

GAL. 1:11-2:14, PAUL AND THE JERUSALEM APOSTLES
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A. The Two Themes

	Nature of Gospel	Paul's Apostleship
Greeting, 1:1-5	1:4	1:1
Conflict, 1:6-10	1:6-9	1:10
Intro. to Doctrine, 1:11-12	1:11 <i>kata anq.</i>	1:12 <i>para anq.</i>
Doctrine, 1:13-5:1	3:1-5:1	1:13-2:14

B. 1:11-12 recaps the two themes, both negatively and positively.

1. Negatively:

- a) The gospel is not "after man," 1:11. It is not a human gospel. Focus on the nature of the gospel.
- b) The gospel is not "of man." He was not taught it, 1:12. Focus on the nature of Paul's role in presenting it.

2. Positively: "But [the gospel is] by revelation of Jesus Christ," 1:12b.

- a) "Revelation" answers "of man." The rest of this chapter emphasizes how he received his message without human intermediary.
- b) "of Jesus Christ" is not the agent (cf. 1:16), but the object, the content. This is what he preaches (1:16). Cf. 1 Cor. 1:23.

C. 1:13-2:14, Overview

The objective here is to establish his independence of and parity with the Jerusalem church, by relating a series of historical incidents. Does 1:20 mark a break in his argument: independence of Jerusalem before this, parity with after?

1. Independence of his gospel from Jerusalem

- a) 1:13-14, His life before salvation.
- b) 1:15-17, His salvation, away from Jerusalem.
- c) 1:18-20, Acts 9, in Jerusalem.

2. Parity with Jerusalem

- a) 1:21-24, Acts 10, away from Jerusalem.
- b) 2:1-10, Acts 11 or 15? In Jerusalem.
- c) 2:11-14, Peter in Antioch, away from Jerusalem.

D. 1:13-14, Life Before Salvation

1. The record

Three imperfects, indicating his continual, habitual action.

- a) He was persecuting pursuing the church.
- b) He was destroying it (word indicates personal violence; Acts 8:1-3; 9:1,2 illustrates the kinds of activity he was carrying out).
- c) He was progressing on the fast track in Judaism, because of his greater zeal for the traditions. (NB: NOT the law!

Pharisaic religion as distinct from OT faith.)

2. The point:

- a) There was a time when he received something *para anqrwpois*, the tradition of the fathers under Judaism.
- b) Certainly, he didn't get his gospel there.

E. 1:15-17, Salvation Experience

1. God's Action, 15-16a

Note the emphasis on God's absolute sovereignty in the affair.

a) *What* did God do? "reveal his son in me." Cf. 1:12. This is the central point of the paragraph. Paul's message is Christ, and that message was committed to him by direct revelation from God.

b) *When* did God do it? "When it pleased God." Not when Paul was ready, but when God was. That's why I don't like, "Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Waiting." He's not waiting for us! When he's ready for us, he takes us.

c) *Why* did God do it? "that I might preach him among the heathen." He has not taken this ministry, this apostleship, on himself. God conveyed it to him.

d) *How* did God do it? Two actions identified:

1) "who separated me from my mother's womb"

a> "From" is time, not space. Not reference to his birth, but to the time at which God separated him. A frequent expression in the servant songs of Isaiah (44:2,24; 49:1,5), here applied to Paul as a servant.

b> "Separated:" Acts 13:2; Rom. 1:1. Set apart for a specific work. So far is Paul from having taken the apostleship upon himself, God had set him apart for that purpose from birth.

2) "and called [me] by his grace"

Recall our discussion on 1:6; the efficacious call, the first thing in our experience that marks us as different. In Paul's case, took place on Damascus road, Acts 26, esp. 14ff.

2. Paul's Action, 16b-17.

a) What he did not do, 16b-17a: Seek human instruction.

1) Generic statement: "immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." May be an allusion to Matt. 16:17, where the Lord indicates that Peter's confession also had no such source. Paul thus claims as direct a revelation as that enjoyed by the acknowledged leader of the twelve.

- 2) Specialization: "Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me." Note the claim that he too is an apostle--later, but no less, than the others.
- a) What he did do, 17b: Retired into Arabia, then returned to Damascus. We have no details, but interesting to speculate.
- 1) Where is Arabia? Interesting that in this same epistle, 4:25, it includes Mount Sinai! Did Paul go that far?
 - 2) Why did he go there? To sort out the implications of his call in view of his Pharisaic background. Did he visit Sinai, there to meditate on the relation of the law to the gospel, and there to be instructed by the Lord?
Sequence I went into Arabia,
Sequence and returned again unto Damascus.

F. 1:18-20, First contact with apostles

Cf. Acts 9:19-30.

1. Time: "After three years." Adequate time for him to develop his own understanding of the gospel. Acts shows that during this time he was active in Damascus "for many days" in preaching.
2. Visited Peter for two weeks.
3. Also met James (cf. Acts 9:27, "apostles").
4. The oath in v.20 emphasizes that this is his only contact with Jerusalem: After three years of independent thinking and ministry, only for two weeks, only with Peter and James.

G. Conclusion

There are two truths to learn from this history--one historical and external, the other present and internal.

1. We need to understand the privileged position that Paul enjoyed as a special channel for God's revelation. Now we can understand why he wrote so much of the NT, and why his interpretation of Christ's life and ministry is normative.
2. As a pattern for us! God saves us the same way he saved Paul, and he saves others the same way. Furthermore, when we enter into ministry for him, we should have the same sense of the Lord's purpose and call that Paul did.