

Galatians 1

- In all of Paul's letters, there is no more passionate defense of the Gospel than the letter to the Galatians
 - Galatia describes not a city but a region in present-day Southern Turkey
 - This region was a place Paul traveled during all three of his missionary journeys
 - In fact, traveling through Galatia was required when headed to Greece or Rome from Judea
 - Among the cities of Galatia Paul visited in the book of Acts were Antioch, Derbe, Lystra and Iconium
 - Paul probably wrote this letter shortly after his first missionary journey and probably just after the Council of Jerusalem in AD 49, making it one of Paul's earlier letters
 - You may remember that the Council of Jerusalem was a meeting of Peter and Paul, among others, to resolve how the Jewish church and Gentile church were to coexist
 - In the earliest days of the church, Christians were Jewish and Samaritan
 - But after Paul began his ministry, the church quickly became Gentile
 - This caused significant friction leading to some compromises intended to ease the integration of Gentiles
 - That experience was an important moment in church history, and we'll see why in Chapter 2 of this letter
- After each missionary trip through the region, Paul would return to either Jerusalem or to his home base in Antioch of Syria
 - And that's probably where Paul was when he wrote this letter
 - While there, Paul hears that Jews who claimed to be Christian were moving throughout the region of Galatia spreading false teaching
 - We call these men Judaizers, because the core of their message was that a Gentile must become a Jew to be saved

- Furthermore, they said that even after one receives Christ, a Gentile must continue in observing the Law of Moses
 - Like the Gnostics (which we studied in Jude's and John's letters), this teaching had the potential to corrupt the church and undermine the spread of the Gospel
 - Naturally, Paul was concerned for the wellbeing of his children in faith, so he writes this letter to counter those false teachers
- Galatians is a relatively simple letter
 - Its focus is to defend the true Gospel of grace
 - More specifically, Paul writes to accomplish three goals:
 - First, to defend his authority in the face of the attacks by these false teachers
 - Secondly, to defend salvation by grace through faith alone
 - Finally, to encourage Galatian believers to stand firm in the truth they had received by Paul's instruction

[Gal. 1:1](#) Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead),
[Gal. 1:2](#) and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:
[Gal. 1:3](#) Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,
[Gal. 1:4](#) who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,
[Gal. 1:5](#) to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen.

- Right away, we see Paul introducing his themes in his salutation
 - Paul's salutation follows very conventional Greek practice in the day
 - Letters in this day began with a certain pattern
 - Like we begin with "Dear..." or "To Whom It May Concern..."
 - First, there was a statement of the writer's identity
 - Secondly, the audience of the letter was identified
 - Finally, a statement of greeting was offered (often just the word "greeting")

- Paul identifies himself as Paul, the apostle
 - This introduces Paul's first purpose in writing the letter
 - He is defending his apostolic authority
- Most of his letters include a statement of his apostleship, and there is a good reason why Paul often begins his letter this way
 - No apostle saw his authority questioned more than Paul
 - The twelve apostles were unique in having served Jesus while in the flesh
 - Paul never had the privilege
 - Furthermore, Paul was well known as the man who persecuted the church during its early years
 - The first Christian martyr fell at Paul's feet
 - So Paul's adversaries took every opportunity to cast doubt on his authority to teach doctrine
 - Lastly, Paul's teaching on the meaning of the Gospel and fundamental doctrines of the faith were far beyond what other apostles were teaching in the day
 - Paul was given knowledge to share with the church that no other apostle received, including those who accompanied Jesus
 - So his critics made a case that his position of authority was one he took upon himself or which other men granted him
 - And they said Paul's ideas were so far beyond anyone else's teaching
 - Even the apostle Peter acknowledged that Paul was in a league of his own when it came to revealing God's word, when Peter said:

[2Pet. 3:15](#) and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, [2Pet. 3:16](#) as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

- So as Paul begins the greetings in most of his letters, he takes extra effort to remind his audiences that his apostleship was no less authentic than any other
 - Paul was appointed to his position as an apostle by Christ personally, he says
 - Which is the way every apostle gained his office
 - The criteria to be an apostle is that you have been appointed by Christ in person and called by Him to be His apostle
 - The twelve received that calling before Jesus died
 - And Paul received it after Jesus was resurrected
 - And Paul was sent by God the Father and the Son with the message he delivered
 - If we accept that Paul was called by Jesus personally
 - And if he was sent by God to bring a message
 - Then we must also accept that his message is consistent with God's will
 - I suspect that the book of Acts is in the canon largely to validate Paul's calling and teaching
 - Much in the same way that Jesus' ministry is explained and validated in the four Gospels
 - Paul's ministry is explained and validated by the record of Acts
- The next thing Paul introduces in his salutation in vs.3-4 is a defense of the Gospel of grace
 - He states that we are saved from our sins by Christ giving Himself for us
 - Simply put, we were saved by grace, God's unmerited favor
 - And that grace gave us peace with God, Paul says
 - And that grace came as a matter of the will of God
 - This is the salvation Paul preached everywhere
 - Salvation is a matter of God's grace alone and nothing else

- If someone claims that any work is required for salvation, they have changed the message and distorted the gospel
- Men receive grace, men receive peace, men receive salvation
 - Men do not earn it
 - Men do not retain it
 - Men do not even ask for it
- Finally, Paul introduces his final theme that Christians are to stand firm in the peace that comes from the true gospel
 - In vs4-5 Paul says that the true Gospel also rescues us from the evil of this present age
 - When we receive the Gospel, we are born again
 - That spiritual change separates us from the sin of the world, the deadness of the world, the ignorance of the world
 - We are set apart from that evil even as we live around it
 - Secondly, we are set apart in our future destiny
 - We are rescued from the judgment this world will experience
 - We will not share in that fate
 - Now notice, if God's grace has rescued us from the world around us and from the judgment to come, then what more is required than grace?
 - That's Paul's point
 - The Gospel of grace grants us everything we need for our life both now and to come
 - It is the source of our sanctification and justification
 - Nothing else is required
- So having reminded the church of what it means to receive the Gospel, Paul then lobbs a cannonball across their bow...

Gal. 1:6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;

[Gal. 1:7](#) which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

[Gal. 1:8](#) But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

[Gal. 1:9](#) As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

- Paul opens with a rebuke asking how they departed so quickly from the truth he delivered
 - He says he's amazed, which is the Greek word *thaumazo*
 - It means to marvel or wonder
 - Paul simply can't believe they have changed their view of the Gospel so easily
 - Notice Paul says the church is deserting Christ
 - Paul will speak in these terms at several points in this letter
 - To abandon the Gospel is to abandon Christ
 - They are abandoning the One Who called them by grace
 - Where are they turning?
 - Paul says they are turning to a different Gospel
 - And to be clear, Paul adds that a different Gospel is really not another gospel
 - The word gospel in Greek means glad tidings or good news
 - So Paul says a different Gospel is not good news at all
 - In all our studies of false teaching in the Jude and John letters, we've noted time and again that false teachers always attack at the heart of the faith
 - They bring an alternative preaching or Gospel
 - Whereas the true apostles made the Gospel the center of all their preaching, false teachers make some other point their focus

- Instead of salvation from hell, they offer salvation from poverty
- Instead of repairing a dead spirit, they want to repair our physical bodies
- They substitute a different outcome for the one the true Gospel offers
- They aren't preaching that we become saved by faith in Jesus Christ and then the Lord may choose to bless us with wealth, health, etc.
- They set aside the issue of sin and the need for eternal salvation altogether and move to other topics
- And any message that substitutes for the true Gospel is a false Gospel
- So when we use the word "Gospel," what truth are we describing?
 - Can we all describe in a few sentences what the Gospel really is?
 - Shouldn't every Christian be able to explain the Gospel succinctly?
 - Otherwise, we are ripe for someone to convince us that the Gospel is something other than what it truly is
 - After all, Paul was amazed how quickly they abandoned the Gospel in Galatia
 - Proving that it's easy to succumb to a false message if we are not continually reminded of the truth
 - Therefore, we have to know what the Gospel is before we can know what it isn't
 - In short, the Gospel is the message of salvation, the good news that men may be forgiven of their sins and reconciled to God
 - It is a message centered on the Person and work of Jesus Christ
 - And it comes in two distinct parts
 - First, the Gospel message begins with repentance from dead works

- Repentance is a work that God Himself accomplishes in the hearts of those He saves
- This godly repentance leads a person to a turn away from a life apart from God
 - To turn from the sin of unbelief
 - To acknowledge the need for salvation
- Elsewhere Paul teaches this repentance is a product of God's will

[2Cor. 7:10](#) For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a **repentance** without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

- Secondly, the Gospel proclaims we are saved by faith in Jesus Christ which is also given to us by grace
 - We believe and confess Jesus is Lord, that He died to pay the debt for our sin
 - And He was resurrected to demonstrate His power over death
 - Elsewhere Paul explains that this faith is also a product of God's grace

[Eph. 2:8](#) For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

[Eph. 2:9](#) not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

- So by God's grace, we are brought to our knees in recognition of our sin before God
- Yet by that same grace we are made to stand by faith in the righteousness of Christ
- This is the true Gospel...nothing more, nothing less
 - Everything else we learn in God's word is connected in some way to furthering this message
 - But nothing in God's word changes the Gospel or adds to it
 - We can't add water baptism, tongues, prayers, circumcision, ceremonies, denominational membership, etc.

- Sometimes you will see churches claiming to teach “the full gospel” which is a warning sign that they are distorting the Gospel
- We can’t look outside the Bible to find new information to compliment or change this truth
- And we can’t look backward into the Old Testament and find extra obligations to add to this truth
- The Gnostics were looking outside the Bible for knowledge to add to the Gospel
- While the Judaizers were returning to the Old Testament to add obligations to the Gospel
- Paul says that these churches in Galatia were being disturbed by men who wanted to distort the Gospel in this way
 - The Judaizers fully intended to change Paul’s message; this wasn’t an accident or misunderstanding
 - The word for distort literally means to twist or turn around
 - They were manipulating the message to move it in a different direction
 - Remember, false teachers are unbelievers who do not understand the very things they are presuming to teach
 - They claimed that what Paul taught the churches wasn’t complete
 - When the church heard this message, it disturbed them
 - It not only confused the believers concerning the true Gospel, but it also left them doubting everything else Paul taught
 - If Paul was wrong on the Gospel, then what value could there be in anything Paul says?
- But Paul draws a hard line between himself and them
 - He says if anyone offers a different message than the one Paul preached – even if it is an angel – then they are to be accursed
 - The word accursed means damnable, as in going to Hell

- Paul says by definition if someone holds to a different Gospel, that one has been reserved for judgment
 - Notice that even if an angelic being appears with this other Gospel, then that angel is to be considered accursed
 - What is another word for an accursed angel? Demon
- An angel declaring a Gospel other than the one Paul delivered is to be understood to be a demon, Paul says
 - We know that the Mormon faith begins with a story of an “angel” delivering a different Gospel than the one Paul delivered
 - And there are other traditions that rely on stories of angels or supernatural beings
 - And we are expected to give additional credence to supernatural messengers
 - But the Bible says we give them no credit when they try to change the Gospel message
- And let’s not overlook Paul’s choice to repeat this statement twice
 - I can’t think of any other time when Paul repeats himself in this way
 - Of all the things Paul said in the New Testament, he reserved his strongest statement to condemn preaching false Gospels
- The rest of the first chapter is devoted to Paul providing background on how he came to know the truth and share it with this church
 - Paul wants this church to have full confidence that he is speaking with the authority of the Lord

[Gal. 1:10](#) For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

[Gal. 1:11](#) For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.

[Gal. 1:12](#) For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

- Paul begins his defense with a simple question: was his purpose in preaching to please men and gain their favor?

- Paul is arguing to the Galatians that his motives in preaching were pure
 - Men who tell lies do so for some self-interest or motive
 - They want to gain something with their lies that the truth couldn't gain them on its own
 - So if Paul was lying to the Galatians, he asks what possible motive would he have had in preaching a lie?
 - Paul says, did my preaching win the favor of men?
- When Paul taught throughout Galatia and Asia Minor, he was pursued by Jews and persecuted at every step
 - He was thrown out of synagogues
 - Chased out of town by Roman soldiers enlisted by Jewish leaders
 - He was poorly clothed, hungry, thirsty, and treated like scum according to 1 Corinthians 4
 - So he had no incentive to lie, cause it didn't make his life easier
 - If he had wanted to please men, he said he would not be a slave of Christ
- Since Paul's motive in preaching wasn't to gain men's favor, Paul explains how he came to preach his message
 - Before we consider how Paul received his revelation, let's consider that statement for a moment
 - Paul heard the Gospel preached to him not by the mouth of a man but by Jesus Christ Himself
 - Paul says the Gospel was not preached to him by a man
 - Yet we have the story of Stephen in Acts 7
 - In Acts 7, Stephen is confronted by the Pharisees and an angry Jewish mob, which claims he was preaching heresy
 - In his defense, Stephen presents the beautifully detailed summary of how the Old Testament preaches Christ from the beginning
 - At the end of his speech, he declared

Acts 7:55 But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God;

Acts 7:56 and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

- At this point, Stephen's declarations drive the Jewish crowd to attack him and stone him to death, even as Stephen prays for their forgiveness
 - As all this takes place, a Pharisee stands watching and approving the event
 - That Pharisee is described in v.58

Acts 7:58 When they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

- So the man who would become the apostle Paul is listening to the Gospel preached by a man named Stephen
 - Yet having heard it, Paul nevertheless approves Stephen's stoning
 - At the beginning of Chapter 8 in Acts, we read this

Acts 8:1 Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

- As Paul heard the Gospel preached by Stephen, he not only didn't believe it, but it only caused Paul to act in greater opposition to the message
 - Paul demonstrates in his own life a spiritual truth of the Gospel of grace
 - Paul says the Gospel wasn't preached to him a man, but by Jesus
 - Yet we know Stephen preached in his hearing
 - Paul is demonstrating that the Gospel is a matter of grace
 - Until the Lord determines to grant us repentance and the gift of faith, the message literally bounces off our hard heart
 - It may even cause us to react in anger as it assaults our pride and self-righteousness

- But when the day comes for salvation, the call of the Gospel is met with repentance and faith by the will of God
- So now Paul gives his testimony of how he came to be an apostle, which is his first defense against his accusers

[Gal. 1:13](#) For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it;

[Gal. 1:14](#) and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.

[Gal. 1:15](#) But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased

[Gal. 1:16](#) to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,

[Gal. 1:17](#) nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.

[Gal. 1:18](#) Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days.

[Gal. 1:19](#) But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

[Gal. 1:20](#) (Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.)

[Gal. 1:21](#) Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.

[Gal. 1:22](#) I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ;

[Gal. 1:23](#) but only, they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy."

[Gal. 1:24](#) And they were glorifying God because of me.

- At several points, Paul gives his personal testimony in the book of Acts, and we have the full story in Acts 9, but none offer the details Paul supplies here
 - First, Paul reminds the church of his former life as Saul, the Pharisee
 - He lived a life according to the manner of Judaism
 - Notice that Paul speaks of living a life in Judaism as a past tense
 - He isn't saying he was no longer a Jew, but rather he was no longer living a life of Judaism
 - His point is that a true Jew moves to follow the Lord as the Lord reveals more truth
 - So when the Gospel was revealed in Jesus Christ, a true Jew would leave behind the old ways of Judaism to follow Christ

- Being a good Jew is not following the Law of Moses; being a good Jew is following the Lord
- And until Paul knew the truth, he was living according to a distorted and manufactured lifestyle called Judaism
- He was an unbelieving Jew
- Consequently, he tried to destroy the very thing that was from God even as he supposed he was a man following God
 - This is the classic state of mind of every religious unbeliever
 - Religious unbelievers are convinced they have the truth even as they oppose Christianity, which is religious truth
 - Their zealousness will often lead them to become persecutors of true believers
 - Just as we see in Islam today or Catholicism during the Reformation or among the Roman pagans and Jews of Paul's day
- Paul's point in reminding the church of his former state is to make clear that Paul would have been the last person to naturally choose to begin preaching the Gospel
 - Paul's former life is itself a testimony to the power of God
 - No one who knew the old Saul could ever imagine that he could become a strong advocate for the Gospel in any form
 - It goes to the issue of credibility
 - Paul traded in a position of honor and power within Jewish culture to preach a message he formerly hated
 - Notice in v.14 that Paul says his life in Judaism was going smashingly well
 - He was advancing beyond his peers and had everything to lose by turning his back on that way of life
 - He was selected to carry the letters to arrest Christians in Damascus, which was a choice assignment
 - Additionally, Paul presumably would have been the first person to advocate for Gentile Christians to pursue a Jewish way of life were it necessary, since Paul himself was an expert in that life

- But he advocated for ancestral traditions, not for the Gospel
- Paul's past demonstrates the power of the Gospel to change hearts and lives
 - Paul proves no one is beyond God's reach
 - There is no human explanation for Paul's switch...it was a miracle as it is every time a person comes to faith
 - But at the same time, the Gospel is foolishness to those who are perishing
 - Leaving us to conclude that salvation is a work of God alone
- My own personal background shares some of these elements
 - While I was never a zealous religious person, I was quick to defend my family traditions in Catholicism
 - I didn't know what I was talking about, but I would still defend the Catholic tradition in the face of Christian attacks
 - It took a miracle of God in the Gospel to open my eyes and show me the truth
- The next part of Paul's story reflects how grace works, starting with the plan and will of God to save a person
 - Paul says in v.15 that the Lord had set Paul apart from his mother's womb
 - The word set apart is *aphorizo*, meaning to set a boundary around
 - Paul was marked out by God from birth to fill a certain role in God's providence
 - Paul is saying that his mission to serve Christ was something God assigned to Paul from the beginning of his life
 - In fact, we might say as was said to Pharaoh, that the Lord raised him up for this very purpose
 - Or as Jesus said to Nathaniel:

John 1:47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!"

[John 1:48](#) Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”

- We have all been set apart in this same way, according to Paul again in his letter to Ephesus

[Eph. 1:4](#) just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love

[Eph. 1:5](#) He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

- All believers are marked out for the call to faith that comes one day
 - We are predestined by God to be adopted by Him through faith in Jesus
 - And these things happen according to the will of God
- This is what Paul is saying to the church in Galatia
 - Paul was set apart and then on an appointed day he was called by grace
 - That call was the call of the Gospel, only in Paul’s case that presentation of the Gospel was made by none less than Jesus Himself
 - Notice Paul says the Lord revealed the Son “in” Paul not “to” Paul
 - Paul’s point is that the revelation of the truth of Jesus is made in our hearts by the power of the Spirit
 - It is not made as an argument we process intellectually and then receive as we might receive instruction in math
 - Salvation is an inside out process rather than an outside in process
- Then Paul says in v.16 that God directed Paul to preach to the Gentiles
 - Luke describes Paul’s commissioning by Christ this way

[Acts 9:15](#) But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;

[Acts 9:16](#) for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."

- Paul's testimony reflects Jesus' own words
- Paul was God's chosen instrument to preach to Gentiles and suffer in the process
- Paul's life is unique in many ways, but his experience of being called to faith and appointed to serve Christ is NOT unique
 - Every Christian is called into faith so we may serve Christ
 - Paul says in Romans 12 we are to present our bodies as living and holy sacrifices to God
 - Paul's service was unique, but service to God is the call for every Christian
- Now Paul turns to the question of his training and knowledge...how did Paul come to know what he shared with the churches?
 - Paul begins at the end of v.16 by saying he didn't immediately consult with men
 - Paul uses the phrase "flesh and blood" to make clear that he did not receive his training from human beings
 - Paul was traveling in north Judea when he was saved
 - But he says his first destination was not to meet the other apostles in Jerusalem
 - In fact, had he arrived there first, he likely would have not been received given his recent history
 - Instead, Paul goes to Arabia
 - Arabia refers to the vast desert wilderness southeast of Israel
 - Modern day Saudi Arabia
 - We don't know exactly what he was doing in Arabia, but we can assume he was being retrained by the Lord Himself
 - We get a hint of that time by something Paul explained to the church in Corinth, when he wrote in the third person speaking of himself

[2Cor. 12:1](#) Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable; but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord.

[2Cor. 12:2](#) I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago – whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows – such a man was caught up to the third heaven.

[2Cor. 12:3](#) And I know how such a man – whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows –

[2Cor. 12:4](#) was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.

- Once again, Paul's experience is unique, but it still serves as a useful pattern for every believer
 - When a person comes to faith in Christ, the most important first step that person can take in their walk is to study God's word
 - To "go away" and spend time learning the faith God has given them
 - To build a solid foundation of doctrine and understanding
 - If we do that, we will be so much better prepared to serve Christ
 - If we neglect this step, we will step out in arrogance and ignorance and be more harm than good in many cases
- So Paul was called by God and prepared and trained by God, and then Paul says he talked to virtually no one else before he began preaching the Gospel to Gentiles
 - Only after first returning to Damascus and ministering for three years did Paul eventually go to Jerusalem to meet Peter
 - He went there simply to become acquainted with Peter, not to be trained by him
 - They spent only 15 days together – not enough time for Paul to have been trained by Peter in any case
 - Other than Peter, Paul only met James, the leader of the church in Jerusalem
 - So he had virtually no exposure to the men who learned from Christ
 - From there Paul went directly into Asia Minor to preach

- As Paul entered into those regions, he was such an unknown commodity that men only knew of his past
- When Paul arrived, they assumed he was a man coming to kill Christians
- So naturally, when he preached the Gospel instead it was a shock
- His point in all this was to demonstrate that his ministry as an apostle was not a product of men, not even the other apostles
 - He is not part of a vast conspiracy to deliver a lie to the churches in Galatia
 - He was not an apostle wannabe that left Jerusalem for better prospects
 - He was an apostle before meeting Peter or James
 - So his authority did not extend from those entities
 - Paul was a man called, trained and commissioned directly by God
- Paul ends by emphasizing that his past as a persecutor of the church and as a man saved by Christ and trained by God was a part of God's plan to bring glory to His name
 - The miraculous nature of his turn around was part of the storyline
 - Consider the encouragement it must have been to a young and persecuted church to hear that the man who previously persecuted the church was now an apostle for Christ?
 - Moreover, he did not arrive at that place because he was threatened or because other men persuaded him
 - From beginning to end, the entire process came at the hand of God
 - So the message to the church was clear
 - If God can act in this way to convert a man like Paul and put him to use for the sake of the Gospel, then the church is in good hands
 - Men could understand that Jesus was caring for His church

- And Paul was making clear that his role was one God authored, God directed and God instructed
- As Paul moved into ministry in this way, he soon found himself correcting even other apostles to ensure they were all teaching and preaching the Gospel accurately
 - Next time we'll move into Chapter 2 as Paul explains how he has defended the true Gospel from the beginning