

GALATIANS

Radically
Transformed
By The Gospel

Galatians 1:11-24

For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. And I was advancing in Judaism beyond

many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into

Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ.

They only were hearing it said, “He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.” And they glorified God because of me.

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2 Peter 1:16

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

1 John 1:1-2

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life-- the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us

What we have to share with others is neither a miscellany of human speculations, nor one more religion to add to the rest, nor really a religion at all. It is rather the “gospel of God,” God’s own good news for a lost world. Without this conviction, evangelism is evacuated of its content, purpose and drive.

– John Stott



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No Mistaking Paul's Pre-Conversion Passion

But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. – Acts 8:3

But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. – Acts 9:1-2

I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women.
– Acts 22:4

Philippians 3:3-6

though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the **law**, a **Pharisee**; as to **zeal** a **persecutor** of the church

Paul's efforts to exterminate the church did not spring from guilt. Before he was converted, he was utterly convinced that Jesus was not the Messiah and that the sect that promulgated such teachings was seriously mistaken. Therefore, when God revealed Jesus to him on the Damascus road, he was totally astonished that his zeal and passion were misdirected.

– Thomas Schreiner



And I was advancing in Judaism
beyond many of my own age
among my people, so extremely
zealous was I for the traditions of
my fathers.

Such was the state of Saul of Tarsus before his conversion. He was a bigot and a fanatic, whole-hearted in his devotion to Judaism and in his persecution of Christ and the church. Now a man in that mental and emotional state is in no mood to change his mind, or even to have it changed for him by men. No conditioned reflex or other psychological device could convert a man in that state. Only God could reach him—and God did!

– John Stott



But when he who had **set me apart before I was born**, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles

Isaiah 49:1

Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name.

Jeremiah 1:4-5

Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, “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.”

But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who **called me by his grace**, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles

Romans 4:17

who gives life to the dead and **calls**
into existence the things that do not
exist.

Romans 8:30

And those whom he predestined he
also **called**, and those whom he **called**
he also justified, and those whom he
justified he also glorified.

But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that **I might preach him among the Gentiles**

Galatians 2:7-8

On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles),

This is astonishing. Paul had been resisting God and doing so much wrong, but God was overruling all his intentions and using his experiences and even his failures to prepare him first for his conversion, and then to be a preacher to the Gentiles.

– Tim Keller



I did not immediately **consult with anyone**; nor did I **go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles** before me, but **I went away into Arabia**, and returned again to Damascus. Then **after three years** I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days.

But I saw **none of the other apostles** except James the Lord's brother. (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And **I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea** that are in Christ.

They only were hearing it said, “He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.” And they glorified God because of me.

Paul did not verify the truth of the revelation he received from others, nor did he immediately plan a trip to Jerusalem to discern whether the apostles in Jerusalem validated the revelation he received. He did not need or desire an apostolic imprimatur on the gospel he proclaimed. Since he received his gospel by a revelation of Jesus Christ, he did not need anyone else to confirm its truth.

– Clinton Arnold

