

Galatians

Lesson 2

Chapter 1:11-24

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Lesson 2
Galatians 1:11-24
Paul, an Apostle Called by God

But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man
(Galatians 1:15-16)

Prayers

Introduction

Paul focuses on his calling by Jesus Christ as an apostle in verses 1:11-24 in defense of his authority. Additional details of Paul's calling are provided in Acts, so we will review his missionary journey to Galatia recorded in Acts.

Read Galatians 1:11-24, Paul Called by God.

Gal 1:11 I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up.

Gal 1:12 I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

Gal 1:13 For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it.

Gal 1:14 I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

Gal 1:15 But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by 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 consult any man, (Acts 9:1-19, conversion

Gal 1:17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.

Gal 1:18 Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days.

Gal 1:19 I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother.

Gal 1:20 I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie.

Gal 1:21 Later I went to Syria [Antioch] and Cilicia [Paul's home, Tarsus, was in the province of Cilicia].

Gal 1:22 I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ.

Gal 1:23 They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy."

Gal 1:24 And they praised God because of me.

1. In verses 1:11-2:21, Paul continues to defend his authority as an apostle of Christ. In verse 1:12, Paul wrote that he received his gospel from Jesus Christ. How did Paul receive his revelation from Christ? See Acts 9:1-19

Ac 9:1 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

Ac 9:3 As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.

Ac 9:4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

Ac 9:5 "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied.

Ac 9:6 "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

Ac 9:7 The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone.

Ac 9:8 Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

Ac 9:10 In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered.

Ac 9:11 The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying.

Ac 9:12 In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

Ac 9:13 "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem.

Ac 9:14 And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

Ac 9:15 But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.

Ac 9:16 I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

Ac 9:17 Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Ac 9:18 Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, ¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Paul received a vision from Christ and was blinded by his glory. Christ sent a disciple to miraculously heal Paul and baptize him to fill him with the Holy Spirit.

2. In verses 1:13-14, Paul refers to his previous life in Judaism. How was Paul "advancing" in Judaism (verse 14)? See Philipians 3:4-7 and Acts 22:3-4.

Phil 3:4 If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more:
Phil 3:5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a
Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee;
Phil 3:6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.
Phil 3:7 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

Ac 22:3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I
was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any
of you are today.

Ac 22:4 I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and
women and throwing them into prison,

Paul was a Pharisee and legalistically faultless, but he also imprisoned Christians and even murdered them, thinking that was what Judaism required of him.

3. In Galatians 1:15, Paul said God set him apart from birth and revealed his Son to him by his grace to preach to the Gentiles. Discuss how Paul's calling is similar or different from your calling.

Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:3-6 that God made plans for all believers before creation. Paul's calling and ours are the same in that God made them before creation. God calls each of us to his purposes; Paul's purpose was to be an apostle. Ours is to be his disciples, and his purposes unfold every day!

4. In verses 1:16-17, Paul points out that he did not go to Jerusalem after his revelation. Why was that significant to his defense?

Paul received his calling from Jesus Christ, so he did not seek the validation of his authority from the other apostles.

5. Galatians 1:17-2:10 provides insight into the time frame of Paul's ministry.
 - a. Verse 1:17 What did Paul do after his conversion and revelation?

Paul went immediately to Arabia and later returned to Damascus.

- b. What did Paul do before he started his missionary journey, Verse 18? Who did he see, and how long did he stay?

After three years in Arabia and Damascus, Paul went to Jerusalem to meet with Peter and James, the brother of Jesus. No doubt, he told them about his revelation and calling to go to the Gentiles.

6. In Galatians 1:21, Paul references going to Syria and Cilicia after visiting Jerusalem. Acts 11:25-26 and 13:1-3 provide additional details of stay in Antioch, Syria. What happened to Paul in Antioch?

Ac 11:25 Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul,

Ac 11:26 and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

Ac 13:1 In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul.

Ac 13:2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

Ac 13:3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

After a year of teaching in Antioch, the Holy Spirit called Paul and a disciple named Barnabas to begin a missionary journey. This journey with Barnabas is referred to as Paul's first missionary journey.

7. Paul's first missionary journey to Galatia likely occurred during the 14-year hiatus between Paul's first and second visits to Jerusalem. Refer to the Acts passages and discuss his first journey's highlights.

Cyprus

Ac 13:4 The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus.

Ac 13:5 When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John [also called Mark] was with them as their helper.

Ac 13:6 They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus,⁷ who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God.

Ac 13:8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith.

Ac 13:9 Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said,

Ac 13:10 "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?

Ac 13:11 Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun." Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand.

Ac 13:12 When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

- a. Where did Paul preach?

Paul preached in the Jewish synagogues in Cyprus.

- b. What gifts of the Holy Spirit did Paul display as an apostle?

Paul taught the gospel and was given insight and discernment into the character of Elymas. He was given miraculous authority to blind Elymas with the power of his word.

- c. What other disciple accompanied Paul and Barnabas on this journey?

John, who was also called Mark [and John-Mark].

Pisidian Antioch (Asia)

Ac 13:42 As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath.

Ac 13:43 When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

Ac 13:44 On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord.

Ac 13:45 When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying.

Ac 13:46 Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles.

Ac 13:48 When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

Ac 13:49 The word of the Lord spread through the whole region.

Ac 13:50 But the Jews incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.

Ac 13:51 So they shook the dust from their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium.

Ac 13:52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

- a. Where did Paul preach?

Paul preached in the Jewish synagogues to Jews and Jewish converts. Then to the Gentiles.

- b. How did people respond to the gospel?

The gospel was received with interest, jealousy, and anger. Paul and his company were expelled from the city by Jews, influential women, and leading men in the city.

Iconium (Galatia)

Ac 14:1 At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed.

Ac 14:2 But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers.

Ac 14:3 So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders.

Ac 14:4 The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles.

Ac 14:5 There was a plot afoot among the Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them.

Ac 14:6 But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, ⁷ where they continued to preach the good news.

- a. Where did Paul preach?

Paul taught in a synagogue.

- b. How did people respond to the gospel?

A large number of Jews and Gentiles believed, but there was also a backlash from the Jews who stirred up Gentiles against Paul, and they planned to murder them by stoning them.

- c. How was Paul's authority as an apostle demonstrated?

Paul preached the gospel, and large numbers of people believed. He also had the power to perform miracles and wonders.

Lystra (Galatia)

Ac 14:8 In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked.

Ac 14:9 He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed ¹⁰ and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

Ac 14:11 When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!"

Ac 14:19 Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead.

Ac 14:20 But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

- a. How was Paul's authority as an apostle demonstrated in Lystra?

Paul miraculously healed a man who was lame from birth.

- b. How did the crowd respond to the miracle?

The crowd wanted to worship Paul and Barnabas. But later, the Jews from Antioch and Iconium came and turned the crowd against them. The crowd stoned Paul and left him for dead.

Derbe (Galatia) and the Return to Antioch (Syria).

Ac 14:21 They preached the good news in that city [Derbe] and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and [Pisidian] Antioch, [and Pisidia, Pamphylia, Perga, and Attalia before sailing to Antioch] ²² strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.

Ac 14:23 Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

Ac 14:28 And they [Paul and Barnabas] stayed there [in Syrian Antioch] a long time with the disciples.

- a. What church structure did Paul and Barnabas implement as they found new believers?

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders to lead each church.

- b. What issues did the new Gentile believer face after Paul's missionary tour?

New believers faced persecution from both Jews and Gentiles who were influential leaders in their cities and who hated the gospel to the point that they were willing to murder Paul for preaching it.

Closing Prayer