesn't consider them *brethren*, but because he wants them to understand the seriousness of what's going on.

He says: *—I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel (again, the definite article is there) which was preached by me is not according to man.*

Okay. Now what we mean by that? Well, he's going to explain as he goes a little bit further. But he says—the phrase here: *make known to you*, has in it the concept of a formal declaration. Okay. "I'm not just speaking off the top of my head. I want you to understand something. This *gospel* I preached to you, is not from man." And then he explains that, as we go a little further.

Verse 12 he says: *For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Paul's going to spend a considerable amount of time, as we go forward here, explaining how he learned the truth of the gospel, because the way he learned it is unique. There is no one else we find, anywhere in Biblical history, who received the truth in the way that Paul did. And again, remember when Jesus Christ spoke to him on the road to Damascus: He's *a chosen vessel*. He is one that God has chosen for a certain reason. So He dealt with him in a different way.

Why was it that Paul needed to make this statement: that it came directly from Jesus Christ? Well, probably, there was accusation against him. "He claims to be an apostle, but you know, the guys in Jerusalem, *they* were there with Jesus for three and a half years. Where was Paul? He wasn't there. He was studying with Gamaliel. So how can he claim to be an apostle in the same way?" And, of course, those who had come from Judea were *implying* that they had apostolic backing. That they were sent there from Jerusalem. And so Paul says: "Okay. I didn't get this gospel from man. I didn't—you know, the gospel was being taught by the apostles in Jerusalem, and then began to expand outward—I didn't hear it that way. I knew what they were teaching, and I thought it was heresy. And so, I didn't receive it. I wasn't willing to do that. When I finally did come to accept it, I wasn't taught by them. I didn't go to Jerusalem and sit down with the apostles and say, 'Okay. I want to learn what you know.'" Didn't happen that way. *Came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

[40:16]

Now, when you read through that section of the book of **Acts [9]** that describes this—after Paul was struck down on the road to Damascus, and what took place there—as we explained, it tells us that he—(well, I think he's going to give us a little bit more here, so let me not get too far ahead. Yes, we'll do that. So, I'll just stick with that, as we go further.)

So, he makes this point: "I received this by *revelation*." The word is used for *revelation* here, *apokalypseōs* is a word that—(I think I pronounced that [wrong]—*apokalypseōs*)—is a word that basically means "to reveal something by removing what was blocking the way." And that's, in a sense, a good description of what happened with Paul. His preconceived ideas, his focus on Judaism and all of its

rituals, blocked his vision. And he didn't recognize Jesus as the Messiah. And once that was taken away, the scales dropped from his eyes—not only physically but spiritually—then he began to see what he hadn't seen before.

So, he backs up, and he gives us a little reminder: **[Verse 13]** *For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it.*

Now again, Paul is making a very clear statement. Here he was—and again will see in other places—he was a Pharisee; he was a part of Judaism. He'd always been brought up [in Judaism]. But he also now has come to recognize that Judaism didn't square with what Scripture gave. It was a separate system. The word he used to express his conduct, describes Judaism as: a way of life. "You've of *heard* my way of life," so to speak, "in Judaism."

He talks about how he *persecuted the Church of God*. Paul's reference to the *Church of God* shows that by this point, the early Christians had begun to see themselves as a body of believers, through whom God was working, not just another branch of Judaism. When they started out, that's what they thought. But now they see themselves as *the Church of God*.

[42:41]

He says: "*I persecuted them beyond measure.*" Paul's rage against the Church was *deeply* emotional, and it was beyond reason. He was so wrapped up in his hatred and his anger that, as he says here, he *tried to destroy it*. This was a very painful memory for Paul. We find three times, in the book of **Acts** [22:4; 26:11], he goes back and tells the story. And in each case, you could almost feel the emotion that he felt. He looked back on what he had done. He was ashamed. He was horrified at what he had done. He knew he was forgiven. Okay. But, you know, sometimes when you have committed sins, and you know you've repented, and you know God has forgiven you, it's still hard to go forward because you still have this sense of: "How could I have done such a terrible thing? How could I have done that?"

Verse 14 *And (he says) I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.*

He said: "You know my background. You know what I did. I literally—" the phrase there, used is: "I blazed a trail in Judaism. I was a leader. I was out front. And I was far more of a zealot than the others. And I again, had a great zeal for the traditions of my fathers." Now, again, what Jesus say about the traditions of the Jews? "You exalt your traditions above the teachings of God." And Paul said, in essence: "That's what I was doing. I was going with the traditions instead of allowing God to lead me."

So: **verse 15** *[But] when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,*

Now again, what an amazing thing that is. Paul says: "I believe God was taking a hand in my life before my birth." And I think when you look at the story of the apostle Paul, that's true. He was given opportunities. He was placed in situations as he was growing up, that made him absolutely unique in comparison to anyone else—to anyone else as a part of the Church. He was absolutely unique and special. He was trained in the Jewish way of life by one of the finest of the rabbis. One of the most respected of the rabbis.

And yet, it's very clear he has a *profound* understanding of the Greek world, and the Greek culture as well. Who else do you find that's that way? There simply is no one, you know. And I don't want to put exactly the parallel, but just to give you a simple example: look at our Dr. Levy. If you wanted to find someone else, somewhere in the Church of God community, to teach the Old Testament, where could

you find someone who has *that* background. Now, I'm not saying God separated Dr. Levy from his mother's womb. We're not say that. I'm not trying to put him in that kind of a spot. But I am just saying: God takes a hand in people's lives long before we may realize it.

I don't know when God began to deal with me. And you probably don't know either. And that's okay. But Paul looks at this and he said: "I believe God has taken a hand in me from the very beginning." As he said: "He *called me*." How? "*Through His grace*. The same thing that I wish for you—that I remind you that you need—I needed it too. Otherwise I would never have been called. Being called from what I was doing, into the truth, took a gift given from the goodness of the giver with *total* disregard for my unworthiness." And Paul recognizes that.

Okay. Well, that brings us up to the end of our time right now. So, we'll pick up next class on **verse 16**.

[46:47]